

Voices of the Children, by the Children, for the Children



**A Report on
the Rights of the Child
on Behalf of Young People
Living in Taiwan**

Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLf)

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I. Introduction

Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLF)

Child Welfare League Foundation (CWLF) is a local non-profit organization in Taiwan; we have been promoting and advocating a wide range of child welfare services in relation to children's rights. These include indirect services, such as improving legislation and advocating children's rights, and direct services, such as adoption, family relationships advice, missing children research, children's hotline and so on.

It is hard for children to fight for their rights in the world of adults, but CWLF believes that children are individual beings who need to be respected, taken care of and protected. As such, CWLF has right from the start been standing the ground of prioritizing the best interests of the child and endeavored to realize the philosophy of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Protecting and promoting children's rights and welfare are our main objectives. It is our wish that each child can be looked after, understood and loved.



Purpose of Children's Report

The Implementation Act of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was promulgated on November 20, 2014 in Taiwan to domestically legislate the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The State Report was published for the first time on November 17, 2016, and the Alternative Report written by civil groups was published on March 31, 2017. These indicate Taiwan's emphasis and development of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, the promotion of children's rights is not complete without the voice of children and youths. We want to understand children's real thoughts and expectations, and provide the first-hand information for experts and scholars of international child rights. We hope we can receive professional advice for practice that focuses on the best interests of children in Taiwan.

Therefore, before writing the children's report, CWLF conducted a questionnaire regarding children's rights for children and youths in Taiwan. A two-day youth empowerment project was also held in the hope of extensively including all groups of children and youths and provide them with opportunities to express their opinions. We believe that this is one of the ways to realize children and youths' right to participate. By participating in the project, children can not only understand their rights as children but also expand their horizons through face-to-face discussions. They can also learn how to respect differences while voicing their rights. Moreover, the national questionnaire made up for the limitation on the time and location of holding the project. We hoped to collect the opinions of children and youths national-wide as complete as possible.

Finally, although this report was written by adults designing the questionnaire and the youth empowerment project, we still tried to keep the most direct voice of the children and youths and minimize indirect interpretation. After all, our primary purpose was to clearly present children's thoughts and suggestions on the current development of children's rights in Taiwan.



Research Methodology

1. Survey

Child Welfare Survey in 2017

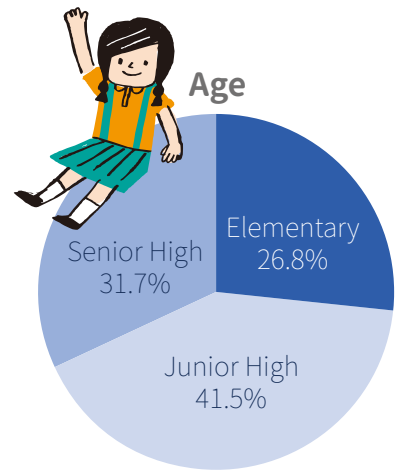
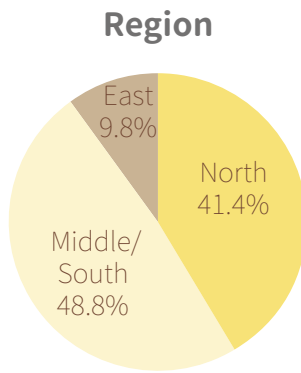
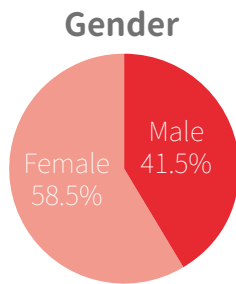
To understand the well-being of children living in Taiwan, the Child Welfare League Foundation referred to the Health Behavior in School-age Children Survey (HBSC) published by the World Health Organization in 2016 (Inchley & Currie, 2016)¹ and conducted a national survey between September 14 and October 7, 2016 by means of questionnaire. The results were compared with the international study. Subjects were school children aged between 11 and 14. Proportional random sampling was used to select the subjects. Schools all over Taiwan (except offshore islands) were randomly selected and the number of subjects was based on the proportion of students in the cities/counties. A total of 1,978 copies of questionnaires were distributed and 1,646 copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 83%. The error was no more than $\pm 2.41\%$ in the 95% confidence level. Among the valid samples, 52.6% were males and 47.4% were females; students aged 11, 12, 13 and 14 accounted for 22.3%, 22.2%, 26.5% and 29.1%, respectively.

2. Youth Empowerment Project

A total of 42 children participated in focus groups on March 11 and 12, 2017 through free registration and invitation. These focus groups were divided based on different ages and identities (e.g., from disadvantaged family and child service of the Child Welfare League Foundation). Children were asked about different aspects of children's rights. Opinions from children were compared with the results of surveys conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation in recent years as evidence.

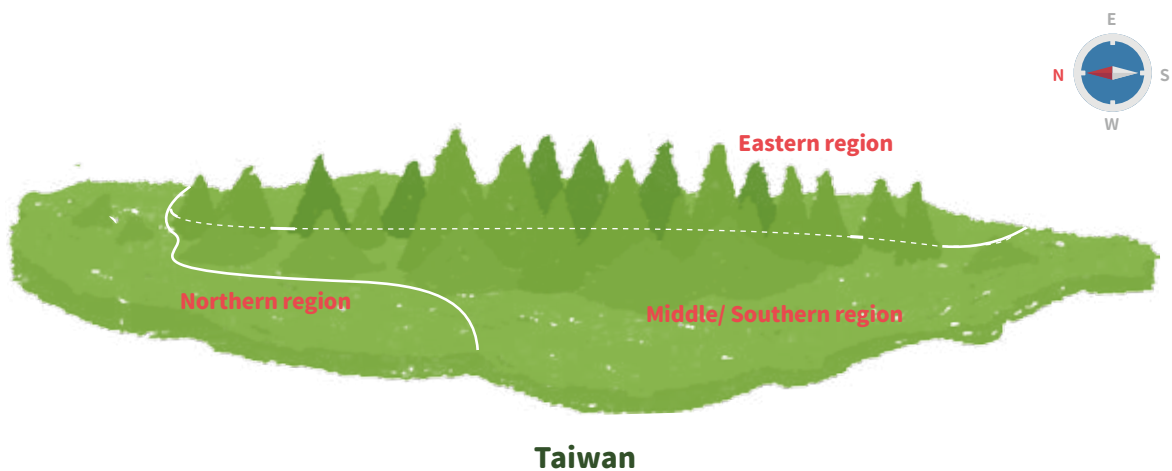
¹ Note: this is a transnational study on young people by the World Health Organization. This study was conducted in 42 countries in Europe and North America. In each country/region, 1500 students of each age (11, 13 and 15) were sampled for the survey. The themes included family resources and structure, family relation, peer relation, physical and mental condition, health behavior and risk behavior.

