



School of Social Work

Institute of Childhood, Youth and Family

# Well-Being of children in Switzerland

Part of the  
Children's Worlds International Survey  
of Children's Well-Being (ISCIWeB)



**Research Abstract**  
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# Well-being of children in Switzerland

## Part of the «Children's Worlds» research project

Currently, children's point of view on their life situation is seldom a focus when it comes to determining social, political, or professional issues that significantly affect their well-being.<sup>1</sup> The «Children's Worlds» project aims to change this condition by closing a knowledge gap in research for children ([www.isciweb.org](http://www.isciweb.org)). «Children's Worlds» is an international, comparative, cross-sectional study in which children between the ages of 8 and 12 provide information about important aspects of their lives through a thematically wide-ranging questionnaire. Since 2011, two waves of data-collection have been conducted in which more than 95'500 children from over 18 countries have participated. The results have had a significant impact on public and professional perceptions of the life situation and social inclusion of children in their respective countries. The third wave of surveys is planned for the end of 2019, in which research teams from 40 countries are participating, including countries such as Israel, Rumania, Ethiopia, Nepal, and now also Switzerland. To gather representative data, a total of 3'000 children will be surveyed in each of the participating countries.

The coordinating team of the international study, led by Prof. Dr. Sabine Andresen (Germany) and Prof. Dr. Asher Ben-Arieh (Israel), exclusively invited the research team of the Institute for Childhood, Youth and Family at the School of Social Work from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), to include Switzerland in the third wave of data-collection. The international coordination of the project is financed by the Jacobs Foundation, while national research teams seek broader dissemination through specialised funding partners. The Swiss study is funded by the Fondation Botnar. Participation by Switzerland in the international comparative study not only makes a valuable contribution to the global debate on the well-being of children, but also creates a unique comparison point by including children's voices in different languages within one national framework. The insights gained from the statistical analysis will increase knowledge and public awareness of the well-being of children and their living conditions in order to influence key actors in their decision-making to advance the social inclusion of children.<sup>2</sup>

Representative data on the personal well-being and living conditions of children are largely lacking in Switzerland, especially for the 8-year-old cohort, and will thereby make a valuable contribution as national reference point. The international comparative research design of «Children's Worlds» offers an important level of interpretation beyond the Swiss context. Through the wide range of topics included in the research design on child well-being, the survey can also serve as a normative study by providing a basis to compare the subjective well-being of other hard-to-reach groups (such as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers) or other particularly vulnerable groups (such as children from families with complex problems).

<sup>1</sup> Ben-Arieh, A., Casas, F., Frønes, I., & Korbin, J. (2014). The multifaceted concept of child well-being. In A. Ben-Arieh, F. Casas, I. Frønes, & J. Korbin (Eds.), *Handbook of child well-being* (pp. 1–28). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. [https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9063-8\\_134](https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9063-8_134).

<sup>2</sup> Keller, S. (2010). Konkrete Erziehungsziele? »Well-being« von Kindern und seine normativen Prämissen. *Neue Praxis*, 40(2), 176–190.

## Overview of the Swiss part within the Children's Worlds study

<i>Children's Worlds — International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCIWeB)</i>			
Topic	Subjective well-being of children aged 8–12		
Design	International comparative cross-sectional study in 40 countries with biennial waves of data collection. Survey of 3'000 children aged between 8 and 12 years in all language regions of Switzerland.		
Research questions	<p><b>1. How do children describe their subjective well-being in Switzerland?</b> Answers are provided by country-specific and international comparative analysis of descriptive statistics, in the following topic areas: (a) home and family, (b) friends and other relations, (c) school life, (d) local area characteristics, (e) money and economic circumstances, (f) time use, (g) freedom and self-perception, (h) life satisfaction, and (i) children's rights.</p> <p><b>2. Are there age-specific differences in well-being?</b></p> <p><b>3. Are there gender-specific differences in well-being?</b></p> <p><b>4. Are there any stratified differences in well-being?</b> Stratification characteristics include: (a) economic prosperity, (b) school type (private/public), (c) population density (urban/rural).</p> <p><b>5. How widespread is children's knowledge of children's rights?</b></p>		
Survey tools	Depending on the age group, the questionnaire includes up to 80 single and multi-item scaled questions. An age-appropriate version has been adapted for 8-year-olds. Standardised back translations for the validation of questionnaires in French, German, and Italian are available.		
Funding	<p><i>Children's Worlds Switzerland</i>: Fondation Botnar</p> <p><i>Children's Worlds international</i>: Jacobs Foundation</p> <p><i>Kick-start funding Switzerland</i>: Department of Education, Office for Youth and Careers Guidance Canton Zurich</p>		
Sampling	Representative sample of children in mainstream schools in specified language regions of Switzerland.		
Surveys	<i>1st wave</i>	<i>2nd wave</i>	<i>3rd wave</i>
Duration	2011–2013	2013–2014	2018–2019
Status	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Completed</i> <sup>3</sup>	being conducted.
Countries	14	18	40   incl. Switzerland
Sample worldwide	34'500	61'000	expected: 120'000
Sample Switzerland	—	—	3'000 (aged 8–12)

<sup>3</sup> Ben-Arieh, A., Rees, G., & Dinisman, T. (Eds.). (2017). Children's Well-being around the world: Findings from the Children's Worlds (ISCIWeB) project [Special issue]. [Children and Youth Services Review, 80](#).

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