



Child and Youth Voices Survey

TERM 1, 2016 TOPICS:

- WHO DO YOU TURN TO WITH NEWS OR TO HELP YOU SOLVE BIG PROBLEMS?
- HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND TALKING TO YOUR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS, AND DO THEY LISTEN?
- HOW OLD IS OLD ENOUGH TO DO VARIOUS THINGS?



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**

Key findings from the Office of the Children's Commissioner: Child and Youth Voices survey

In term 1, 2016, two schools, a primary school and an intermediate school, participated in the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Child and Youth Voices Survey. The survey asked a range of questions about the important people in student's lives, as well as what age young people considered themselves old enough to do various activities, from travelling to school alone, to living independently.

A total of 370 students completed the online Child and Youth Voices survey. The students' responses have been collated and are provided in this report.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner would like to extend a very big "thank you" to the students and schools who participated in our first survey of 2016. Surveys like this one are a really important way for young people to share their thoughts and views.

What did students say and how will we use this information?

The students we surveyed told us how important family and friends are in their lives: they turn to them to share both happy and sad news, and they talk to them when they have a big problem they need help to fix. These students are happy with the amount of time they spend talking to their mum, dad or caregiver each day, and the majority felt their parents listened to what they had to say "always" or "most of the time".

The information we received helps us represent the views of children in our advocacy work. Some of the questions in this survey were specifically designed to inform our advice on current changes underway with Child, Youth and Family, including developing an advocacy services for children in care of the State and changing the age at which young people leave State care.



Some points we will raise based on this survey include:

- Highlighting how important it is for children and young people to maintain the ability to talk to their friends and siblings, if they are unable to talk to their parents. This could mean making an extra big effort to keep children and young people at the same school or local area.
- Emphasising just how variable the amount of time young people need to spend each day talking to parents or caregivers is. Besides their parents, most children and young people had a range of people they would ask to support them to solve a big problem. There is no "one size fits all" model when working with young people.
- Recommending that young people need to be older than the current age of 17 when they leave the care system. Over half the students (54%) believed that they would be 20 years or older, before they moved out from living with their parents or caregivers.



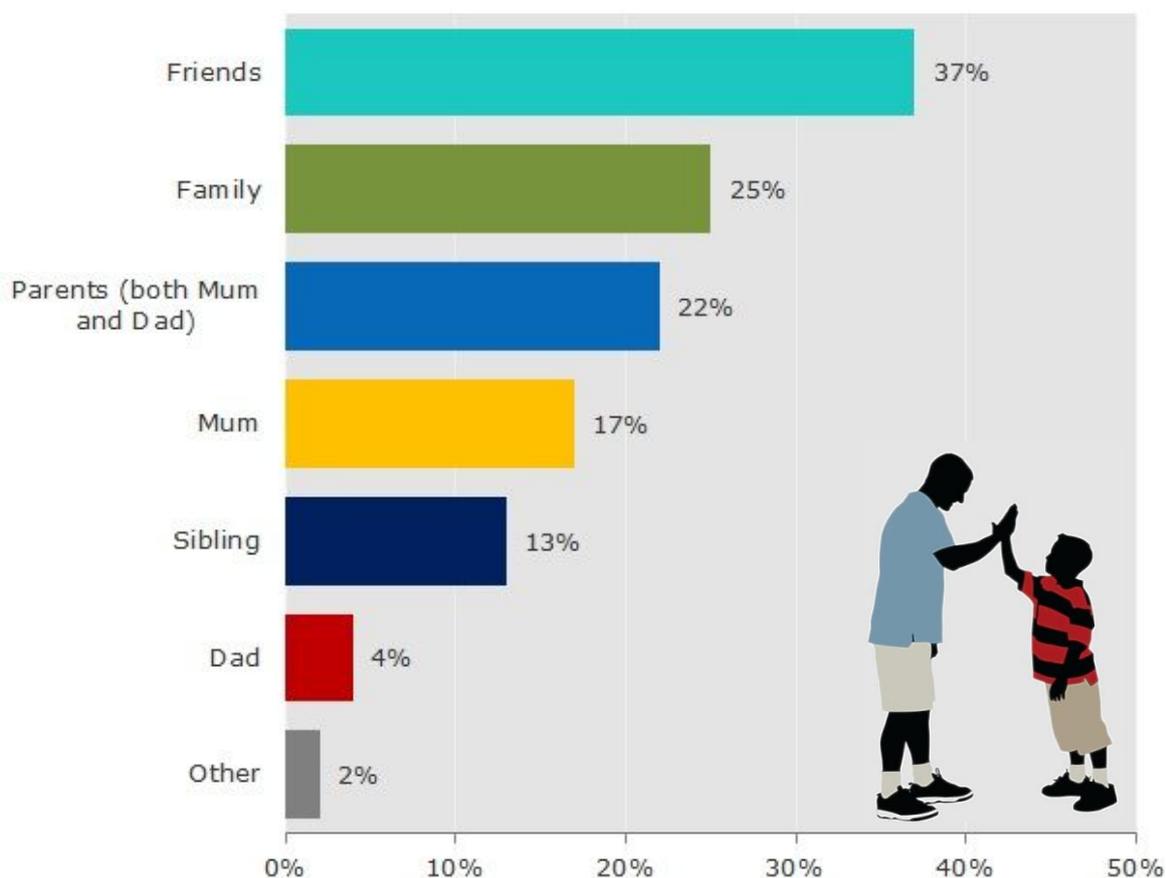
About the respondents

The 370 students who completed the survey were aged seven to 14 years, with the majority (67%) aged 11-12 years old. Just over half (51%) were female, 45% were male and 4% preferred not to say. When asked what ethnicity they were as, 46% identified as Pacific Island people, 40% identified as NZ Maori, 21% as NZ European, 16% as Asian, and 14% as 'other'.

