Images provided by **Piktochart** make information beautiful, **freepik** free graphic resources for designers, **pixabay**, **123RF**

Are All Schools "Good" Schools?

what do children really think?

To find out, we conducted a survey with 300 primary school students (P4 to P6) and 301 secondary school students (Sec 1 to Sec 4).

Schools the students attended were classified into different tiers, based on their academic programmes. Schools in the highest tier offered the Gifted Education Programme (GEP) or the Integrated Programme (IP).

☞ We found that regardless of school type, students perceived those from "good" schools to have a higher social status than those from "other" schools.

☞ Students also felt that those from "good" schools had better academic competence than those from "other" schools.

To access the e-version of the newsletter, please go to www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-bites.

What Do Children Really Think About "Good" Schools in Singapore?

In the survey, students were asked to indicate on a ladder their own *social status* (i.e. wealth, housing and exam scores), and to rate their *academic competence*. They were also asked to do the same for a generic student from a "good" school as well as a generic student from an "other" school.

Perceptions of Oneself vs. Others

Primary School

Social Status

There were no differences in the way primary school students from different school types rated their own social status.

Academic Competence

There were also no differences in the way primary school students rated their own academic competence.

Secondary School

Social Status

Students in the highest school tier gave themselves a higher rating of social status, whereas those from lower tiers gave themselves a lower rating of social status.

Academic Competence

Secondary school students from different school types did not differ in the way they rated their own academic competence.

Differences Emerge at Secondary School

Students gave the generic *"good" school* student a high social status and the generic "*other" school* student a low social status. Students in the highest school tier were more likely to see themselves as similar in social status to generic students from "good" schools, whereas those of other school tiers saw themselves as similar to generic students from "other" schools.

Our findings indicate that there may be some social distance between the students from schools typically considered to be "good" and those from other schools.

What can be done?

☛ Address the stereotype that students from "good" schools have higher social status.

☛ Provide opportunities for students from different school types to interact with one another.

Stay tuned for more findings in our next issue!

More information on the study can be found at www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-ongoing.

The Easy vs. Difficult Child

What Factors Contribute to Child Temperament?
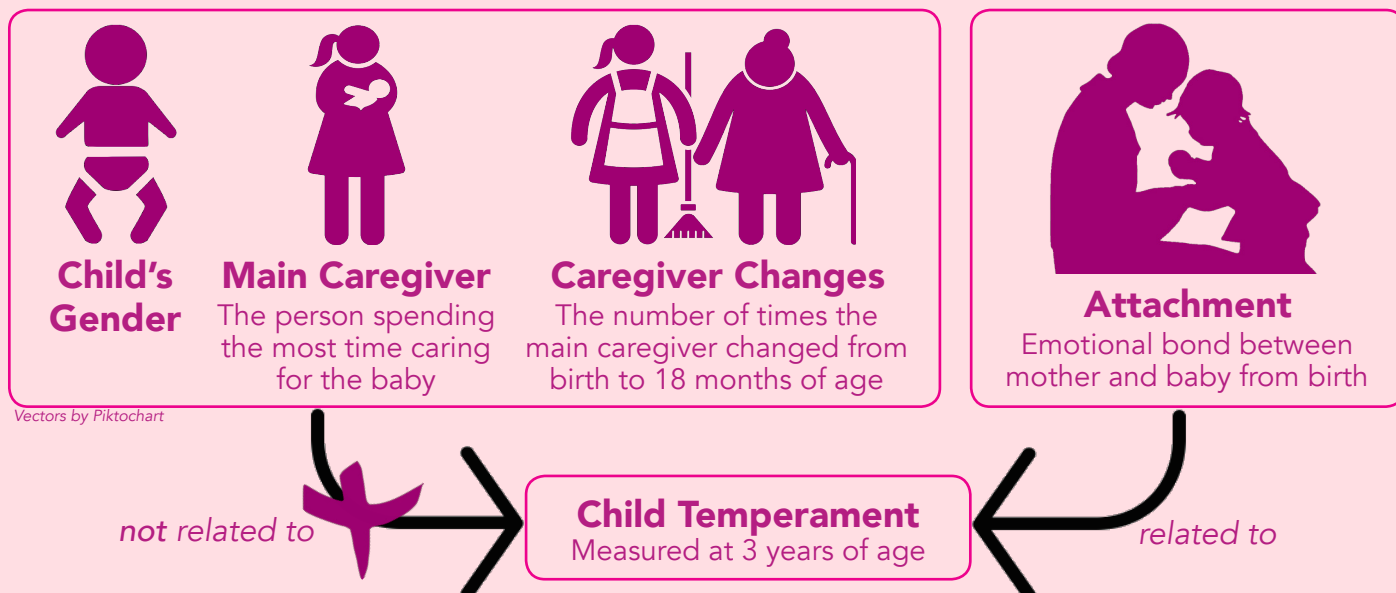
Child temperament refers to the way children approach and react to people and their surroundings. In this study, we were interested in whether *child temperament* would be affected by the child's gender, who their main caregiver was, the number of times their main caregiver changed, and the emotional bond between mother and baby.

