

4 Family and Home

Young people spend the majority of their time in and around the home. Relevant questions are scattered through the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire, but the ones included here relate particularly to the kind of home they live in and the things they do when at home.



Question

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Adults at home

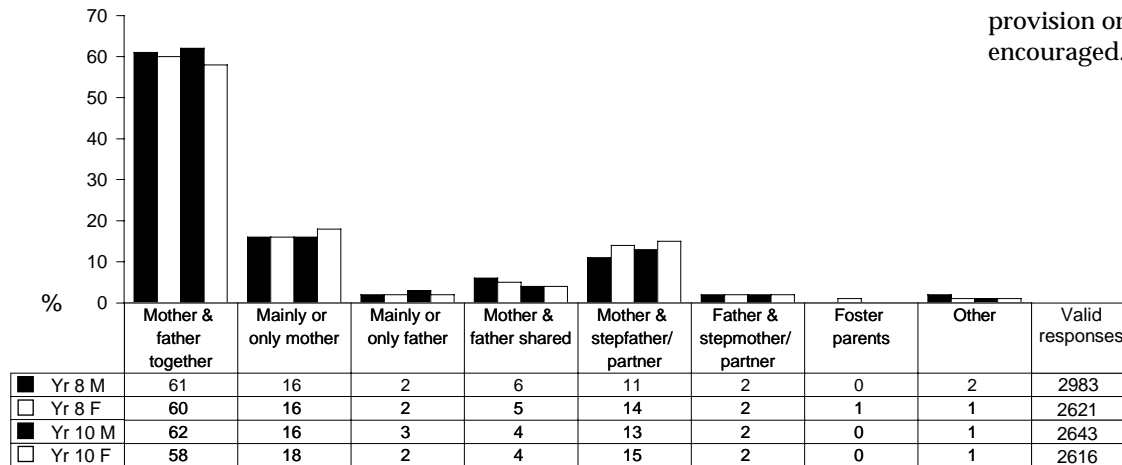
Up to 62% of pupils live with both parents

Which adults do you live with?

1. Up to 62% of the respondents live with *mother & father*.
2. If they live with just one parent their *mother* is more likely than their *father* to be present.

Comments

1. In the case of the *mainly or only mother* category, some of these young people may have been brought up by a single parent from the beginning, while others may be with a parent who has separated.
2. The *other* category could include grandparents or other relations, as well as children in care homes.
3. It is often observed that the children of single or divorced parents fare worse, for example being more prone to depression, perhaps because of the trauma of the previous relationship, the likely poorer economic circumstances and other related factors. On the other hand, they may be in a better situation emotionally than if their parents had stayed together.
4. It is quite easy to demonstrate differences in the levels of health-risky behaviour between children with different family backgrounds, but we sometimes wonder if this helps anybody. If it was likely to improve provision or sympathy for disadvantaged groups we would be more encouraged.



Home population

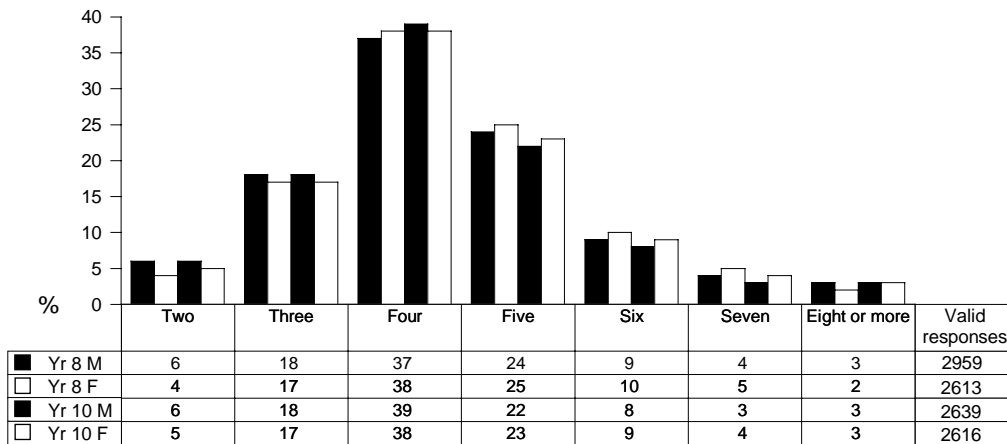
Around 38% live in homes with five or more people

How many people live in your home (including yourself)?