Section 1: Talking to Others

We asked students who they talked to when they had happy news to share. Overall, respondents identified that they were most likely to tell their friends (37%). (Students could identify more than one person, so the graphs add up to more than 100%).

Think of a time that you had some happy news to share. Who did you share your news with? (combined results)



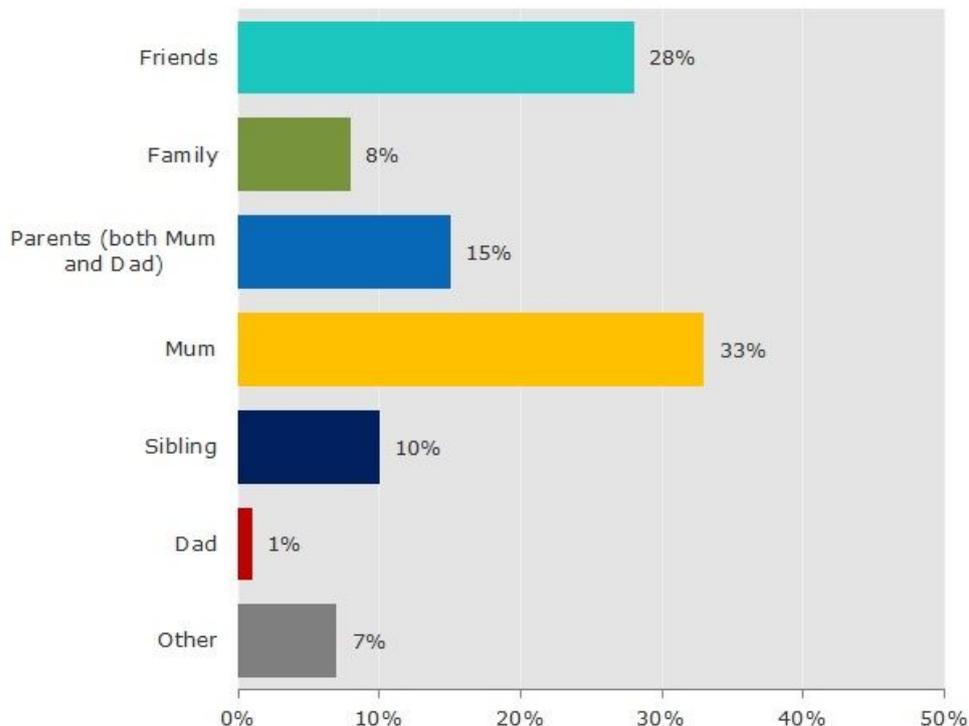
These graphs show how the children responded: adding 'Mum' and 'Dad' categories together with 'parents (both Mum and Dad)', the results change in some cases. For example, adding these responses together would have 41% of the students share happy news with either one or both of their parents.

There was a difference in the responses from the primary school age group to the intermediate school age group; at primary school level 28% of students reported their friends as being someone they would share the news with. This figure then increased to

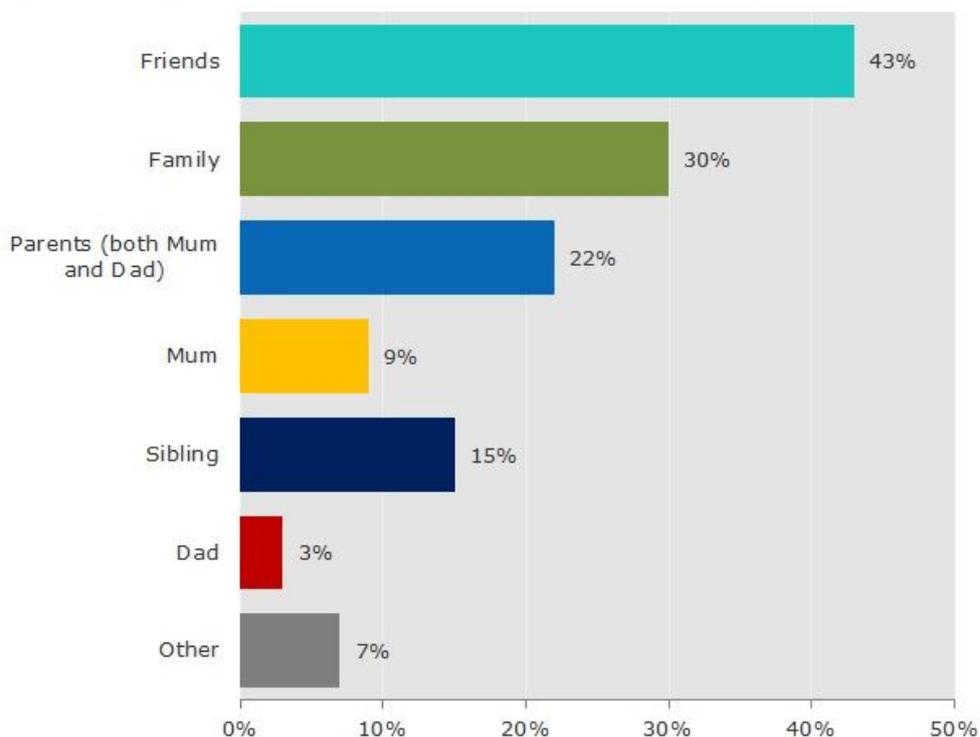
46% of the intermediate age group who reported that they would share happy news with their friends. Detailed graphs are shown below.

This is consistent with normal childhood development. It also demonstrates how important these connections and friendships are to children.

