

The Future at Five

GENDERED ASPIRATIONS
OF FIVE-YEAR-OLDS



THE FUTURE AT FIVE

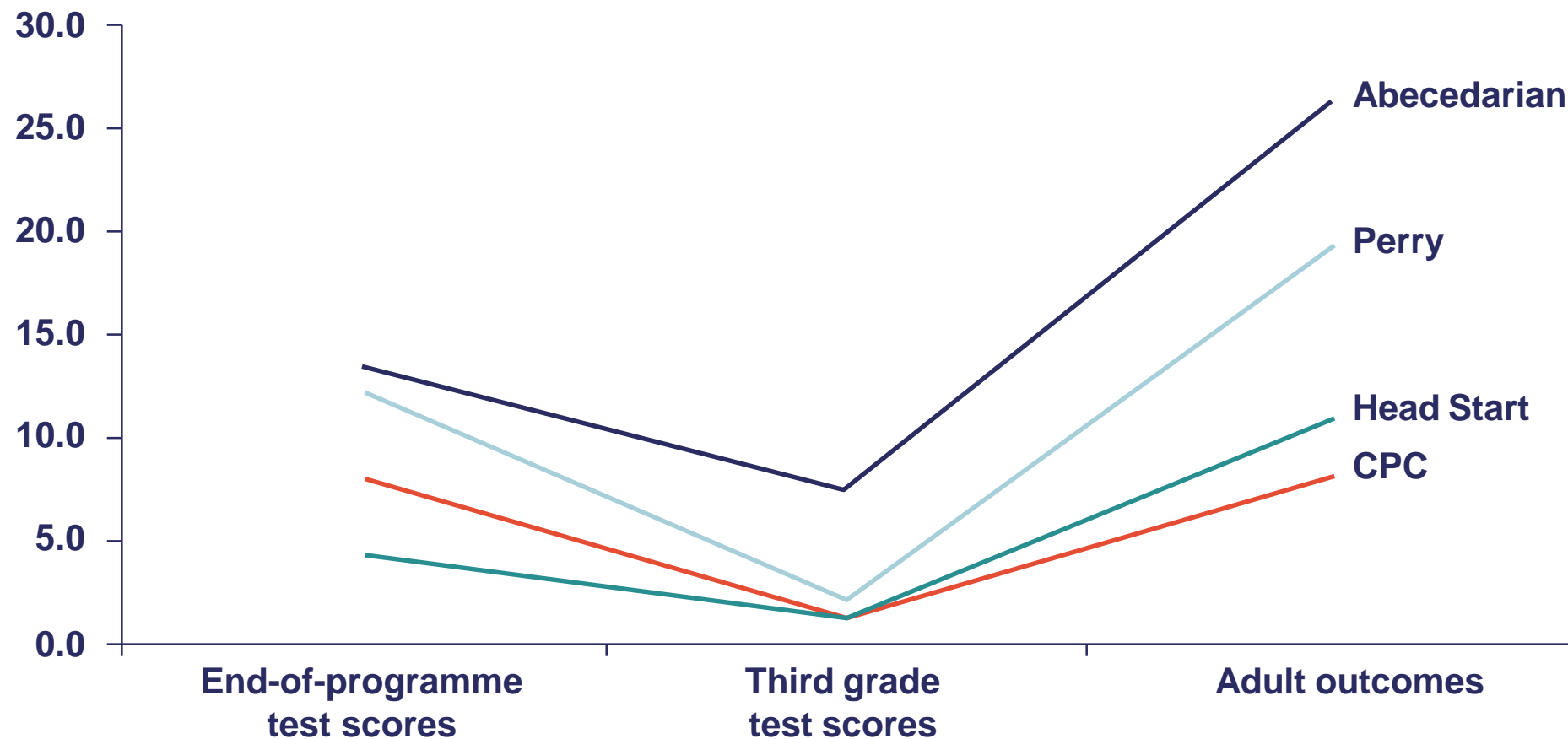
**Gendered aspirations
of five-year-olds**

Why should we listen to five-year-olds?



