



# indicators

The official newsletter of the International Society for Child Indicators



June 2011

## ISCI NEWS

# 2011 Conference Just Around the Corner

July 27–29 • York, England

Some 300 delegates are expected to gather in York, England, this summer for ISCI's 3rd biennial conference. Over 200 abstracts have been accepted from more than 30 countries for the event, to take place at the University of York, July 27–29.

### ABSTRACTS COVER THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- National and international surveys of children
- Subjective child well-being
- International comparisons of child well-being
- National child well-being strategies
- National reports on child well-being
- Child well-being in developing countries, especially Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Combining qualitative and quantitative measures
- Indicators in evaluation studies
- Community-level child well-being indicators
- Constructing indices
- Longitudinal studies
- Different domains of child well-being
- Listening to children/child participation in research
- Inequality among children, intergenerational transitions
- Policies that achieve good outcomes for children

The program also features a panel on child poverty and well-being as well as the following lectures: "Child Well-Being in the Early Years: What Matters?" by Kathleen Kiernan, Professor of Social Policy and Demography



Register  
before May 31  
and SAVE!

at the University of York, and "How Indicators Helped Save the Lives of 3 Million Children a Year" by Peter Adamson, editor of the UNICEF Report Card series.

The conference dinner will be held in the National Railway Museum, one of York's many attractions. Founded by the Romans and later settled by the Vikings, York is where Constantine the Great was crowned. It is an exquisitely preserved medieval city with a rich history and well worth a visit.

For full conference details and to register, go to [ISCI's conference website](#).

Discounted fees are available for members of ISCI, members of the UK Social Policy Association (a conference sponsor), and students. An early bird rate is in effect until May 31. Exhibition space is also available.

This is the first ISCI conference to be held in Europe; previous conferences were in Chicago (2007) and Sydney (2009).

**Indicators**, the newsletter of ISCI, provides information on child indicators to an international audience of researchers, advocates, policymakers, and the media. To submit material, please see [contact information on page 11](#).

# News from the Field

## Springer Announces New Publication Series

Springer Publishing has introduced SpringerBriefs, concise summaries of cutting-edge research and practical applications in a range of fields, including ours.

*SpringerBriefs in Well-Being and Quality-of-Life Research* cover a broad range of topics, including health, cross-cultural studies, gender, children, education, work and organizational issues, relationships, job satisfaction, religion, spirituality, and aging from the perspectives of sociology, psychology, philosophy, public health and economics.

The compact refereed monographs, which run from 50 to 125 pages each, feature snapshots of hot and/or emerging topics, in-depth case studies, and timely reports of state-of-the art analytical techniques. The volumes analyze past, present, or future trends, as well as their determinants and consequences.

*SpringerBriefs in Well-Being and Quality-of-Life Research* are of interest to a wide range of individuals with interest in quality-of-life studies, including sociologists, psychologists, economists, philosophers, health researchers, as well as practitioners across the social sciences.

Briefs will be published as part of Springer's eBook Collection, with millions of users worldwide. In addition, briefs will be available for individual print and electronic purchase.

Overseeing editorial review is an international advisory board, including Alex Michalos, Brandon University, Canada; Antonella Delle Fave, MD, University of Milan; Joe Sirgy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University;

and Asher Ben-Arieh, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts are considered for publication in this series. The board aims for publication 8–12 weeks after acceptance.

### Proposals may be e-mailed to:

Esther Otten, Publishing Editor  
Springer Science + Business Media  
[esther.otten@springer.com](mailto:esther.otten@springer.com)

Proposals should include:

- 1) The proposed **title** of your brief.
- 2) The **author information**. Provide your full name as it would appear for publication, and your full contact information. If there are two or more authors, provide the full names in the order in which they are to appear. Please note that after manuscript delivery, no changes can be made to the author names or the order of author names.
- 3) An **abstract**, which will be full-text searchable and used to identify your content online.
- 4) 5–10 **keywords** (search terms) that best describe your brief. What terms will be used when searching your topic on Google or Amazon?
- 5) Your manuscript **delivery date**.
- 6) The estimated **number of pages** in the final product.
- 7) An author **biography/CV**.
- 8) **Draft content**, if available. Provide a concise outline/table of contents. If available, in a separate PDF, attach an excerpt or writing sample that reflects the content and/or presentation style of the manuscript. If the manuscript is complete, please attach the entire PDF for review.

