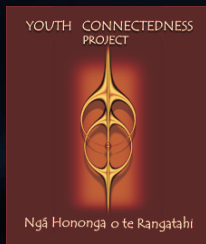


Youth Connectedness Project

Families & Whanau

University of Auckland, July 6th, 2009



Carla Crespo

Victoria University of Wellington

Youth Connectedness Project and Families: The main actors

Parents/caregivers

About:

1400 (Wave 1, 2006)

1200 (Wave 2, 2007)

1000 (Wave 3, 2008)

Young people

1774 participated in the Project's 3 Waves

(10-15 years old, Wave 1, 2006)

(11-16 years old, Wave 2, 2007)

(12-17 years old, Wave 3, 2008)

The world of storm and stress?

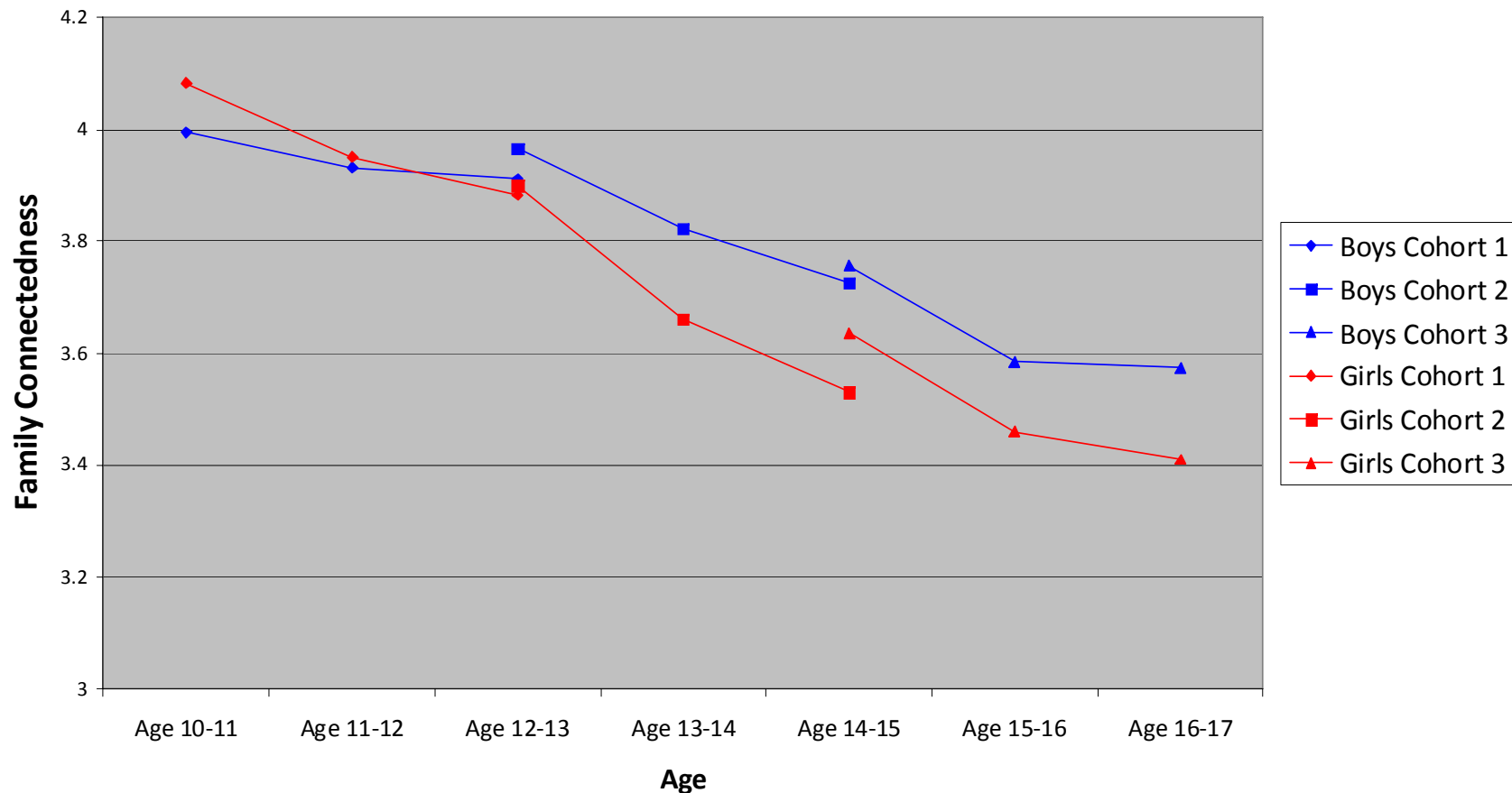


Or maybe not...