Think of a time that you had some happy news to share. Who did you share your news with? *Primary school aged students*

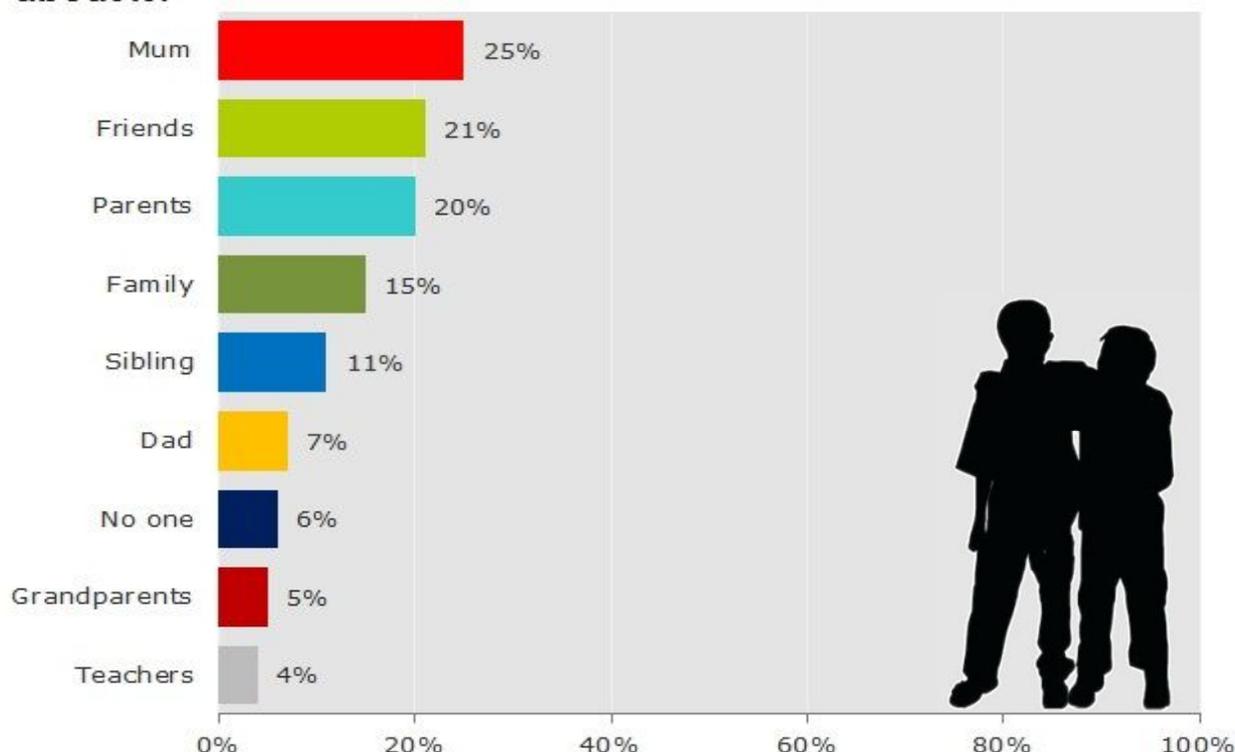


Think of a time that you had some happy news to share. Who did you share your news with? *Intermediate school aged students*



If the students were worried or sad, they were more likely to talk to their Mum, followed by friends or parents (where both Mum and Dad were identified).

Think of a time that you felt worried or sad. Who did you talk to about it?



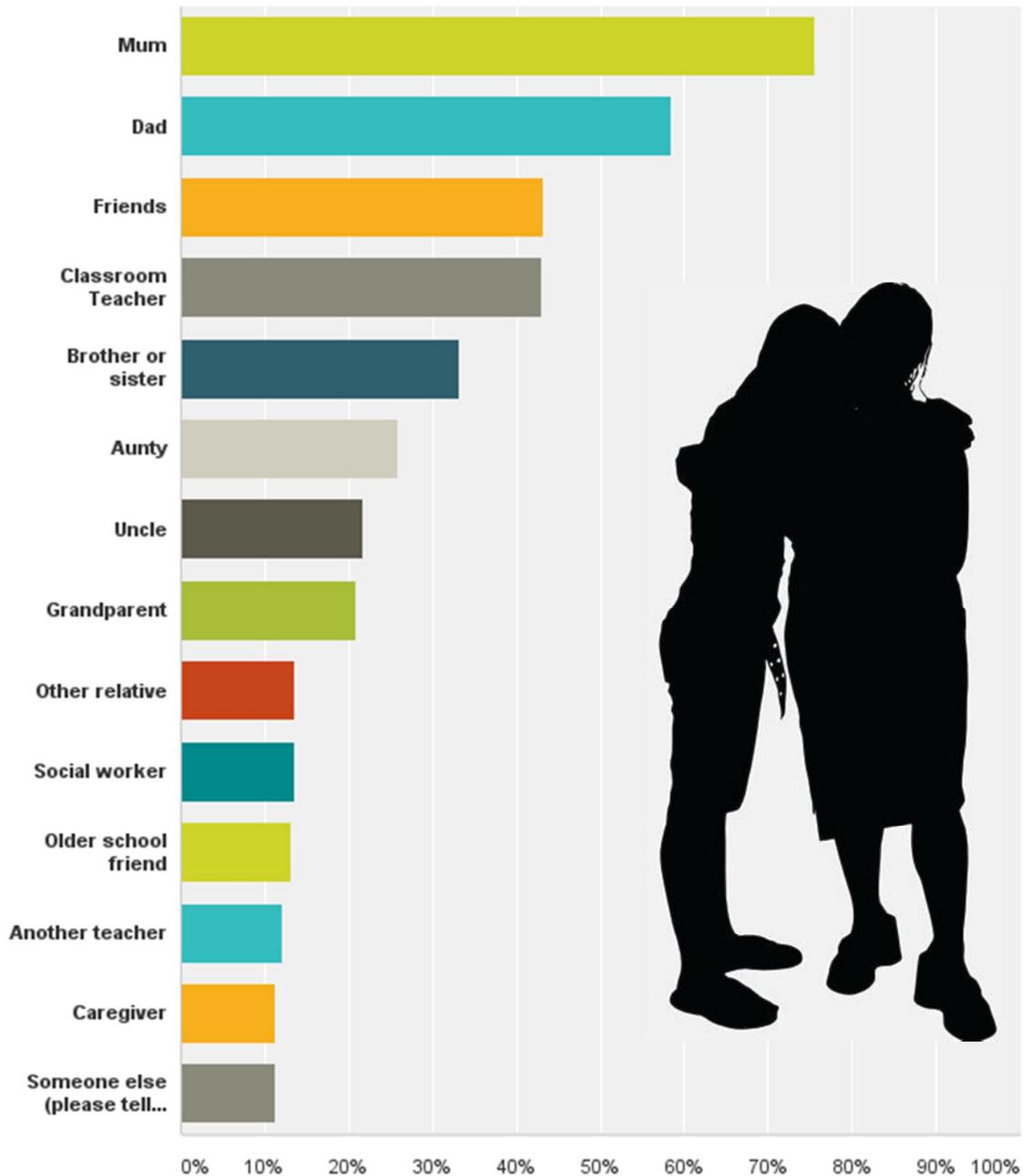
Students were then asked to imagine that they had a problem that was too big for them to solve on their own, and asked who they would go to for help. We asked this because we wanted to know who children and young people turn to when they need someone to advocate on their behalf. (Students could again identify more than one person, so the graphs add up to more than 100%).

