

# Trends & Tudes<sup>SM</sup>

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Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

## Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Feeling Safe: What Girls Say...                                     | 1-4 |
| Editorial: Our Take On It.....                                      | 2-4 |
| Ask a Question Get An Answer ..                                     | 4   |
| Recent Research for<br>Public Release .....                         | 5   |
| Come See Us at Kid Power .....                                      | 5   |
| Come See Us at IIR's Youth<br>Marketing Mega-Event! .....           | 5   |
| The 2003 Wave of YouthPulse <sup>SM</sup><br>Is Now Available ..... | 6   |
| 360 Youth College Explorer:<br>2003-2004 .....                      | 6   |
| We've Been Published .....  | 6   |
| Trends & Tudes Poll Vault .....                                     | 6   |
| Contact Us .....  | 6   |

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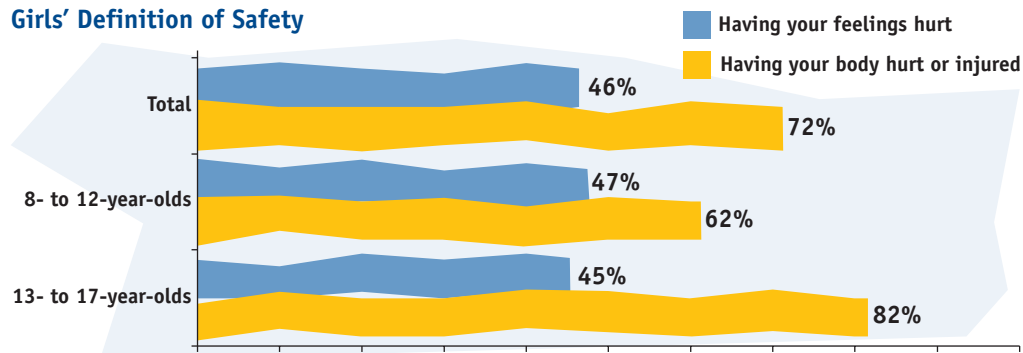
## Feeling Safe: What Girls Say

Harris Interactive has the privilege of working with many respected and prominent youth organizations on important issues in children's and teens' lives. This past year, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say". Previous studies by GSUSA's Girl Scout Research Institute found that a top concern of girls 11 to 17 is the need to feel "safe"—physically, socially and emotionally—as the basis for their healthy development.<sup>1</sup> "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say" examined this issue in more depth. The study included ten focus groups conducted in four target cities around the country with girls ages 8 to 17 and a national, online survey of 2,279 girls in the same age range. The research covered several aspects of safety, including how girls define safety, emotional safety versus physical safety, the role of social relationships in safety, and developmental changes from the tween through teen years.

### Defining Safety

What does "being safe" mean to girls? The majority of girls (72%) define safety as not being **physically** hurt. However, nearly half (46%) also consider **emotional** danger in their definition of safety. In fact, girls' topmost safety concern is being teased or made fun of (32%). Tweens and teens have somewhat different definitions of safety. Teens place greater emphasis on physical safety, while tweens are especially concerned with emotional safety. More teens (82%) than tweens (62%) report feeling safe means not having your body hurt. They are also more likely than tweens to be worried about being attacked with a weapon (35% vs. 21%), being forced to do something sexual (34% vs. 15%), getting into a car accident (29% vs. 14%) and getting a disease (32% vs. 10%).

### Girls' Definition of Safety



Source: "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say", October 2003. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Girl Scouts of the USA. Base: Girls ages 8- to 17-years-old (n = 2,279)

<sup>1</sup>"The Ten Emerging Truths: New Directions for Girls 11-17" (2002) and "How America's Youth Are Faring Since September 11th" (2002), reports published by the Girl Scout Research Institute, New York, NY



YOUTH AND EDUCATION  
The Harris Poll<sup>®</sup> PEOPLE

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## Editorial: Our Take On It

by Dana Markow, Ph.D.