Easy Temperament	vs.	Difficult Temperament
• Easy to soothe • Sociable • Cooperative		• Tends to cry & be fussy • Shy • Irritable
More likely to have		*More likely to have*
• Better social skills • Secure bond with mother		• Poorer social skills • Insecure bond with mother

In collaboration with KK Women's & Children's Hospital, we interviewed 439 first-time mothers when their children were 4, 18, and 36 months old.

Our Findings

The child's gender, who the child's main caregiver was, and the number of times the caregiver changed did not relate to child temperament. Instead, children with a secure attachment were more likely to have an easy rather than difficult temperament.

Child's Gender

Main Caregiver
The person spending the most time caring for the baby

Caregiver Changes
The number of times the main caregiver changed from birth to 18 months of age

Attachment
Emotional bond between mother and baby from birth

Vectors by Piktochart

not related to

related to

Child Temperament
Measured at 3 years of age

In conclusion, parents and caregivers can focus more on maintaining positive interactions with their child, rather than count the hours of contact. This focus is especially important for parents whose work reduces their time with their children, or for parents and caregivers of temperamentally difficult children.

Stay tuned for more findings in our next issue!

What Sort of Behaviours Constitute Child Abuse and Neglect?

Through the Lens of Different Professionals

Professionals play an important role in child protection, as maltreated children are often unable to seek help for themselves.

We asked 1,155 professionals (counsellors, doctors, educators, lawyers, nurses, police officers, social workers) whether they considered 18 behaviours to be *abuse*.

Findings

Professionals, regardless of their professions, perceived child abuse and neglect by defining it with respect to a high severity of harm to children.

Professionals were almost unanimous in regarding *extreme behaviours of harm* as child abuse and neglect.

Having sex with a child
98% regarded it as *abuse*

Burning a child with a cigarette
98% regarded it as *abuse*

However, professional perceptions differed for behaviours with *less visible harm* to children, the prime example being **emotional maltreatment**.

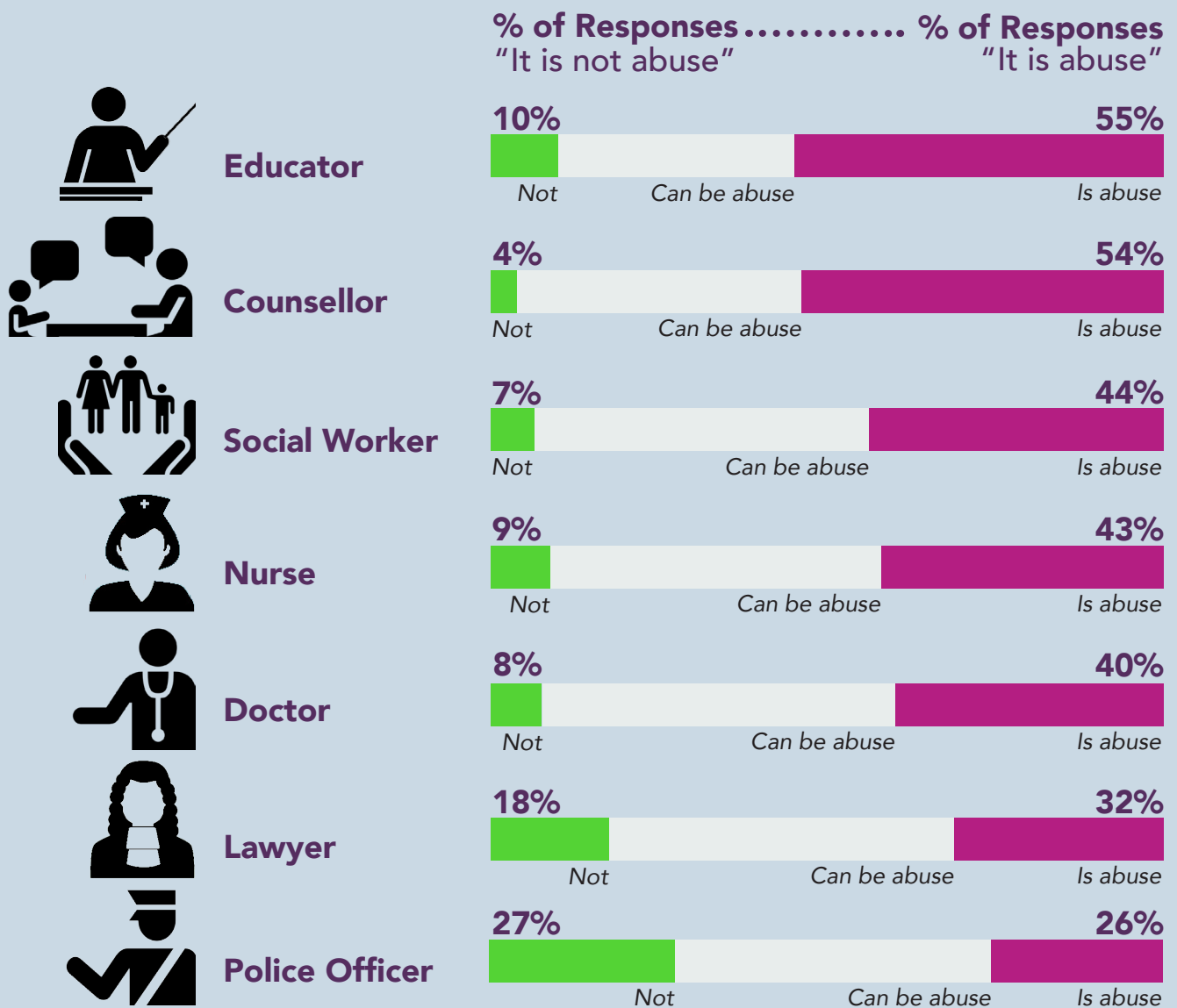**Calling a child "useless"**
19% to 62% regarded it as *abuse*

