

A study of working children in 1990 . . .

The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire records a wide range of behaviours, including *Do you do a regular paid job during term time?* Together with additional questions about the type of work done, the hours worked, the time of day spent working, and the pay, they give a good deal of information about working children on a nationwide basis.

We thought it would be interesting to investigate the differences between working and non-working children as evidenced by their responses to other questions in the questionnaire. Are there particular characteristics that distinguish them? Is there evidence that having a

paid job is an overall benefit or handicap to a youngster? It would be optimistic to expect clear answers, but these were the thoughts which prompted the investigation.

Although we have data banks on almost 200,000 young people extending back over a decade, the figures presented here are for some 19,000 pupils in secondary schools who answered the questionnaire in 1990.

How many 'workers'?

First of all, what percentage of these young people do have a regular paid job during term time (Table 1). Even among the 11-12 year olds, about a quarter are working, and well over a half are in work by the time they are 15. The percentage of working girls is slightly lower than that of boys of the same age until the last year of compulsory schooling, when it jumps up to match or even overtake the boys.

Year	BOYS		GIRLS		Sample size
	Work	Don't work	Work	Don't work	
7	28.6	71.4	22.7	77.3	1224
8	42.5	57.5	29.7	70.3	6383
9	54.2	45.8	43.7	56.3	2884
10	60.5	39.5	56.7	43.3	7770
11	60.3	39.7	71.1	28.9	680

Table 1. The sample of pupils analysed in this survey, showing the percentage that had a regular paid job during term time.

Year	Hours worked last week								
	<1	<2	<3	<4	<5	6-7	8-10	11-20	21+
BOYS									
7	27.1	23.3	16.5	11.3	3.0	10.5	3.0	5.3	0.0
8	18.0	19.2	14.4	9.6	7.9	14.8	8.6	6.0	1.5
9	10.0	15.1	12.1	13.0	8.5	19.7	11.6	8.8	1.2
10	7.1	12.6	11.6	11.3	8.3	16.7	16.2	13.1	3.0
11	6.1	6.7	7.8	10.1	6.7	15.1	23.5	20.1	3.9
GIRLS									
7	19.1	29.1	18.2	7.3	6.4	7.3	8.2	1.8	2.7
8	16.3	20.0	14.9	11.7	8.6	13.2	8.4	5.8	1.0
9	8.5	17.0	13.2	12.3	10.1	15.9	14.0	7.1	1.7
10	4.5	7.5	10.1	13.1	11.2	18.1	20.3	13.7	1.6
11	1.5	5.9	3.9	7.4	7.4	19.4	33.5	19.7	1.5

Table 2. The hours worked by the 'workers' during the previous week, shown as percentages of all those with regular paid work.

This effect is shown in our data for earlier years as well.

How long do they work?

The number of hours worked in a week (Table 2) shows the expected increase with age. Half of the working 11-12 year olds work for two hours or less, but at 15-16 the same percentage work for eight hours or more.

How much do they earn?

Since the weekly earnings are also reported, it is possible to calculate the average rate of pay for boys and girls of different ages (Table 3). Obviously the actual rates paid for particular

Year	Average hourly rate of pay	
	Boys	Girls
7	£2.47	£2.05
8	£2.46	£2.21
9	£2.16	£2.02
10	£1.96	£1.64
11	£1.67	£1.35

Table 3. These average rates were obtained by dividing last week's pay by the hours worked.

jobs could vary widely within each group, but the table contains the surprising discovery that the average hourly pay falls with increasing age! Is this something that teachers could investigate further with their pupils?

Less surprising is the fact that boys are paid more than girls.

Table 4 shows the amounts received by the workers during the previous week.

The year 10 pupils

After making these general observations on the whole group of young people in our 1990 data, the following notes refer to links between paid work and other behaviours for year 10 pupils only. This group is chosen because it is the largest in our data bank and also tends to be a particular target for health-related education in schools.