The majority of students identified that they would seek help from their Mum (75% of respondents), or their Dad (58% of respondents). The next three most common responses were their friends (43%), classroom teacher (43%) and their siblings (33%).

The importance of these other connections highlight how important it is for children and young people to maintain the ability to talk to their friends and siblings, if they are unable to talk to their parents. It also shows that many children and young people have a range of other people in their lives that could help them with a big problem, and advocate for them to help fix it.

Q6 Imagine that you had a problem that was too big for you to solve on your own, for example if you weren't allowed to participate in a fun activity because of the colour of your skin. Who would you talk with to help you fix it? (Select any which apply).

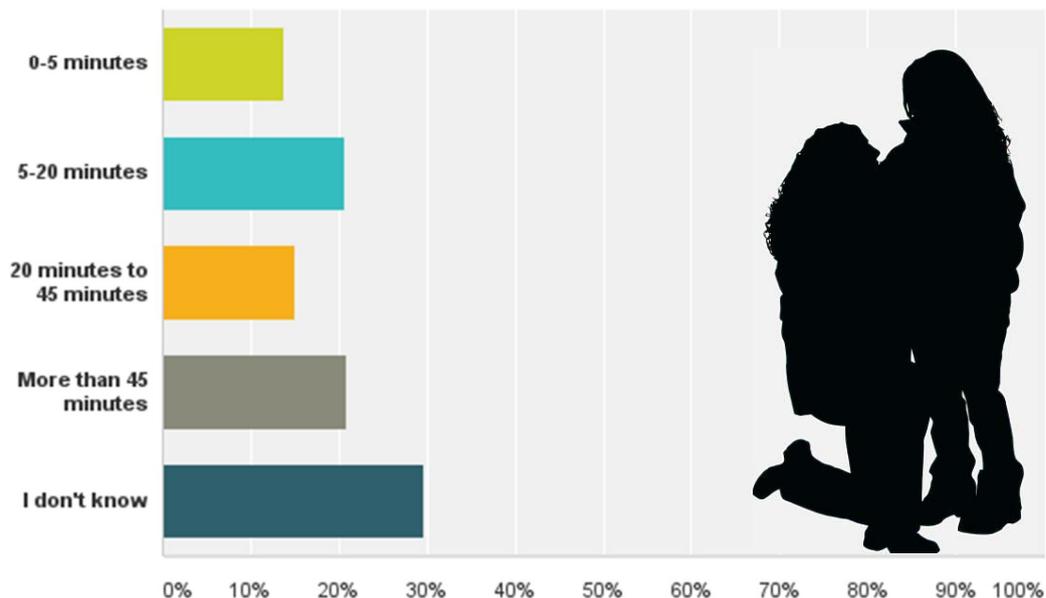
Answered: 349 Skipped: 21



We asked how long students spend talking with a parent or caregiver each day. The results were somewhat evenly spread across all the possible options. The results were comparable for the primary and intermediate age groups.

Q7 How long each day do you think you spend talking with your Mum, Dad or Caregiver?