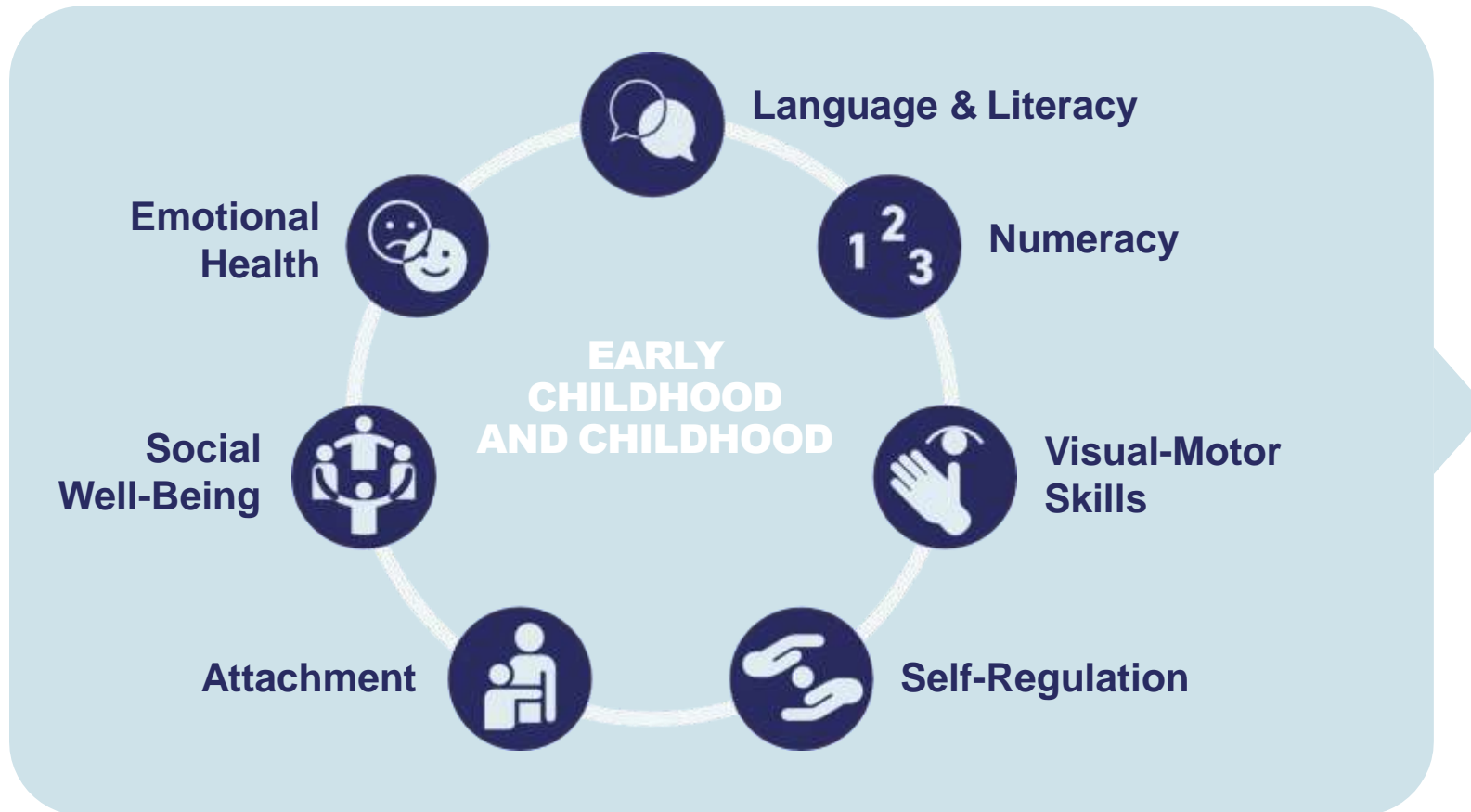
We know early outcomes predict adult outcomes

Predicted percentage effects on adult earnings of early childhood programmes, based on test scores versus adult outcomes



(Source: Bartik, 2014)

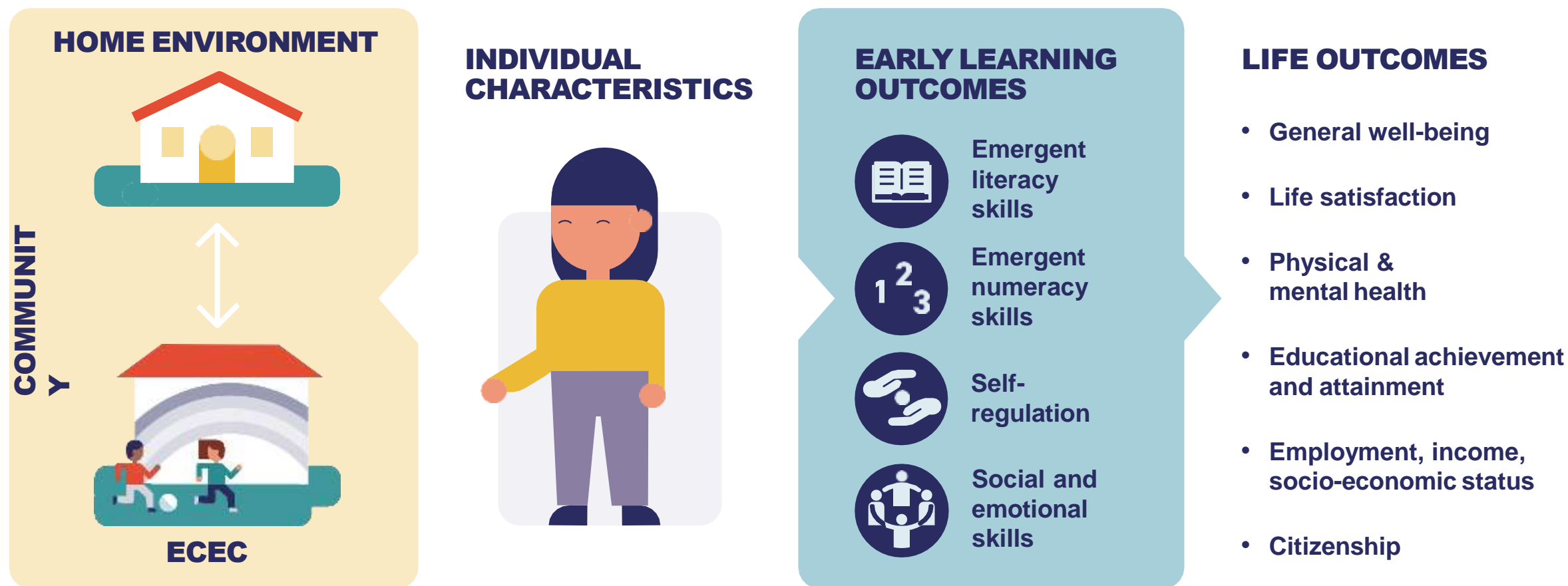
Holistic early learning and well-being supports positive outcomes