1. The most frequent value is 4, which is most likely to correspond to two adults and two children. Up to 63% report living in a home with at least 4 people. Up to 25% report living in a home with 5 people.

Comments

1. The community within the home may include friends and paying lodgers as well as family members.
2. Whilst larger family groups provide richer opportunities for interaction between young people and other individuals, the opportunity for seeking privacy is also important to youngsters. The bedroom question on page 40 can be used in conjunction with this question as an indicator of the amount of privacy available.



Younger and older siblings

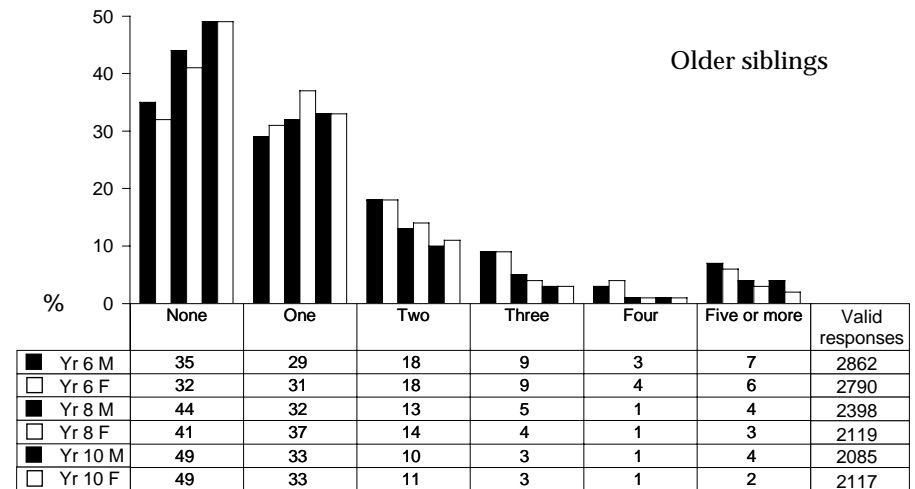
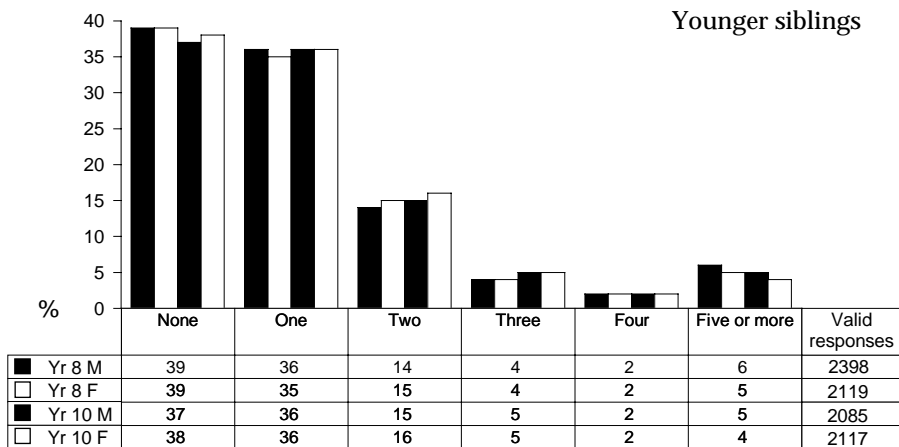
Around 60% have at least one younger sibling

How many brothers and sisters are younger/older than you?

1. Around 38% are the youngest, and up to 49% are the oldest. The ones who are neither youngest nor oldest (about 10%), must therefore be in a family of at least three, with at least one sibling older and one sibling younger than themselves.
2. Some individuals, who are 'only children', will appear in the 'none' columns on both charts.

Comments

1. The question specifies only those siblings living at home, and prompts for step-brothers and step-sisters if they are living at home. However, if the parents have separated and the children share time between them, the concept of 'home' may embrace more than one household.
2. We have been able to show that the frequency of tooth brushing declines with later children, as does the fear going to school because of bullying *Toothbrushing in Adolescence* (MacGregor et al., 1994) and *Bully Off* (Balding, 1996).



