

GCSE results linked to child's enjoyment of school at age six

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A child's enjoyment of school at six years old is linked to their GCSE results aged 16, according to new research from the University of Bristol, published in the journal *Science of Learning*.

The research team used data from world renowned health study Children

of the 90s, to answer three research questions:

- Is [school](#) enjoyment patterned by biological sex at birth, socioeconomic background or cognition?
- How does school enjoyment relate to GCSE achievement?
- Does school enjoyment relate to social or sex differences in GCSE achievement?

The team found that pupil's school enjoyment measured at six years old is patterned by their sex and cognitive ability but not their family's socioeconomic background. For example, girls were twice as likely to report enjoying school than boys. School enjoyment strongly related to GCSE achievement at age 16 even after consideration of their socioeconomic background and cognitive ability. Pupils who reported enjoying school at age 6 went on to score on average 14.4 more GCSE points, equivalent to almost a three-grade increase across all GCSE's and were 29 per cent more likely to obtain five plus GCSE's grade A - Cs including Maths and English than those who did not enjoy school.

Lead author Dr. Tim Morris said: "While it is intuitive that a pupil's school enjoyment relates to their education, it is quite remarkable that school enjoyment as early as age six is so strongly linked to GCSE's 10 years later. That this link persists even after considering family and pupil factors provides support that a lack of school enjoyment may have long lasting effects on pupil's educational outcomes."

"Research into methods for improving school [enjoyment](#) and the effectiveness of interventions in this area could have [beneficial effects](#) for [children](#)."

Professor Nic Timpson, Principal Investigator for Children of the 90s said: "This is an important piece of research which shows how Children of the 90s data has helped inform our understanding of educational

attainment as well as health/wellbeing."

More information: *Science of Learning*, [DOI: 10.1038/s41539-021-00092](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-021-00092)

Provided by University of Bristol

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