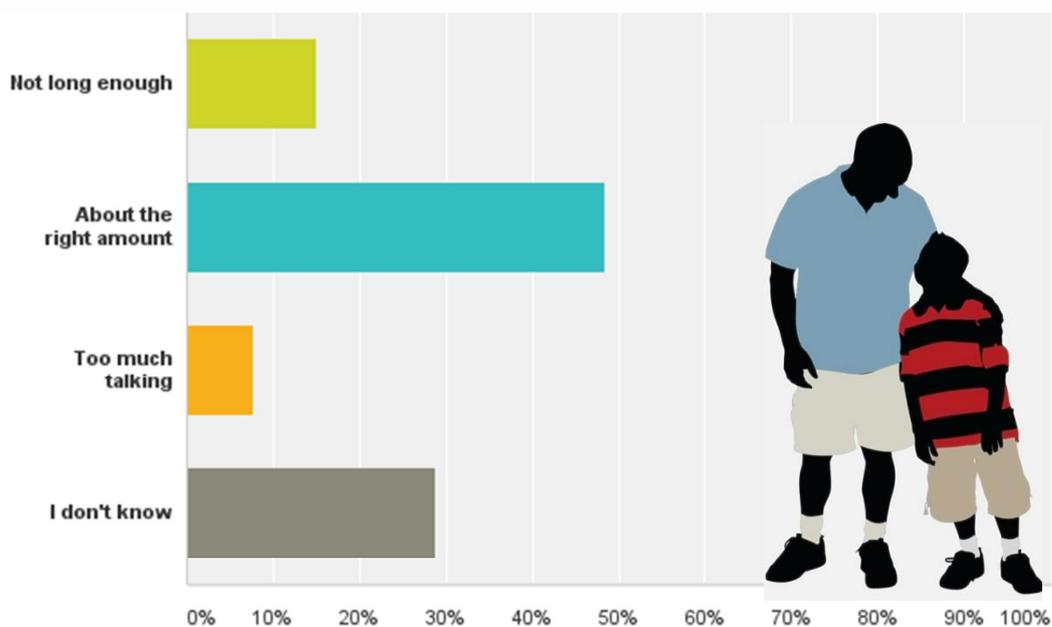
Answered: 348 Skipped: 22



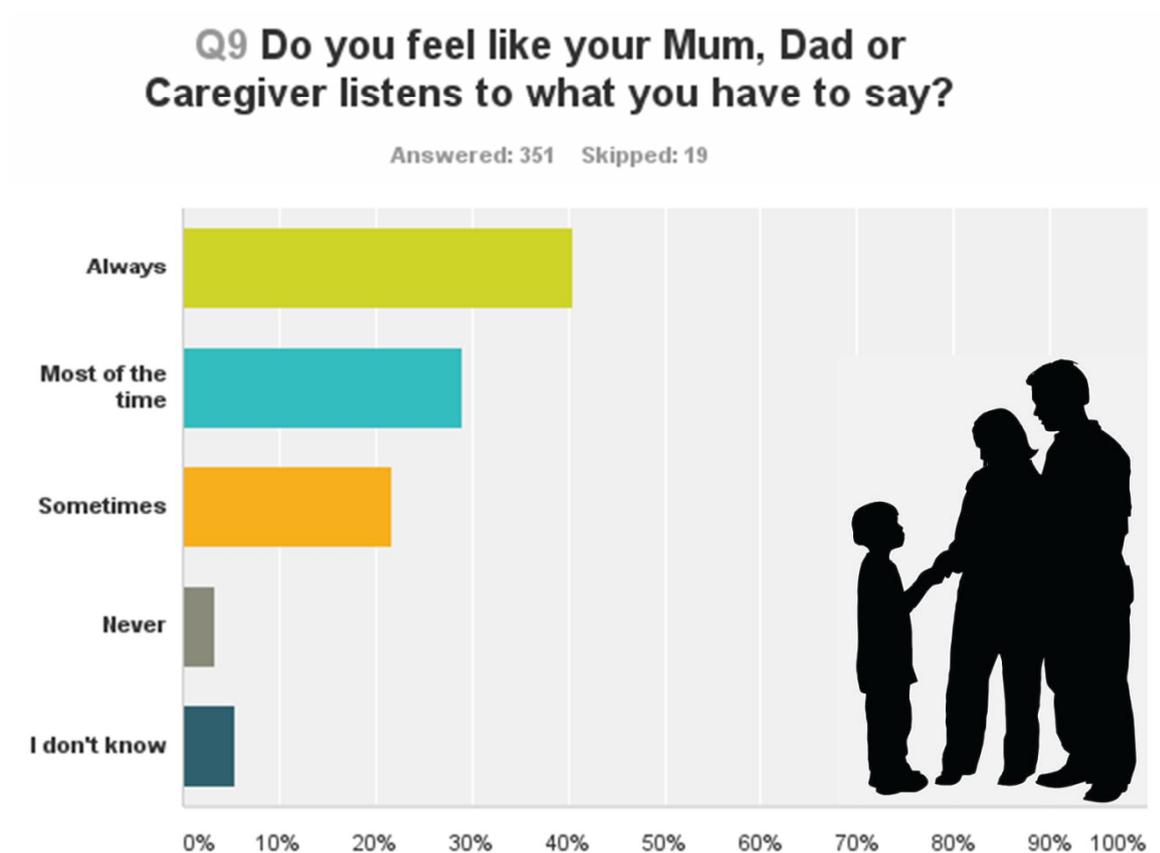
Despite the wide range of responses, almost half of all respondents felt that the amount of time they spent talking was “about the right amount”.

Q8 Do you think spending that amount of time talking is...

Answered: 347 Skipped: 23



We asked if respondents felt that parents or caregivers listened to what they had to say. Encouragingly, nearly 70% of respondents felt that they were listened to either “always” or “most of the time”.



