

The Subjective Well-being of Adolescents in Care

ISCI 2017

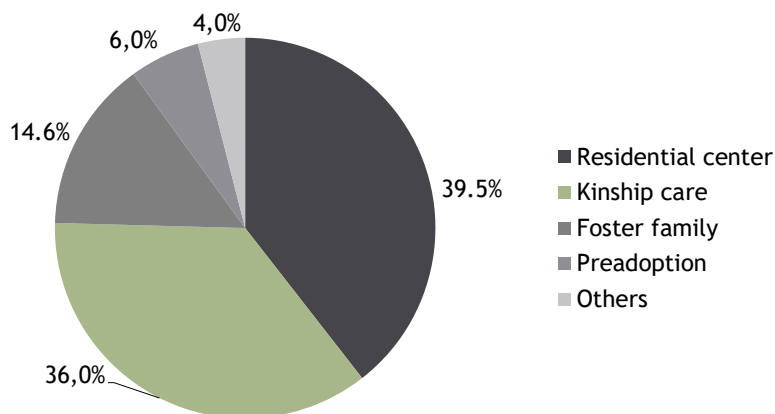
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**There are 6,936 children in public care
in Catalonia (5.0‰)**

Distribution by type of placement 2016



Starting point and purpose

- Children's **subjective well-being** (SWB) constitutes an important component in **understanding their quality of life**. However, little is known about children in public care regarding their **perceptions and satisfaction with life**.
- The purpose of this study is to explore the SWB between adolescents in residential care, kinship care and family foster care (non-kinship care)

It is part of Joan Llosada's PhD dissertation *The subjective well-being of adolescents in public care in Catalonia*

Population and sample

- The study used data from care population in Catalonia born between 1998 and 2000 (N=700) (response rate=58%)
- The final sample comprised 669 adolescents aged 12-14 years (N = 669):
 - **397** adolescents in **residential care** (response rate=73%)
 - **251** adolescents in **kinship care** (response rate=49%)
 - **41** adolescents in **foster care** (response rate=37%)

The questionnaire

The same questionnaire used in the **International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB- Children's worlds)**. It was adapted to fit the characteristics of children in care

Dimensions of ISCWeB:

- Home - Health - Material things - Time use - Interpersonal relations - School - Local area satisfaction - Personal

It includes **3 psychometric scales** on SWB (PWI, SLSS, OLS)

Main Changes:

- “family” was replaced for “residential care or family foster care”
- “parents” were replaced for “carers”
- 4 questions about their type of placement were added

Multiple regressions have been used to explore which factors are related to children's SWB according to type of placement

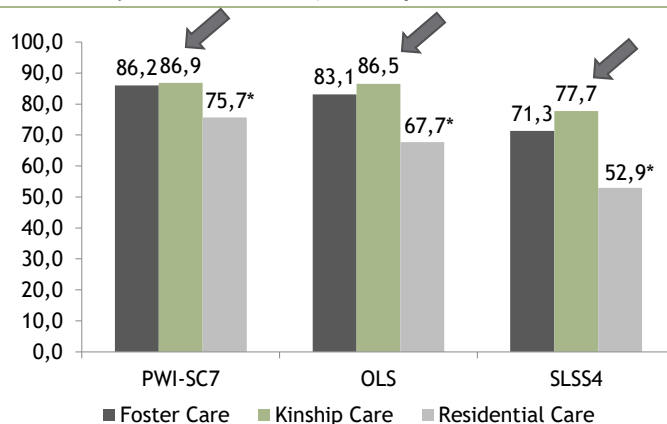
The psychometric scales used

	Type of scale	Items
OLS Overall Live Satisfaction	11-point scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with your life in general
SLSS The Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner)	5-point scale The 4-item version was used (SLSS4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My life's going well • My life is how I want it to be • I have a good life • I have what I want in life
PWI-SC Personal Well-being Index-School Children (Cummins & Lau)	11-point scale A modified version was used (PWI-SC7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction with health • Satisfaction with the things you have • Satisfaction with relationships with people • Satisfaction with your primary or secondary school • Satisfaction with how you spend your time • Satisfaction with how self-confident you feel • Satisfaction with the opportunities you have in life

