

# Children in the news: they're horrid aren't they?

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News tends to highlight the negative but it is especially confused when it comes to children. Two young children die in a car accident and it makes national [headlines](#) because taking young lives is worse but mainly because a footballer is involved.

Teenagers are killed in [knife crime](#) and that makes headlines even though the statistics have remained pretty stable for a decade now.

The United Nations publishes a [report](#) about the 'grim' life for British youth which declares that "Youth justice and attitudes to young 'have got worse'".

And yet if you look at the figures in that UN report it is possible to paint a picture of an alternative universe where things look rather rosy.

It shows that:

- almost 90% of families eat together sometimes/most of the time/always
- almost 90% have never got into trouble with the police
- 97% feel safe at home
- 77% feel listened to by adults

The recent 'Kids Season' on [BBC Four](#) was a brave attempt to portray a more rounded picture of UK youth. The documentary series [My New Best Friend](#) was set in an inner city comp but managed to portray its subjects as human beings rather than fodder for reality TV or as evidence for some depressing social thesis. [watch again [here](#)]

But there are still plenty of facts to support the bad news stories. It is shocking that one in ten children claim to have carried a knife in the last year. It is certainly wrong that so many children are criminalised and then mistreated in the 'care' or justice systems.

But what is really 'grim' is how this appears to be a relatively small and immutable section of society. We have a certain class of youth who seem to be unaffected by government efforts to lift them out of poverty or remove them from harm's way. By picking on individual issues rather than looking at this group as a whole the media, and possibly policy-makers, are only seeing headlines instead of underlying causes.

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