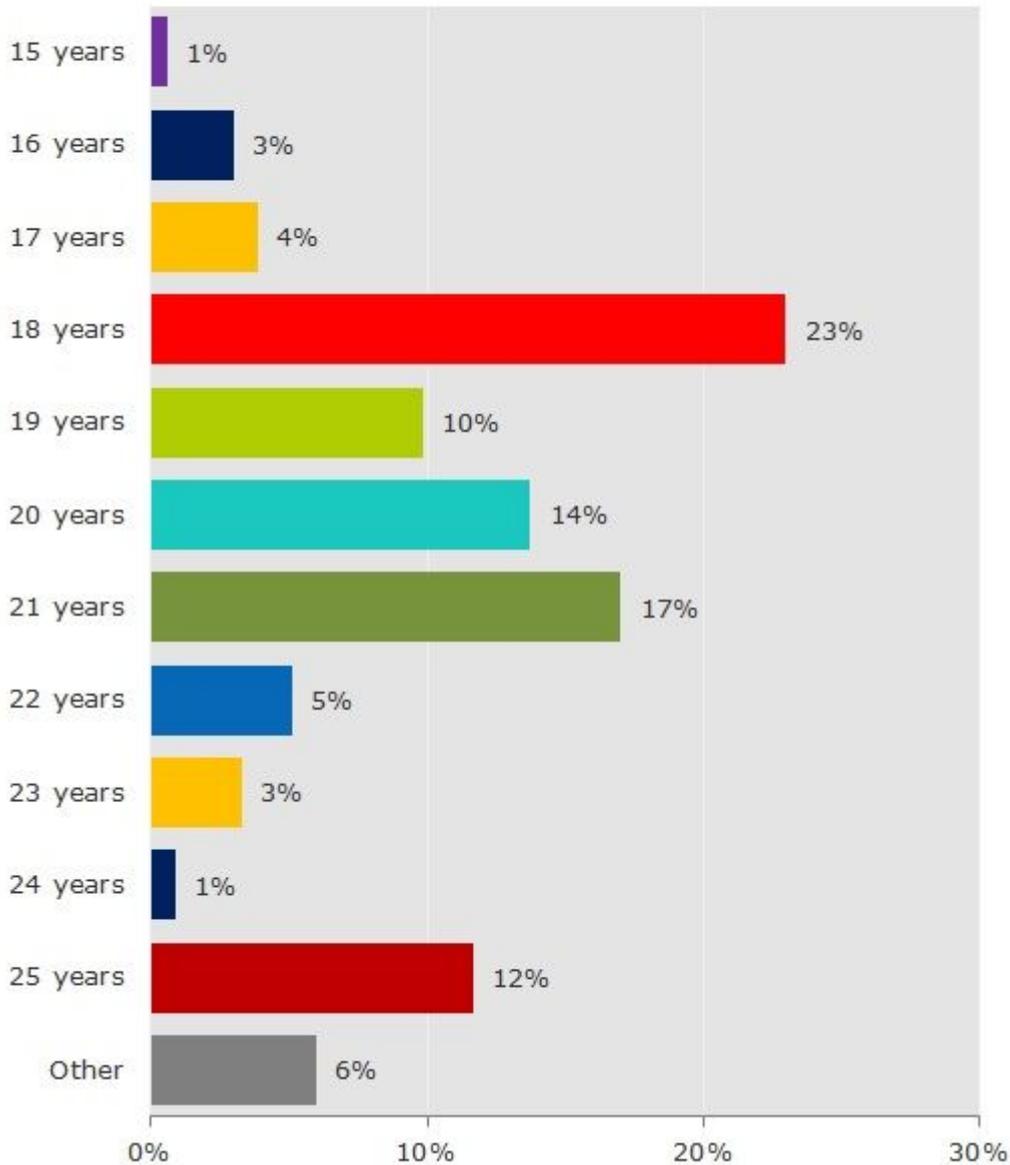
Section 2: How old is old enough to....

The second part of the survey asked students a range of questions about what age they thought that they would be old enough to stay home alone, travel to school unaccompanied, drive a car, vote or move out of home and live on their own.

We were most interested in what age these children thought they could live on their own, as this age will increase for young people in care of the State. These young people currently leave care at 17 years old.

The largest single response was “18 years”, with 23% of respondents identifying this as the age they would be living independently. Over half of students believed that they would be aged 20 years or older (54%) before they moved out of home and lived independently, with 14% saying they would be 25 or 30 years old. A small number of students said they didn't know, or gave other responses such as ‘when I get a job’ or ‘when I get married’.

At what age do you think you could move out of home and look after yourself?



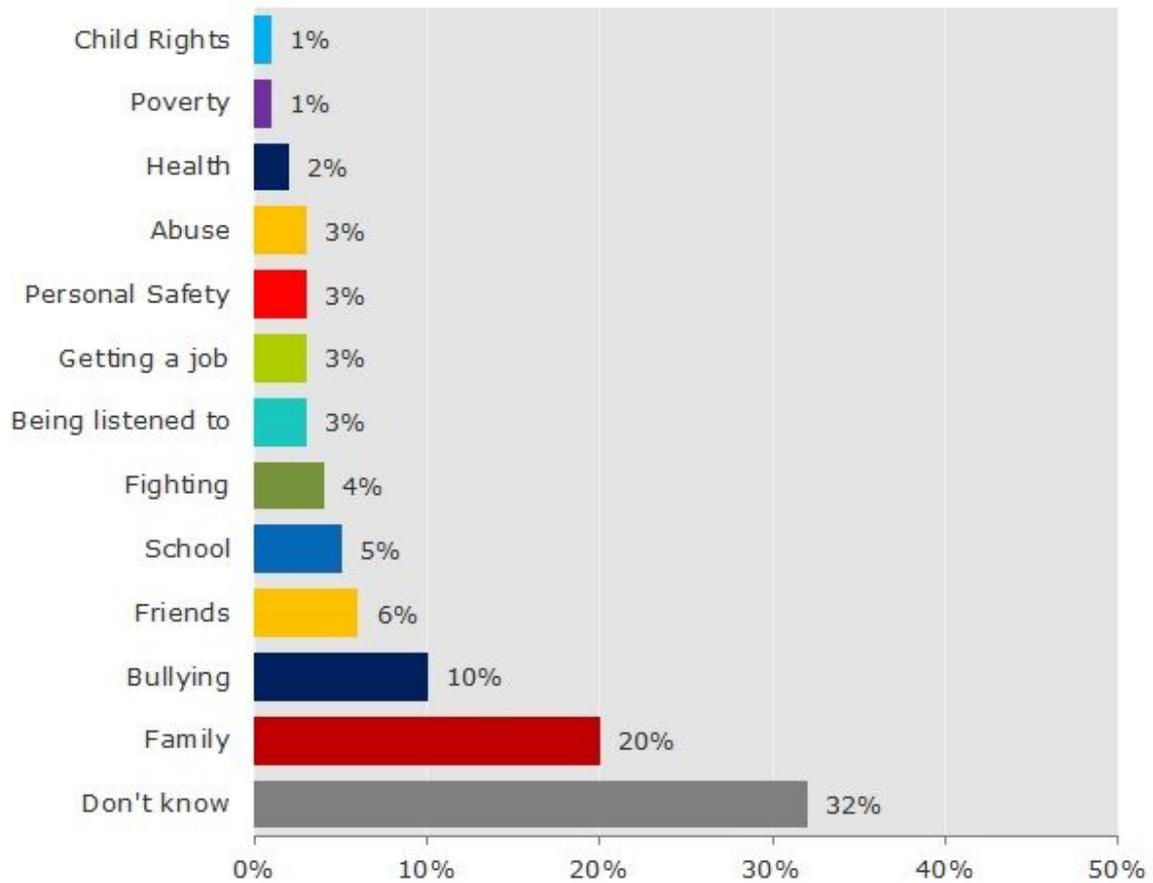
The graphs on other age-related questions can be found in Appendix One.