Family size

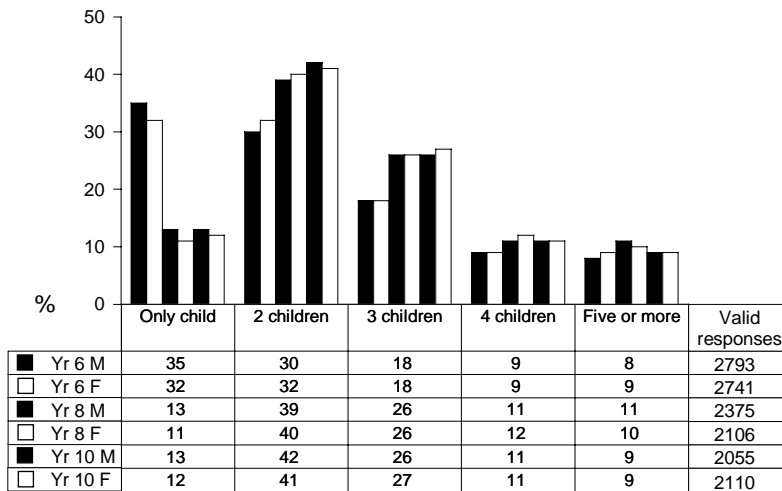
Up to 11% live in a family with *five or more* children at home

Total number of children in the family living at home

1. In this sample, most pupils live in a family that has two children.
2. All age/gender groups record similar statistics, as would be expected.

Comments

1. The secondary data refer explicitly to siblings living at home. This may be smaller than the total number of children, if some have moved away, but there could also be step-brothers and step-sisters from earlier marriages.
2. There is a slight inconsistency between this question in the primary and secondary questionnaires. The primary data include siblings that are not necessarily at home, hence the higher percentages recording large family numbers.
3. The mean family size, calculated from the secondary data, is 2.6 children. The widely-accepted figure of 2.4 may be consistent with this, as childless families are necessarily excluded.



Bedrooms

At least 55% of the sample live in a home with *three* bedrooms

How many bedrooms are there in your home?

- Up to 59% of these young people live in a three-bedroom home and up to 27% live in a four-bedroomed home.

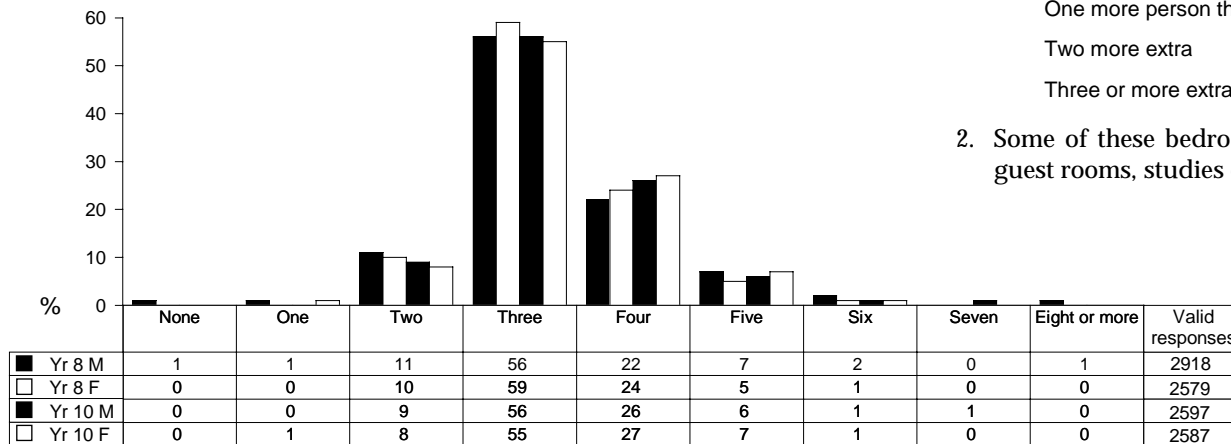
Comments

- These data, in conjunction with those describing the home population on page 37, can be used as an indicator of the amount of privacy available. The table below shows the difference between the number of people and bedrooms in the home, obtained from the whole sample combined.

People/bedroom density

Crowding?	Percentage
Three extra bedrooms or more	1%
Two extra bedrooms	1%
One extra bedroom	6%
Equal number of people and bedrooms	23%
One more person than number of bedrooms	37%
Two more extra	20%
Three or more extra	12%

- Some of these bedrooms may not be used for sleeping in: they may be guest rooms, studies or serve some other purpose.



Ethnic Group

A predominately white population is represented here

Ethnic group — which of the following most nearly describes you?