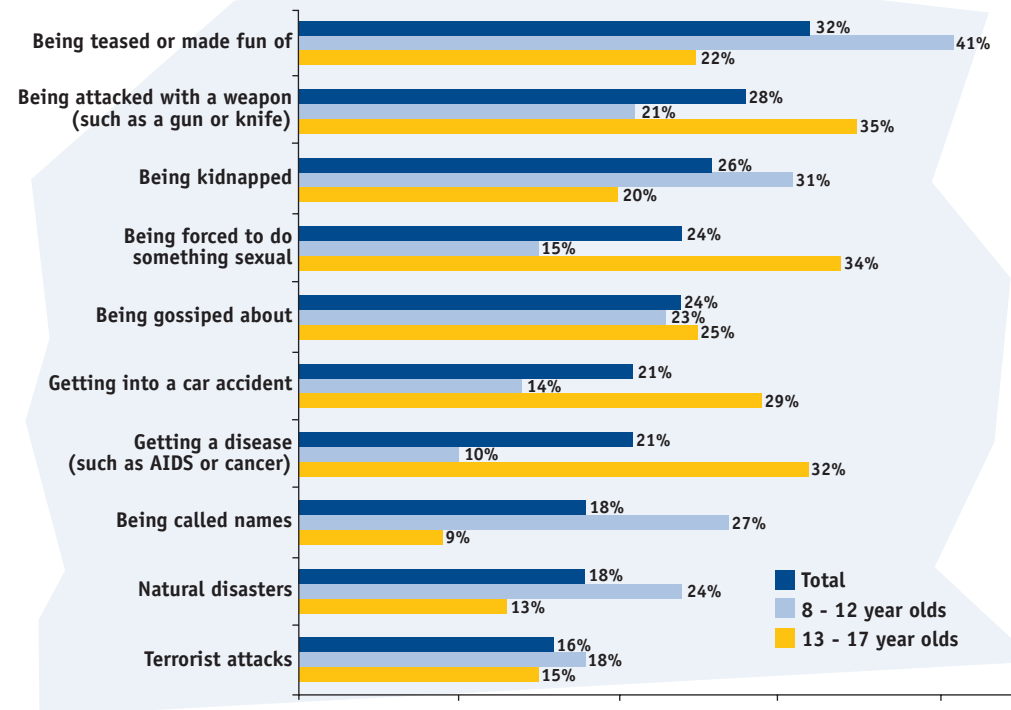
Senior Director

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This month's issue of *Trends & Tudes* highlights girls' experiences with safety and their concerns in this area. But this generation is not solely defined by their worries and fears. Overall, the Millennials are an optimistic, resilient generation. Most teens expect to go to college, are very confident that they will achieve their goals for the future, and believe they will have more money and job opportunities than their parents ("MetLife Survey of the American Teacher," 2000). Our 2003 YouthPulse survey found that the majority of tweens and teens believe that when they are 30 years old, they will be in a career they like (86%), own a house (86%), be physically fit (72%), and be married (72%). Girls and boys have equally high expectations in all of these areas. When it comes to education, girls have higher expectations than boys. Girls are more likely than boys to expect to have a graduate degree.

Today's tweens and teens do have concerns, and safety is not the only issue. In our 2003 YouthPulse study, we found that over half of boys and girls are worried that someone close to them will get sick or die (58%) and about getting good grades

### Girls' Top 10 Safety Worries

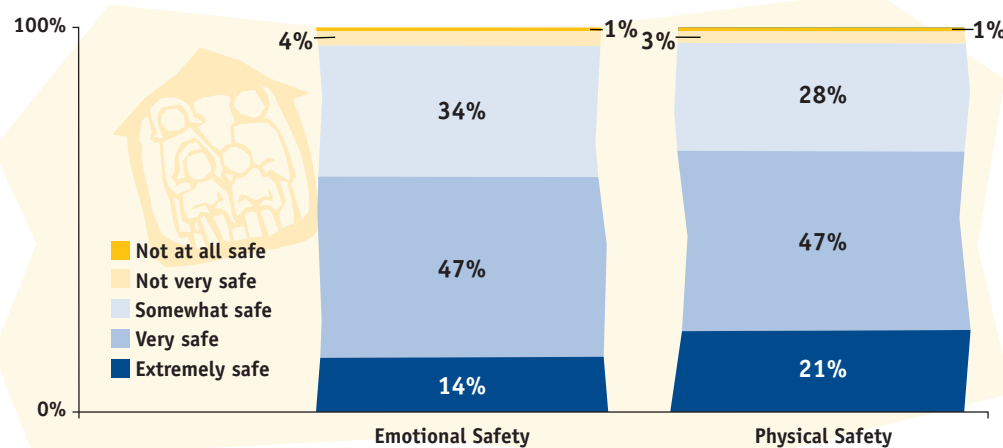


Source: "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say", October 2003. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Girl Scouts of the USA. Base: Girls ages 8- to 17-years-old (n = 2,279)