For more information, visit [www.springer.com/briefs](http://www.springer.com/briefs).



# News from the Field *continued*



## Children's Worlds Survey Focuses on Youth Perspective

Granting children the rights laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is only a minimum requirement for children to develop and thrive. Providing them with an environment in which they can fully blossom and reach their potential is quite another thing.

That premise is what inspired ISCI researchers to undertake Children's Worlds, an international survey on children's subjective well-being. The study is collecting solid and representative data on children's lives and daily activities, their time use, and, in particular, their own perception of their well-being. The ultimate goal is to improve children's well-being as well as their participation in affairs that concern them and their influence in determining the course of their own lives.

The ISCI group—with the support of experts from OECD, UNICEF and World Vision—came together in 2009 to design a questionnaire that could be used in any country. In summer/fall 2010, the preliminary questionnaire was put to the test in the U.K., Germany, Spain, Brazil, Honduras, Israel and Palestine. In December 2010, the findings of the pilot survey were presented and discussed, and a revised questionnaire was created.

That questionnaire is now being used by researchers around the world. Results are expected to be gathered this fall, with a final workshop to be held next spring.

For more information on Children's Worlds, see [the project website](#).



## Wikichild to Fold Into Wikiprogress

The Wikichild project, which did not develop as anticipated, will now be integrated into [Wikiprogress](#). The Wikiprogress initiative is rapidly advancing and is now the main platform of the OECD-hosted Global Project on *Measuring the Progress of Societies*. However, it features little information on child well-being.

The new plan capitalizes on synergies between Wikichild's network and knowledge base and the Wikiprogress team's know-how in developing a web community to better understand societal well-being. While enhancing the content on Wikiprogress, the effort will give Wikichild much greater visibility.

Content will be disseminated through Wikiprogress online social networks; the monthly [eBrief](#), which goes to over 30,000 registered subscribers; and the [ProgBlog](#). The Wikiprogress site itself gets more than 8,000 unique visitors per month.

Wikiprogress, which runs on a MediaWiki platform, will migrate over all current Wikichild content. Users can then use Wikiprogress to edit and upload additional content on child well-being. Those who are signed up on Wikichild will also be free to use the new platform to promote their own initiatives, events and news.

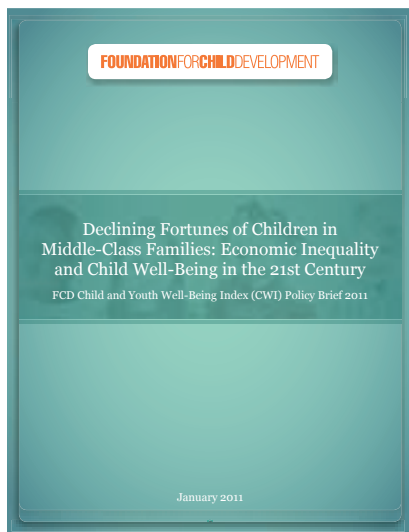
For more information, please contact [Dominic Richardson](#).



## News from the Field *continued*

### Report Shows Middle-Class Children Lost Ground in U.S.

A new report from the [Foundation for Child Development](#) (FCD) documents the divergent paths of well-being for children in different income categories in the United States. Report author Donald J. Hernandez concludes, “Children in middle-class families were losing ground long before the Great Recession.”



The report uses a child well-being index—combining family economic well-being, community engagement, health, and social relationships—to track changes in well-being for low-, middle-, and high-income children since 1985. It is the first-ever report to assess the impact on

child well-being of the growing income gap and declining wealth of the middle and lower classes in the United States.

The report finds that while overall child well-being increased after 1985—especially between 1992 and 2000, which marked a historic peak—child well-being deteriorated substantially in the eight subsequent years. “Nearly one-half of the improvements registered between 1992 and 2000 were wiped out by 2008,” Hernandez notes.