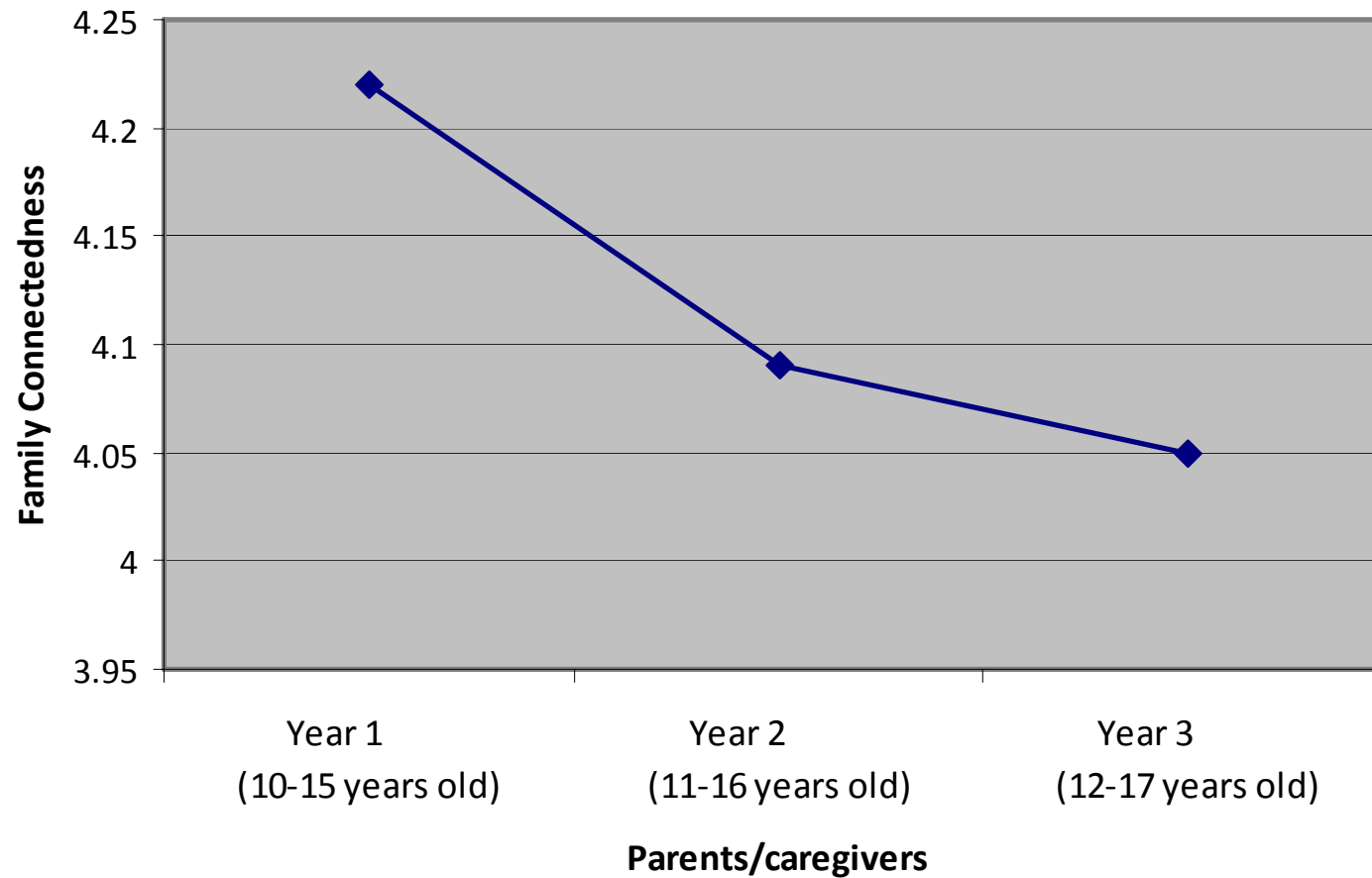


Family Connectedness across time: Young people

Family Connectedness Across Time by Age Cohort and Gender



Family Connectedness across time: Parents /caregivers



Positive perceptions of family *decrease* with time for *both* young people and their parents/caregivers



Yes, but....