Threatening to abandon a child
33% to 57% regarded it as *abuse*

More information about the study can be found at www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-ongoing.

What Sort of Behaviours Constitute Child Abuse and Neglect? *continued...*

Through the Lens of Different Professionals

Emotional Maltreatment: *Is it abuse?*

% of Responses .... **% of Responses**
"It is not abuse"   "It is abuse"

Professional	"It is not abuse"		"It is abuse"
Educator	10% Not	Can be abuse	55% Is abuse
Counsellor	4% Not	Can be abuse	54% Is abuse
Social Worker	7% Not	Can be abuse	44% Is abuse
Nurse	9% Not	Can be abuse	43% Is abuse
Doctor	8% Not	Can be abuse	40% Is abuse
Lawyer	18% Not	Can be abuse	32% Is abuse
Police Officer	27% Not	Can be abuse	26% Is abuse

Implications

1 Among professionals, there is consensus that extreme behaviours of harm directed at children *is* abuse.

2 Professionals are less consistent in identifying child abuse and neglect which have less visible signs of harm.

3 More focus could be given to behaviours with less visible harm, particularly emotional maltreatment, when training professionals.

Cyberbullying
When Bullying Goes Online

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

3,319 adolescents aged 12 to 17 yrs

28 schools

What is Cyberbullying? @bullyfree.sg

Cyberbullying is bullying in cyberspace where harm is intentionally and repeatedly inflicted upon an individual through the use of computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices.

About **1** in **9** reported being CYBERBULLIED

But, **40%** of victims also cyberbullied others

NO gender differences

Compared to those who have not been bullied, cybervictims are more likely to have frequent psychosomatic symptoms such as recurring headaches, socioemotional and behavioural problems, and self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

HOW

Top Tactics:
- Disrespected online
- Called names
- Rumours about them

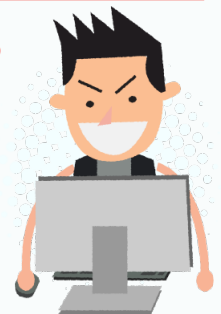**Affects their online reputation**

WHERE

Top Platforms:

Social Networking Sites

Text Messaging

BY WHOM

Likely to have an idea of who the bully is!

TRENDS of CYBERBULLYING

More information about the study can be found at www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-ongoing.

What can you do to help?

**STOP** **BLOCK** **SAVE** **TELL**

Visit **www.bullyfree.sg** *for more information*

This study is a collaboration between the Singapore Children's Society and the Child Guidance Clinic of the Institute of Mental Health.