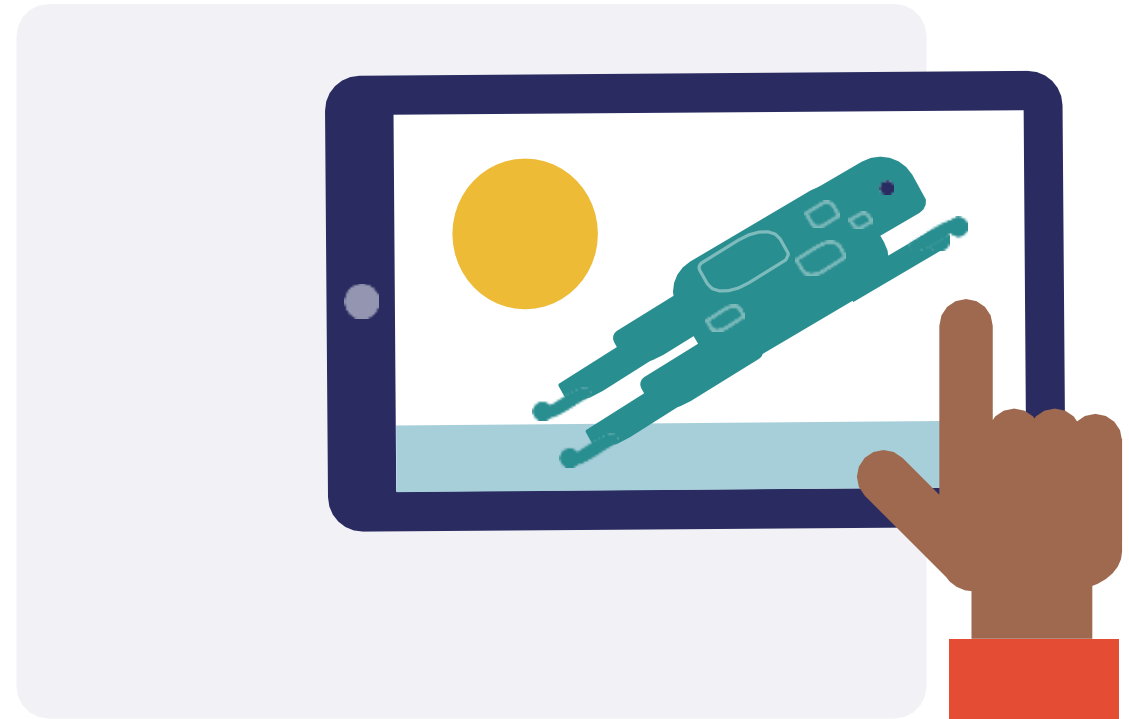
LIFE OUTCOMES

- General well-being
- Life satisfaction
- Physical & mental health
- Educational achievement
- Employment, income, socio-economic status
- Citizenship

Countries conceptualised a cross-country study focused on early childhood



Children are able to show or tell us what they think, like and can do, free from interpretation or bias



IELS also prioritised hearing the voices of the children

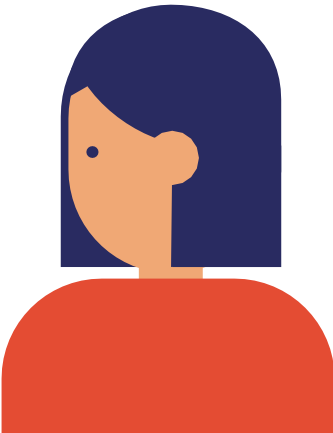


What do you like most about your centre/school?

What do you want to do or be when you grow up?



Who do you prefer to play with?



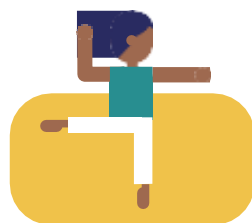
The International Early Learning and Well-being Study asked

