



*Action for
Children*



Childhood then and now

Although childhoods have got better since 1869, there are still lots of things which must be improved so that all children and young people have the childhood they deserve

We asked young people what childhood is like in the UK today and what they think should be changed



**What young people
told us in our survey***

**1 in 2
children**

worry about 'people suffering
because they don't have
enough money'

Safer streets and lower
risk of crime should be
the focus of change

'Being bullied' and 'too much pressure from school' are the major barriers to having a good childhood

Feeling loved and cared for by my family is the top choice for 'what makes children happy'

79%

of young people are 'very' or 'fairly' happy

34%

of children think that childhoods today are worse than they were for their parents

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



What young people told us they think should change

*“Spend less time at school and
more time with your family”*

“Kids should be allowed to vote”

*“They put the weight of stress
of exams on children way too
early it’s as soon as you leave
primary school”*



“There should be more support groups and information about help which is available”

“Parents should have more support and more awareness of what their children are getting into”

“More opportunities and funding for leisure activities”

“Show each other respect and offer help to people from other friendship groups”

What we want to happen next

We are asking governments across the UK to make sure that:

- 1** A plan is in place so that all government departments are working together to improve the lives of children and young people. This should be led by the Prime Minister.
- 2** There are national plans in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to make sure that the UK plan is achieved in a way that helps local people.
- 3** There is proper funding for services that support children and families.



Changing childhoods

We wanted to explore how childhoods
have changed over 150 years since our
charity started in 1869



Late 1800s to early 1900s

Life was very different for children. Many didn't go to school, had to work and faced extreme poverty. Some people like Thomas Bowman Stephenson, who started our charity, worked hard to improve the lives of these children. In some ways, life did get better.

For example in 1908 penalties were introduced for people who mistreated children.





Mid to late 1900s

Children's lives continued to improve, for example the National Health Service was set up and in 1944 secondary education was introduced for all children.

In the 1960s and 70s local councils started to provide specific services for families so children and young people got more support.



Late 1900s to early 2000s

More attention was paid to children's rights around the world (the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and in the UK (the Children Act 1989). This helps protect children and ensure their opinions are listened to when decisions are made about their care. Lots of children were helped out of poverty.



Since 2010

Children and their families still need support. There are modern versions of problems which existed in Victorian times. More attention is being paid to children's mental health needs, although there is still a long way to go before everyone will get the help they need. Social media is also making life more challenging for some young people.





With thanks

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Safe and happy childhood



Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

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