In Closing...

We asked students what other 'big issues' were going on in their lives. This question had the least responses in the survey; with close to half of the students opting not to answer the question. This suggests that we will need to review how we ask this sort of question in future. There was a range of responses, with family (possibly due to the survey topic), and bullying the most common themes in their responses after "don't know". The following graph shows the responses to this question.

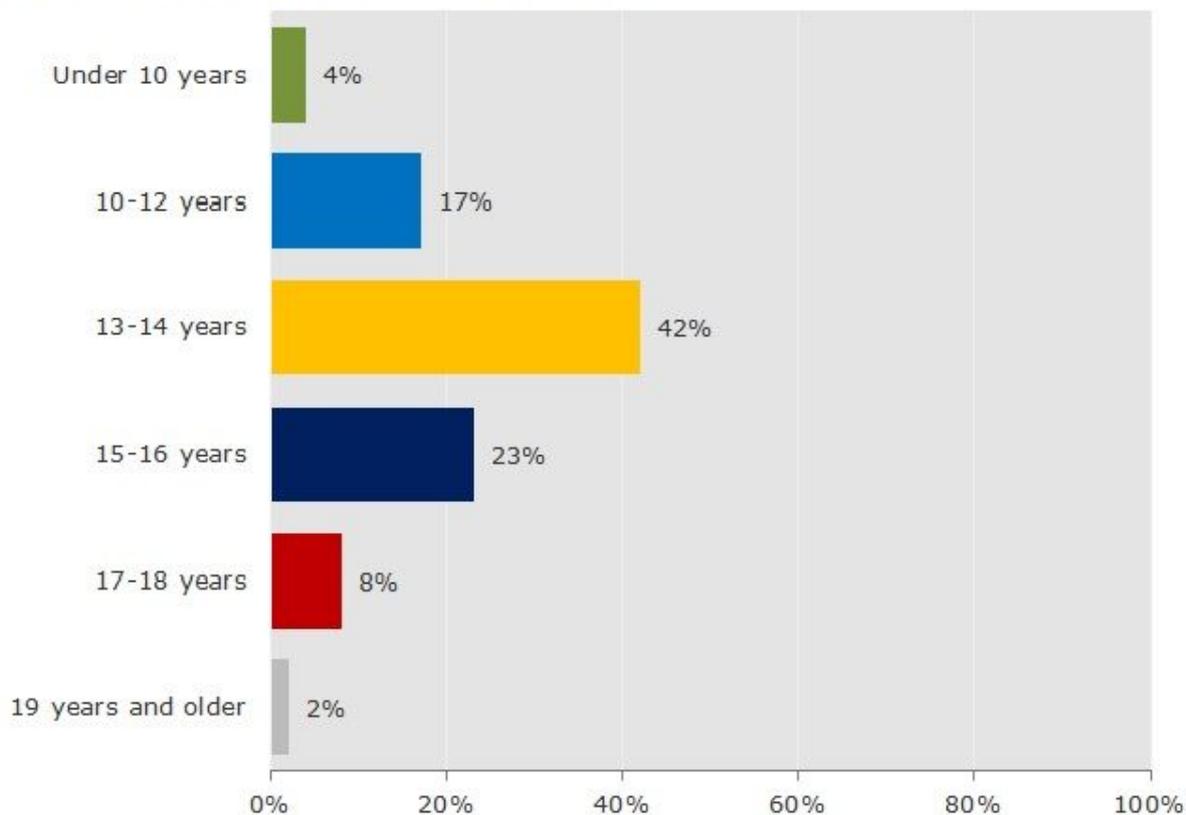
This survey asked some questions about two important issues: who you talk to, and at what age you can do things for yourself. What other big issues are important to you?