Proportion of gender, region and age of the children and youths participating in the focus groups are as follows:



Statistics of the composition of the youth empowerment project

Group	Number	Male	Female	North	Middle/ South	East	Elementary	Junior High	Senior High
General	11	3	8	7	4	0	3	5	3
High risk	8	5	3	4	2	2	1	2	5
Adopted	8	3	5	4	4	0	2	3	3
Divorced	8	2	6	3	4	1	1	4	3
Rural	7	4	3	0	6	1	4	3	0
Total	42	17	25	18	20	4	11	17	14



3.Recommendations of the Children

In addition to the youth empowerment project held in 2017, the Child Welfare League Foundation has started to recruit members from children and youths since 2016. CWLF organized two youth empowerment projects for disadvantaged children and youths in Taipei and Taichung and one World Café. The participants of the former were the children of disadvantaged families served by CWLF, and the participants of the latter were more than 30 children and youths from northern, middle, southern and eastern parts of Taiwan.

This proposal summarizes the comments provided by the children and youths from the activities held in the past two years.



II. Survey

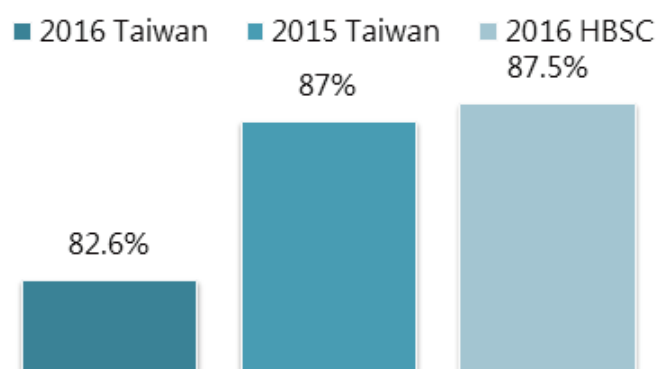
Child Welfare Survey in 2017

The Child Welfare League Foundation concerns about children's welfare and conducts national survey every year. To understand the child welfare in Taiwan and that in other countries, we compared the survey with the School-age Children Survey (HBSC) published by the World Health Organization in 2016 (Inchley & Currie, 2016)². The results are as follows.

1. Subjective well-being

(1) Personal well-being: life satisfaction

The average score of subjective life satisfaction of students in Taiwan was 7.88. Students who gave a score of 6 or more accounted for 82.6%, which was less than the score of last year. Compared with HBSC countries, 92.3% of students in the Netherlands gave a score of 6 or more. About 90% of students in Norway and Denmark gave 6 points or more. Even the international average was 87.55%. These were all better than that of Taiwan.



MEASURE:

Young people were asked to rate their life satisfaction using a visual analogue scale. The Cantril ladder has 11 steps: the top indicates the best possible life and the bottom the worst. Respondents were asked to indicate the ladder step at which they would place their lives at present (from zero to 10).

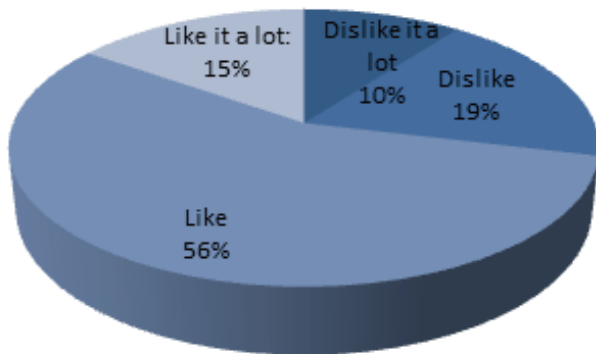
RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportion reporting high life satisfaction, defined as a score of six or more on the Cantril ladder.

² Note: this is a transnational study on young people by the World Health Organization. This study was conducted in 42 countries in Europe and North America. In each country/region, 1500 students of each age (11, 13 and 15) were sampled for the survey. The themes included family resources and structure, family relation, peer relation, physical and mental condition, health behavior and risk behavior.

(2) School well-being

According to the survey, only 15.3% students reported liking school a lot. Such percentage was lower than the survey conducted in 2014 (26.3%) and lower than that of Norway (46.8%) and the Netherlands (42.2%). It was even lower than the international average (33.5%).



MEASURE:

Young people were asked how they feel about school at present. Response options ranged from liking it a lot to not liking it at all.

RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportions who reported liking school a lot.

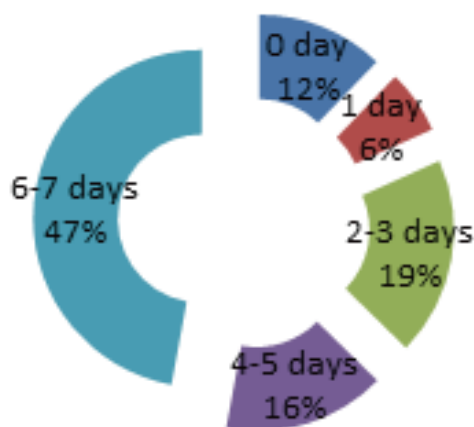
2. Peer and family relationships

(1) Family relations

Only 47.1% children said that they had dinner with their parents six to seven days a week. About 37.2% children had dinner with both or one parent three days a week or less. Compared with the HBSC study of the same year, 59.5% children had dinner with both or one parent every day. If compared with the historical data of the Child Welfare League Foundation, the percentage of



children having dinner with both or one parent four days a week or more has decreased year by year since 2012. The frequency of children having dinner with both or one parent in Taiwan recently still has room for improvement compared with the international average and past data.



