

Children Don't Want Experts!

A representative study shows that two in three children want more info on corona, but want it explained by adolescents or young adults

A survey of n=837 children shows that many of them do not feel well enough informed about coronavirus. They want the explanations, however, to come from adolescents or young adults, not from experts.

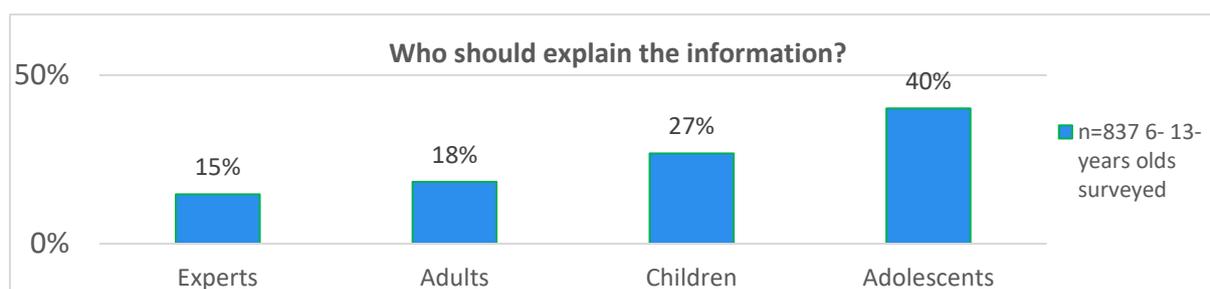
Munich, 27.1.2021 – The International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (Internationales Zentralinstitut für das Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen, IZI), part of the Bayerischer Rundfunk, asked n=837 children between the ages of 6 and 13, among other questions, whether they felt they had enough information about how they could protect themselves from coronavirus, and who they thought should provide them with this information.

Most children and pre-teens want more information about corona

The study “Topics of Interest for Children in Television News Programmes” (“Das Themeninteresse von Kindern bei Nachrichtensendungen”) showed that surprisingly few children are absolutely secure in their knowledge about corona. For example, only 16% stated that they “strongly agree” and 35% that they “agree” with the statement “I know how I can protect myself against corona and need no further information”. There were no differences here in terms of sex or age. Many children (66%) actively seek out new information on coronavirus. Furthermore, most of them (84%) would like to know, for example, how children in other countries are being affected by corona. Overall, this is a sign that even after nearly a year of the pandemic, children are still not sure how to deal with the virus.

The presenters should be adolescents or young adults

In response to the question of who should present this information to them, four in ten children state that the presenters should be adolescents or young adults. Six- to ten-year-olds can even picture a child in the role of presenter. However, only a few would like experts to present the information.



“Children need information that is purposefully adapted for them, comprehensible and age-appropriate”, says Maya Götz (IZI). “The study clearly shows that we underestimate children’s uncertainty when it comes to dealing with the virus.” Various studies have repeatedly shown that experts are, on the whole, very unappealing to children, and children do not understand what they are saying. In this respect, it is always important to present new developments, but also reinforce what is already known, in an appealing way, focusing on the children’s perspective on life in the pandemic.

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