### Experiencing Safety

How safe do girls feel on a typical day? Girls are slightly more likely to feel physically than emotionally safe. Sixty-eight percent say that they feel extremely or very safe physically and 61% feel extremely or very safe emotionally. However, a sizable number of girls only feel somewhat safe physically (28%) or emotionally (34%).

### Feeling Emotionally and Physically Safe on a Typical Day



Source: "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say", October 2003. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Girl Scouts of the USA. Base: Girls ages 8- to 17-years-old (n = 2,279)

Continued on Page 3

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in school (56%). Other top areas of concern for boys and girls are how they look (44%), their weight (41%), and that college will be expensive for them (37%).

In all of these areas, girls are more likely to express concern than boys. Girls are more likely than boys to say they worry about getting good grades (60% vs. 52%), how they look (53% vs. 36%), their weight (52% vs. 31%), and that college will be too expensive (43% vs. 32%). In only two areas we asked about did more boys than girls have concerns. Boys today are more likely than girls to worry about having to fight in a war (33% vs. 17%) and doing well in sports (27% vs. 20%).

Teenagers' concerns also go beyond their own backyard. As we enter this presidential election year, half of teens or more are worried that the environment is getting more polluted (54%) and that they might not be able to find a job (51%). Nearly half are worried that there are too many people living in poverty and that not everyone has equal rights (48%). In these areas as well, more girls express concern than boys.

The "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say" report featured in this issue of *Trends & Tudes* illuminates the association between feeling unsafe and other negative experiences, as well as how feeling safe relates to optimism

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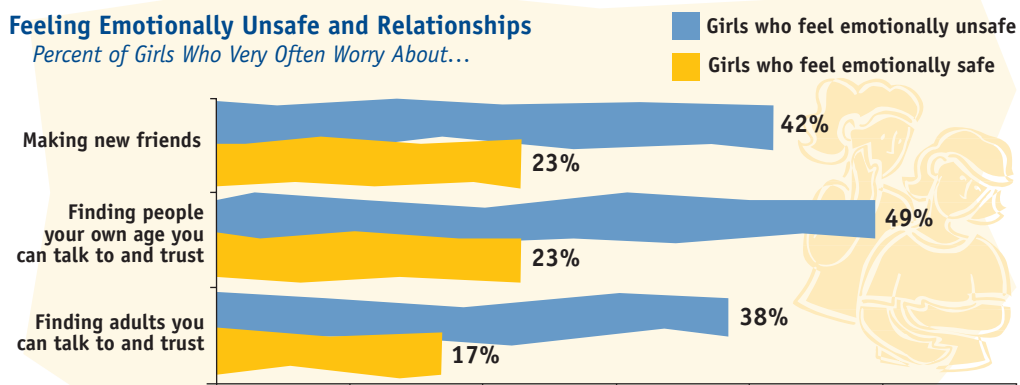
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## Safety and Relationships

The quality of relationships emerges as an important intersection with safety. Girls who feel emotionally safe are more likely to get along well with their parents (54% vs. 30%) and have a lot of friends (53% vs. 23%). Girls who feel emotionally unsafe are more likely to worry about making new friends (42% vs. 23%), finding people their own age they can talk to and trust (49% vs. 23%) and finding adults they can talk to and trust (38% vs. 17%).

### Feeling Emotionally Unsafe and Relationships

Percent of Girls Who Very Often Worry About...



Source: "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say," October 2003. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Girl Scouts of the USA. Base: Girls ages 8- to 17-years-old (Emotionally safe (extremely/very safe) n=1415. Emotionally unsafe (not very/not at all safe) n=135. Girls who responded "somewhat safe" are not included in this graph.)

