

Family conflict a major cause of children's unhappiness

Children's wellbeing is far more strongly influenced by levels of family conflict than by family structure, according to new research by The Children's Society. In the first comprehensive investigation of childhood wellbeing from a young person's point of view, thousands of pupils were asked questions exploring the impact on wellbeing of family structure, such as living in a lone or step parent family. The difference between a young person's family getting along – and not – explained 20 per cent of the variation in overall happiness with life, whereas differences in family structure only explained two per cent.

The survey's co-author, Professor Jonathan Bradshaw

of the University of York, said: 'This survey makes a major contribution to our understanding of children's subjective wellbeing in England and the factors that contribute to it. It also establishes a valuable benchmark that we can use to track changes in wellbeing over time.'

Bob Reitemeier, chief executive of The Children's Society, said: 'Family conflict emerges in this study as a major cause of childhood unhappiness, and so it is vital that families can get mediation and counselling to help them resolve and avoid conflicts.'

'This report is a stark reminder that our actions as adults can have a



Research shows that parental conflict impacts on children

profound impact on our children's wellbeing – and the importance of listening to what children are telling us,' Reitemeier said.

Understanding Children's Wellbeing: A National Survey

of Young People's Wellbeing was conducted by The Children's Society in collaboration with the University of York and research organisation Ipsos MORI.
The Children's Society