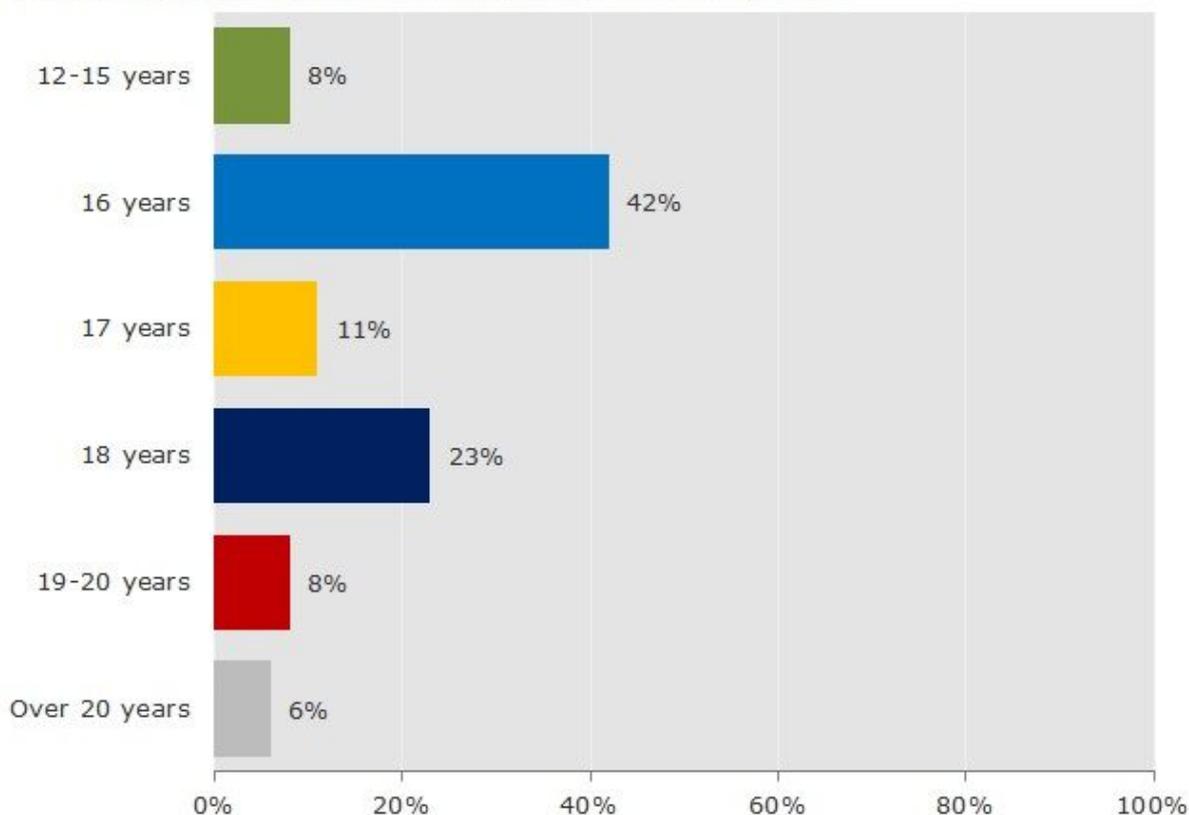
Report written May, 2016.

Appendix One – Age-related graphs

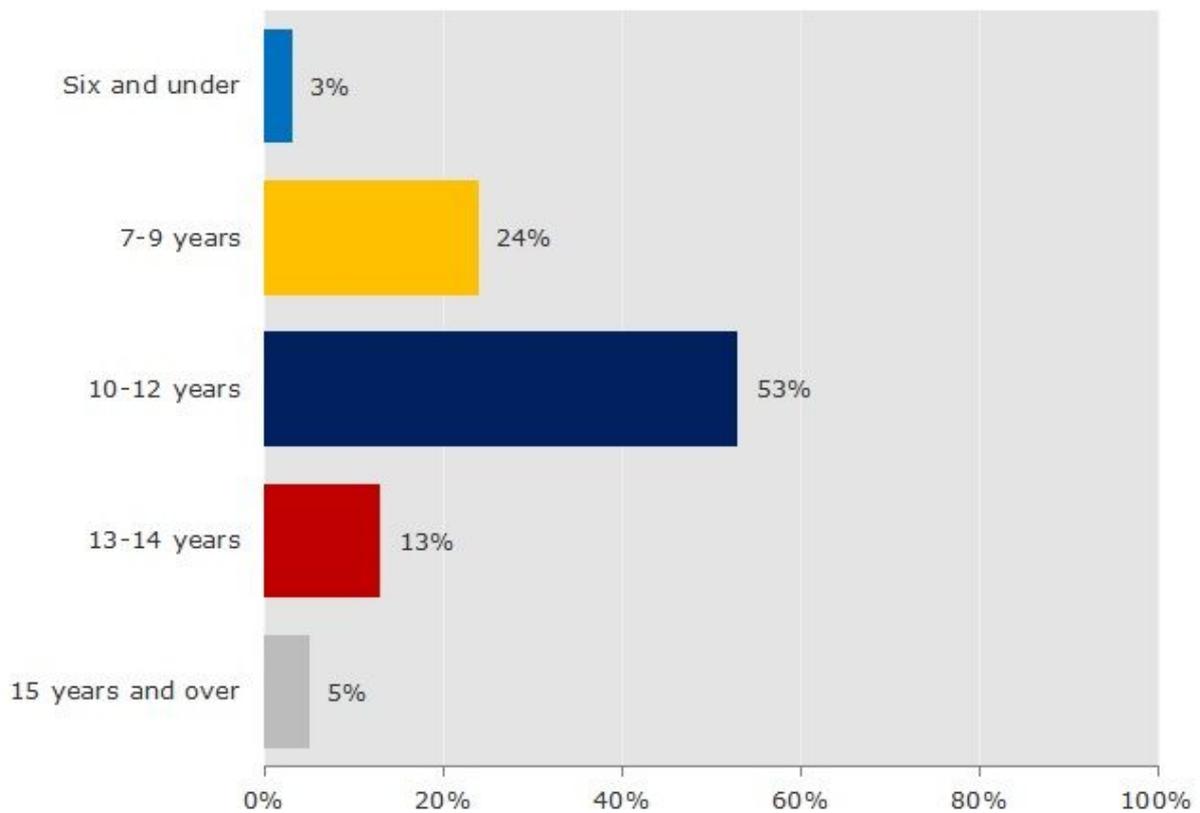
At what age do you think you could stay home by yourself for four hours during the day?



At what age do you think you could drive a car?



At what age do you think you could walk, scooter or cycle to or from school on your own?



At what age do you think you should be allowed to vote in a New Zealand election?