MEASURE:

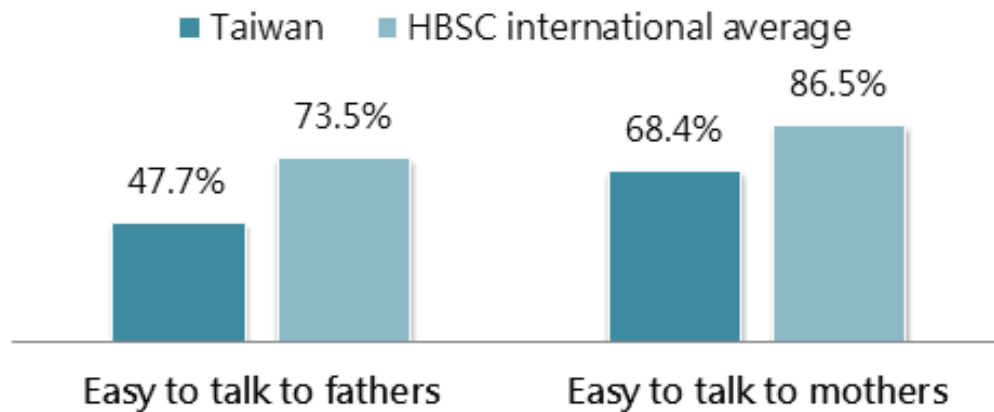
Young people were asked how often they eat an evening meal with both or one parent.

RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportions reporting eating evening meals with both or one parent every day.

Almost all children face difficulties while growing up. They need someone to talk to. However, only 47.7% of children found it easy to talk to their father and 68.4% found it easy to talk to their mother. These percentages were far lower than the percentages in the Netherlands (father 80.3% and mother 90.8%), and were even lower than the international average (father 73.5% and mother 86.5%).





COMMUNICATION WITH MOTHER

MEASURE: Young people were asked how easy it is for them to talk to their mother about things that really bother them. Response options ranged from very easy to very difficult.

RESULTS: Findings presented here show the proportions who reported finding it easy and very easy to talk to their mothers.

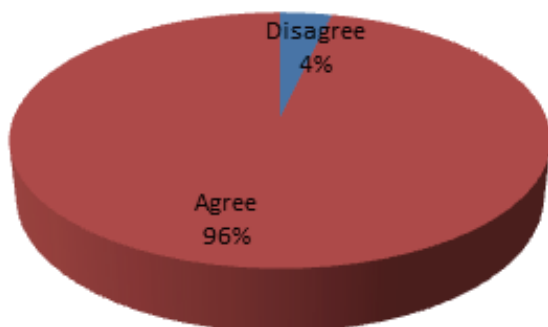
COMMUNICATION WITH FATHER:

MEASURE: Young people were asked how easy it is for them to talk to their father about things that really bother them. Response options ranged from very easy to very difficult.

RESULTS: Findings presented here show the proportions who reported finding it easy and very easy to talk to their fathers.

(2) Peer relations

Children were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement that most of the students in their class(es) are kind and helpful. About 96.3% of young people agreed with the statement. Such percentage was higher than the average of HBSC (69.5%). That is, most children in Taiwan consider their peers friendly and helpful.



MEASURE:

Young people were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement that most of the students in their class(es) are kind and helpful. Response options ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportions who agreed or strongly agreed.

3. Health behavior

(1) Eating behavior: soft-drink consumption

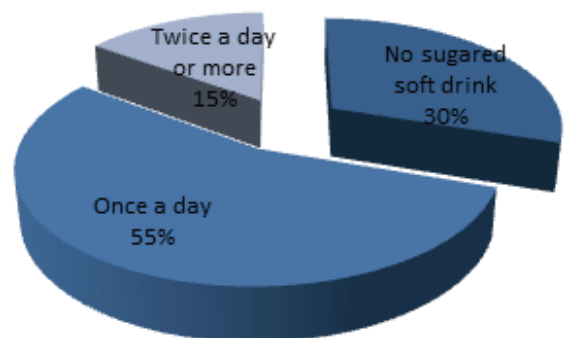
According to the survey, 70% of children in Taiwan drank sugary soft drinks. Such percentage was higher than the average of HBSC (16.5%). About 15% of children even drank sugary soft drinks twice a day or more. Their actual intake of sugar is worrying.

MEASURE:

Participants were asked how often they drink sugared soft drinks, with response categories ranging from never to every day, more than once.

RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportions reporting that they consumed soft drinks at least once a day.



(2) Eating behavior: daily sweets consumption

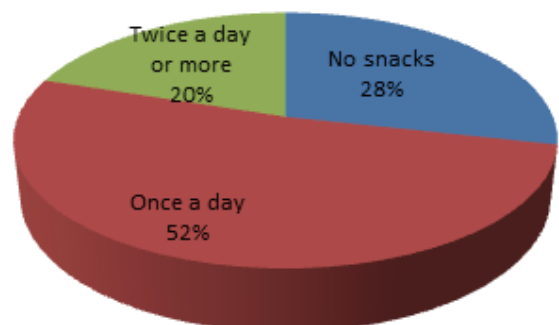
In addition to sugary drinks, children in Taiwan also consumed a lot of snacks. According to the survey, 72% of children ate snacks every day. Such percentage was higher than the average of HBSC (23.5%). About 20% of young people ate snacks twice a day or more. Compared with young people in other countries, the children in Taiwan obviously ate too many snacks high in fat, sugar, and sodium.

MEASURE:

Young people were asked how often they eat sweets. Response options ranged from never to more than once a day.

RESULTS:

Findings presented here show the proportions who reported eating sweets every day or more than once a day.