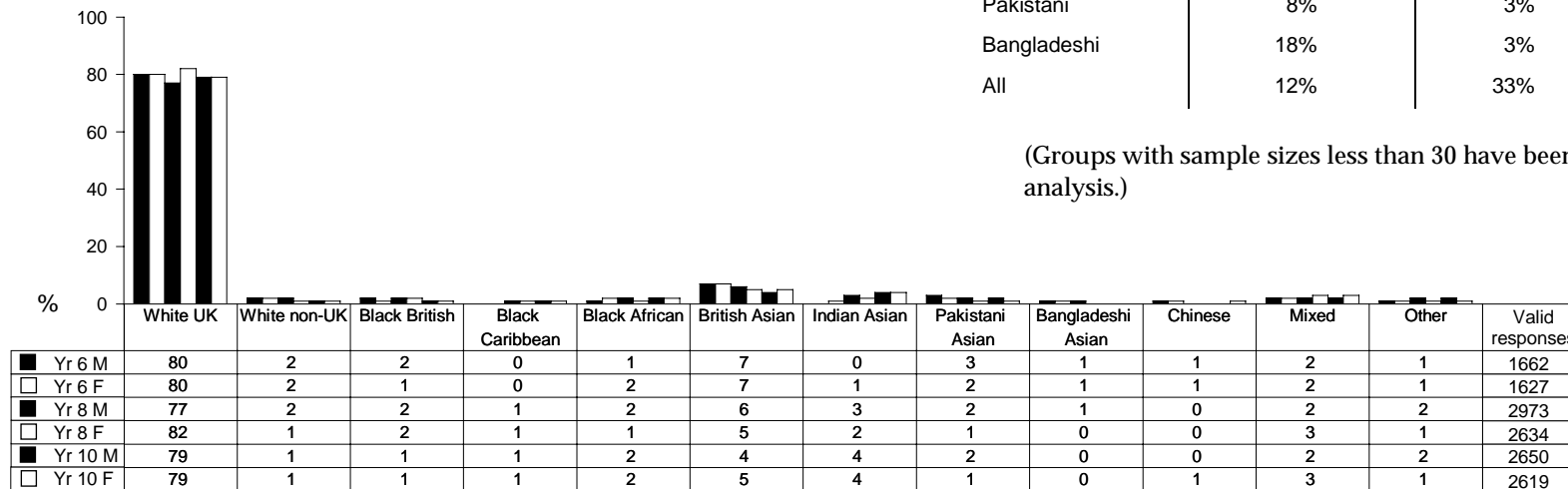
Comments

1. 80% of 10-11 year olds and around 79% of 12-15 year olds in this sample reported being White, that is, *UK or European*.

1. Some aspects of young people's lifestyles, such as diet and the use of legal and illegal drugs, are strongly influenced by cultural factors. For example, among Year 10 males, we see the following differences:

Ethnicity	Smoked in last week	Drank alcohol in the last week	Ever taken any illegal drugs
Black (either)	3%	10%	12%
White UK	15%	47%	25%
Indian	6%	9%	8%
Pakistani	8%	3%	12%
Bangladeshi	18%	3%	3%
All	12%	33%	20%

(Groups with sample sizes less than 30 have been excluded from this analysis.)



Journey to school

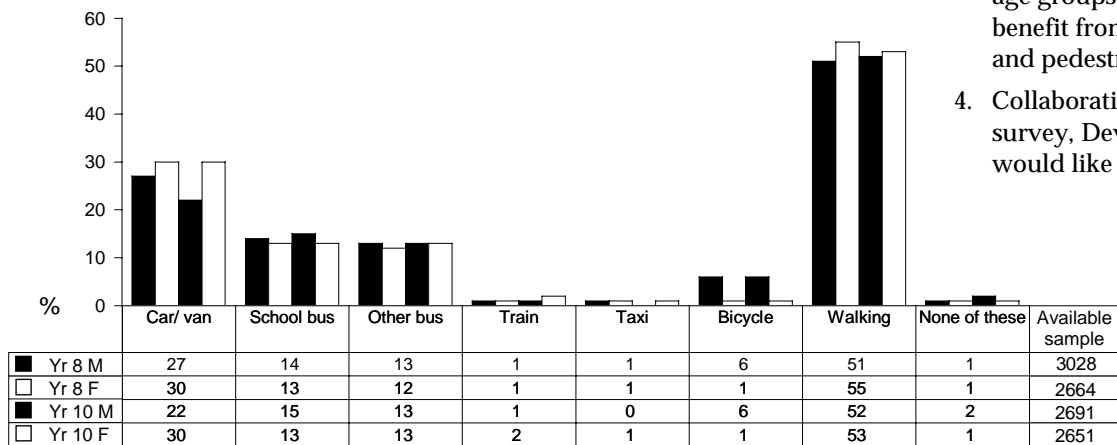
Up to 30% go to school by *car*

How did you travel to school today?

