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Financial circumstances determine how children and young people spend their summer

For the majority of young people, summer is a time for relaxing, engaging in independent activities and spending time together. In addition to these positive observations, the examination of the summer activities of children and young people reveals some of the inequalities in Finnish society. For those who considered their financial situation good and for children of highly educated parents, summer was more likely to include travelling, cultural experiences, hobbies and other refreshing activities that enable them to gain different resources. This information emerges from the 2024 Children and Youth Leisure Survey.

“Not much research has been conducted before on how children and young people spend their summer even though most schools, educational institutions and youth centres close their doors for more than two months. As the public institutions are closed, young people’s summer is built more strongly on relationships with family and friends than other seasons. It is therefore not surprising that matters such as financial inequalities are reflected in our results,” says **Antti Kivijärvi**, Senior Researcher at the Finnish Youth Research Society.

The examination of experiences from summer jobs also reveals considerable differences between different population groups. Especially those young people who speak a foreign language as their native language were less likely to find a summer job. This means that the Finnish labour market is at risk of segregation from the very first job applications.

“All young people should have the opportunity to have a summer job and learn about the world of work. Summer jobs strengthen young people’s inclusion, self-confidence and faith in the future. Especially foreign-language speakers and those who do not have previous work experience face obstacles to finding employment. It would be important that, when increasing summer job opportunities for young people, municipalities take these special groups into account and also promote employment opportunities together with the employment areas and companies,” says **Ida Leino**, Chair of the State Youth Council.

Young people find the impacts of social media neutral

More than one half of young people use WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram on a daily basis. However, the use of social media varies according to the young person’s age. For example, TikTok, which has frequently been in the news, is considerably more popular among 15–19-year-olds than among those younger or older than that, while Facebook is mainly used by people aged over 25. Gender also determines young people’s social media habits. Image-based services, such as Instagram, are highlighted in the social media use of girls and young women, whereas services typically used by boys and young men include platforms linked to the gaming culture, such as Discord and YouTube.

One third of young people felt that social media had had a positive impact on their lives, which is twice as many as the number of respondents who rated the impact as negative. Young people most commonly felt that the impact of social media on their lives was neutral or difficult to assess. Indeed, many young people have both positive and negative social media experiences.

“Young people’s social media use is often approached from the point of view of adults’ concerns, in which case harmful effects are emphasised at the expense of typical impacts. Efforts are then made to promote young people’s wellbeing primarily through bans and restrictions. Restrictions are also needed, but research results highlight the fact that comprehensive restrictions also prevent positive social media experiences,” says Statistical Researcher **Konsta Happonen**.

Engagement in guided hobbies decreases dramatically in lower secondary school age

Almost all young people have some kind of hobby. Engagement in hobbies independently is more common than engagement in guided hobbies. Engagement in all guided hobbies declines significantly after the age of 15 at the latest. In physical activity, engagement declines earlier than in artistic and cultural hobbies and in other guided hobbies. However, engagement in hobbies independently is equally common among children, young people and young adults of all ages.

Guided and independent hobbies also differ from the point of view of segregation. Especially participation in guided hobbies accumulates to the same young people. Engagement in guided hobbies was most typical particularly among children of parents with a degree in higher education and among those who considered their financial situation good.

“The results of the survey illustrate a picture in which guided and mainly paid hobbies may lead to differentiation rather than bring together children and young people from different backgrounds. Many young people engage intensively especially in guided physical activity, and the costs then also become high,” says Special Researcher Kivijärvi.

Publication details

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The online version of the leisure survey will be openly available to read online starting from the day of publication. The printed book can be purchased at the publication event or from [Bookstore Tiedekirja](#), [Rosebud Books](#) and other well-equipped bookshops.

Orders of review copies

To request review and advance copies for the use of media, contact Sarianne Karikko, Communication Manager at the Finnish Youth Research Society by email, sarianne.karikko@nuorisotutkimus.fi.

Infographics

Also familiarise yourself with the infographics of the 2024 leisure survey, which summarise the results (attached to the distribution of the press release).

Publication event

[The publication event for the leisure survey](#) will be held at Tiedekulma (Yliopistonkatu 4, Helsinki) on Wednesday 10 December from 9.00 to 11.00. The event can also be followed online on the [Tiedekulma website](#).

Children and Youth Leisure Survey

The Children and Youth Leisure Survey examines the views of 10–29-year-olds on leisure activities, the media, physical activity and time use. The survey is published every two years, and it is based on national survey data. The first leisure survey was published in 2009.

The 2024 survey focuses especially on how children and young people spend their summers and on their views on mobile technology. A total of 1,419 children and young people aged between 10 and 29 responded to the survey. The survey was published jointly by the [State Youth Council](#) and the [Finnish Youth Research Society](#).

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