



Is there a relationship
between children's
wellbeing and perceptions
of safety from sexual
harm?

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Today's presentation

1. The big picture
2. The Children's Safety Survey
3. Data visualisation
4. Method
5. Results
6. Conclusions
7. References
8. Questions and contact details

The Big Picture: ICPS' Children's Safety Studies

Children's Safety Studies

Children's Safety Survey

A survey tool youth-serving organisations can use to measure **children's perceptions** of safety

Safeguarding Capabilities Survey

A survey tool youth-serving organisations can use to measure **staff and volunteers** capabilities to safeguard children

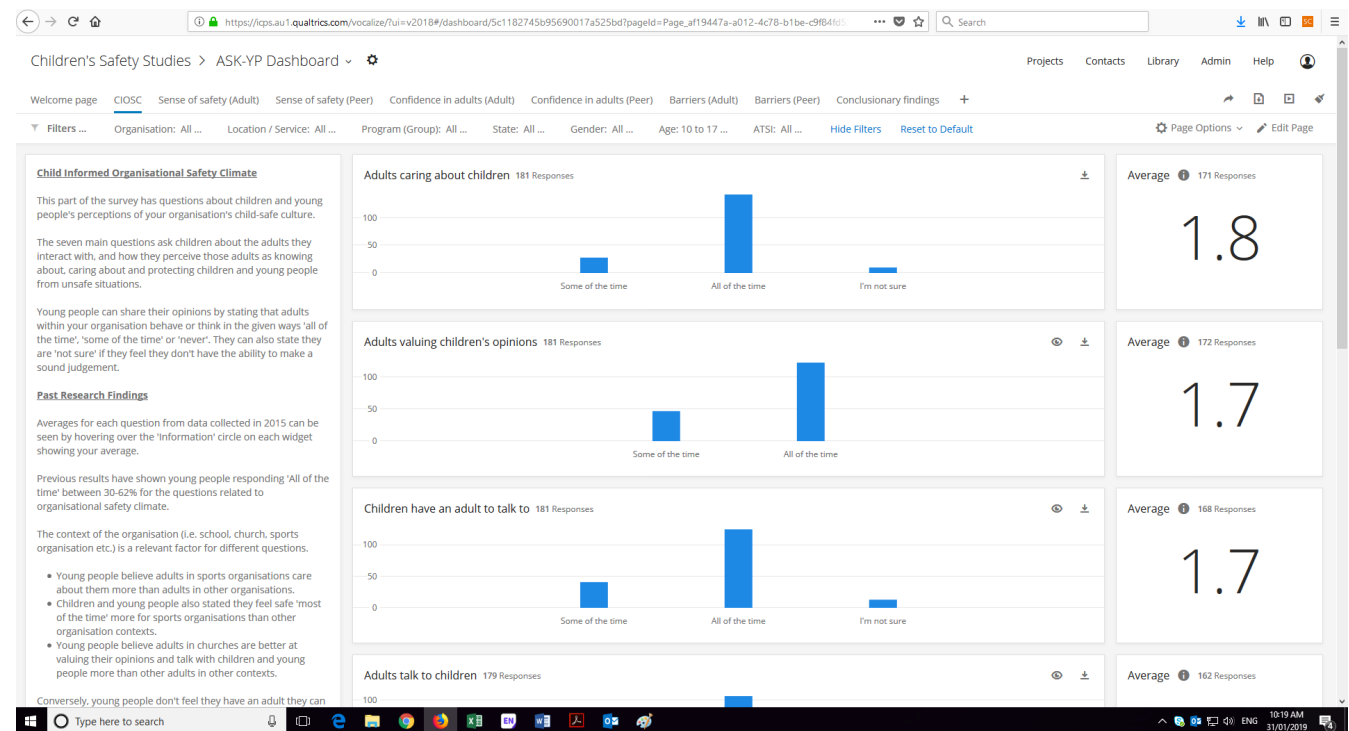
Safeguarding Portal

ACU's one-stop shop for **resources training and survey tools** to support organisations to develop a culture of safeguarding.

<https://safeguardingchildren.acu.edu.au>

Dashboard access

- Once a minimum of ten people have participated in either survey at an organisation, a dashboard logon will be sent to the participation coordinator.
- Safeties are in place to ensure no child's responses can be identified and attributed to them.