The report focuses on how trends in real family income, parental employment, single-parent households, and access to health insurance and pre-kindergarten have impacted child well-being. For example, between 1985 and 2008, the proportion of children in middle-class families not covered by health insurance declined by one-half, from 20 percent to 10 percent.

The report is part of the Child Well-Being Index series sponsored by FCD. [It is available online.](#)

### REDIM Makes Strides in Data-Based Child Advocacy

The Network for the Rights of Children in Mexico (“Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México,” or “REDIM”) had a successful year in 2010, starting with new leaders: Executive Director Juan Martín Pérez García and Council President Rogelio Padilla from MAMA A.C. in Jalisco.



Among other accomplishments in 2010, REDIM:

- Presented the “Index to Measure the Quality of Legislation within the Framework of Children’s Rights” publication before Mexico City’s congress.
- Hosted an International Workshop on Data-Based Advocacy, drawing organizations from across North and South America. The event furthered the development of a network of data-based child advocacy organizations in Latin America.
- Presented the “Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict” before the UNO’s Children’s Rights Committee.
- Worked to enhance relationships with key policymakers in Mexico City, who ultimately approved legislation reforms to create a Children’s Rights Defense System.
- Released the Kids Count Mexico 2010 report to the public and presented it before Mexico City’s congress. The report updated 61 percent of its indicators and added five new ones. The report was also divided in two issues—the Data Book, with indicators covering eight domains on children’s rights, and a publication focused on violence against children.
- Increased its presence on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to generate conversation around topics involving children’s rights, violence against girls and more.

# News from the Field *continued*

## Funding for PRB to Assist Latin American Network

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) has received a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to strengthen the data and communications capacity of Infancia Latina Cuenta, a Latin American network similar to the foundation’s U.S.-based KIDS COUNT network.

For more than 20 years, PRB has helped the Annie E. Casey Foundation and KIDS COUNT to increase public awareness of the status of children in the United States.

“We are gratified to continue our partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT program, drawing attention to the demographic, social, and economic needs of children at the state and national levels,” says James E. Scott, PRB’s acting president and chief financial and operating officer.

PRB will hold a workshop in Washington, D.C., to provide Latin American network members with targeted assistance on data and communications. The workshop will also include site visits, giving participants the opportunity to meet U.S.-based children’s well-being and advocacy groups.

For more information, contact James Gribble at 202-939-5403 or [jgribble@prb.org](mailto:jgribble@prb.org).



## Survey Analysis Focuses on Happiness Among 11–15-Year-Olds

Pier Professional, publisher of the *Journal of Children's Services*, has produced an article that uses data from the British Household Panel Survey to explore trends in subjective well-being of young people aged 11–15, from 1994 to 2008.

Two dimensions of subjective well-being are measured using multi-dimensional scales representing “happiness” and “self-esteem.” This 14-year period has seen many changes in the environment of young people that may have had an impact on their well-being, including economic growth, increased parental employment, and efforts to improve social policy for children. Has all this activity had an impact on what young people say about their lives?

The analysis suggests that there has been an improvement in the average level of happiness of 11–15-year-olds over time, especially for girls. It is impossible to draw clear conclusions about the causes of this improvement in happiness, but there is some evidence that it relates to relationships with friends and experiences in school.

The article was written by Jonathan Bradshaw and Antonia Keung, of the University of York, England.

To view the full article free of charge, [click here](#) and enter your name and e-mail address.



It's not too late to attend this summer's ISCI Conference!  
 York, England • July 27–29  
**[Register now »](#)**

## Publications

### New System Assesses Child Well-Being in Spain

UNICEF Spain, in association with the Childhood Observatory of the Region of Asturias (Observatorio de Infancia de Asturias), has developed a system of indicators to provide a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and young people in Spain.