III. Youth Empowerment Project



Findings By Theme



The children and youths participated in the youth empowerment project discussed various child and youth rights. The results of the discussions are summarized in Appendix 2. Eight child rights issues, which the children and youths concerned the most, are described as follows:

1. Right to Privacy in School and at Home

--Children and youths felt that their privacy is not respected at home or in school.

In the focus groups, children expressed many conditions in which their privacy was violated. For example, their school bags and drawers were inspected in school without advanced notice. Parents also checked their stuff, cellphones and computers without their consent. These all made them feel that they were not respected. According to a survey conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation in 2015³, 33.6% of children and youths believed that their privacy was violated by the adults. Further, the children indicated in the questionnaire that their parents read their Line conversation, changed Facebook passwords and checked their schoolbags without their consent. What's more, some teachers also checked the children's cellphone messages. The children and youths were very uncomfortable about such behavior.

2. Respect for Child's Opinion

--"Parents should listen to the opinions of children more and shall achieve a consensus with children by means of communication and negotiation with regard to major decisions, such as school transfer and having boyfriends/ girlfriends."

According to the survey conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation in 2016⁴, 10% of children and youths (11 years old and above) felt that adults did not respect their opinions. They were only informed of the adults' decisions related to the children and youths, such as supplementary education, extracurricular activities and career after the decisions were made. The children said their parents did not fully communicate and discuss with them beforehand, which made them feel disrespected.



³ Cited from the survey on the top ten issues concerned by young people the most. The survey was conducted between September 16 and November 3, 2015 on students aged 11 to 18 in Taiwan (main island). Questionnaires were distributed by proportional random sampling. A total of 2,715 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 2,244 copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 82.7%. The error was less than $\pm 2.07\%$ in 95% confidence level.

⁴ The survey was conducted between September 14 and October 7, 2015 on students aged between 11 and 14 by means of physical questionnaire. The students were selected by proportional random sampling method. Schools all over Taiwan (except off-shore islands) were randomly selected. The number of students selected from each county/city was based on the proportion of students in each county/city. A total of 1,978 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 1,646 copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 83%. The error was less than $\pm 2.41\%$ in 95% confidence level.

3. Protection from Gangs Violence

--“Some gang organizations recruited students outside of school and instructed them to do bad things, such as collecting protection fees and fight, which made other students on campus feel threatened and insecure.”

In recent years, media in Taiwan have reported interference of mafias and gangsters on campus, highlighting the seriousness of campus security issues. According to a study⁵, young people involved in gangsters often participated in gang fights or ensuring momentum, even selling drugs, intimidation and violent debt-collection. These are the reasons why gangsters recruited students. The children and youths were terrified of penetration of gangsters in school.

4. Non-Discrimination

--“Children were often the subject of discrimination and bullying in school because of their own statuses, such as physical or mental disability, poor academic performance and poor hygiene, or family background, like the aboriginal status and low income household status.”

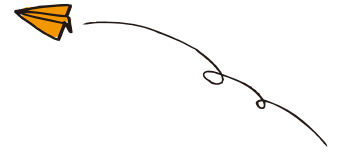
According to the survey conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation in 2015⁶, 36.4% children said that they were discriminated and bullied in school but such incidents were not properly handled. Examples provided by the students are as follows. Firstly, teachers assaulted students personally, shouted, and treated different students unequally. Secondly, students with better academic performance were favored by teachers. Thirdly, schools and teachers placed tags on students, for instance, physically/mentally disabled students and low-income household students being summoned for rice supplement, or teachers publicly saying to students that somebody is mentally/physically ill, and order them to take care of him/her. Such acts made the children feel that discrimination is everywhere in school.

With regard to discrimination among students, the Child Welfare League Foundation's 2013 survey⁷ also found that relational bullying were often resulted from differences. In the study, nearly half of the children said that some students were bullied in the class(es) because of body shape and appearance (61.2%), dislike (54%), personality and temper (48.3%), extraordinary or very poor academic performance (33.7%), or differences from gender stereotype (27.6%). It is worth noting that some children were discriminated because they were from poor family(17.4%).

⁵ Cited from Shu-Lung Yang (2001), Gangs and Violence in Schools: A Profile of Risk Factors in Juvenile's Gang Involvement, Department And Graduate Institute Of Criminology, National Chung Cheng University

⁶ Same as Note 1

⁷ Cited from the Investigation Report on Current Status of Bullying on Taiwan's Campus. The Child Welfare League Foundation conducted a small ball internet questionnaire survey on children under 18 years old. The survey was conducted between December 25 and February 18, 2012. A total of 1,022 copies of questionnaire were collected.



5. Education

--"There should not be one standard answer for each question. The current curriculum is too rigid and only emphasizes standard answers. There should be more open questions so that students can express their opinions."

The children in the focus groups said that the curriculum is not flexible enough, and sometimes they felt they are crammed. Therefore, they hoped to have more opportunities to express themselves. Compared with the survey conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation in 2011⁸, 22.4% students found that they are becoming less interested in study. In addition, 17.4% students believed that what they are studying is not useful for their future.

6. Drug Abuse

--"Some people coated drugs with candy or mixed them in milk tea so that children and youths could take the drugs without knowing it. This is harmful for children and youths' health."

Almost all children in the focus groups said that they had heard of candy-coated drugs and drug-mixed beverage. Therefore, they were worried that they might take drugs accidentally in their daily lives. This was also the most serious issue concerning health and safety according to the young people's votes.

Although drug abuse is significantly less prevalent in Taiwan compared with that in other countries, however, according to the Child Welfare League Foundation's 2016⁹ survey, about 16% of children said that they know the access to the drugs (grades III and IV drugs). The most common channel was "people going to places of public entertainment", followed by "internet friends" and "adult friends" and then "friends outside school."

Combining the children's concerns and the actual investigation, it is possible that most children believe that they might take drugs accidentally because they are less vigilant, and it is easy to obtain drugs through out-of-school channel, resulting in most children feeling insecure about taking drugs by mistake. In brief, the children were worried that they might be fooled, and further harm their health.