Results: SWB according to type of placement and comparison with general population

SWB according to type of placement

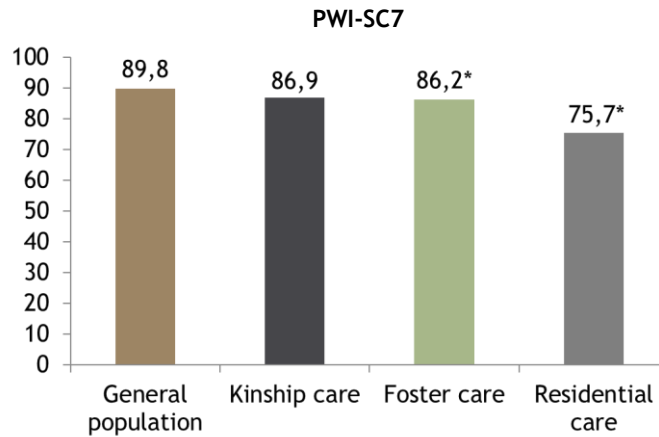
The adolescents in residential care have a lower SWB than those in family foster care (kinship care and non-kinship).



* statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)

Comparison with general population

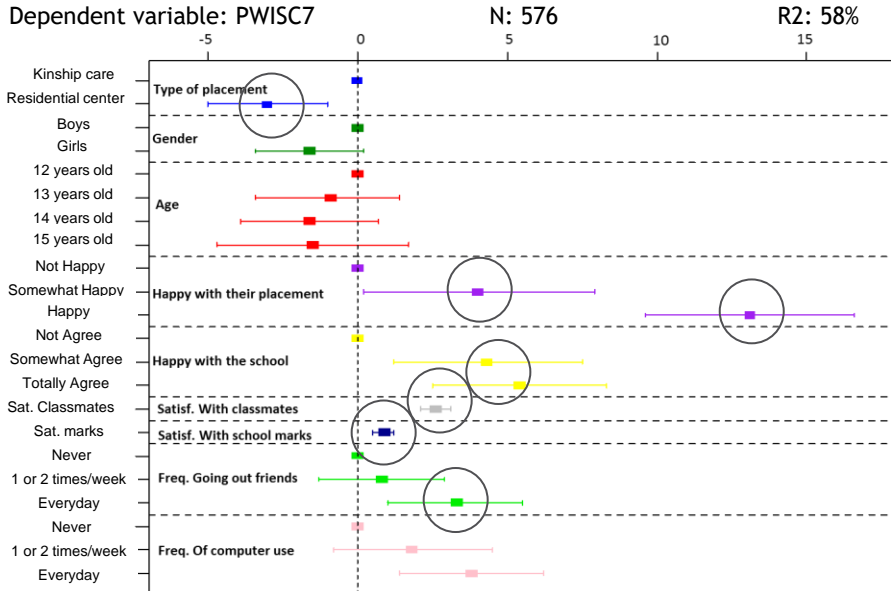
The adolescents in kinship and foster care displayed higher scores in SWB than those in residential care, and were similar to the general population,



* statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)

Results: Multiple regression models

Multiple regression model (aggregate sample)



