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## British adults 'fear youngsters'

From BBC News 22.10.06 © BBC MMVII

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/6074252.stm>

**Britain is in danger of becoming a nation fearful of its young people, a report has claimed.**

It says British adults are less likely than those in Europe to intervene when teenagers commit anti-social behaviour. The Institute for Public Policy Research blamed changes in the family, communities and the economy for the "increased risk of youth crime".

Children's charity Barnardo's **echoed** the claims, saying youngsters have been "**demonised**" by the **media**.

The report says 65% of Germans, 52% of Spanish and 50% of Italians would be willing to **intervene** if they saw a group of 14-year-old boys vandalising a bus shelter, compared with just 34% of Britons. The IPPR also said teenagers needed **structured** activities like drama and sports clubs. Julia Margot, from the IPPR, told the BBC Radio Five Live: "In Britain, as opposed to countries like Spain and Italy, adults are less likely to socialise with children in the evenings.

"So we don't have this culture of children hanging out and playing out in the town square where adults are also socialising and drinking.

"We don't have a culture where adults go out to pubs and bars and bring children with them, and so there is a problem about adults being less used to having children around."

### Youth concerns

The 200-page report says that last year more than 1.5 million Britons thought about moving away from their local area due to young people hanging around. About 1.7 million admitted to avoiding going out after dark as a direct result of youths gathering.

Britons were also three times more likely to **cite** young people "hanging around" as a problem than they were to complain about noisy neighbours.

Pam Hibbert, **principle** policy officer for Barnardo's, said public perceptions created by the media and politicians had bred fear amongst the nation's adults. She said: "We have become fearful of all children.

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"We know, for example, young crime in itself has remained fairly static in the last 10 years - it is a minority that cause problems and **retaliate**.

"The demonisation of children and young people in some sections of the media and when politicians refer to youngsters as jobs - that breeds the actual fear."

### 'Turning a blind eye'

British adults were more likely than their other European counterparts to say that young people were predominantly responsible for anti-social behaviour, and **cite** "lack of discipline as the root cause of anti-social behaviour". The Britons who were unwilling to get involved claimed they feared being physically attacked or **verbally** abused - or that they would be the victim of subsequent reprisals.

Nick Pearce, IPPR director, said: "The **debate** about childhood in Britain is polarised between false opposites: that either children or adults are to blame.

"In **closer knit** communities, adults supervised their neighbours' children.

"These days, adults tend to turn a blind eye or cross over on the other side of the road rather than intervene in the discipline of another person's child, often because they fear they might be attacked."

A spokeswoman for YouthNet - an online charity which provides information, advice and guidance for people aged 16 to 24 through two websites - said young people's achievements were often **overlooked**.

She said: "While young people acknowledge that a minority of their peers can be anti-social, they'd like to point out that not all young people are the same and the majority, who contribute to society, work hard and have fun without being destructive, are often overlooked because the good things they do don't make news."

The report "Freedom's Orphans: Raising Youth in a Changing World" will be published next month.

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A. Read the article and decide whether the following statements are true or false. There may also be cases where we do not know as there are insufficient facts

1. The Spanish are more likely than the Germans to intervene if they see 14 year olds vandalising a bus shelter.

True/False/Don't know

2. Julia Maggot believes British parents socialise more with their children than parents in Italy.

True/False/Don't know

3. The IPR believe youngsters have been "demonised" by the media.

True/False/Don't know

4. Fear of verbal abuse is one of the reasons why adults do not get involved.

True/False/Don't know

5. YouthNet provides information and guidance to 18 - 24 year olds.

True/False/Don't know

6. Nick Pearce says we blame the parents and not the children.

True/False/Don't know

7. Nick Pearce believes we should discipline other people's children.

True/False/Don't know

8. 1.7 million Britons said they would move house because of the local problem with young children

True/False/Don't know

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B. What do you understand by the following words?

They are in **bold** in the text. Write a definition or think of a word that could be used instead.

If you are stuck you can use a dictionary.

1. **echoed**
2. **demonised**
3. **intervene**
4. **structured**
5. **media**
6. **principle**
7. **retaliate**
8. **cite**
9. **verbally**
10. **debate**
11. **closer knit**
12. **overlooked**

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## Answers

### A

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. false      | 2. false      |
| 3. false      | 4. true       |
| 5. false      | 6. don't know |
| 7. don't know | 8. false      |

### B

echoed - repeated, agreed with, reiterated

demonised - made to look bad,

media - the press, journalists, the TV

intervene - arbitrate, mediate, get involved

structured - ordered, planned, well thought out

principle - main, chief

retaliate - hit back, get even, react, seek revenge

cite - name, quote, mention

verbally - orally, vocally

debate - argument, discussion

closer knit - cohesive, strong

overlooked - ignored, disregarded