7. Play and Leisure

--Children all agreed they spend too much time in class and do not have enough time for rest and leisure.

⁸ Cited from the survey on over-study of students in Taiwan. The survey was conducted on students in Taiwan (except off-shore islands, such as Penghu) aged between 11 and 14 by group random sampling between October 5 and 24, 2011. A total of 3,115 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 2,756 valid copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 88.48%. The error was less than $\pm 2\%$ in 96% confidence level.

⁹ Cited from the Survey on Young People's Awareness Level and Access Risks of Grades III and IV Drugs. Physical questionnaires were distributed to students aged between 11 and 18 in Taiwan between May 23 and June 30, 2016. A total of 3,930 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 3,050 valid copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 77.61%. The error was less than $\pm 1.77\%$ in 95% confidence level.



Most children in the focus groups go to bed at 11pm, 12am or even later. It is easy to imagine that they do not have enough sleep. Most children said they hope classes can be shortened or delayed because they do not have enough rest. They also do not want to finish the classes too late.

According to the Child Welfare League Foundation's 2016 survey¹⁰, most children and youths in Taiwan lacked sleep. Overall, 78.2% of children and youths had less than 8 hours sleep per day on weekdays. The older the children were, the less sleep they had. Take elementary school students (41.9%) for example, less than half of the students had 8 hours of sleep or more per day on weekdays. This number dropped to 18.7% in the case of junior high school students and 4.7% in the case of senior high school students ($P<.001$, statistically significant.) In addition to general lack of sleep, it was even more surprising that some children are facing serious sleep deficiency. According to the survey, every one in three high school students (38.7%) had less than 6 hours of sleep every day on average.

The same survey also pointed out that about 27.2% children and youths said they have little time for activities they like. Further analysis revealed that the most common reason is busy study schedule (72.2%). Most of the student who were too busy to participate in leisure activities were high school students (82.7%) (statistically significant, $P<.001$).

8.Voting Age

-- Children hope that the voting age can be dropped from 20 years old to 15 or 16 years old.

According to the laws of Taiwan, only people at the age of 20 or older have the right to vote. Children and youths without voting rights are often among the disadvantaged groups or are sacrificed for government policies or resource allocation. Therefore, the children and youths participating in the focus group all said they hope that the voting age can be dropped to 15 or 16 years old. However, they expected parents, schools and the Government to gradually increase the children's democratic awareness in the process or allow children to start voting from local election as practice.

The Child Welfare League Foundation asked the children's attitude towards "voting age at 18 years old" in the 2015 survey¹¹. Nearly four in five respondents (77.1%) agreed to drop the voting age to 18 years old. Voting is an important way for people to participate in public affairs. The drop of voting age will help encourage and cultivate children and youth's awareness of public issues and qualities that rational citizens should have.

¹⁰ Cited from the Survey on Young People's Break and Leisure Life. The survey was conducted between May 23 and June 30, 2016 on students aged between 11 and 17 in Taiwan (except offshore islands, such as Penghu, Kinmen and Lienchiang) by proportional random sampling. A total of 3,930 copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 3,050 valid copies were recovered. The recovery rate was 77.6%. The overall sampling error was controlled within 2.0% in 97% confidence level.

¹¹ Same as Note 1

Spotlight Issue 1 : Respecting teens

1.10-12 years old

(1) Corporal punishment in schools

- Some teachers still apply corporal punishment. Some teacher do not practice corporal punishment, but they throw blackboard erasers or chalks. (11 years old, male, southern region)
- Teachers in after school programs or cram schools practice corporal punishment. (12 years old, female, southern region)
- I agree with teachers' use of corporal punishment. It is quicker and simpler. (12 years old, male, northern region)
- Teachers practice corporal punishment or order students to run around school track. (14 years old, female, southern region)

(2) Teachers' unfair punishment

- One of my classmates made a mistake in one question on the exam, and all the class was asked to copy the question and answer for 100 times as punishment. (12 years old, female, southern region)
- Some teachers practice collective punishment. When a student does something wrong, his/her classmates around him/her are punished as well. (13 years old, male, northern region)
- Teachers have different punishment standards for males and females. The punishment for males is harsher. (13 years old, female, southern region; 11 years old, male, eastern region)
- Teachers only like students with good academic performance. (13 years old, male, northern region; 11 years old, female northern region)

2.12-18 years old

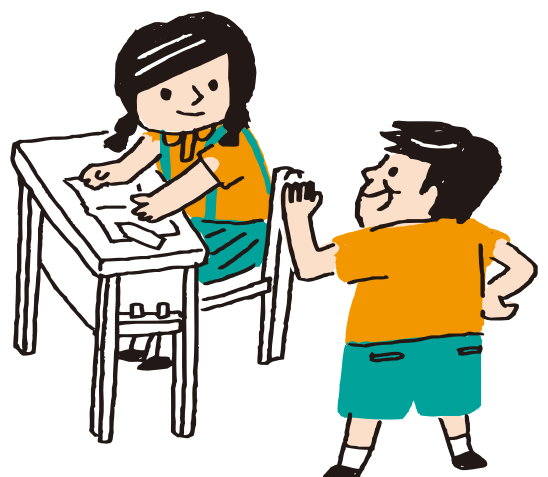
(1) Overly performance-oriented school clubs

- In elementary school, I felt that students are treated as monkeys by the school. We were forced to participate in competition after joining a club and had to work hard to win a prize. We did not have autonomy. (13 years old, male, middle region)
- The school did not respect students' opinions when dealing with club affairs. For example, a ninth-grade classmate of mine in the next class wanted to participate in a contest on behalf of the choir club. He promised that he would maintain good academic performance. However, the school still did not approve his request. Director of student affairs office invited his parents to the school "for a cup of tea," hoping to convince the student not to participate in the contest. (15 years old, male, middle region)

- The school only pays attention to the clubs that often win competitions, such as the track and field team. The rest of the clubs do not get attention and have less funding. (15 years old, male, middle region)
- Club performance affects the cumulative score of comprehensive assessment program in some schools, resulting in pressure on students. (16 years old, female, eastern region; 13 years old, male, middle region)