±4 000 five-year-olds

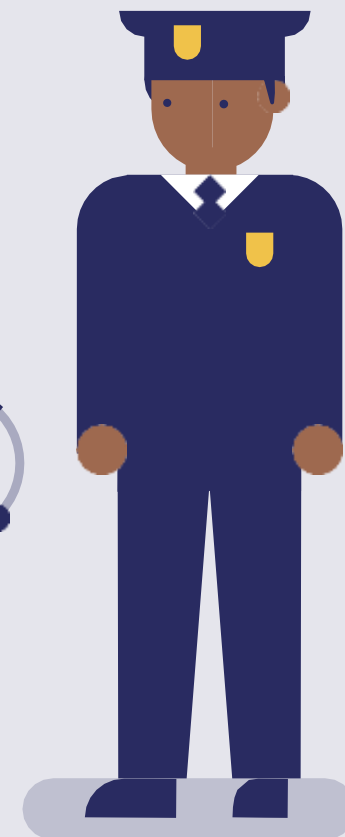
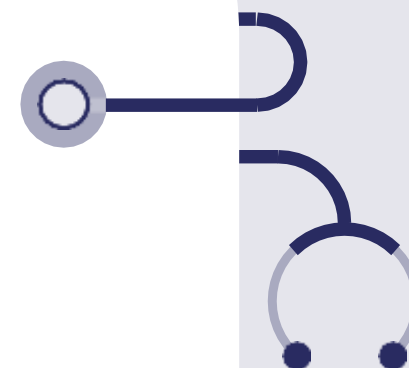
from England and Estonia
what they want to be or do
when they grow up



Clear gender differences can be seen in five-year-olds' aspirations



GIRLS	RANK	BOYS
Teacher	1	Police officer
Veterinarian	2	Athlete/sportsperson
Doctor	3	Fire fighter
Hairdresser	4	Builder
Police officer	5	Teacher
Dancer	6	Parent
Parent	7	Fictional character
Fictional character	8	Doctor
Artist	9	Armed forces
Chef/cook	10	Bigger/older
Athlete/sportsperson	11	Pilot
Musician	12	Driver (type unspecified)
Shop sales assistant	13	Scientist/engineer
Royalty	14	Work with/be with father
Nurse	15	Car, van or taxi driver



Clear gender differences can be seen in five-year-olds' aspirations

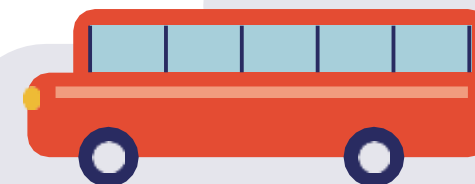


GIRLS	RANK	BOYS
Pet groomer/animal care worker	16	Chef/cook
Dentist	17	Someone who works (unspecified)
Fire-fighter	18	Someone who plays
Bigger/older	19	Bulldozer driver
Scientist/engineer	20	Train, bus or tram driver
Beautician or related worker	21	Pet groomer/animal care workers
Sports coach	22	Musician
Ambulance worker	23	Astronaut
Asibling	24	Truck or lorry driver
Pilot	25	Farmer
Builder	26	Shop sales assistant
Creative/performing artists not classified elsewhere	27	Ninja
Natural creature (animal, fish, insect)	28	Inventor
Shop-keeper	29	Work with computers
Child-care worker	30	Car mechanic

RANK

BOYS

Chef/cook
Someone who works (unspecified)
Someone who plays
Bulldozer driver
Train, bus or tram driver
Pet groomer/animal care workers
Musician
Astronaut
Truck or lorry driver
Farmer
Shop sales assistant
Ninja
Inventor
Work with computers
Car mechanic



And gender stereotyping is stronger among boys



1 in 4

of the 30 most popular roles selected by girls are in traditionally female-dominated occupations.



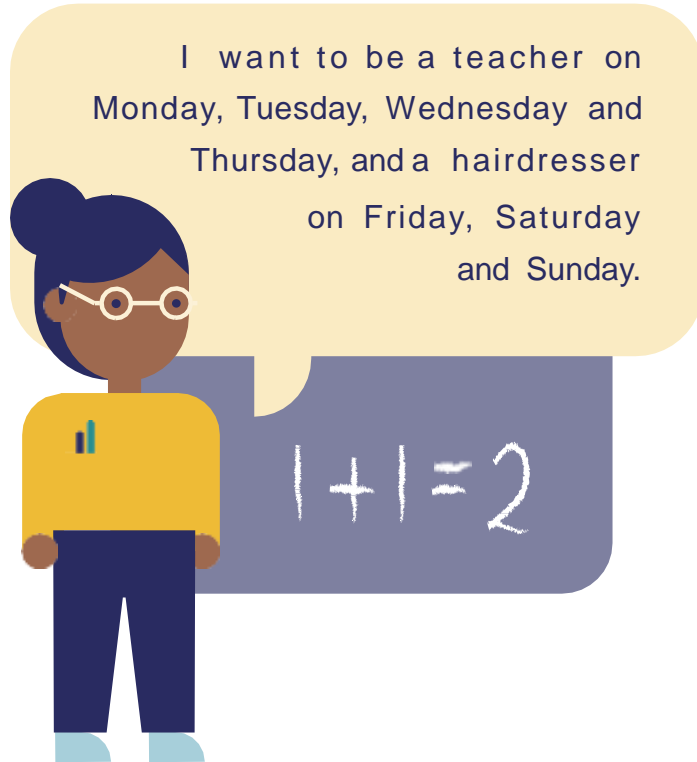
More than

1 in 2

of the top 30 roles specified by boys are in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Other gender differences include:

The most popular responses of girls feature more concrete aspirations than boys



Girls are attracted to nurturing and creative roles,



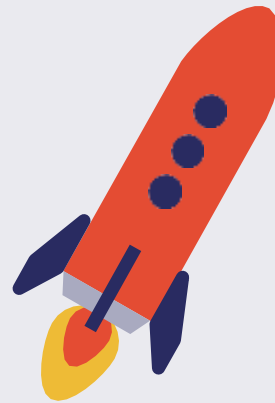
while transport, protecting and building are all very popular for boys

The average socio-economic status of the occupations aspired to by girls was significantly higher than that of boys.