To present the data for all year groups would involve very complicated and space-consuming tables,

but interested readers may, of course, apply to us for further information.

Spending power

Workers have more money to spend — and they spend more, as shown in Table 5! But they seem to lose out on pocket money (Table 6). Or do they seek work because their pocket money is inadequate? This is more material for class discussion.

Self-esteem

It might be expected that earning money and having more to spend would enhance a young person's confidence. We have seen this given as a good reason for encouraging youngsters to find jobs, and certainly would have seen sense in it. Surprisingly, the results presented in Table 7 do not bear this out. The working and non-working boys show no statistically significant difference in self-esteem. For the girls, even more remarkably, the workers have statistically significantly lower self-esteem than the non-workers!

This does not mean that the basic premise is wrong. It could be that the ones seeking paid work would rate even lower on the self-esteem scale if they did not have their jobs. Many other factors must be taken into account — for example, pupils from the

Educating Children and Teenagers with Prader-Willi Syndrome

Saturday 22nd June 1991

A study day of talks and workshops for teachers, welfare and nursery assistants, special needs careers officers, and educational psychologists.

Venue: The Ridgeway School, Farnham, Surrey.

Details and application form from: Jackie Waters, Information Officer, Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (UK), 5 Wollaton Road, Chaddesden, Derby DE2 4HX.

Tel: (0332) 668790

Closing date for applications: 10 June '91

Year	Money earned last week							
	<50p	<£1	<£2	<£3	<£4	<£5	<£10	>£10
BOYS								
7	1.7	10.2	15.3	9.3	8.5	18.6	30.5	5.9
8	0.5	3.8	9.4	9.8	11.6	17.1	35.0	12.9
9	0.0	0.9	4.2	6.9	7.5	12.4	41.4	26.6
10	0.0	0.2	2.3	4.6	6.5	11.6	34.8	39.9
11	0.0	1.1	0.6	1.7	2.8	6.7	26.8	60.3
GIRLS								
7	5.2	11.3	17.5	18.6	7.2	14.4	18.6	7.2
8	1.4	3.7	13.9	14.6	11.5	21.0	22.8	11.1
9	0.0	0.9	7.0	8.7	9.0	20.7	35.0	18.5
10	0.0	0.5	2.7	5.4	4.8	15.6	32.6	38.3
11	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	5.4	21.1	68.6

Table 4. The percentage of 'workers' earning the amounts shown in the column headings for their previous week's paid work.

	Money spent last week								
	None	<50p	<£1	<£2	<£3	<£4	<£5	<£10	>£10
BOYS									
Work	12.9	1.7	3.0	9.3	7.8	6.1	12.4	22.9	23.9
Don't work	21.1	2.0	6.9	14.3	10.5	6.9	14.0	14.4	9.9
GIRLS									
Work	10.5	0.8	4.2	9.7	9.9	6.4	15.5	21.7	21.4
Don't work	16.1	2.8	8.3	14.7	13.3	7.2	14.4	15.0	8.3

Table 5. A comparison of the previous week's spending levels as reported by 'workers' and 'non-workers' in year 10. Figures in percentages.

	Weekly pocket money								
	None	<50p	<£1	<£2	<£3	<£4	<£5	<£10	>£10
BOYS									
Work	28.5	0.9	5.1	17.8	13.1	5.9	16.3	9.3	3.1
Don't work	11.2	0.4	4.0	14.7	15.6	6.8	19.9	20.3	7.0
GIRLS									
Work	29.3	0.5	4.7	16.3	12.2	5.8	17.1	10.7	3.3
Don't work	7.6	0.8	3.5	13.9	16.5	8.5	21.6	20.7	6.9

Table 6. A comparison of the previous week's pocket money as reported by 'workers' and 'non-workers' in year 10. Figures in percentages.

Table 7. The self-esteem index (out of 20) as derived for 'workers' and 'non-workers' in year 10.