(2) Normal curriculum not implemented

- Non-major subjects such as scouts and home economics, are often substituted with exams. (16 years old, female, eastern region; 13 years old, male, middle region)
- Classes are substituted with other classes or exams. For example, PE class is substitute with Chinese class. (13 years old, female, northern region; 13 years old, male, southern region; 14 years old, female, southern region)
- Junior high schools of all regions force students to take the eighth class and teachers take this opportunity to speed up the progress of class. (15 years old, male, middle region; 13 years old, male, middle region)
- Teachers shall not take up students' rest time. (15 years old, female, southern region)



Spotlight Issue 2 : The relatively disadvantaged

1. Distant District Schools Services

The Child Welfare League Foundation has started to pay attention to Taiwan's remote primary schools without resources and provide children in remote schools with various resources and care. Seven students from rural schools were invited this time to discuss the rights and benefits related to them.

- There is only one pair of spikes (size 26) in the school. All students have to share this pair of spikes in track and field games. The size of the spikes often does not fit. (12 years old, male, eastern region)
- Balls, baseball bags and soccer goals are ragged in the school. However, the school does not have money to buy new ones. (13 years old, female, southern region; 12 years old, male, southern region)
- There are no buses in the community. We have to drive or ride scooters. (11 years old, male, eastern region)
- There are only few buses in the village and the interval is long. Moreover, the buses are old and smelly and only go to a few locations. (16 years old, male, southern region; 13 years old, female, southern region; 15 years old, female, southern region)
- I have nowhere to go on holidays except sports field in schools. I hope there are parks, swimming pools, libraries and baseball fields. (14 years old, female, southern region; 14 years old, male, southern region; 13 years old, female, southern region; 12 years old, male, eastern region)
- There are no hospitals and clinics in nearby townships and towns. It is a long ride to see a doctor (between 15 and 30 min drive). There are also no pharmacies. (14 years old, female, southern region; 14 years old, male, southern region; 13 years old, female, southern region)



2.Children and Youths with Divorced Parents

Taiwan's divorce rate ranks the world's second. However, only 1% of cases are mediated in the judicial system. The rest are privately agreed divorce. Hence, there is no protection for child rights. The Child Welfare League Foundation started to provide family mediation and supervised visitation services for divorced couples in 2002. Eight children and youths from divorced families were invited this time to discuss rights related to them.

■ Parents do not have to avoid children when they proceed with divorce. They should let children understand the reasons for divorce to prevent children from thinking too much and blaming themselves for the divorce, which would be painful for the children. (15 years old, male, middle region; 16 years old, female, middle region; 16 years old, female, northern region; 17 years old, male, northern region)

■ Parents should not criticize the other party in front of the children. (16 years old, female, northern region).

■ If parents have disputes and conflicts over children's custody and maintenance costs, the children would feel painful. (15 years old, female, eastern region)

Suggestion: Parents should deal with the issue rationally and peacefully. They can communicate with each other by writing rather than talking. Talking can cause conflicts easily. On the contrary, writing can calm down emotion and retouch words, which can avoid conflict and enable rational negotiation (17 years old, male, northern region).

■ Continuous disputes and conflicts from parents who cannot divorce because of the limitations of traditional family or religion (e.g., Catholic doctrines are against divorce) affect children's life. Consequently, children suggested that such parents shall just divorce; otherwise the adults and children would continue to live in pain. Additionally, they also suggested that interference of relatives and friends should be avoided, because the conflicts would be escalated with the involvement of parents' relatives and friends. (14 years old, female, middle region; 17 years old, male, northern region; 15 years old, female, eastern region)

■ Children may have less sense of security and lack the love of one parent if parents are divorced. It might also be painful for the children if they do not see the parent who does not live with them. (17 years old, male, northern region).

■ Children may be teased by classmates if parents are divorced. (14 years old, female, middle region)

- I did not want to talk with my classmates after my parents were divorces. For a while, I felt I was ignored by the classmates. (15 years old, male, middle region).
- When my parents remarried after the divorce, I did not know how to interact with the spouses of my parents. (17 years old, male, northern region)

3.Children and Youths of High Risk Family & Child Abuse Prevention Service



“High risk family” is a family, which encounters unexpected changes but does not have a strong support system and enough resources to deal with the crisis. The Child Welfare League Foundation has started to provide services for such families since 2004. Eight children and youths from high risk families were invited this time to discuss rights related to them.

- Parents impose too many responsibilities to children and such responsibilities should not be borne by children. Further, parents do not play their role as caregivers. For example, the children have to work part-time because of their parents’ own problems. Part-time work and part-time study makes it hard for the children to do well on either work or study. However, the parents blame the children for not doing their duties. (17 years old, female, southern region)
- Parents vent their anger on children because of their own difficulties in life. (16 years old, female, eastern region)
- The Government can only divide resources based on specified conditions because resources are limited. The Government is willing to take care of people, but the resources are not enough. (17 years old, female, southern region)
- Improper discipline by parents causes stress and even physical and mental symptoms on children, such as depression. (16 years old, female, eastern region; 13 years old, female, northern region; 12 years old, male, northern region)
- Improper discipline by parents causes children’s crazy counterattack. (17 years old, female, southern region; 14 years old, male, southern region; 16 years old, female, eastern region)

4. Adopted Children and Youths

The Child Welfare League Foundation has started to handle child and youth adoption and provided protection to abandoned children since 1992. Eight adopted children and youths from were invited this time to discuss rights related to them.

Based on the survey conducted by the Child Welfare League Foundation, the issue bothering adopters the most was children's background. About 40% adopters worried about how to tell the children their ancestry. In addition, about one third of adopters worried that they cannot deal with children's reaction once the children know that they are adopted. (Survey from the southern region)

- Most children said that they only reveal their background to a few close friends. Because these friends were assessed and selected by themselves, majority of these friends kept the secret. Therefore, it did not affect their interpersonal relation or lives. (14 years old, female, northern region; 16 years old, female, northern region; 13 years old, male, southern region)
- Only one of the children revealed his background to his classmate once. The classmate and other classmates isolated him. Therefore, the child does not talk about his ancestry anymore. He does not have friends and only plays with himself since then. (12 years old, male, northern region)

The participants in this group all have known their ancestry. Parents' attitude towards adoption and background issues has become open. However, for these children, their background is still their privacy that should be properly dealt with. "Background disclosure" still needs to be advocated in Taiwan's adoption service.