Multiple Linear Regression
Residential care

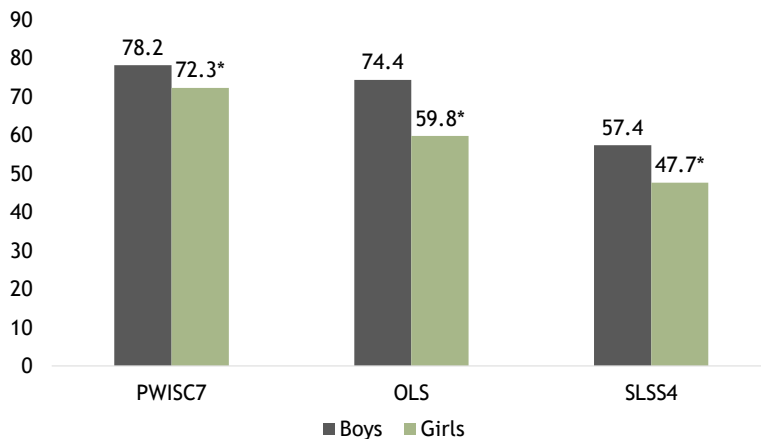
Independent Variables	PWISC7	OLS	SLSS4
Gender (Boys)			
Girls	-5.169***	-1.502***	-10.23***
Age (12 years old)			
13 years old	-2.807	0.271	-1.351
14 years old	-0.336	0.0703	5.708*
15 years old	-2.906	-0.878	-9.515*
Years in the same placement	0.0408	0.00893*	0.0448
Breakdowns in previous foster family (No)			
Yes	-5.150***	-1.165***	-6.723**
Size of the center (less than 20 children)			
From 20 to 29 children	0.998	-0.614*	6.890**
More than 29 children	-4.070**	-0.936***	-10.68***
Run away (No)			
Run away one or more times	-2.068	-0.697*	-7.979***
Satisfaction with the educators (Not at all)			
Somewhat satisfied	6.137*	1.104	7.898
Totally satisfied	13.51***	1.915**	19.86***
Satisfaction with the Director (Not at all)			
Somewhat satisfied	4.850	0.248	-0.513
Totally satisfied	9.695***	0.570	3.032
Satisfaction with center mates (Not at all)			
Somewhat satisfied	5.671**	0.633	2.679
Totally satisfied	10.23***	1.395**	9.084**
R-squared	0.351	0.243	0.264

Multiple Linear Regression Kinship care

Independent Variables	PWISC7	OLS	SLSS4
Gender (Boys)			
Girls	2.077	-0.243	1.782
Age (12 years old)			
13 years old	-1.330	-0.112	-5.518
14 years old	-0.164	0.182	-3.928
15 years old	-6.112**	-0.567	-5.289
Years in the same placement	0.00483	-0.00286	0.0820**
Breakdowns in previous foster family (No)			
Yes	-1.954	0.659***	12.73**
Satisfaction with persons who live at home (Not at all)			
Somewhat satisfied	17.16	2.932	13.85
Totally satisfied	33.59*	4.723**	38.01***
R-squared	0.326	0.248	0.261

SWB according to gender in Residential Care

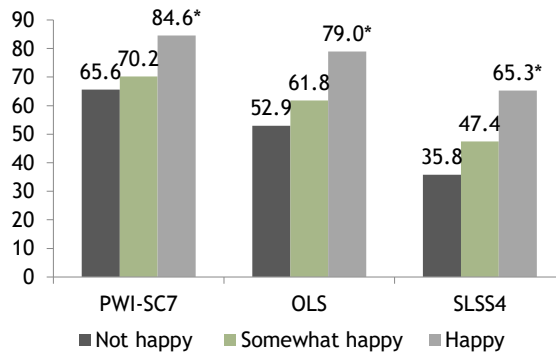
The girls in residential care displayed lower subjective well-being scores than boys



* statistical significance (p < 0.05)

Happy with their placement?

Happy with placement	Foster care		Kinship care		Residential care		Total	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not happy	1	3.2	2	0.9	94	23.7	97	14.9
Somewhat happy	1	3.2	9	4.0	119	30.1	129	19.8
Happy	29	93.6	213	95.1	183	46.2	425	65.3
Total	31	100	224	100	396	100	651	100

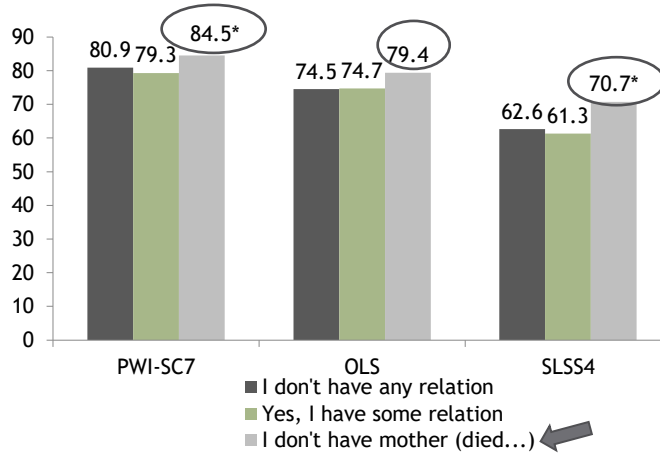


* statistical significance (p<0.05)