## Implications

Having several adults to turn to for support is often an indication of a sense of well-being, and is particularly important for girls. Most girls (83%) report that they have at least three adults in their lives that they could turn to if they were in trouble or needed help, although 23% of teen girls (13 to 17) say they have fewer than three adults to turn to. Girls who feel emotionally unsafe are less likely than those who feel safe to have at least three supportive adults in their lives (73% vs. 86%). The survey found that girls who feel emotionally or physically unsafe are also more likely than girls who feel safe to have other negative experiences, such as having trouble paying attention in school and often feeling sad and unhappy. Thus, safety matters in ways that go beyond being free from imminent physical danger. The survey showed that those who felt physically unsafe also described themselves as emotionally unsafe, so emotional safety is of key concern as well. In the words of one 12-year-old girl, "A broken arm can heal, but what about a broken heart? Words hurt a lot."

## Find out more

Insights from this study will be presented by GSUSA and Harris Interactive at the Kid Power Spring conference in May. More information on "Feeling Safe: What Girls Say" (including the Executive Summary) is available on the Girl Scouts of the USA website: [http://www.girlscouts.org/about/ResearchInstitute/original/feeling\\_safe.html](http://www.girlscouts.org/about/ResearchInstitute/original/feeling_safe.html)

Continued on Page 4

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about the future and other positive experiences. For those who work with or care about children and teens, addressing their concerns about safety and other issues can help them achieve the high expectations for their future that they have.

Continued from Page 3

Harris Interactive has conducted several other studies on issues of safety and violence with youth. Many of these reports are available from their sponsoring organizations. The following are a few examples:

- "Terrorism, the Attack on America and Implications for Youth Marketers," Harris Interactive Youth Polls (2001 - 2002)
- "Youth and Violence," Families and Work Institute (2002)
- "Lethal Violence in Schools: A National Study," Alfred University (2001)
- "Hostile Hallways and Hostile Hallways II: Bullying, Teasing and Sexual Harassment in School," AAUW Educational Foundation (1993, 2001)
- "MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Violence in America's Public Schools," MetLife (1993, 1999)

## Ask a Question...

Have a burning question you would like to ask kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question for our upcoming YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup> youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next issue of the newsletter.

## ...Get an Answer

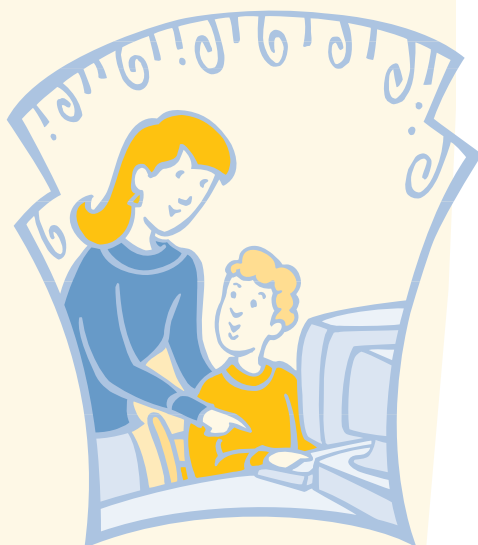
Anne Collier from Net Family News submitted the following question:

### "Which of the following limitations do your parents put on your use of the Internet?"

|   | 10 - 12 year olds | 13 - 18 year olds |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Rules about the websites I can visit                                    | 77%               | 16%               |
| Rules about the amount of time I can spend online                       | 63%               | 16%               |
| Rules about the people with whom I can communicate online               | 69%               | 13%               |
| A filtering system that limits my access to certain websites            | 40%               | 11%               |
| A monitoring system that allows my parents to review my online activity | 32%               | 7%                |
| Time-out software   | 5%                | *                 |
| Other   | 19%               | 4%                |
| None  | 7%                | 64%               |

\* Small Base

Source: Harris Interactive February 2004 YouthQuery<sup>SM</sup>; Boys and Girls ages 8 - 18



## Come See Us At Kid Power Spring!

Harris Interactive will give two presentations at Kid Power Spring, May 3-4 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida:

- “The New Gender Gap: The Differences Between Boys and Girls” will be presented with the Girl Scouts Research Institute.
- “What Do Youth Marketers Think About Selling to Kids?” This Harris Interactive/Kid Power Poll is considered to be the first survey to study issues of marketing to children from an industry perspective.