- Over 22%, with more females than males, go at least part of the way to school by *car*.
- About 14% go by *school bus*.
- Up to 55% of males and females *walk* at least some of the way to school.

Comments

- Respondents were able to select more than one of these options, for instance if they travel part of the way to school by car and then walk the remaining part of their journey they were able to circle both these answers, hence row totals may add up to more than 100%.
- The percentages of young people travelling to school by car represent a significant number of car journeys contributing to the congestion on our roads, the danger posed by traffic to pedestrians and cyclists and adding to pollution levels. Since 1999 we have seen similar percentages of pupils reporting car journeys to school. Some of these car journeys of course may occur where there are no suitable alternatives and indeed car-sharing arrangements may be operating.
- It is comforting to note that at least half of males and females within these age groups still walk some of the way to school. These youngsters will benefit from this daily exercise as well as developing their independence and pedestrian skills.
- Collaborative research by SHEU in Devon (P. Gimber: 'Travelwise' survey, Devon County Council, 2000) suggests that more young people would like to cycle to school than do so. (See also *safety helmets* page 20.)



Car ownership

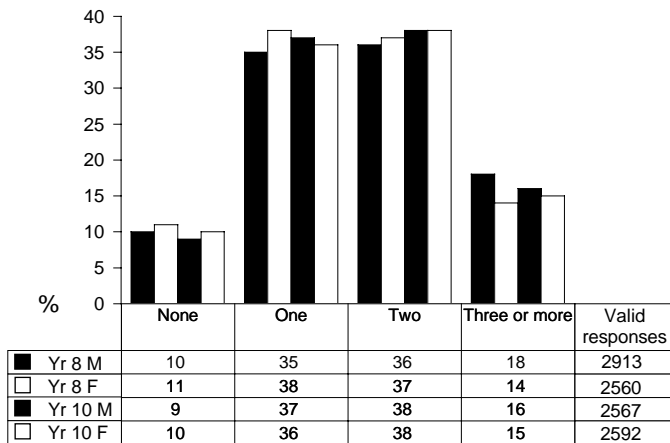
Over 51% of families have *two or more cars*

How many cars/vans does your family own?

1. At least 89% of households in this sample own at least one car.
2. Over 51% of families have *two or more cars*.

Comments

1. The concept of 'family' may vary depending on young people's circumstances.
2. Ownership of a second car may encourage the 'school run'. These figures reveal that up to 18% of the families within this sample owned three or more cars.
3. Car ownership is another indication of family affluence and social background, although should not be interpreted glibly: some rural areas may be relatively deprived, but have high rates of car ownership, necessitated by the poor public transport available.



Television watching

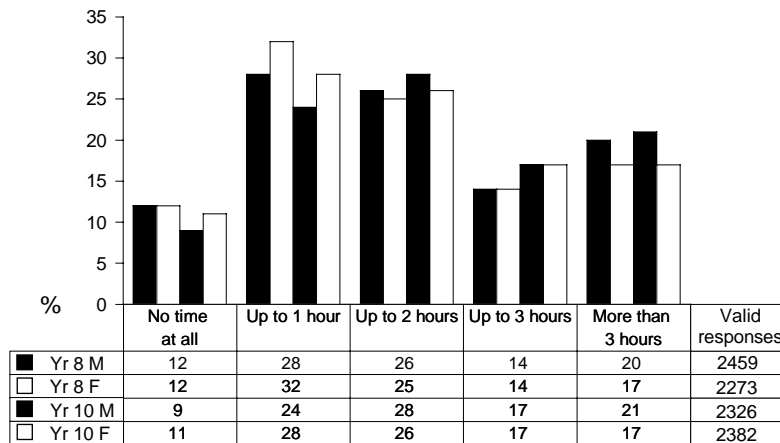
At least 88% watched some TV during the evening prior to the survey

How long did you spend watching live or recorded TV programmes after school yesterday?

