



# Discussion

Although our research found that all the indicators were associated with well-being, some appeared particularly important. For the younger children (4-10yrs) we looked for trends in responses, whereas for older young people (11-18yrs) we used statistical analysis (binary logistic regression) to find out which indicator was most strongly associated with high and low well-being.

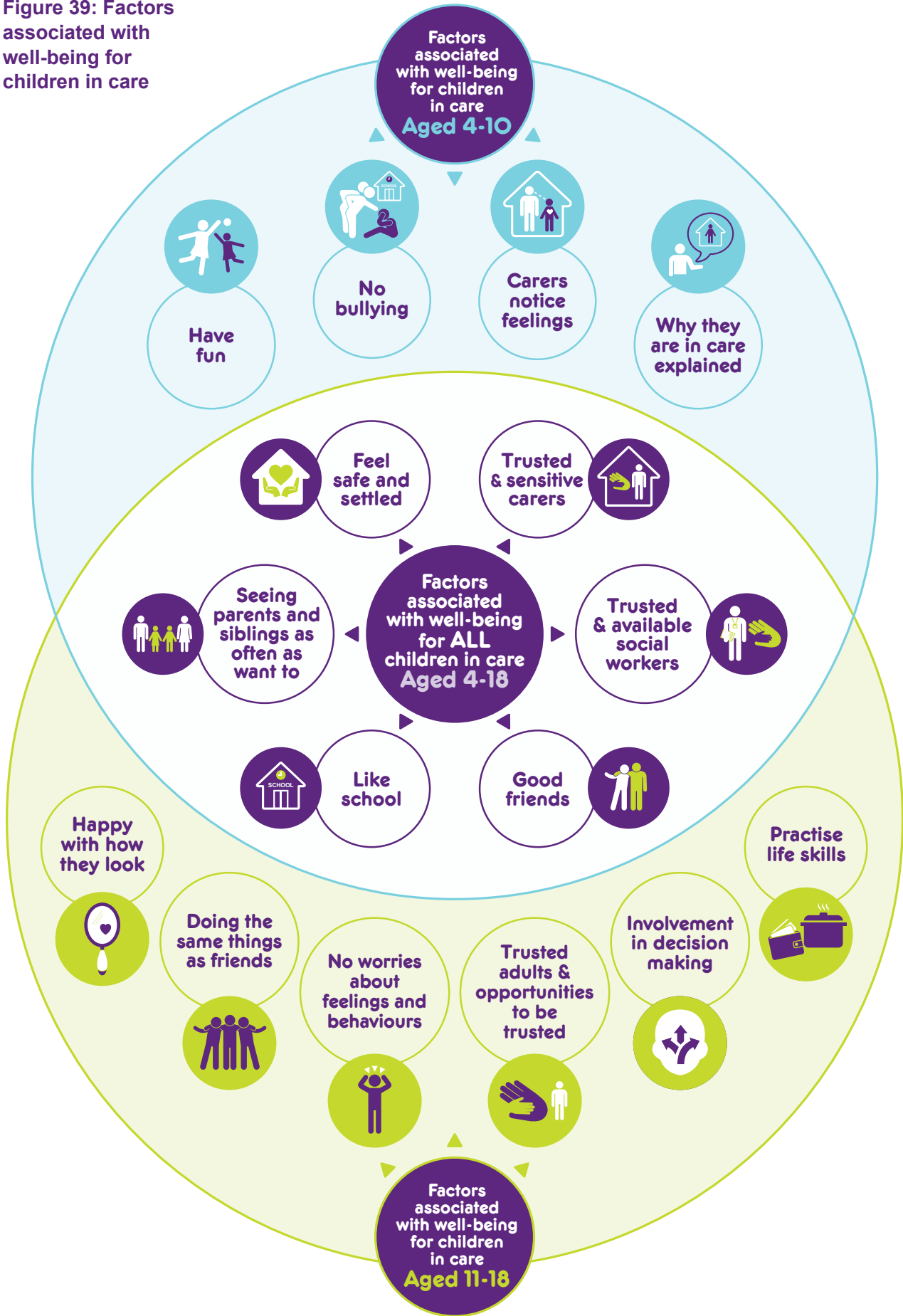
### What all age groups had in common:

- ▶ For all children and young people having **good friends** and **trusting and supportive relationships** were really important. This included **trusting carers and social workers**.
- ▶ **Liking school** influenced well-being for all age groups.
- ▶ Feeling **safe and settled where they lived** was important for children in care whether they were 4 or 17.
- ▶ Staying connected to family by **seeing mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters** as often as they wanted was highlighted by all age groups.

### Differences in what questions were asked and age differences showed that:

- ▶ The youngest children (4-10yrs) wanted to have **trusting relationship with carers** who **noticed their feelings** and **did not shout**. For the oldest age group, having **trusted adults**, as well as being given **opportunities to be trusted** was associated with well-being.
- ▶ While relationships with carers was also very important for the older young people, the support gained from friends was also key to their well-being, especially being able to **do the same things as peers**. Younger children were asked a different question and for them **having fun at the weekend** mattered.
- ▶ A larger percentage of younger children felt **afraid to go to school because of bullying** compared with 11-16 year-olds. Teenagers with low well-being often struggled with **worries about feelings and behaviour** and girls in particular were **unhappy with how they looked**.
- ▶ Nearly half of the youngest children (4-7yrs) did not feel that the **reasons they were in care had been fully explained**, whereas being **involved in decision making** and **practising life skills** was associated with well-being for older young people in care.

Figure 39: Factors associated with well-being for children in care



Although 'happiness with appearance' was strongly associated with low well-being it was not entered into the final regression models as it was also highly correlated with other variables and did not meet the assumptions necessary to be entered into regression models. Being unhappy with appearance was primarily a concern for girls.

The high correlation of happiness with appearance with other well-being indicators does raise questions about our theoretical understanding of young people's well-being. It may suggest that being happy about appearance may be an integral aspect of well-being rather than being a separate and explanatory factor. We wondered if 'happiness with appearance' was an important part of understanding adolescence well-being, or an important domain in its own right that taps into different concepts such as self-esteem and identity that explain different levels of well-being? How do young people determine their level of happiness with appearance? Do young people compare themselves with others and if so, who? We need to understand much more about the importance of appearance in young people's lives and how it seems to have a central role in young people's well-being.

## Bright Spots Programme informing policy and practice

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The Bright Spots programme is more than a research programme, it is about putting children and young people's voices at the heart of children's services. We continue to work with local authorities across the UK to use the *Your Life Your Care* survey and inform policy and practice development. Examples of what local authorities have done in response to their findings are captured in our resource bank <https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/bright-spots/resource-bank/>.

Key findings and recommendation for policy and practice can be found at [www.coramvoice.org.uk/10000-Voices-Report](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/10000-Voices-Report)