We hope to meet you at these presentations. For more information, go to: [www.kidpowerx.com](http://www.kidpowerx.com)

## Come See Us At IIR's Youth Marketing Mega-Event!

We will also be presenting, along with our colleagues from Yahoo!®, at the IIR's Youth Marketing Mega-Event, June 27-30, in Anaheim, California. This session will present the results of the “Born to Be Wired: A New Media Landscape Comes of Age” project, which we conducted for Yahoo! and Carat Interactive in June 2003. More information is available at <http://www.iirusa.com/youth/>

## Recent Research for Public Release

### National MetLife Survey Shows Disconnect In How Principals, Teachers, Parents And Students View School Leadership

MetLife released “The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership” on February 5, 2004 in Washington, DC. The survey, the latest in MetLife's annual series conducted by Harris Interactive since 1984, examines the attitudes and opinions of teachers, principals, parents and students regarding school leadership. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige gave the keynote speech at the release event, which included *The Harris Poll*® Chairman Humphrey Taylor presenting the findings, and a discussion of the survey results with high school students and a panel of education professionals.

The survey found that principals, teachers and parents agree that the primary goal of school leadership is motivating students and teachers to achieve. The survey also reveals a disconnect between this goal and reality. Principals have a more positive view of school atmosphere and relationships than parents, teachers and students. The survey examines these differences in perception.

#### Key findings include:

- Nine in 10 principals (89%) say their school is welcoming to parents. But only six in 10 parents (61%) describe their school in this way.
- Nearly all principals (97%) believe that their school shows concern for students. This view is less commonly held by teachers (83%) and parents (66%).
- Nine in 10 principals (91%) say their school has open communication, yet only six in 10 teachers (58%) and parents (58%) say this about their school.
- Nine in 10 principals (93%) are satisfied with their relationship with students' parents, but only 64% of parents report this level of satisfaction. Teachers' and parents' assessments are similar. Seventy-eight percent of parents and 73 percent of teachers are satisfied with their relationship with each other.
- Of all the members of the school community, students are the least likely to describe their school as safe. While most principals (89%), teachers (67%) and parents (57%) say their school is safe, less than half of students (46%) describe their school this way.

To download a copy of the full report, please visit: [www.metlife.com](http://www.metlife.com)



## Trends & Tudes Poll Vault

To view previous issues of *Trends & Tudes*, please visit our website at [www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_k12.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_k12.asp).

## Contact Us:

To make suggestions regarding this newsletter or to discuss a business issue involving youth or the people and issues that influence today's youth, please contact our Information Desk at 877.919.4765 or [info@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:info@harrisinteractive.com).

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## The 2003 Wave of YouthPulse is Now Available

YouthPulse, Harris Interactive's lifestyle and attitude study of 8- to 21-year-olds, is now available by subscription. YouthPulse provides important insights to youth marketers and can help connect your organization with this Millennial Generation. Contact us at 877.919.4765 or [info@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:info@harrisinteractive.com) for details.

## 360 Youth College Explorer: 2003-2004

**Powered by Harris Interactive is Now Available!**

You can now subscribe to 360 Youth College Explorer, the annual study of college students powered by Harris Interactive. This is the only study of its kind to provide marketers with insights about the entire college market of 18- to 30-year-olds, including: full- and part-time students, students at 2- and 4-year institutions, and undergraduate and graduate students. This year's topics cover income and spending, financial services, online behavior, technology and wireless, entertainment, food and dining, and much more. Contact us at 877.919.4765 or [info@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:info@harrisinteractive.com) for details.

## We've Been Published!

John Geraci, Harris Interactive, and Judit Nagy, Yahoo!, have published an article in the International Journal of Advertising & Marketing to Children. "Millennials – the New Media Generation" shares the results of the Harris Interactive study conducted for Yahoo! and Carat Interactive regarding media use among Generation Y. More information on this journal is available at <http://store.warc.com/ProductInfo/35.asp>.