Comments

1. At least 17% watched for *more than 3 hours*, whilst 12% or fewer did not watch any at all.
2. 'Normal' gender differences are not apparent in this sample, with similar levels of males and females watching different amounts of TV.
3. At least 88% watched some TV during the evening prior to the survey.

1. Many people believe that television-watching is an incompatible activity with doing homework, although some pupils say they can do both at the same time. With computer games and the Internet as added possible distractions, perhaps young people today need to be more disciplined about their homework habits than ever before.
2. Time spent watching television, playing computer games and using the Internet will also prevent young people from taking part in any physical activity during these hours, thus encouraging a sedentary lifestyle.



Homework

Females spend more time

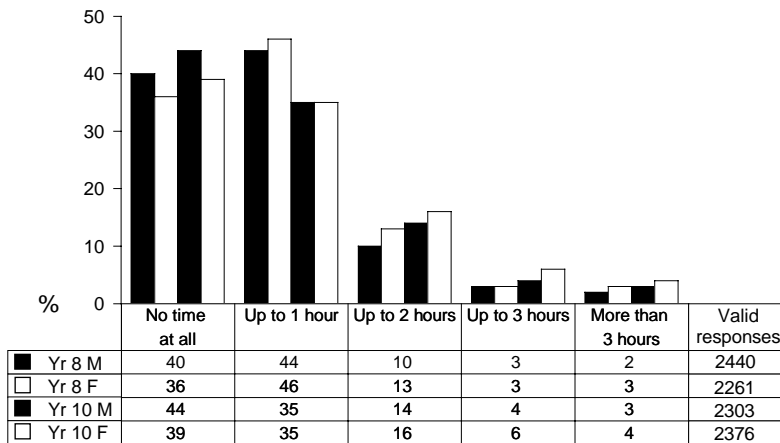
How long did you spend doing homework after school yesterday?

1. In general, more females than males did homework, and they tended to spend longer at it.
2. Fewer of the older pupils did any homework at all.

Comments

1. The data refer to the evenings of Monday to Thursday only.
2. The slight increase in the percentages for *no time at all* with the older age group is perhaps the reverse of what may be expected.
3. The data appear to substantiate the view that females are more studious than males.
4. The average number of hours spent doing homework are calculated as follows:

Year 8 Males	0.9
Year 8 Females	1.0
Year 10 Males	0.9
Year 10 Females	1.1



Computer games

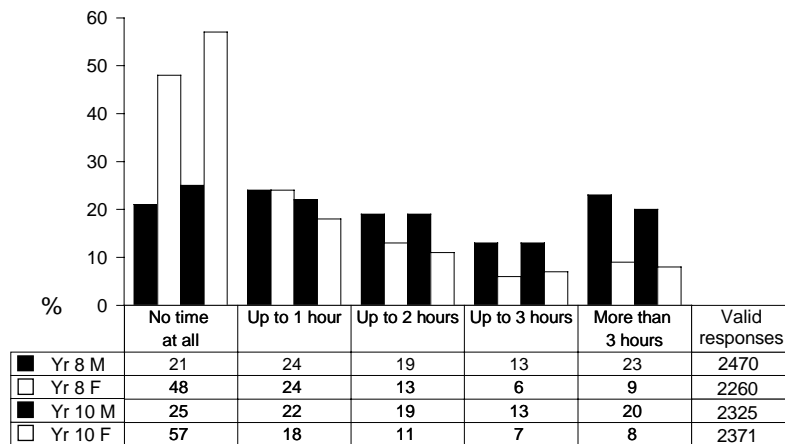
Up to 79% of males play computer games

How long did you spend playing computer games after school yesterday?

1. The much greater involvement of males than females is clear.
2. Up to 23% of males spent *more than 3 hours* on computer games.
3. Despite this male 'dominance', at least 43% of the females reported spending some time playing computer games after school, on the day prior to the survey.

Comments

1. The question lists Playstation, Gameboy and P.C. (Personal Computer) as examples.
2. The data reveal that significant percentages of males in this sample spent a considerable amount of time playing computer games during the evening before the survey. While there are benefits to playing some computer games, (Griffiths, 2002, 2003), it is easy to suppose that their time might be better spent.



