



Department
for Education



Children of the 2020s



WHAT IS CHILDREN OF THE 2020s?

Children of the 2020s is a national study of around 8,500 children born in England at the start of the 2020s. This is a unique generation of children and the study aims to understand how their early experiences affect their learning and development. We have surveyed families each year since the children were around 9 months old, and now it is time for the age 5 survey.



HOW IS THE CHILDREN OF THE 2020S STUDY MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Evidence from major studies like Children of the 2020s has been used to support government investment in:

- Free hours of early education and childcare for children aged 0 to 5 years
- Children's centres and Best Start Family Hubs, which bring together family services like free stay-and-plays, infant feeding help, health visiting, parenting advice, and early support for children's learning.
- The Best Start in Life website, with up-to-date guidance on child development from birth to starting school. See beststartinlife.gov.uk

Children of the 2020s is helping government to plan the services and support that families need. It shows researchers and policymakers how children are developing and learning today, what pressures families are under, and what can help them to thrive.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM CHILDREN OF THE 2020S SO FAR?

We have published 3 reports from Children of the 2020s so far. Here are a few of the key findings:

Young children were learning to speak at the same rate as before the pandemic

Children's spoken vocabulary at age 2, in 2023-24, was similar to 2-year-olds before the pandemic (in 2017-20). This is reassuring because it suggests being born just after the pandemic was not detrimental for children's language development.

Reading, chatting and playing together makes a big difference to children's development

Children could say more words when someone at home carried out simple activities with them on most days each week, such as looking at books, learning songs and nursery rhymes, counting together and playing games. Small things matter in children's early years!

Screen time should be limited for young children

Screens are part of life, but children who spent more than 2 hours per day watching screens at age 2 could say fewer words on average, and had higher rates of emotional and behavioural difficulties. These findings on screen time were used to help develop new guidance for parents on managing screen time for young children, available at beststartinlife.gov.uk/screen-time-under-5s/

FIND OUT MORE

These are just a few of the things we've learned. Find out more at:

Age 9 months report:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-of-the-2020s-first-survey-of-families-at-age-9-months

Age 18 months report:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/eating-habits-of-children-aged-16-to-18-months

Age 2 report:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-of-the-2020s-second-survey-of-families-at-age-2

THE AGE 5 PILOT SURVEY

Turning 5 is a big moment in children's lives, and they will have grown up and learnt so much since they first joined the study! We are excited to hear from the parents/guardians of all the 5-year-olds in the Children of the 2020s study to see how they are getting on now that they are old enough to start school.

Your participation will help us enormously as we prepare for the main survey when we visit a much larger group of Children of the 2020s families. As part of our preparations, we conduct what is called a pilot survey. A pilot allows us to carefully test the survey to make sure that the main survey will work smoothly. By taking part in the pilot, you are helping us make the study as good as it can be.

Findings from the study will help the Department for Education understand the needs of young children in England today and improve services for families like yours, particularly in children's early years. Don't miss out on the chance to help shape future policies! Your participation can really make a difference.

WHAT DOES TAKING PART INVOLVE?

An Ipsos interviewer will arrange to visit you and your 5-year-old(s) at your home so that you can take part in some research activities. These will involve a questionnaire for the parent/guardian about the child(ren)'s development and family life and some games and puzzles for your 5-year-old(s). The children's games and puzzles measure children's development and are a very important part of this visit. They include activities with picture cards, and some games on the interviewer's tablet.

The visit will take around 45 minutes, and one parent/guardian will need to be present. As a thank you for taking part, we will give you an e-voucher that you can use at a range of retailers. Information on how to redeem your voucher will be sent via email after the visit. Your child will also receive stickers, a certificate, and a small gift.



WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE VISIT?

STEP 1

Updating information
about your family



The interviewer will check/collect some information about your household and who lives with you now

STEP 2

Fun games and puzzles
for your 5-year-old(s)



These are for your child to do with help from our interviewer. During this time there will be some questions for you to answer using your smartphone or tablet too, about you, your child and family life. More information about the games and puzzles can be found on the website: children2020s.ipsos.com/age-5-years-survey/

STEP 3

Parent/Guardian
questionnaire



Finally, the interviewer will ask you a few final questions.



We will also ask you if you are happy for us to invite your child's teacher to a survey. We won't be carrying out the Teacher Survey as part of the pilot but want to test this question with you.



AGE 5 PILOT SURVEY FAQS

How long will the visit take?

The visit will take approximately 45 minutes but could be more, or less, depending on whether your child needs a break or you need to pause for other reasons.

Who needs to be present for the visit?

One parent/guardian, usually the one that spends the most time with your 5-year-old(s), must be present for the whole visit. The 5-year-old needs to be present for the games and puzzles. These are easy to do, and most children enjoy them. It would be helpful if another adult was available to look after them during the other parts of the visit but don't worry if that's not possible.

Can you tell me more about the Ipsos interviewer coming to my home?

The Ipsos interviewer visiting you will have lots of experience working on studies involving children of all ages and will have gone through extensive training for this study. They will wear an Ipsos identification card. The Ipsos interviewer will never be alone with your child(ren) including whilst your child is taking part in the games and puzzles. You, or another responsible adult caring for your 5-year-old(s), must be present at all times during the interviewer's visit.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from any part of the visit, or the whole thing, at any time, without having to give a reason. To withdraw from the study as a whole please let us know using the contact information on page 12.

If you withdraw from the study any data already collected will continue to be used unless you explicitly request that we delete it. If you wish to have your anonymised survey data (your answers to the survey questions) deleted and not deposited, please make this request within one month of taking part in the survey, after which the data will be processed and it may not be possible to delete your anonymised survey data.



YOUR PRIVACY

The information you give us will be held securely and will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation. This information will be used solely to inform the design of the main survey. You will not become part of the main study. Any information you provide during this research will NOT be used for marketing, nor will we sell or pass on your information to any third party.

Please see the Privacy Notice for further information about how your data will be used, how long it will be held, and your rights under data protection laws: children2020s.ipsos.com/key-resources/#PilotStudy_Privacy

WHO HAS APPROVED THIS RESEARCH?

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of University College London; an independent group of people to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing, and dignity.

If you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee by emailing: ethics@ucl.ac.uk or writing to: **Office of the Vice-Provost (Research), University College London, 2 Taviton Street, London, WC1H 0BT.**



CONTACT US

If you would like more information about the study, or the Age 5 pilot survey, please contact the study team at Ipsos using the details below:



0800 056 8184

(calls from landlines are free but costs from mobile phones may vary, please check with your provider)



children2020s@ipsos.com

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CHILDREN OF THE 2020s

For further information about the study please visit the study website: children2020s.ipsos.com

YOUR INTERVIEWER'S NAME IS:

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INTERVIEWER CONTACT NUMBER

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