IV. Recommendations of the Children

Regarding these issues concerned by the children and youths, they provided specific recommendations from their points of view. The recommendations are worthy of reference.

Recommendations for “adults’ violation of personal privacy”:

1. Offer parents parenting education courses to teach parents how to respect children. Paid leave and incentives can be provided to parents to encourage them to take the courses.
2. Adults can only check children's personal items when they have legitimate reasons.

Recommendations for “respect for children’s opinions” and “punishment”

1. Schools shall not make rules only for the convenience of discipline. They shall consider students’ situations and include students in discussion.
2. School rules shall be known to everybody and shall be implemented.
3. Punishment to students shall depend on wrong acts.

Recommendations for “campus safety issues”

1. Schools shall cooperate with police to strengthen patrol on campus and confirm whether there are any dead spots for public security.
2. In the case of conflicts between students, schools shall actively and carefully deal with the coordination between parents of both sides to avoid derived campus violence.

Recommendations for “free from discrimination and bullying on campus”

1. Strengthen counseling service to bullies and people who are bullied.
2. Improve support from classmates and senior students. For example, hold welcome activities to enhance interpersonal links. Besides, increase the communication and exchange of different grades to promote friendly and mutual assistance.
3. Talking about bullying is not helpful. There shall be further and more effective intervention. Forced intervention or hand-shake is not appropriate.
4. The implementation of “friendly campus” shall not be only a slogan.
5. The way that schools handle bullying incidents shall not be so militarized or just preach bullies.





A group of young girls in white traditional Chinese clothing are performing a dance in a park. They are holding long, thin sticks with white, fluffy pom-poms at the ends. The background shows trees and a fence.

Recommendations for “education and leisure”

- 1.** Exams shall not dominate school life; otherwise it is stressful for students and leaves too little time for the students to sleep.
- 2.** Delay the time of the first class. (Students can have enough sleep before going to school.)
- 3.** Recesses are too short. They shall be extended to 15 minutes each.
- 4.** The time of each class shall be cut down by 10 minutes.

Recommendations for “policies and social participation of children and youths”

- 1.** Policy development shall focus on children.
- 2.** Drop the voting age so that youths can participate in policies as soon as possible.
- 3.** Drop the age for driver’s license to 16 years old. Public transportation is not readily available in some regions.

V. Appendix

Appendix 1

Indicators	HBSC Mean (%)	Taiwan	
		Percentage (%)	ranking position (42 Countries)
Percentage of young people with scores above the middle of the life satisfaction scale.	87.5	82.6	aged 11 , 41 aged 13 , 35
Percentage of young people liking school a lot.	33.5	15.3	aged 11 , 43 aged 13 , 34
Percentage of young people eating evening meals with both or one parent every day.	59.5	47.1	aged 11 , 35 aged 13 , 30
Percentage of young people finding it easy and very easy to talk to their mother.	86.5	68.4	43
Percentage of young people finding it easy and very easy to talk to their father.	73.5	47.7	43
Percentage of young people finding their classmates kind and helpful.	69.5	91.4	1
Percentage of young people consuming soft drinks at least once a day.	16.5	67.9	43
Percentage of young people eating sweets every day or more that once a day.	23.5	69.6	43

Appendix 2

1. The Right to survival

- 1 Children in underprivileged families have an inadequate diet, due to finance reasons. For example, having rice-only diet.
- 2 Children are harmed due to there being too many bad people.
- 3 Some children committed suicide due to academic pressure.
- 4 Children die in accidents (drowning) from being around a dangerous coast or riverside.
- 5 Children die of building collapses during earthquakes, because of greedy builders constructing unsafe structures.
- 6 Polluted food (oil, plasticizer produced by greedy manufacturers) endangers children's health.
- 7 People coat drugs with candies or milk tea, and give (distribute) them to children, causing sickness.
- 8 Drivers of motorcycles, automobiles and buses making fast turns and driving too fast without safety in mind are making it difficult for children to react, resulting in accidents, causing harm to children. →Control the upper limits.
- 9 The air in the school is poor (the school is next to an industrial zone) due to severe air pollution (may be caused by industrial development, thermal power plant).
- 10 There are delinquents (students) in school, who threaten the safety of other students, such as, bumping into people on purpose, blocking access.
- 11 Parents neglect the car safety issues of child-safety seat/front seat/seat belt, resulting in child endangerment, or death.
- 12 Some merchants sell cigarettes to juveniles.
- 13 Family members or passers-by smoke and expose children to second-hand smoking.

- 14 Children have the right to participate in the policy or decision making on issues relating to medical care, health, or even life and death.
- 15 Children die in cases where parents include children in their suicide.
- 16 Poorly trained nannies cause child abuse, child injury or death.
- 17 Gang members recruit students outside of school, instruct children to do bad things (fighting, collecting protection fees), and endanger the safety of children.
- 18 Secondary/elementary school students illegally ride motorcycles, resulting in accidents.
- 19 Giving birth and then abandoning infants (infant abandonment) endangers the lives of infants.
- 20 Teenage girls, who have no contraceptive measures, have multiple abortions which affect physical health.
- 21 Children are left alone at home, resulting in accidents.

2. The right to protection

- 1 **Parents should protect children.**
 - When children are encountering difficulties or emergency situations, parents should protect children.
 - In the process of divorce, adults must: communicate rationally and peacefully. / have social workers involved. / have pre-marital education. / consider children's psychological age (psychological trauma, learning a similar approach to handle things, mental pressure, involve children or not, mental worries, on the verge of breaking down, subsequent living cares).
- 2 **Do not abuse children.**
 - Do not beat children.
 - Do not abuse children mentally/ scold children.
 - Processing methods when children ask for help/ Social worker intervention/ Parenting education
 - Reasonable discipline (communication, room for correction)
 - Forbid corporal punishment in school/ after-school class/ nursery.