The system's primary objective is to improve compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Measuring and comparing the present and projected future status of children's well-being also aims to:

- » initiate public debate about the situation of children in Spain, particularly how their well-being will be measured and assessed, and children's own subjective sense of their own well-being,
- » facilitate access to information and better monitor the fulfillment of children's rights and the improvement of their lives across Spain,
- » highlight the progress and challenges of children's well-being in Spain, as well as inequalities within the child and adolescent populace and between different regions,
- » promote informed political decisions concerning children and elevate their position in the public agenda,
- » facilitate the creation of national standards and points of reference (benchmarks) for different regions and public administrations, and
- » contribute, via statistical data, to public awareness regarding the rights of children in Spain.

[Click here](#) to read the report in Spanish.

### Index Ranks Countries by Well-Being of Mothers and Children

Save the Children's 12th annual Mothers' Index compares the well-being of mothers and children in 164 countries — more than in any previous year. It also provides information on eight additional countries.

Norway, Australia, and Iceland top the rankings this year. The top 10 countries, in general, attain high scores for mothers' and children's health, education,



and economic status. The United States placed 31st.

The bottom 10 countries — including eight from sub-Saharan Africa — perform poorly on all indicators. Afghanistan ranks last in the 164 countries surveyed. Conditions for mothers and their children in the bottom countries are grim. On average, 1 woman in 30 will die from pregnancy-related causes. One child in 6 dies before his or her 5th birthday, and 1 child in 3 suffers from malnutrition. Nearly 50 percent of the population lacks access to safe water, and only 4 girls for every 5 boys are enrolled in primary school.

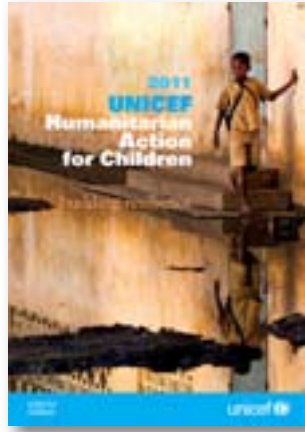
On the children's well-being portion of the Mothers' Index, Sweden finishes first and Somalia last. While nearly every Swedish child enjoys good health and education, children in Somalia face a more than 1 in 6 risk of dying before age 5. Thirty-six percent of Somali children are malnourished and 70 percent lack access to safe water. One in 3 primary-school aged children in Somalia are enrolled in school, and boys outnumber girls almost 2 to 1.

[Click here](#) for the report result and indicators.

## Publications *continued*

### UNICEF Report Aims to Mitigate Impact of Disasters

The unprecedented scale of the disasters in Haiti and Pakistan in 2010 triggered an extraordinary global response from humanitarian organizations. Yet it also underscored the need to strengthen preparedness and reduce risk in communities that are repeatedly hit by crises.



UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children Report 2011 presents crises that require exceptional support. It shows where urgent action is imperative to save lives; to protect children against violence and abuse; and to ensure access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, health, nutrition, and education.

The 32 countries targeted in this appeal are prioritized based on the scale of the crisis, the severity of its impact on children and women, the chronic or protracted nature of the crisis, and the potential to bring about life-saving and long-lasting results.

[Click here](#) for the full report.

### African Report on Child Wellbeing 2011: Budgeting for Children

The 2011 edition of The African Report on Child Wellbeing is the second in a series of reports published biennially by The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), which aims to put Africa's children on the public and political agenda, and to hold African governments accountable for caring for children.



The 2008 edition of

the report was well received and made significant progress in promoting good governance and child well-being. It has become a major source of information and data on children in Africa.

The 2011 edition of the report explores in greater depth the obligations of African countries to invest in their children; the arguments for doing so — from a moral, social, political, and economic perspective; and the importance of the national budget in 1) positively impacting the well-being and quality of life of children; and 2) representing an effective barometer of true government commitment to the rights of the child.

The evidence presented in this report points to areas for improvement and priorities for action.

The report can be found on the [African Child Forum website](#).

### Report Helps Inform Policy around Childhood Obesity

The childhood obesity epidemic in the U.S. is the result of many factors and will not be resolved through any single action. Resolution of the epidemic will require concerted action across many sectors and settings, including schools, child care facilities and communities.