Internet use

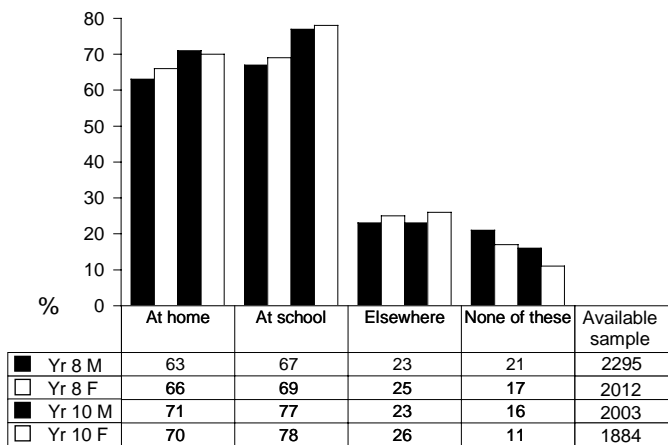
Up to 89% of Year 10 pupils access the Internet

Have you used the Internet in the last month?

1. Between 67%-77% of the pupils accessed the Internet at school.
2. At least 63% of the pupils used the Internet at home.
3. The percentages of males using the Internet are slightly higher than those for females.
4. The *none of these* figures reveal that more than 79% of pupils in this sample do use the Internet.

Comments

1. The difference between males and females is apparent, however, it is not as great as the difference for playing computer games (see page 46). There may be marked differences in how members of each sex spend their time on the Internet.
2. Those pupils responding to the *none of these* category indicates that they have not used the Internet 'in the last month'. Since 2000, the *none of these* figures show a sharp decline across age and gender. For example, in 2000, 44% of Year 8 females had not used the Internet 'in the last month'. This figure declines to 17% for the same group in 2005. Thus Internet use appears to have increased over the four year period from more than 56% in 2000 to more than 79% in 2005.

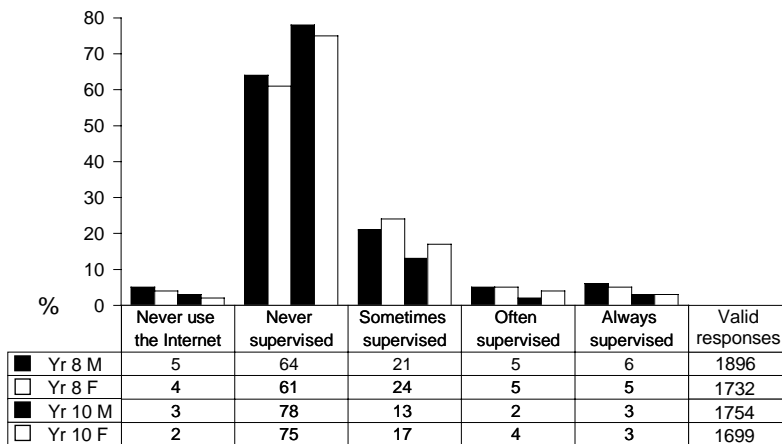


Internet browsing

78% of Year 10 males browse without adult supervision

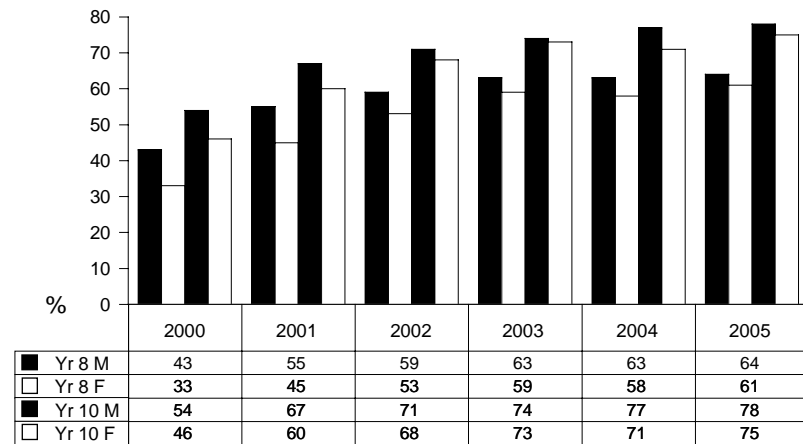
Are you able to 'browse' the Internet without adult supervision?

1. Around three-quarters of young people are able to browse the Internet at least sometimes without adult supervision.
2. Slightly higher percentages of males than females are always able to browse the Internet without adult supervision.