Relationship with biological family

SWB according to the relation with their mothers

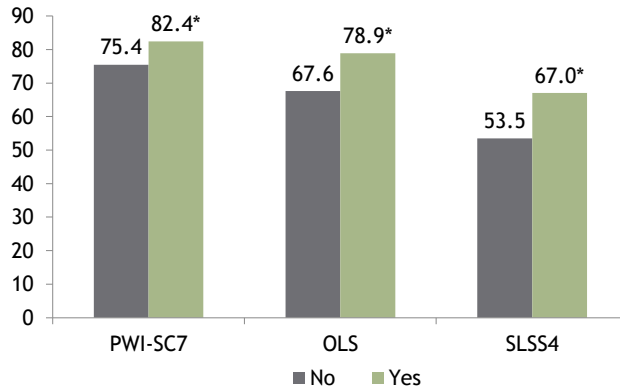
Adolescents who do not know their mother or whose mother has died obtain a **higher mean score** than those who have a mother, whether they have contact with her or not.



Stability

Maintain the same caregivers that last year

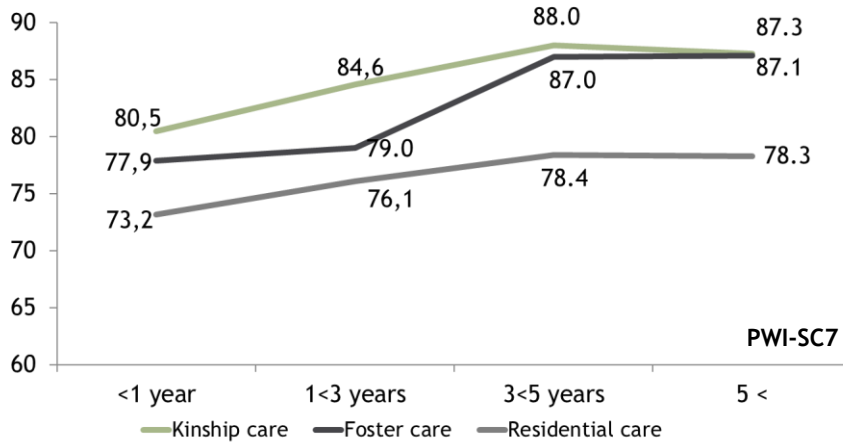
	Foster care		Kinship care		Residential care		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No	3	7.3	14	6.1	187	48.2	204	31.0
Yes	38	92.7	215	93.9	201	51.8	454	69.0
Total	41	100.0	229	100.0	388	100.0	658	100.0



* statistical significance (p<0.05)

