



*KidsHealth KidsPoll®—How Do Kids Handle Conflict?
Summary of Findings*

KidsHealth KidsPoll is collaboration among the Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth, the Department of Health Education and Recreation at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, the National Association of Health Education Centers, and participating health education centers. The purpose is to gather information (opinions, attitudes, and feelings, etc.) about current health issues from children. The information is gathered using handheld data collection devices from kids ages 9 to 13 as they attend classes in the health education centers. The information is shared with educators, caregivers, health care organizations, the media, and other interested parties at the national and local levels. The goal is to provide insightful information that will enable them to develop programs to help kids make healthy life decisions, prevent disease and injury, and understand their bodies. This poll focused on how kids handle conflict.

Individual Demographics

Individual-level information was collected anonymously from each child who participated.

- 1,245 children
- 53% girls, 47% boys
- 9-13 (average age 10.5) (9=28%, 10=29%, 11=22%, 12/13=21%)
- 10 centers participated in this poll:
 - CDC Global Health Odyssey – Atlanta, GA
 - Children’s Health Education Center – Milwaukee, WI
 - Robert Crown Health Education Center – Chicago, IL
 - Health World Children’s Museum – Barrington, IL
 - Hult Health Education Center – Peoria, IL
 - Kansas Learning Center – Halstead, KS
 - McMillen Center for Health Education – Ft. Wayne, IN
 - Poe Center for Health Education – Raleigh, NC
 - Ruth Lilly Health Education Center – Indianapolis, IN
 - Weller Health Education Center – Easton, PA

School Demographics

School-level information was not collected from each child, but is based on statistics for the schools.

- 31 schools
- Students participating came from schools that averaged: 48% White, 37% Black, 12% Hispanic, 2% Asian/Pacific, 1% Native American:
 - 29% of the students came from schools with student bodies that were 0-33% Black/Hispanic/Asian/Native American combined
 - 33% of the students came from schools with student bodies that were 33-67% of these groups
 - 38% of the students came from schools with student bodies that were 67-100% of these groups
- Students came from schools with an average of 57% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch:
 - 24% of students were from schools with 0-33% of their student body qualifying for free or reduced lunch
 - 31% of students were from schools with 33-67% of their student body qualifying for free or reduced lunch
 - 45% of students were from schools with 67-100% of their student body qualifying for free or reduced lunch

The U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Dept of Education use a measure of city size and location called a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The categories for MSA are:

- *Large city center = center of a MSA city with population >250,000*
- *Midsize city center = center of a MSA city with a population <250,000*
- *Large city fringe = urban fringe of a large MSA city*
- *Midsize city fringe = urban fringe of a midsize MSA city*
- *Large town = not within a MSA with a population >25,000*
- *Small town = not within an MSA with a population 2,500-25,000*
- *Rural outside = not within an MSA with a population <2,500*

- The percentage of students from schools in each locale were: 44% large city center, 21% midsize city center, 8% large city fringe, 13% midsize city fringe, 3% large town, 5% small town, and 5% rural.
- Average school size: 362
 - 39% of students came from schools with an enrollment of 0-300
 - 52% of students came from schools with an enrollment of 301-600
 - 9% of students came from schools with an enrollment of 601-900
 - 0% of students came from schools with an enrollment of 900+

Statistically Significant Findings — Overall

1. What usually happens when you are around people very different from you?

- a. I mostly ignore or try to avoid them**
- b. I try to get to know them, but usually don't like them**
- c. I try to get to know them, and usually like them**
- d. None of these**

38% said they usually like them; 24% said they usually do not like them, despite trying; while 14% avoid them. One fourth said none of these. Boys were more likely to say none of these (30% vs. 23%), whereas girls were more apt to say they like them (51% vs. 39%). Those who have less arguing at home were more likely to say they don't like them (see Summary Table). There were not discernible patterns by age.

2. With whom do you argue the most?

- a. Parents (or other grownups at home)**
- b. Brothers or sisters**
- c. Friends**
- d. Other kids**
- e. Someone else**

More than half of the students said they most often fight with siblings. This was followed by parents, other kids, and friends at 18%, 12%, and 10%, respectively. The more often they reported arguments at home, the more likely they were to say that they most often argue with siblings (see Summary Table). There were no discernible patterns by age or gender.

3. How often is there arguing in your home?

- a. Every day**
- b. Every week, but not every day**
- c. Every month, but not every week**
- d. A few times a year**
- e. Never**

38% reported daily arguments and another 26% reported weekly argument. There were no discernible patterns by age or gender.

4. How often do you argue with other kids your age?

- a. Every day**
- b. Every week, but not every day**
- c. Every month, but not every week**
- d. A few times a year**
- e. Never**

About a quarter each said daily and weekly, 14% said monthly, 18% said a few times a year, and 15% said never. Older children were more likely to admit to daily or weekly arguments (9=47%, 10=48%, 11=57%, 12/13=66%). Those who usually report less tolerance were more likely to have daily or weekly arguments than those who ignore and those who learn to like different people (64%, 51%, and 47%, respectively). There was no difference by gender.

- 5. What do you most often worry about when you are in an argument with a kid your age?**
- a. That I will hurt the other person's feelings**
 - b. That we won't be as good of friends afterwards**
 - c. That he or she will tell other people not to be my friend**
 - d. I don't worry when I'm in an argument**

The majority (40%) said they don't worry, with about 1 in 5 giving each of the remaining answers. There were no differences by age or gender.