Boys and girls express different aspirations

BOYS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN GIRLS TO FAVOUR BEING...

- Farmers
- Train, bus, tram, truck or lorry drivers
- Inventors
- Car mechanics
- Astronauts
- In the armed forces

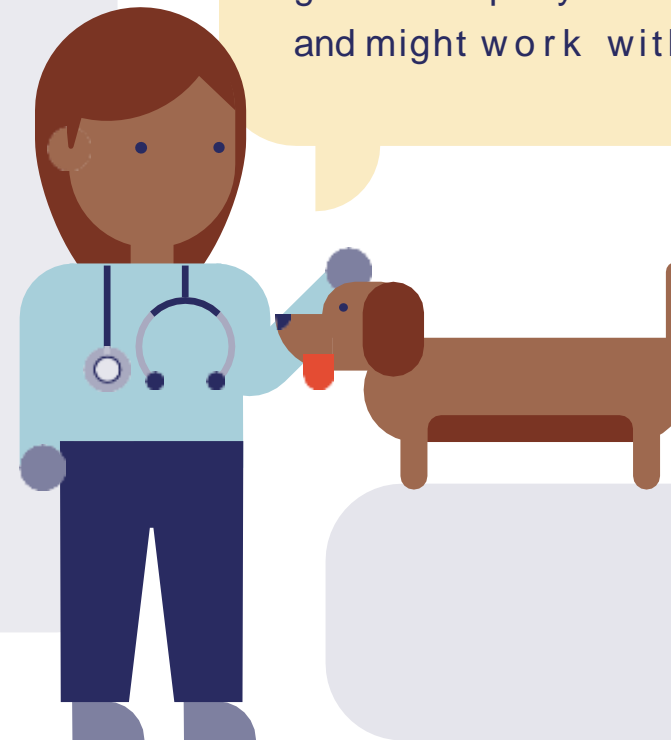


I want to be an inventor. I already practise at home with cardboard boxes.

Girls and boys express different aspirations

GIRLS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN BOYS TO WANT TO BE A...

- Veterinarian
- Hairdresser
- Dancer
- Royal
- Nurse
- Dentist
- Beautician
- Sports coach
- Ambulance worker



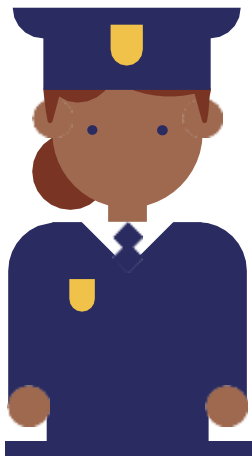
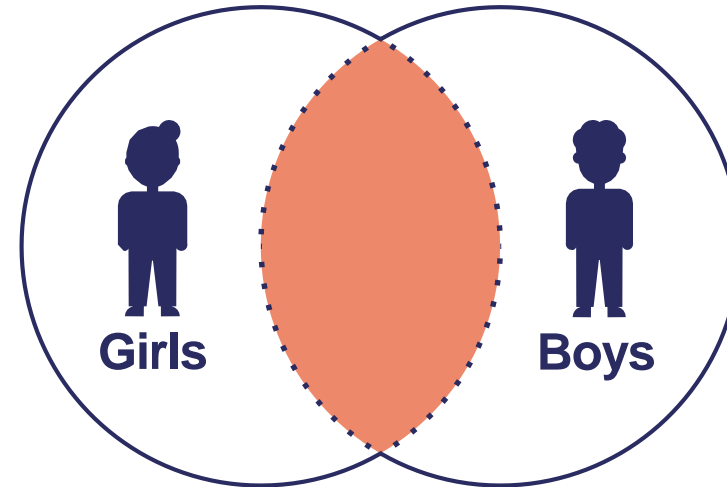
I want to be a vet because I get to help my favourite animals and might work with dogs.



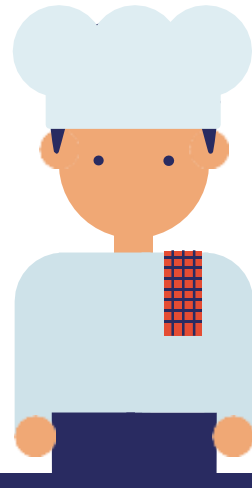
But some aspirations are shared

Half of the top 30 roles

specified by children are favoured by both girls and boys, including the wish to be a police officer, teacher, doctor and a cook/chef.



POLICE OFFICER



CHEF



TEACHER



DOCTOR

Children aspire to roles that are familiar to them, including those of family members...

15% of children aspire to roles that are the same as or very similar to their parents' occupations.

Other family members can also be influential, with children mentioning their grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles in their responses.