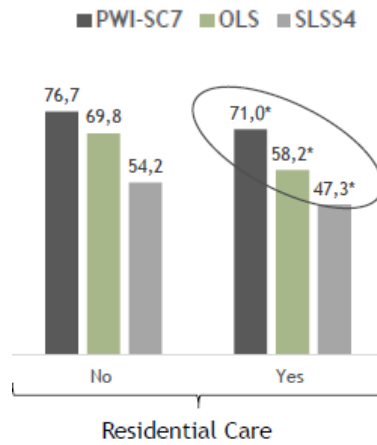
SWB by years in the same placement

Those adolescents who had been in the same placement longer had a greater SWB



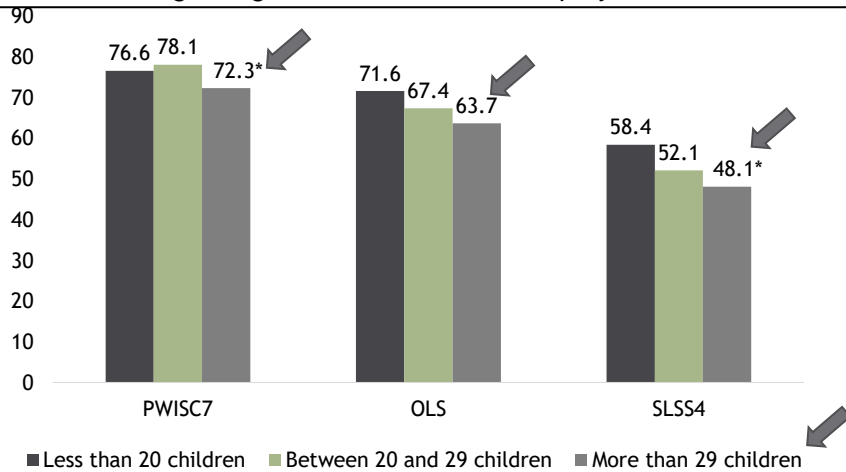
SWB by breakdowns in previous foster families

The adolescents who had suffered a breakdown in a previous foster placement had a lower SWB



SWB by number of children in residential centres

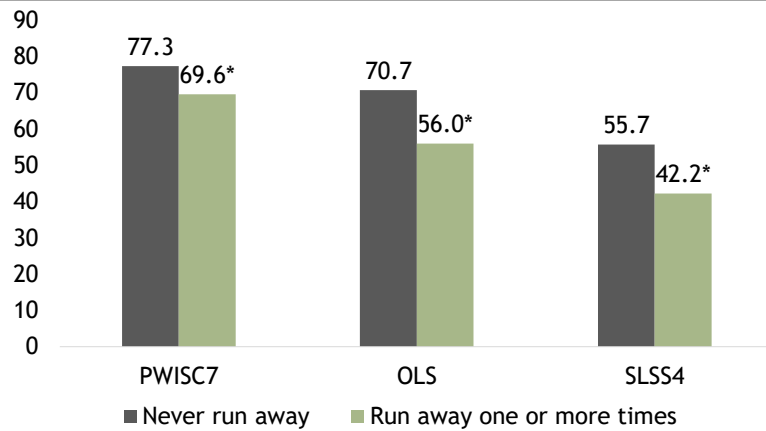
Children living in big residential centres displayed lower SWB



* statistical significance(p<0.05)

Run away and SWB (residential care)

Number of times the adolescent has run away from the residential home has an impact on the SWB

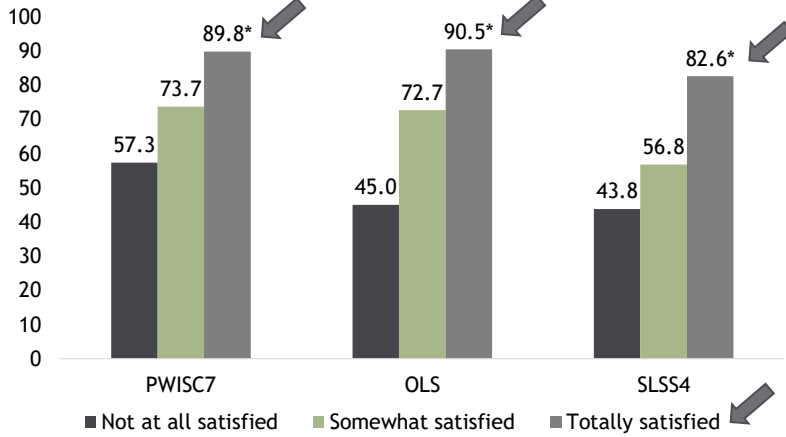


* statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)

Relationships

SWB according to satisfaction with people who live at home (Kinship care)