The 2011 Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report highlights selected behaviors, environments, and policies that affect childhood obesity through support of healthy eating. National and state-specific information is reported; however, individual states may have additional information from surveys and/or policies or regulations enacted outside the monitoring period that can augment the data in this report and help inform public health decisions.

[Click here](#) to view the report.

## Publications *continued*

### Report Reveals New Digital Media Habits of Children

New technology sometimes brings change that is so swift and sweeping that the implications are hard to grasp. Such is certainly the case with the rapid expansion of media use by children and youth for ever-larger portions of their waking hours.

Academics, policymakers, and practitioners show a keen interest in the digital age. And, of course, parents are scrambling to keep up with the preponderance of new gadgets that influences modern household life and communication.

Key findings:

- » Children have more access to all kinds of digital media, and they spend more time during the day with them than ever before.
- » Television continues to exert a strong hold over young children, who spend more time with this medium than any other.
- » Not all children have access to newer digital technologies, nor do all children use media in the same ways when they do own them. Family income continues to be a barrier to some children owning technology, even as the price of devices falls.
- » Lower-income, Hispanic, and African American children consume far more media than their middle class and white counterparts.
- » Children appear to shift their digital media habits at around age 8, when they increasingly open their eyes to the world of media beyond television.
- » Mobile media appears to be the next “it” technology, from handheld video games to portable music players to cell phones. Kids like to use their media on the go.

[Click here](#) for the report.



### Adolescent Well-Being Stressed in Annual UNICEF Report

Young people are the key to a more equitable and prosperous world, according to UNICEF’s flagship report, **“The State of the World’s Children 2011 — Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity,”** released in February.

The report says that investing in the world’s 1.2 billion adolescents — those between the ages of 10 and 19 — can break entrenched cycles of poverty. “We need to focus more attention now on reaching adolescents, especially adolescent girls, investing in education, health, and other measures to engage them in the process of improving their own lives,” said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake.

While the international community has made tremendous gains in improving the health and well-being of children under 10, the SOWC report emphasizes that less progress has been made in reaching older children. The vast majority of these adolescents live in developing countries. Their numbers are rapidly growing, and the challenges they face are formidable:

- » Almost half the world’s adolescents of secondary-school age don’t go to school; they are vulnerable to trafficking and recruitment into armed groups.
- » About 150 million young people between the ages of 5 and 14 are engaged in child labor.
- » More than 70 million girls and women have undergone genital cutting, which usually occurs by the onset of puberty.

SOWC also finds that girls are often the most overlooked, even as they have the most potential to pass wealth and well-being on to their children.

The report indicates that not only is it right to meet the challenges that adolescents face and give them the opportunity to participate in their societies, but it makes economic sense as well. “It is also the smart thing to do, enabling us to consolidate our historic gains in early childhood and child survival, and to accelerate progress,” said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Hilde F. Johnson. “Breaking the cycle of poverty, breaking the cycle of discrimination, breaking the cycle of inequity — the choice is ours to make.”

[Click here](#) for more information.



# Conferences

## Opportunities and Challenges: Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

June 1–2, 2011 • Queen’s University, Belfast

This interdisciplinary conference will bring scholars together to explore key issues, opportunities, and challenges in implementing the UNCRC. In particular, it will explore the gap between children’s rights standards as set out by the UNCRC and the active implementation of the UNCRC rights within States Parties.



See the [conference website](#) for key questions, registration information and other details.

## Effective Parenting and Child Well-Being: Understanding the Evidence Base

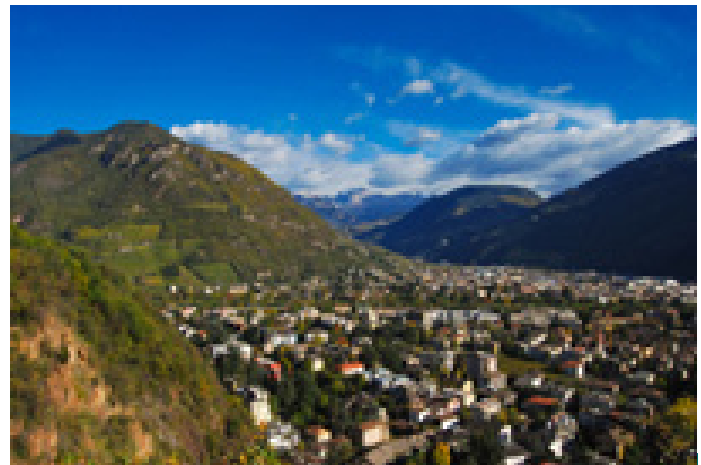
June 21, 2011 • Institute of Education, London