Past findings

Cohen & Geier (2010) found that many children do not feel safe at school.



Thapa et al. (2013) found a relationship between school climate (including safety) and students well-being

Moore et al. (2016) found that young people in OOHC often did not feel safe in their residences



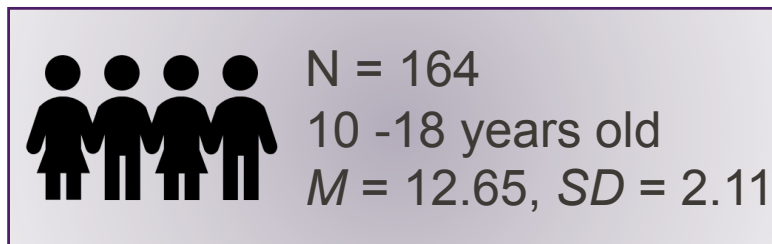
Little evidence exists as to whether the same relationship between these variables occurs in OOHC

Method

Design

The study had a cross-sectional design whereby young people were asked the questions on one occasion.

Participants



21 identified as Aboriginal and two as Torres Strait Islander.



41 spoke a language other than English at home



Method

Elements of the Children's Safety Survey

1. The Australian Safe Kids and Young People Survey

The survey contains **four overarching sections** measuring children's perceptions of safety within your school

1. Child Informed Org Safety Climate
2. Sense of Safety
3. Confidence in Adults
4. Barriers to Help Seeking

Sections 2 – 4 seek responses after young people watch an **animated scenario** regarding an **unsafe situation with an adult** and again with an **unsafe situation regarding a peer**.

2. The Child Health Utility 9 Dimension (CHU 9D)

Developed as a measure of health-related quality of life for children and young people by Stevens (dates), the CHU 9D is currently used in over 190 research projects.

3. The Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ)

Developed by Robert Goodman (1997), the SDQ measures 5 factors of well-being (4 negative and 1 positive). Cited in over 4000 articles, it is currently used in the longitudinal Growing up in Australia study.

Procedure

The organisation approached ICPS asking to utilise the survey to assess children's perceptions of safety across 5 different programs.

Once registered to take part in the survey (3 online forms) unique links were sent to each program leader where they distributed the links and recruited young people.

Young people filled in the survey over a 3-month period.

Data feeds into the ongoing Children's Safety Studies.



Results

	Range	Family Support Services (2018) Mean	Royal Commission (2015) Mean
Child Informed Organisational Safety Climate	0 - 2	1.69	1.44
Confidence in Adults (Adult scenario)	1 - 5	4.21	3.66
Confidence in Adults (Peer Scenario)	1 - 5	4.15	3.62
Barriers to Help Seeking (Adult scenario)	1 - 5	3.76	3.39
Barriers to Help Seeking (Peer)	1 - 5	3.73	3.39
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Difficulties)	0 - 30	13.04	N/A
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Prosocial)	1 - 5	7.97	N/A
Quality of Life	1 - 9	1.76	N/A

Correlations with wellbeing

N (Range) 145 - 163	SDQ (Difficulties)	SDQ (Prosocial)	Quality of life
Child Informed Organisational Safety Climate	-.29***	.23**	-.32***
Confidence in adults (Adult Scenario)	-.20*	.20*	-.28***
Confidence in adults (Peer Scenario)	-.23**	.18*	-.23**
Barriers to help seeking (Adult Scenario)	-.31***	.22**	-.31***
Barriers to help seeking (Peer Scenario)	-.27**	.19*	-.27**

Small to moderate correlations exist between the three wellbeing variables and all three components of child safety perceptions (ASK-YP).

Conclusions

- Children feel that the Family Support Services programs have a child-safe culture.
- They have confidence in the adults they interact with but feel there are barriers to seeking help.
- Organisations have the opportunity to improve young people's perceptions of safety by working towards standards and principles adopted post Royal Commission.
- Further research regarding wellbeing and perceptions of safety is needed in other sectors.
- Organisations working towards child safety should consider how this intersects with wellbeing work.

References

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Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357–385.

Questions and contact details

**To find out more about the
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