How families handled emergency remote schooling during the time of Covid lockdown in spring 2020

Engl. transl.: How families handled emergency remote schooling during the time of Covid lockdown in spring 2020

# Keywords

* corona
* distance learning
* educational system
* children

# Details

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## Topics

* Literacy and skills
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Learning

## Sample

The target population for this study was children between 10 and 18 years of age and one
of their parents.
The data collection was conducted by the research company VALICON. Respondents were
drawn from the Valicon panel sample and panel samples of their respective partners in
each of the included countries. Based on the VALICON’s existing data (census of the age
of household members), a pre-selection of individuals with children aged between 10 and
18 was made. If the parent respondent had more than one child in the target age group
who was willing to participate in the second half of the survey, parents were advised to
invite the child who would be the next to have their birthday to participate.

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

How did families handle remote schooling during the time of Covid-19 lockdown during spring 2020? Perceptions on remote schooling activities were gathered from parents and their children at the end of primary education and in secondary education (10-18 years old) from 9 EU countries (Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) in addition to Switzerland and Norway.The findings show that almost all children who participated in the survey were able to conduct some school-related activities using digital technologies, and many reported that their schools had provided them with both digital communication and learning platforms. The findings also point out to large variations in terms of how children were able to interact with their teachers in learning activities and how often children were in contact with their teachers through online means. In addition to learning activities provided by the school, parents also engaged in complementary learning activities with their children, for example by using free of charge online learning material and exercises, such as video recordings and online quizzes.Both children and parents were worried about the pandemic’s negative impact on education, generally parents more so than children. Families voiced the need for better guidelines on how to support children with distance education activities and how to support the child psychologically during the confinement. Parents also expressed their need for more counselling and psychological support.These early results from the survey can guide future activities of schools and education systems in their move to digital education that can deliver more even, and better, pedagogical and social outcomes. They can also guide planning of practices that suite local context and needs. More in-depth analysis of this data will be made available throughout 2020-2021.

# Outcome

The findings show that on average, children across all participating countries reported spending about half of their online time on digital learning activities. Moreover, almost all children who participated in the survey were able to conduct some school-related activities using digital technologies, and many reported that their schools had provided them with digital communication and digital learning platforms. The findings, however, also point out to large variations in terms of how children were able to interact with their teachers in learning activities and how often children were in contact with their teachers through online means. Whereas 75% or more of the children in Italy, Norway, Portugal and Romania said to have daily online interactions with their teachers during the Covid-19 lockdown in spring 2020, this number was between 50-75% in France, Ireland, Spain and Switzerland, and between 34-41% in Germany, Austria and Slovenia. Worryingly, some children reported very infrequent contacts with teachers with no access to online activities, the amount varies from 11% in Ireland to less than 1% in Italy. Overall, the lockdown during Covid-19 has shown that the readiness of schools and families to support remote instruction through digital technologies was uneven. How learners perceived online learning activities and teacher contacts can be, to a certain extent, indicative of teaching arrangements put in place by national and regional school authorities. As such, it cannot be used as a proxy for the quality of learning that took place during the classroom closure, mainly because there are various factors that influence learning, which during the Covid-19 lockdown varied substantially starting from accessibility and availability of parental support and devices at homes to the instructional practices and teacher competences. It is also rather normal that practices vary from a school or a country to another within certain parameters. However, it is also the job of the education system and society to guarantee equitable access to education to all. In the upcoming reports, there will be more focus on such questions. Secondly, the findings shed light on the level of worries that both children and parents have due to the pandemic and classroom closure. In general, parents were worried about the pandemic’s negative impact on their child’s education (e.g. falling behind with schoolwork, failing in exams). Children were concerned about not being able to keep up with their schoolwork while classes changed due to the pandemic and about getting poor grades because of the online learning activities. Additionally, across all participating countries, many children reported an increased workload because of the remote schooling activities. Even 40% or more children in Slovenia, Portugal, Austria and Spain estimated to have more workload than before the pandemic. With regards to children’s worries outlined above, school policies and practices can play a role. For example, in some school systems in Europe, the assessment methods were changed due to the classroom closure (e.g. e.g.: Council Conclusions on countering the COVID-19 crisis in education and training; European Schoolnet2). Thirdly, the report gives an idea of children’s skills (e.g. digital skills) and their beliefs in their abilities to cope with online learning activities. Previous research shows that this can be strongly related to their successful learning and also to their well-being. The survey confirms that remote and digital schooling opens opportunities for children to gain new skills with digital technologies, but it also shows that the family background can influence the way in which the children felt about their capacities and beliefs towards online learning activities. In almost all participating countries, children coming from families with below-average household income felt less strongly about their own capacities to cope with online learning activities than other children. Last, families voice the need for more support from schools if such a situation was to happen in the future again. Over 80% of responding parents in Romania, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Italy and Slovenia would have wanted the school to provide possibilities for their children to do online educational activities with their classmates. Likewise, ideas for extracurricular activities to be done at home would be welcomed by over 80% of parents especially in countries such as Romania, Portugal and Spain.