Parents have an enormous influence over the development, education, health, and well-being of their children. Rapid social, demographic, and economic changes in recent years have increased the demands and pressures on parents. It is important that policies designed to support parents and improve the quality of parenting have a secure evidence base and are relevant to the circumstances of today’s families.



This one-day conference provides an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share information about the latest research evidence and discuss implications for policy.

Visit the [conference website](#) for more information.



## Conference to Look at Results of Evidence-Based Practices

Bozen, Italy • June 29

*“Too little is known about the effectiveness of social, health, and educational work,” reads the program for an upcoming conference in Italy.*

*“Research on the effectiveness of programs is limited by available resources. This conference is an occasion for sharing knowledge about outcome evaluation, starting from real practices.”*

The conference, “Integrating Evidence-Based Practices in Child and Family Services: Lessons Learned from Different Countries,” is scheduled for June 29 at Free University in Bozen, Italy.

Program presentations fall under two primary topics: “Roles, Functions and Conditions for Outcome-Based Evaluation of Services for Children and Families” in the morning, and “Tools and Methods for Sharing Evidence-Based Practices” in the afternoon. Case studies will come from England, Israel and Ireland.

The conference is being organized by the **Fondazione Zancan** (a research center in Padova, Italy) in collaboration with several other organizations. The official languages of the conference are Italian, German, and English.

To view the full program, go to the [Fondazione Zancan website](#) and click on the PDF link under the graphic on the right side of the page.

## Conferences *continued*

### Australasian Evaluation Society 2011 International Conference

August 29–September 2, 2011  
Sydney, Australia

A record number of abstracts has been received for this Australasian Evaluation Society conference, which will kick off with two days of workshops. This year's theme, "Evaluation and Influence," will encourage discussion about how to make the most effective use of evaluations as well as how to promote the role of evaluation in the broader community.

Visit the [conference website](#) for details.



### Social Welfare, Social Work and Social Development: Policy Options for a Sustainable Future

July 9–12, 2012 • Stockholm, Sweden

Mark your calendar for the Joint Biennial World Conference of the International Association of Schools of Social Work, the International Council on Social Welfare, and the International Federation of Social Workers. The conference is being held in cooperation with Swedish partners.

Watch the [conference website](#) for updates on the theme and other details.



### Rights of the Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood

October 20–22, 2011 • Dubrovnik, Croatia

The European Society of Social Pediatrics (ESSOP) and the UNICEF Office for Croatia will host the 4th European School of Social Pediatrics in October.

The event will give scholars and professionals from throughout Europe an opportunity to learn and share knowledge and experiences in the area of early childhood development.

Abstracts must be submitted (in English) no later than September 1, 2011.

For the program and other information, see the [event website](#).



### Help ISCI Grow!

**Please join ISCI** if you are not already a member.  
If you are a member, **invite a colleague to join!**

For more information, contact Lori A. Bailey, ISCI Membership Coordinator, at lbaile2@clermson.edu or visit <http://www.childindicators.org/join.html>. You may join online or via regular mail.

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and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

## Join the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI)



The International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI)

contributes to improving the well-being of the world's children. The ISCI seeks to build a network of individuals dedicated to improving measures and data resources, advancing data analysis, exploring theoretical issues, and publicizing and disseminating information on the status of children. ISCI is also working to enhance the capacity of the field, especially for countries in the initial stages of producing child well-being indicators. Finally, ISCI is identifying and developing ways to facilitate the dissemination and application of indicators in policy and practice.

For a full description and information on joining ISCI, please visit [www.childindicators.org](http://www.childindicators.org).