21ST CENTURY CHILDREN
The nature of modern childhood

KEY QUESTIONS

• What is the nature of childhood in the 21st century?
• How can schools and teachers work together with families and communities to help children thrive?
• How can we do this while still allowing children to be children, and learn by taking risks and making mistakes?

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic was a forceful reminder that schools are not just places of academic learning. They are part of the social fabric of our communities, with schools and teachers increasingly expected to support the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of children.

Balancing these new expectations and roles for education in the digital world is a complex challenge. There is an urgent need to better understand the nature of modern childhood and the skills, capacity and resources required for education to support children to thrive in all areas of their lives.

OBJECTIVES

Synthesise multi-disciplinary research, flag knowledge gaps; identify implications for education

Work with countries to share experiences and common challenges; identify examples of good practice

Highlight strategic priorities and propose a pending agenda for policy, practice and research
MAIN THEMES

- Physical health
- Emotional well-being
- Digital technologies
- Family and peers
- Social/Emotional skills
- Stress and pressure
- Mental health
- Happiness
- Changing values
- Diverse families
- Ageing parents
- Role of peers
- Digital divides
- Information as power
- Social networks
- Cyber risks
- Play and physical activity
- Eating habits, obesity
- Risky behaviours
- Sleep
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Policy questionnaire with responses from 26 different education systems
- Main reports and research papers
- Expert meetings with leading experts to identify key research priorities and gaps
- Short briefs
- Desk-based research
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KEY PUBLICATIONS

- Education in the Digital Age: Healthy and Happy Children (Main report)
- Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-Being in the Digital Age (Main report)
- Why parenting matters for children in the 21st century (Research Paper)
- Impacts of technology use on children: exploring literature on the brain, cognition and well-being (Research Paper)
- New technologies and 21st Century Children (Research Paper)
- Physical health and well-being in children and youth (Research Paper)
- Emotional well-being of children and adolescents (Research paper)