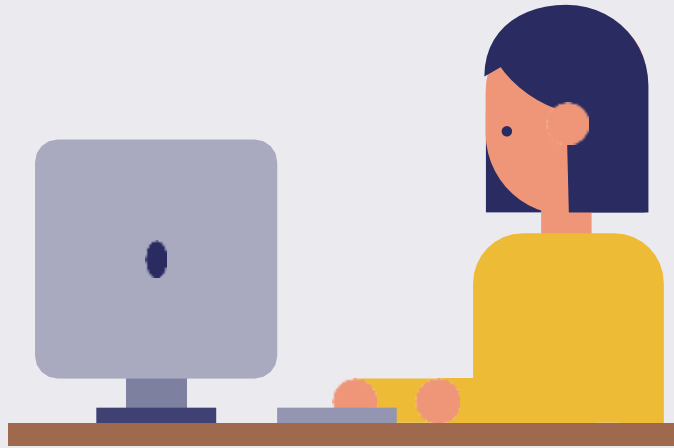


The **14TH** most popular future aspiration stated by boys is working with or being with their father



...and those of people they encounter in their everyday lives

I want to be the director of the kindergarten. Then I can write in the computer.



I want to be a hairdresser because my Auntie is. She gives me haircuts.



Children also draw inspiration from books, films and television



From the top 30 aspirations, fictional character was rated:

7TH for boys

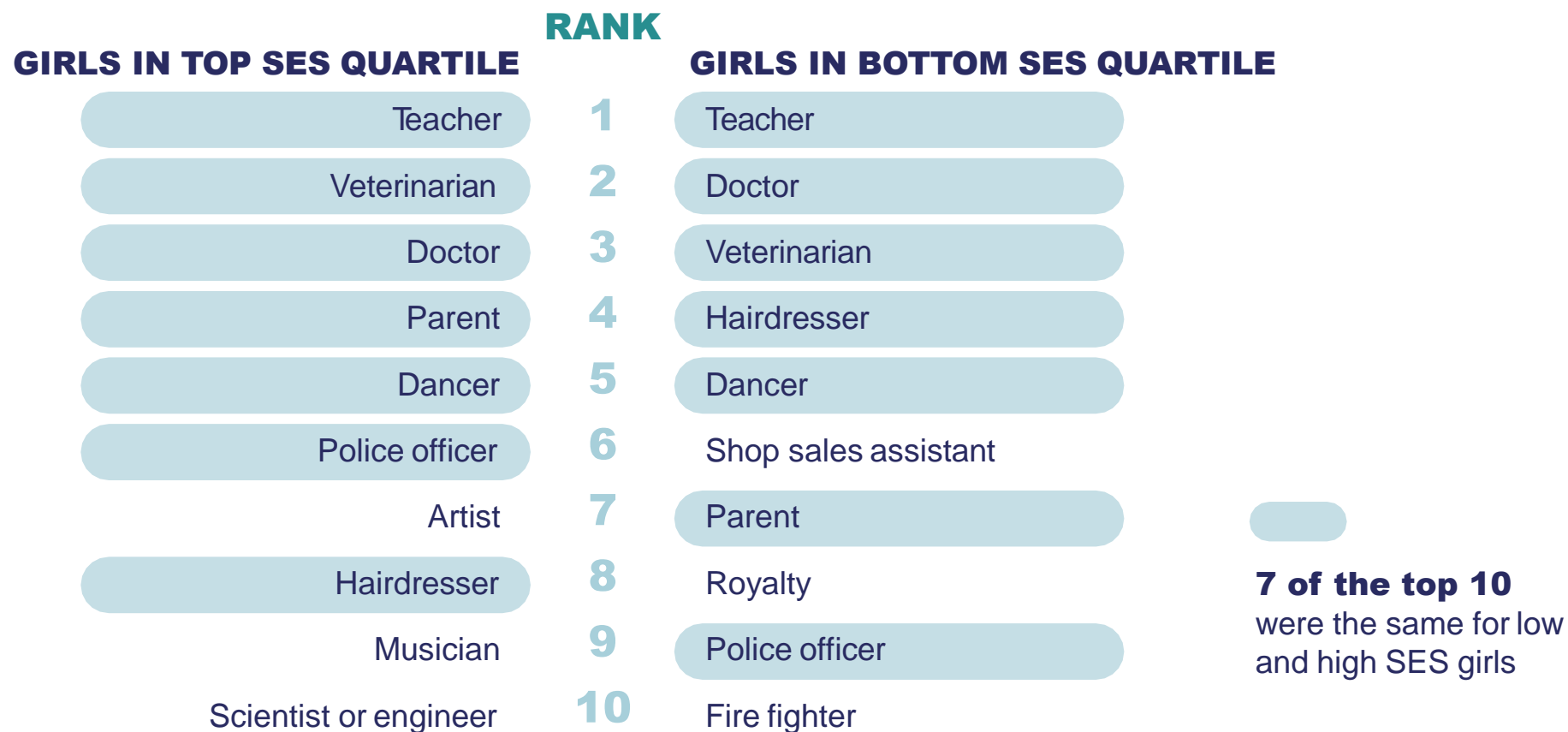
8TH for girls

Girls aspire to be fairies, mermaids and unicorns.