Although perceptions of family connectedness decrease over time for both parents/caregivers and young people, they are still very high.

Family perceptions and Gender

Significant differences

Family Cohesion

Boys $>$ Girls
($M=3.56$) ($M=3.41$)

Family Mutual Activities

Boys $>$ Girls
($M=3.75$) ($M=3.62$)

Family Conflict

Boys $<$ Girls
($M=2.16$) ($M=2.28$)

No differences

Family's Monitoring and Supervision

Boys Girls
($M=3.56$) ($M=3.60$)

Family's Encouragement of Autonomy

Boys Girls
($M=3.65$) ($M=3.62$)

Family Identity

Boys Girls
($M=3.65$) ($M=3.62$)

One family: Two “points of view”

Significant Differences

Family Cohesion

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=3.82) (*M*=3.50)

Family Mutual Activities

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=4.02) (*M*=3.75)

Family Conflict

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=2.25) (*M*=2.15)

Family’s Monitoring and Supervision

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=4.27) (*M*=3.68)

Family’s Encouragement of Autonomy

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=4.20) (*M*=3.70)

Family Identity

Parents/Caregivers > Young people
(*M*=4.61) (*M*=4.23)

Young people and their parents/caregivers **don't** agree about families

Young people have **less** positive perceptions of their families than their caregivers



Yes, but....

Past research on families has found the same results.

Parents/caregivers and young people are in different developmental stages of their lives

and

parents and young people, although belonging to the same family unit, have very different roles in family life and, thus, different perspectives.

Family Rituals: “Windows” to the family

Rituals tell researchers/clinicians what families “do”

- **They help to organize behaviour within the family**
- **They allow to look at the interaction between individual and family – level factors**

“Does my family invest in rituals?”: Parents/caregivers perceptions

Dinnertime

M= 3.16 (2007)

M=3.19 (2008)

Annual Celebrations

M=3.48 (2007)

M=3.50 (2008)

“Christmas, Anniversaries,
Birthdays...”

Family Rituals: Why they matter

-International research evidence (Fiese, 2006)

-In our study **family rituals are linked to more positive perceptions of family** for both Parents/caregivers and Young people

Parents/caregivers who report stronger family investment in rituals also report stronger family cohesion (r s between .26** and .34**) and less conflict (r s between -.11** and -.17**).

When parents/caregivers report stronger family investment in rituals, young people themselves also report stronger family cohesion (r s between .14** and .19**) and less conflict (r s between -.07** and -.09**).

“Beyond the magic wand”:
Young people on family and desired change

Is there anything you would like to see changed in your family?

30.2% (n= 535) YES

69.8% (n=1239) NO

Desired change: Four main themes

Category	Description	Example	Percentage and Frequency
Relationship improvement	Improving relationship quality, closeness and support among family members	<i>"no one in my family trusts each other. I would like to see them trusting others"</i>	22% (119)
Less conflict	Ending or reducing conflict among family members, including verbal arguments and physical aggression	<i>"the arguing in my family it gets a bit to much to handle"</i>	24.5% (131)
Time together	Spending more time together "as a family" or with specific family members who share the household, including general time together and time spent in family activities	<i>"i would like us to spend more time together like going out and stuff i think that would be cool"</i>	20.6% (110)
Granting of freedom and respect	Being treated according to one's age, including respect for own opinions and right to make choices about one's life	<i>"i would like to see my mum and dad stop treating me like a baby but i dont think that will happen until im 18"</i>	14.3% (76)

Really...More time together...?

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In their own words...

“i would like us to spend more time together by like going out and stuff i think that would be cool”

Josh, 12

“Do more things (activities) together. Everyone be home more often. Work together as a family more. Do more for others and the community as a family. Go out for meals more often. Go on more holidays together.”

Noah, 15



In their own words...

“going out as a family more.
like going on holidays”

Maria, 16

“spending more time with each other
and having meals together”

Judit, 16



*“Every kid needs at least one adult
who is crazy about him.”*

Urie Bronfenbrenner



*“Every kid needs at least one adult
who is crazy about him.”*

Urie Bronfenbrenner

At Year 3, **84%** of our sample
(1482 young people between 12 and 17 years old)
agreed with the sentence:

There is someone in my life who tells me I am special



*“Every kid needs at least one adult
who is crazy about him.”*

Urie Bronfenbrenner

At Year 3, **89%** of our sample
(1571 young people between 12 and 17 years old)
agreed with the sentence:

***There are people in my life who I can count on
if I get into trouble***