Comments

1. News items continue to appear regarding young people accessing Internet 'chatrooms' and the associated potential dangers and subsequent risks of meeting undesirable adults. This is a major concern for parents and schools alike.
2. There is guidance for 'safe surfing' for parents and young people in a number of different publications, some of which is summarised in Mark Griffiths' article in *Education and Health*, Vol.22 No. 2.
3. Since 2000, we have seen a sharp rise (see below) in the percentages of young people that report browsing the Internet without adult supervision:



After-school activities

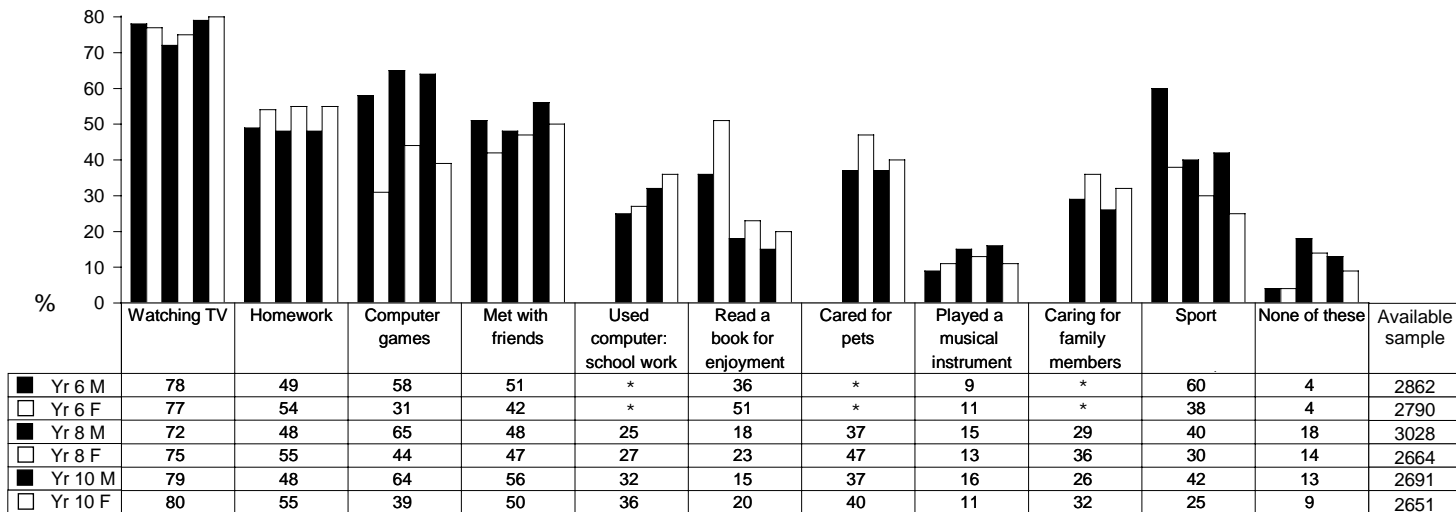
Watching television is the most popular activity

Activities after school on the previous evening

1. More popular with males (5+% difference). All years: *Playing computer games, playing sport.*
2. More popular with females (5+% difference). All years: *Reading a book.* Year 8: *Caring for pets.*
3. Age differences (5+% difference). Both genders: *reading books, computer games, sport.* Females only: *caring for pets.*

Comments

1. The fall in the percentage of 'readers' between Years 6, 8 and 10 implies a decline in the importance of books in the lives of children as they grow older.
2. The partial declining participation of females in sport seen for this question is mirrored in the later section on sport (page 91-93).
3. The use of computers, for a purpose other than playing games, is not markedly different between males and females but, clear differences are seen in relation to use of a computer for games.



* Year 6 pupils were not asked about these activities

National newspapers

Up to 40% take *The Sun*

Which of the following newspapers are taken in your home on most days?

1. The order of popularity, based on this table, is: *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *The Mirror*, and *Daily Star*.

Comments

1. For many years now we have classified these newspapers into *broadsheet*, *tabloid*, and *popular tabloid* groups, and used them as a broad socio-economic discriminator with which to match other behaviours. This has become more difficult as the tabloid format is more widely used.
2. The respondents often confuse local and national daily newspapers. Ambiguities can still occur despite the care we take to guide them through the questionnaire and also to obtain the names of the local newspapers found in a particular survey area.