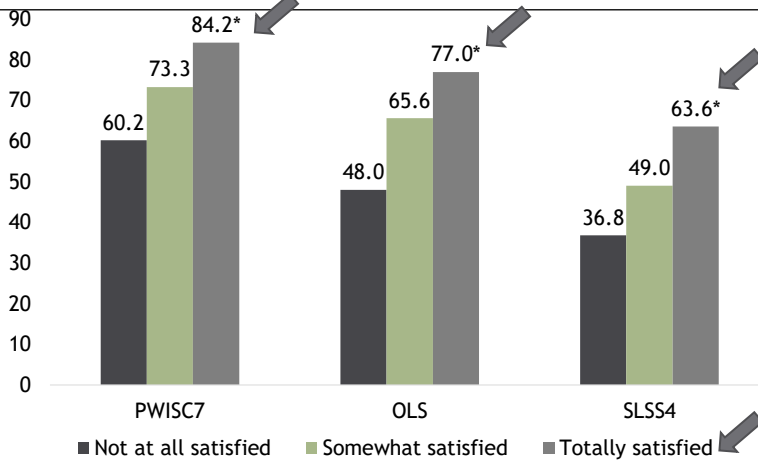
Adolescents who were highly satisfied with their kinship carers displayed higher scores of SWB



* statistical significance(p<0.05)

SWB according to satisfaction with their Educators (Residential care)

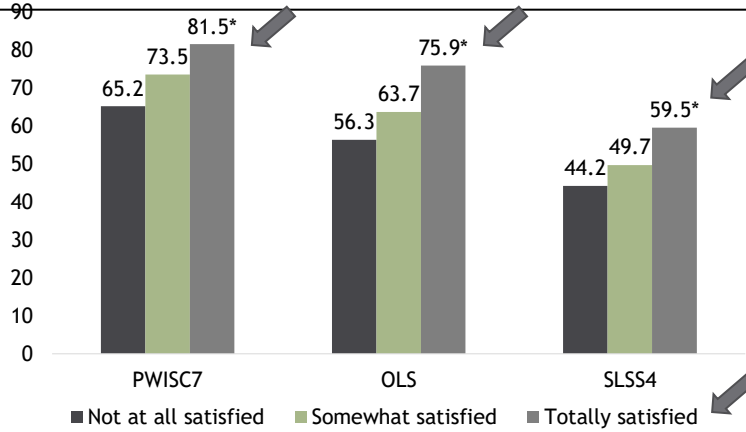
Adolescents who were highly satisfied with their educators displayed higher scores of SWB



* statistical significance(p<0.05)

SWB according to satisfaction with peers in the Residential home

Adolescents who were highly satisfied with peers displayed higher scores of SWB

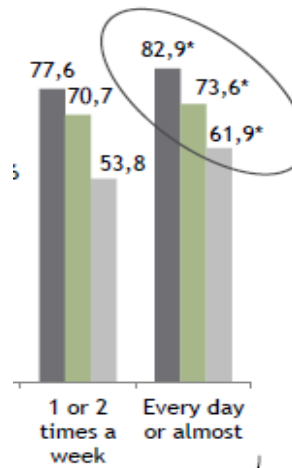


* statistical significance (p<0.05)

SWB according to frequency of going out with friends

■ PWI-SC7 ■ OLS ■ SLSS4

Among adolescents in residential care, going out with friends every day or one/twice a week increases SWB compared to going out not often or never



* statistical significance (p<0.05)