Boys aspire to be superheroes such as Superman and Spiderman.

Socio-economic status (SES) was less of an influence on aspirations than gender



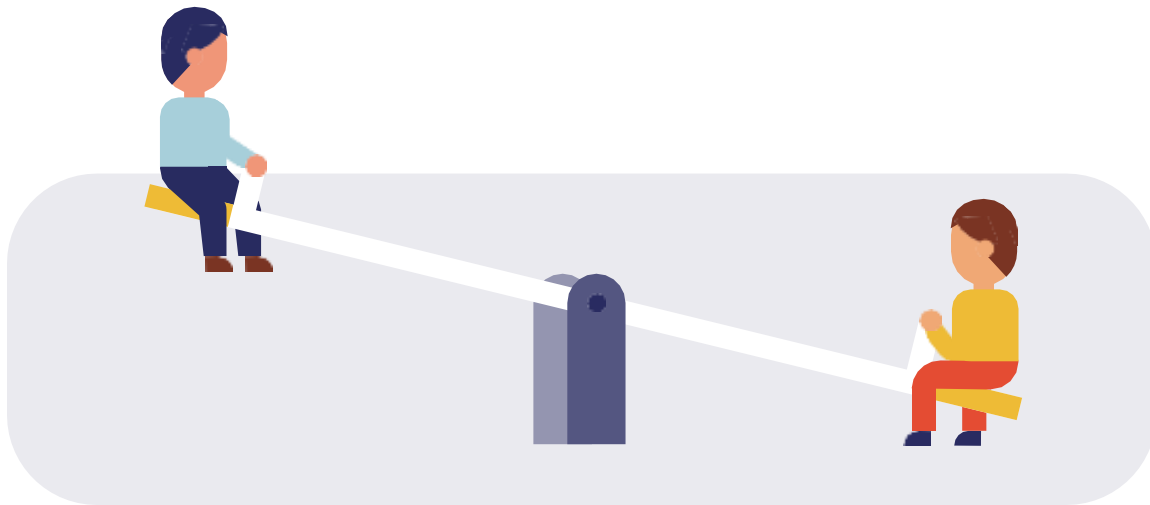
...but there were some differences between the most and least advantaged boys

BOYS IN TOP SES QUARTILE	RANK	BOYS IN BOTTOM SES QUARTILE
Police officer	1	Police officer
Athlete/sportsperson	2	Athlete/sportsperson
Fire fighter	3	Fire fighter
Builder	4	Builder
Pilot	5	Teacher
Teacher	6	Parent
Doctor	7	Fictional character
Parent	8	Truck/lorry driver
Cook/chef	9	Armed forces
Scientist or engineer	10	Bigger/older

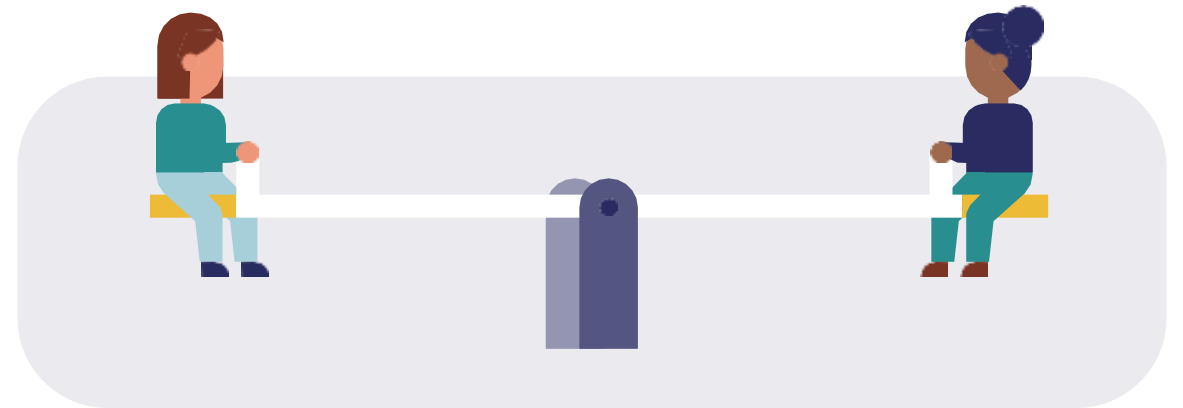
6 out of 10
were the same for low
and high SES boys

There is an interaction between gender and immigrant background

Boys with an immigrant background aspired to roles with a significantly higher SES than boys without an immigrant background...



while girls with and without an immigrant background had equally high aspirations.



The highest literacy skills are found among children who want to be a ...



RANK

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Scientist or engineer | 6 | Hairdresser |
| 2 | Artist | 7 | Builder |
| 3 | Veterinarian | 8 | Nurse |
| 4 | Dancer | 9 | Shop sales assistant |
| 5 | Pilot | 10 | Pet groomer/animal care worker |

The highest social-emotional skills are found among children who want to be a ...

