

Childhood Then and Now

Celebrating 150 years of Action for Children



This pack has been created to accompany the fold-out poster version of our Choose Childhood policy report. The poster was designed for and with young people. The young people we spoke to also selected the topics included in this slide pack as those which they think their peers would be interested in.

The aim of these slides is to provide information and questions which can form the basis of discussions you might like to have with young people. There is also information about campaigning which we hope young people will find useful.



Young people's rights



- Find out more about the rights you have if you are 18 or under as part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- These rights include the right to give your opinion and to have food and clothing. You can find out more at:
<https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>
- The UK agreed in 1990 that it would protect these rights and this started to have an effect from 1992.

Discussion:

1. Do you think that any of these rights need to be better protected in the UK?
2. The UNCRC says that adults should make decisions that are in your best interests (Article 3). How can adults find out about what you think is best for you?

Young people's mental health



- In our survey we found over a quarter of young people (29%) are worried about their own mental health.*
- Academic research has shown that three-quarters of adult mental health difficulties start by the age of 18.
- This is why Action for Children is calling for governments across the UK to provide more mental health services which help as soon as there is a problem.

Discussion:

1. We can't always control every aspect of our mental health, but do you know some ways to try to keep yourself mentally healthy?
2. Please find some helpful advice at:
<https://www.buildsoundminds.org.uk/emotional-wellbeing>

**Figures are from an online YouGov survey of 2,082 UK 11-18 year olds in March 2019.*

Social media challenges



- In our survey, young people told us that using social media can make them worried.
- Many girls in the UK (59%) think there should be “less pressure around physical appearance” and lots of boys (41%) think this too.* Many young people we spoke to believe there is a link between social media and pressure to look a certain way.
- But young people also told us that social media can be positive because it helps keep people stay connected.

Discussion:

1. How can you use social media to make life better for other young people?
2. Do you know what to do if something you see on social media is upsetting?
3. Please find some helpful advice at:
<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/young-people/resources-11-19s>

**Figures are from an online YouGov survey of 2,082 UK 11-18 year olds in March 2019.*

Being supported and supportive



- Action for Children is calling for the government to spend more money helping children and their families earlier, before problems get more difficult to solve.
- Here is some advice from a young person we spoke to. If you see someone at school who might need help: “before you just walk away I’d say it’s worth a chance to see if they’re alright.”
- 61% of young people think being bullied is the top barrier to children having a good childhood today.*
- In our focus groups, young people told us being respected is really important.

Discussion:

1. How easy is it to follow that advice?
2. How could you make your school a more supportive place?
3. How do you show respect to other people?

** Figures are from an online YouGov survey of 2,082 UK 11-18 year olds in March 2019.*

Make your voice heard



What is campaigning?

Campaigning is about trying to make change. This can be changing behaviour, changing what people think (raising awareness) or what government does about an issue (policy).

How can I campaign?

1. Choose a subject you really care about! E.g. poverty, personal safety, mental health support.
2. Find out more about the subject so that you can show why it's important.
3. Have a think about whether one or more of the rights in the UNCRC backs up your argument!
4. Decide what sort of change you want to achieve and who you need to influence to achieve that change.
5. You can campaign as an individual, as part of a group, or as part of an organisation like Action for Children.
6. Take action – think about what would convince the people you are trying to inspire.

Campaigning activities you could try:

Create a website with information about your campaign (<https://www.wix.com/>)

Make a video (<https://spark.adobe.com/>)

Write to, or ask to speak to, your local MP (<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>)

Start a petition! (www.change.org)