- 6. What do you usually do when you are in an argument with another kid your age?**
- a. Talk it out or work it out**
 - b. Ignore the person or walk away**
 - c. Get upset or cry**
 - d. Get angry and yell or use mean words**
 - e. Hit or get in a physical fight**

A third said they usually work it out, followed by a fourth who said they get physical. 19% said they ignore them and 18% said they yell; only 4% admitted to getting upset or crying. Boys were more likely to say they get physical (36% vs. 21%). Girls were more likely to say they work it out (30% vs. 24%), get upset (6% vs. 2%), or yell (23% vs. 18%). Those who have fewer arguments at home were more likely to try to work it out (see Summary Table). Those who say they don't worry when in an argument are much more likely to get physical than those who have some worry (41% vs. 21%, 10%, and 18%).

- 7. How do you usually apologize when you have an argument with another kid?**
- a. Write a note on paper**
 - b. Send an email or text message**
 - c. Call on the phone**
 - d. Talk in person**
 - e. I usually don't apologize**

The two most common responses were talk in person (41%) and don't apologize (33%). Those with more frequent arguments at home were more likely to either not apologize or to talk in person (see Summary Table). There were no discernible patterns by age or gender.

- 8. What is the best thing adults can do when kids argue with each other?**
- a. Leave them alone and let them work it out**
 - b. Help them work it out**
 - c. Stop the argument and split them up**
 - d. Stop the argument and get them to play nicely**
 - e. I don't know**

One in five said they didn't know what was best. Of those who had an answer, about a third each chose either let them work it out or help them work it out. Girls were more likely to say let them work it out (40% vs. 32%). Older children were also more likely to say let them work it out

(9=23%, 10= 28%, 11=39% 12/13=43%). Those who don't worry about arguments were the least likely to say help them work it out (24% vs. 38%, 38%, and 42%, respectively).

Other Findings Worth Highlighting

Another way of looking at the data is to calculate odds ratios for outcomes based on the predictive variables. To statistically control for inter-correlation among variables, odds ratios were calculated using Multivariate Binary Logistic Regression. The outcomes of interest were whether kids worry after an argument, how often they report arguments with other kids, which of two options they usually choose during arguments, whether they apologize or not after an argument with another kid, and whether they believe adults should get involved in arguments between kids.

	Worry vs. don't worry about argument with kids	Weekly or more frequent vs. less frequent peer argument	What they do: yell or fight vs. work it out	Apologize vs. don't apologize after argument with kids	Involve adults vs. don't involve adults
Gender					
boys	1.4 (0.9-2.0)	0.8 (0.5-1.2)	1.4 (0.9-2.3)	1.3 (0.8-1.9)	0.7 (0.5-1.2)
girls	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Age					
12/13	0.6 (0.4-1.1)	2.5* (1.4-4.6)	0.3* (0.1-0.6)	0.6 (0.3-1.2)	1.2 (0.6-2.3)
11	1.0 (0.6-1.9)	1.9* (1.1-3.3)	0.7 (0.4-1.5)	1.2 (0.6-2.2)	0.6 (0.3-1.2)
10	1.4 (0.9-2.4)	1.5 (0.9-2.5)	1.1 (0.5-2.0)	1.3 (0.7-2.4)	0.5 (0.3-1.1)
9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Worry About					
tell others	na	0.6 (0.3-1.1)	2.5* (1.3-4.8)	2.3* (1.3-3.9)	1.2 (0.7-2.3)
lose friend	na	0.5* (0.3-0.8)	5.8* (2.9-11.8)	7.5* (3.6-15.6)	1.5 (0.8-2.9)
hurt other	na	0.7 (0.4-1.1)	3.3* (1.7-6.2)	3.9* (2.2-6.9)	1.2 (0.7-2.3)
don't worry	na	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Home Arguments					
monthly or less	1.4 (0.9-2.1)	0.4* (0.3-0.6)	1.9* (1.1-3.4)	1.2 (0.7-2.0)	1.7* (1.0-3.0)
weekly	1.6* (1.1-2.6)	0.5* (0.3-0.8)	1.7 (0.9-3.2)	1.2 (0.7-2.0)	1.8* (1.0-3.1)
daily	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Tolerance					
ignore	1.5 (0.8-2.6)	0.9 (0.5-1.7)	1.7 (0.8-3.7)	1.5 (0.8-2.9)	0.9 (0.4-1.9)
don't like	1.0 (0.5-1.8)	1.0 (0.5-1.8)	0.6 (0.2-1.5)	0.7 (0.4-1.3)	1.4 (0.6-3.1)
like	1.5 (1.0-2.4)	0.8 (0.5-1.3)	1.8 (0.9-3.2)	1.7* (1.1-2.9)	1.0 (0.6-1.7)
other	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Adjusted Odds Ratios (with 99% confidence intervals)

Statistically significant differences are noted by asterisks ($P < 0.01$). Analyzed together, only weekly home argument (AOR=1.6x) predicted how much kids worry about arguments with peers.

Older kids were more likely (1.9 to 2.5x) to report weekly or more frequent arguments with peers. Those who worry most about losing a friendship were half as likely to have frequent arguments with peers. Further, those with less frequent arguments at home were also less likely to have frequent arguments with peers (0.4 to 0.5x).

Older kids were less likely to work things out as opposed to fight/yell during a peer argument (0.3x). Compared with those who don't worry about peer arguments, those who worry about something are more likely to work things out (about others being told=2.5x, about losing friendship=5.8x, about hurting the other person=3.3x). Also, those with less arguing at home are more likely to try to work things out (1.9x).

Those who worry about something are more likely to apologize than those who don't worry about peer arguments (about others being told=2.3x, about losing friendship=7.5x, about hurting the other person=3.9x). Also, those who like those different from themselves are more likely to try to apologize (1.7x).

The only predictor for preference for involving adults in peer arguments was frequency of home arguments. Those with less frequent home arguments were more likely to want to involve adults in peer arguments (1.7 to 1.8x) compared with those with daily home arguments.

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