Children's SOCIETY
Caring for the Future

Child Guidance Clinic

Spotlight! Research Grant Recipient

Ms Tok Kheng Leng was a recipient of the Singapore Children's Society Research Grant in 2015. She was a Social Work student at the National University of Singapore and completed this study as her Honours Thesis.
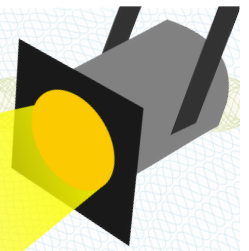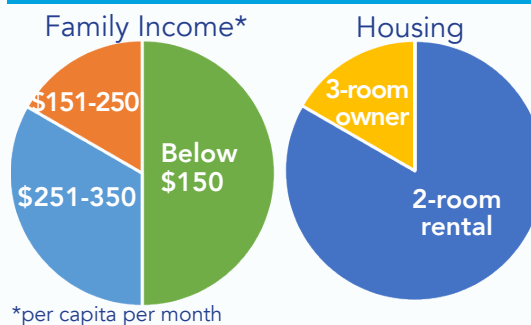
What factors contribute to academic resilience?

Academic resilience is characterised by the ability of students to achieve good educational outcomes despite experiencing adverse living conditions such as poverty.

Participants

Six low-income one-child (aged 9 to 13 years) families were interviewed. Children who scored above the 70th percentile at year-end and those with a Primary School Leaving Examination score of 213 or higher were included in the study.

Demographics

Family Income*

- $151-250
- $251-350
- Below $150

Housing

- 3-room owner
- 2-room rental

*per capita per month

Challenges

Children faced a number of challenges which included: being bullied, having a desire to hide their family's financial situation from their friends, a home environment unconducive for studying, and parental conflict.

Findings

Strong parent-child relationships contributed to academic excellence despite challenges from poverty. Despite limited resources, the families strategised to help their children achieve academic success.

Parents' strategies

- Monitored children's homework closely.
- Established routines and rules regarding homework.
- Trained children to be independent and resourceful.
- Used insights about their children to motivate them.

Children's strategies

- Revision strategies (e.g., focus on difficult topics).
- Confidence in their academic abilities.
- Made time to relax and manage stress.
- Overcame unconducive studying environment.

Singapore Children's Society Research Grant

Since 1992, the Singapore Children's Society has awarded over 90 research grants to students conducting research related to children, youth, and families. For more information, visit **www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-grants**.

Email us to subscribe to the e-version of our newsletter at researchbites@childrensociety.org.sg!

A Note From Our Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second issue of Research Bites, the Singapore Children's Society's bi-annual research newsletter. By presenting our research in bite-sized chunks, we aim to make our findings accessible to practitioners, researchers and anyone else interested in finding out more about our work. In this issue, we feature our research on a variety of issues pertinent to children and youth such as perceptions of child abuse and child temperament. We also hope to answer questions like "do children think that all schools are good schools?" and "how many students in Singapore experience cyberbullying?"

I hope that you have enjoyed reading Research Bites! If Research Bites has whetted your appetite and you would like to find out more, I encourage you to refer to our website (www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-ongoing) for more in-depth information about each study. From the next issue onward, we will be moving Research Bites online. If you prefer to continue receiving print copies of Research Bites, please contact us. Otherwise, subscribe to the e-version of Research Bites by dropping us an email at researchbites@childrensociety.org.sg.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to Research Bites, especially our Research Committee members, Dr Tan Seok Hui and Dr Quah Saw Han. We look forward to hearing from our readers, so please feel free to drop us an email if you have any comments or suggestions.

Thank you, and happy reading!

Denise Liu,
Editor, Research Bites
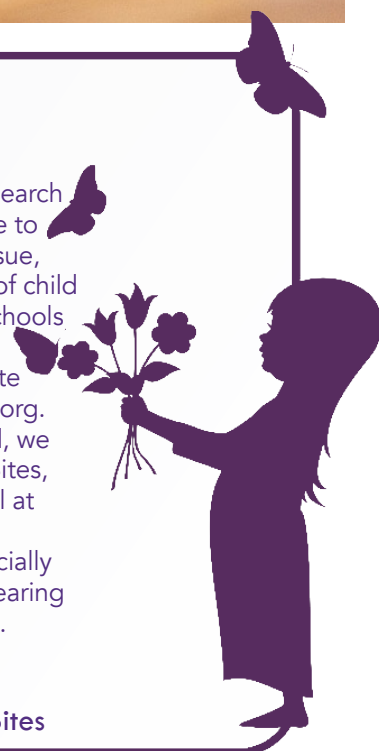
Research Bites, Singapore Children's Society's bi-annual research newsletter, aims to make research findings more accessible to interested members of the public and professionals working with children. With its easily digestible visual format, **Research Bites** aims to acquaint readers with our research — both completed and in progress — and research-related information. **Research Bites** is available at **www.childrensociety.org.sg/research-bites**.

Research Committee