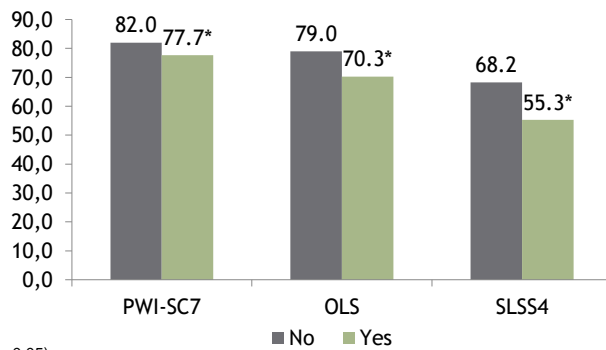


School



Changes of school

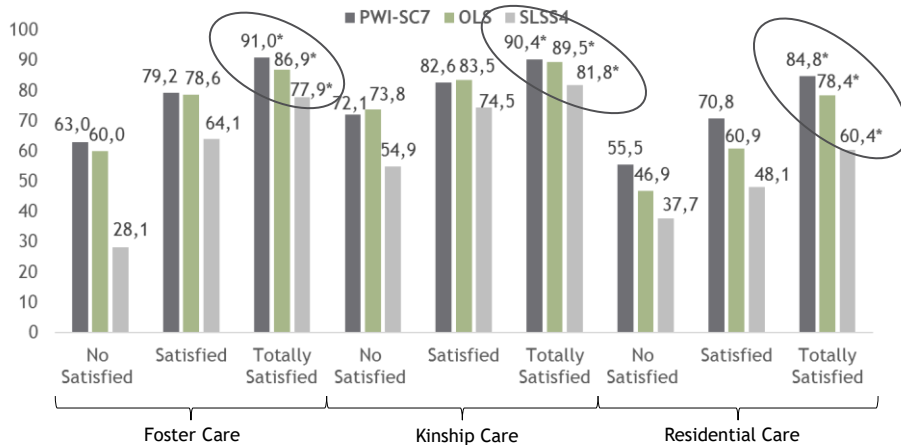
	Foster care		Kinship care		Residential care		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No	30	75.0 %	180	77.9 %	169	43.0 %	379	57.1 %
Yes	10	25.0 %	51	22.1 %	224	57.0 %	285	42.9 %
Total	40	100.0 %	231	100.0 %	393	100.0 %	664	100.0 %



* statistical significance (p<0.05)

SWB according to satisfaction with classmates

The greater the satisfaction with classmates, the higher the SWB scores observed



* statistical significance (p<0.05)

Conclusions (1)

- The results show a **much lower subjective well-being among adolescents in residential care** than those family foster care. The means for those in family foster care are very close to that of adolescents in the general population.
- We must be careful **not to attribute** all the responsibility for these results to the residential centres alone, because the characteristics of those in centre differ from those in foster care.
- Half of the adolescents **in residential care are not happy living** in a residential centre and this adversely affects their SWB. This is not a minor aspect, as it refers to where they live
- Being happy with the type of placement has a greater impact on SWB than type of placement. Therefore, **the placement is important but their perception of it is even more so**, which reminds us that we need to take the opinions and perceptions of children themselves more seriously.

Conclusions (2)

- Stability, education, satisfaction with relationships with careers and peers, do leisure time activities act as a highly compensatory factors
- The size of residential centres affects their SWB
- Being more time in care if children have stability impacts positively in their SWB

Practice and political implications

- These findings highlight the need to address the **participation** of children regarding any decision that affects their lives, the importance of **stability**, the **key role of the education**, the importance of **having good relations with carers and friends** and of their **leisure time**.
- The need to clarify as far as **possible the role of biological parents**.
- **Pay attention to girls in residential centers**
- There should be a **review of residential care**; continue to **promote family foster care** and pay great attention to the **positive results of kinship care**.

Some responses at the end of the questionnaires

- **“At last someone cares about what I want and how I feel”** (Girl, 14, residential care)
- **“Thank you for sending it to me; hardly anyone asks me these kinds of questions”** (Girl, 14, kinship care)
- **“It’s been great. I’ve found it interesting because they care about me”** (Boy, 13, kinship care)
- **“I think it’s good they do this so people know how children in residential homes feel. I think it’s important”** (Girl, 13, residential care)
- **“No matter how many questions you ask and no matter what we answer, nothing’s going to change”** (Boy, 13, residential care)
- **“I’ve really enjoyed your questionnaire. I want to know the results”** (Girl, 12, residential care)

References

- Llosada-Gistau, J., Montserrat, C. & Casas, F. (2015). **The subjective well-being of adolescents in residential care compared to that of the general population.** *Children and Youth Services Review*, 52, 150-157.
- Llosada-Gistau, J., Casas, F. & Montserrat, C. (2016). **What matters in for the subjective well-being of children in care?** *Child Indicators Research*, DOI 10.1007/s12187-016-9405-z

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