	Self-esteem index			
	0-10	11-13	14-16	17-20
BOYS				
Work	16.6	19.5	31.1	32.8
Don't work	14.9	20.6	30.3	34.2
GIRLS				
Work	20.1	22.6	30.8	26.5
Don't work	17.1	21.7	34.7	26.6

Sun, Mirror and *Star* readership groups tend to score lower on the self-esteem scale, and a greater percentage of them work for money.

Social life

Tables 8 & 9 show that the workers have a more active 'social life' in the conventional sense of the word. They are more likely to have a close friend of the opposite sex and to go to discos and dances

'Legal' drugs

Workers are more likely to be smokers (Table 10). The difference is particularly marked amongst the girls, of whom 20.5% of workers currently smoke, compared with 13.7% of non-workers. They also drink more frequently and consume more units of alcohol (Tables 11 & 12).

Conclusion

The article by Chris Pond, which precedes this brief survey, rightly points to the abuse of the child labour system as revealed in the Low Pay Unit's Birmingham survey in terms of pay, hours, conditions, and possible hazards.

Yet the fact remains that if you take all the pupils in a typical comprehensive school, almost half of them will be doing some sort of paid work during term time. The evidence presented here suggests that in general they are not working because they have to, but because they welcome the extra cash.

It would be interesting to know the reactions of these young people to the possible effect on their jobs if the 1973 Employment of Children Act were implemented in full!

Contact John Balding, Schools Health Education Unit (0392) 264722.

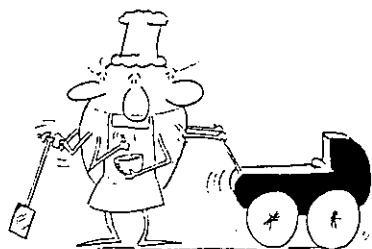


Table 8. Percentages of year 10 'workers' and 'non-workers' who have a regular boyfriend or girlfriend.

	Yes	No
BOYS		
Work	28.6	71.4
Don't work	21.4	78.6
GIRLS		
Work	38.1	61.9
Don't work	27.1	72.9

Table 9. Figures in percentages showing when the year 10 'workers' and 'non-workers' last went to a disco or dance.

	Within last week	Within last 2 weeks	Within last month	More than 1 month ago
BOYS				
Work	19.1	13.9	19.2	47.8
Don't work	15.2	9.3	17.3	58.2
GIRLS				
Work	28.4	16.1	22.7	32.8
Don't work	19.8	12.3	22.7	45.2

	Never	Once or twice	Given up	Like to stop	Won't stop
BOYS					
Work	42.1	25.5	16.2	10.9	5.3
Don't work	50.6	24.5	12.1	8.6	4.2
GIRLS					
Work	34.0	24.9	20.7	13.7	6.8
Don't work	49.5	19.9	16.9	9.6	4.1

Table 10. Percentages of 'workers' and 'non-workers' showing the smoking habits of pupils in year 10.

	Days last week on which alcohol was drunk				
	0	1	2	3	4+
BOYS					
Work	32.2	28.6	15.9	9.5	13.8
Don't work	43.3	25.3	12.5	8.2	10.7
GIRLS					
Work	39.1	28.7	14.4	7.9	9.9
Don't work	48.7	25.7	13.5	5.8	6.3

Table 11. A comparison for year 10 'workers' and 'non-workers' showing the number of days on which alcohol was drunk and by what percentage.

	Number of units of alcohol						
	0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11-20	21+
BOYS							
Work	31.5	7.7	10.2	17.8	17.2	11.3	4.3
Don't work	42.4	7.7	10.5	14.8	13.6	8.1	2.9
GIRLS							
Work	38.4	10.4	13.7	17.4	12.5	6.0	1.5
Don't work	48.4	12.5	9.5	14.1	10.6	3.6	1.4

Table 12. A comparison of the number of units of alcohol drunk by year 10 'workers' and 'non-workers'. Figures in percentages.