RANK

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Pet groomer/animal care worker | 6 | Teacher |
| 2 | Dancer | 7 | Hairdresser |
| 3 | Pilot | 8 | Fire-fighter |
| 4 | Scientist or engineer | 9 | Shop sales assistant |
| 5 | Musician | 10 | Royal |



Summary of findings

Aspirations in early childhood are limited by beliefs about gender,



with gender norms particularly pronounced in the aspirations of boys.



While home background characteristics were less influential on aspirations, **there were some clear differences between boys from the most and least advantaged backgrounds.**

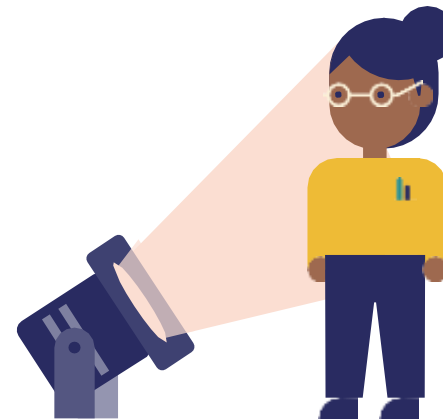
Summary of findings

Children aspire to roles that are known to them from:

- family
- community
- entertainment media.



Children with strong early literacy skills commonly aspired to roles in STEM.



While children with strong social-emotional skills aspired to roles in teaching and the performing arts.

Implications

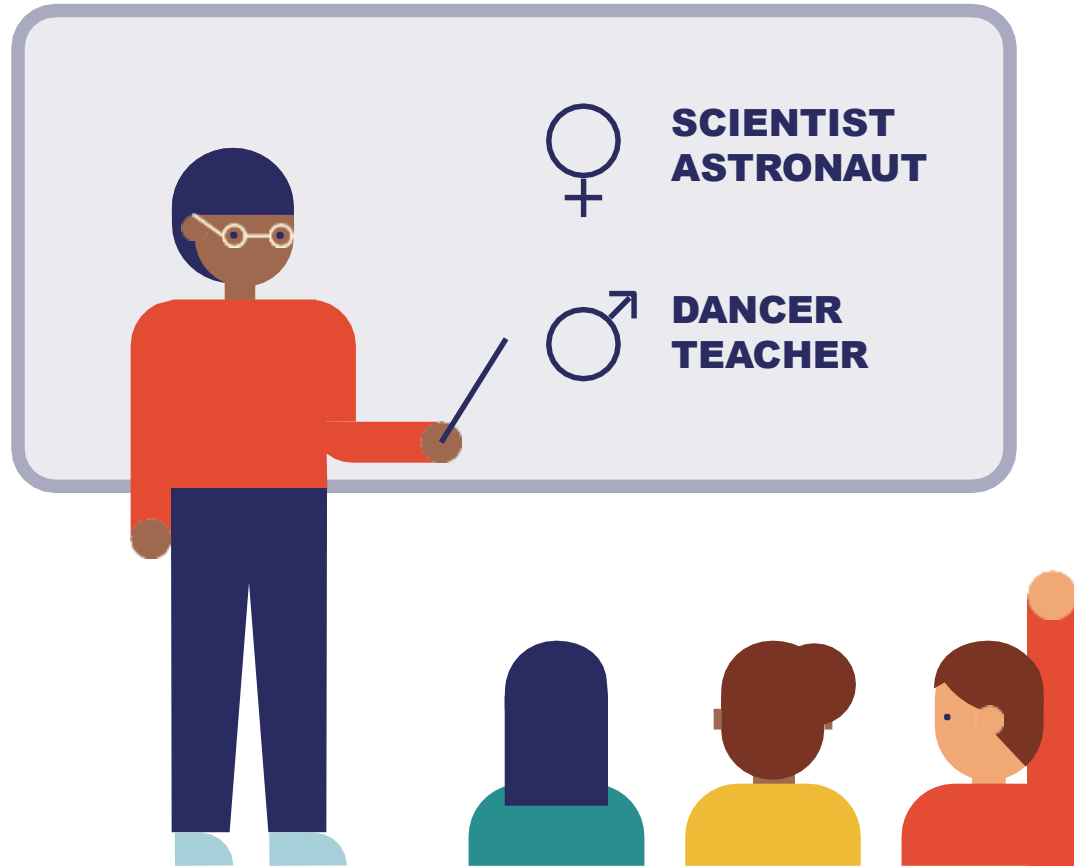
CHILDREN'S ASPIRATIONS ARE RELATED TO THEIR:

- motivation and persistence at school
- subject choices
- later occupations

BUT, these findings show us that these aspirations can be constrained from a young age by traditional roles or expectations that limit children's horizons



What can parents and teachers do?



- 1** encourage children's interests and talk to children about their aspirations
- 2** identify and challenge stereotypical thinking at home or in the classroom, and encourage children to do the same
- 3** introduce children to a broad range of jobs through, for example, the books and media children are exposed to at home or at school, or by inviting individuals to speak to classes about their jobs.

Next steps

The International Early Learning and Well-Being Study will continue to ask young children how they see their futures, to track whether the gendered nature of young children's aspirations changes over time.



Find out more...



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES
AMONG FIVE-YEAR-OLDS:**

Go to the International Early Learning and
Child Well-being Study website: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/early-learning-and-child-well-being-study/>