- 3 Maintain children's health.**
- 4 Privacy protection.**
 - Do not enter children's room without consent.
 - Do not pry into children's personal items/ read private messages on cell phones/ read the computer browser history.
 - Do not overly engage in children's social media.
- 5 The government should assign a council for children when their rights and interests are infringed.**
- 6 Take bullying on campus seriously.**
 - Lack of teacher involvement/ only verbal warning
 - Shifting the responsibility onto parents/ children
 - Disposing and discussing the issue with the entire class
- 7 Protect children from the harm of mass media.**
 - Monitor inappropriate news contents.
 - Increase in-depth, international/positive reports.
 - Add child-protection mode to cell phone, computer.
 - TV ratings
- 8 Implement child-labor protection.**
 - Work hours, wages, insurance
 - Set up hotlines for reporting.
- 9 Protect children from the harm of discrimination.**
 - Physical/ mental disability, indigenous people, poor school performance, poor self-care ability, family background.....
 - Incorporate it into the curriculum of kindergarten/ lower grades of elementary school.

3. The right to development

- 1 Would like to have shorter class hours or have a later starting time, because there is not enough time to rest, and would not like to get off school too late.
- 2 Hope not being asked to give only standard answers. The content of current curriculum is too rigid in that only allows a one single answer. There should be more open questions for discussion that allow students express their opinions freely.
- 3 I am forced to go to a after-class school by my parents, and that leaves no time for me to do what I want.
- 4 The way the teachers scold students is too hurtful, by using improper words, for example, 'retarded'.
- 5 A teacher allows his/ her son to look at the smart phone when driving, in the presence of other students.
- 6 There should be more hours allowed for the existing weekly computer class, so that we can finish computer assignment at school, and the class should be more than just a Power-Point lecture.
- 7 Teachers or substitute teachers would replace classes of some subjects, such as, Music, Art class with academic subjects, such as, Chinese, English, Math, Social Study, Science, and never give back the classes of the original subjects.
- 8 The teacher uses the smart phone during class time, and then pretends to be working when the Principle or assessor passes by the classroom.
- 9 Recess time should be longer, and teachers should not delay or occupy recess time.
- 10 Would like to see more online instruction platforms, so that our learning isn't limited to only text books.
- 11 Morning meetings should only be convened when there are important announcements. There is no need for a fixed numbered of meetings each week, which just fall in a rut of meaningless preachings.

- 12 Would like to not have the same subject for two periods in a row, or have the same subject twice in a day.
- 13 The content of teaching is more theoretical than practical. Do not understand why we should be learning such contents.
- 14 There are too many subjects to learn, which compresses the time left for rest and leisure.
- 15 Leisure space and facilities for juveniles is lacking and/or outdated.
- 16 There is not an ample selection of school clubs, and resource allocation between the clubs is not equal.
- 17 Teachers read textbooks with a routine attitude, and the classes are done when the reading is over.
- 18 School clubs allow us to cultivate hobbies, and spice up our lives, but the school does not respect the opinions and requirements of the school clubs. For example, there are lengthy administrative procedures, which delay activities and agendas.
- 19 There should be more channels available for high school and university admissions, and higher quotas.
- 20 Teaching quality and/or teaching attitude is poor. There should be psychological testing included in teachers' qualification tests.
- 21 There should be equal distribution of resources among schools. For example, there are consistently insufficient lab equipment and musical instruments.
- 22 There should be a review of secondary and high school curriculum. School administrators might consider the competence-based class grouping from the overseas educational system.
- 23 In consideration of environmental protection and cherishing our forest resources, textbooks should be replaced by tablet computers.
- 24 Reconsider the possibility of grouping students according to academic performance, because each student has different needs, and should not be limited by the performance of their classmates.

4. The right to participation

- 1 The voting age for juveniles should be reduced to 15 or 16 (as their level of maturity has increased). Parents, schools and government should take action to enhance the maturity of juveniles and prevent their exploitation, and the scope of juvenile voting should be restricted. For example: restricted to local elections.
- 2 Juveniles should be able to participate in policy discussion or voting on juvenile related issues, such as curriculum adjustment, work-study regulations, compulsory education.
- 3 Under the premise of parental agreement, a leave should be granted by schools for students to participate in student civil protests.
- 4 Parents should make an effort to listen to children's opinions, and try various communication methods (exchange conditions) to achieve consensus with children on issues, such as school transfers, making boy/girlfriends.
- 5 Schools and parents should provide children with information relating to social issues or policies that students are concerned about, such as one fixed day off and one flexible rest day, amendment on same-sex marriage regulations, and colleges signing one-China commitment, so that children will have the opportunities to understand social events or national affairs and to express their opinions.
- 6 Elementary, secondary, and high schools should have feed-back mechanism for classroom teaching to create the opportunities for student-teacher communications.
- 7 There should be a media channel made available for students of secondary and high schools so that they can express their opinions on the regulations concerning student clothing, and permitting students to participate in the decision-making process.
- 8 The decision on continuing education (what subject to major in) should be determined by the children; while parents may provide their opinions for reference, these opinions should not be the dominion of the decision.
- 9 When reporting on social issues, the media should provide more comprehensive information for students, for example, the reports on student protests.

- 10 The government should provide comprehensive information for students to help them understand the full scope of social events, such as, student protests, and one fixed day off and one flexible rest day.
- 11 Not only adults but also students should be invited to community activities to participate in planning, for example, activities organized by the Neighborhood leader.
- 12 Actualize the title of student representative: allow student representatives to convey students' opinions.
- 13 Children's extracurricular activities, such as after-school tutoring and the arrangements for talent lessons, should be discussed to reach a consensus between parents and children, and not be decided on by a single party.
- 14 Before signing students up to partake in any event, the school authorities must ask about students' opinions, such as team relays and choir.



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