

Spain

This site note provides an overview of how social and emotional skills are distributed among different student groups and how they relate to students' health, well-being, educational outcomes, and future aspirations in Spain. It draws on data from the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) 2023.

SSES 2023 measured the following skills among 15-year-old students in Spain:

- Task performance skills (persistence, responsibility, self-control and achievement motivation)
- Emotional regulation skills (stress-resistance, emotional control and optimism)
- Engaging with others skills (assertiveness, sociability and energy)
- Open-mindedness skills (curiosity, creativity and tolerance)
- Collaboration skills (empathy and trust)

Results for Spain in this note are compared to the average across participating sites. This average includes:

- Sites that participated in SSES 2023 in all analyses: Bulgaria, Bogotá (Colombia), Chile, Delhi (India), Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Emilia-Romagna (Italy), Gunma (Japan), Helsinki (Finland), Jinan (China), Kudus (Indonesia), Peru, Sobral (Brazil), Spain, Turin (Italy) and Ukraine
- The following cities that participated in SSES 2019, where possible: Daegu (Korea), Houston (United States), Istanbul (Türkiye), Manizales (Colombia), Ottawa (Canada), and Suzhou (China)

Data for achievement motivation between 2019 and 2023 are not comparable, therefore analyses for this skill only include SSES 2023 sites.

The OECD collaborated with the National Institute for Educational Assessment (INEE), Ministry of Education, Vocational Training, and Sports of Spain as the national project partner to implement the SSES in Spain.



For further analysis and information, refer to 'Social and emotional skills for better lives: Findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023' and the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills 2023 Technical Report (forthcoming).

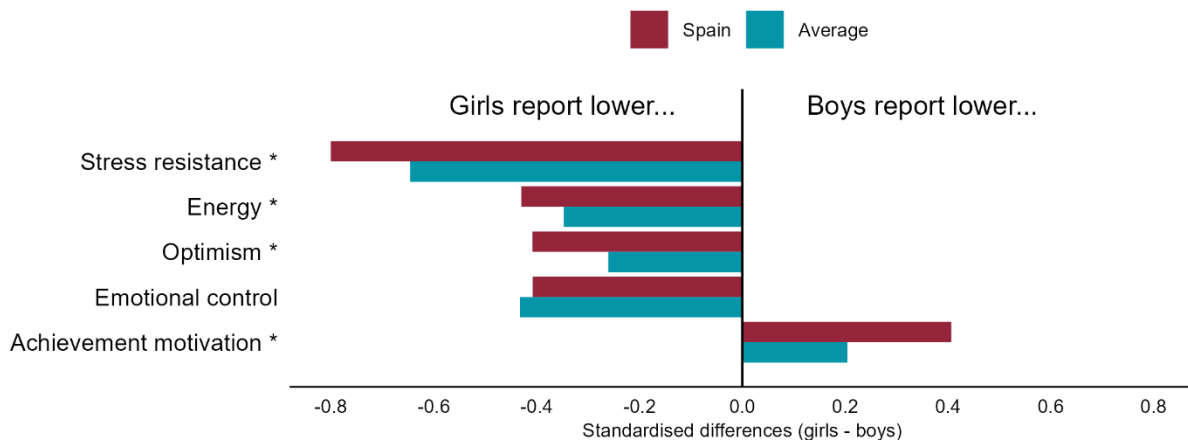
How are students' social and emotional skills distributed across socio-demographic groups in Spain?

Differences in skills between boys and girls

- 15-year-old girls in Spain reported lower levels of eight out of 15 skills compared to boys, on average: emotional regulation skills (stress resistance, optimism, and emotional control), energy, sociability, trust, assertiveness, and creativity. While girls also reported lower levels of these skills on average across sites, gender differences in most of these skills (all except emotional control and creativity) were larger in Spain. This was especially the case for assertiveness, where gender differences in Spain were the second largest across all sites for this skill.
- 15-year-old boys in Spain reported lower levels of achievement motivation, tolerance, empathy, responsibility, and persistence than girls, on average. Gender differences in achievement motivation, tolerance and empathy were larger in Spain than on average across sites. This was especially the case for achievement motivation, where differences in Spain were the largest across all sites for this skill.

Figure 1. Largest gender differences in skills in Spain

Standardised differences between the scores of 15-year-old girls and boys in Spain compared to the average across sites



Note: The five skills with the largest gender differences in Spain are included, ordered from the largest to smallest difference. All standardised differences between boys and girls are statistically significant with a threshold $p < 0.05$. Differences in Spain that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

Source: OECD, SSES 2023 Database Table B2.4

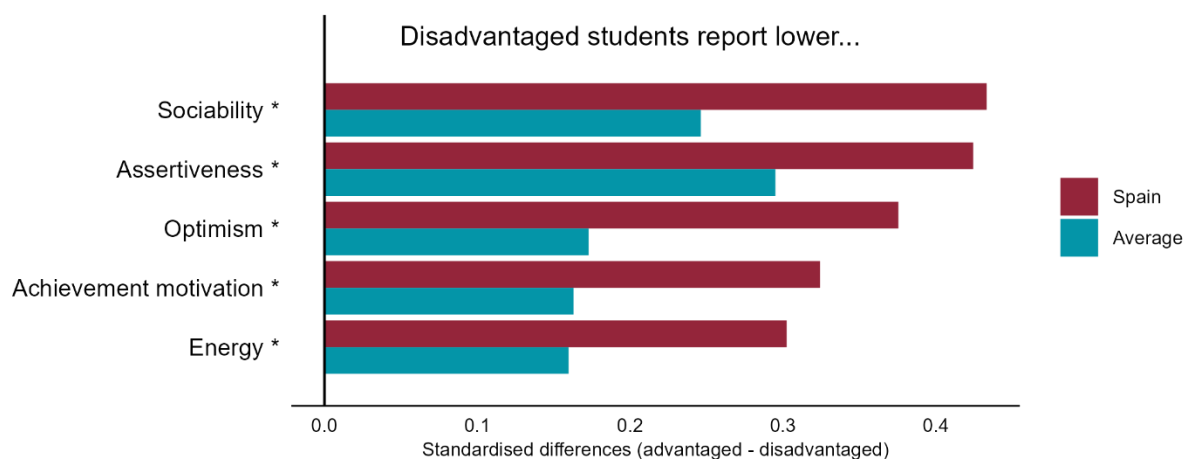
Differences in skills between advantaged and disadvantaged students

- Disadvantaged 15-year-old students in Spain reported lower levels of all social and emotional skills than advantaged students, on average.
- While disadvantaged students reported lower levels of all skills compared to advantaged students on average across sites, differences by socio-economic background were larger in Spain for most skills: task performance skills (achievement motivation, persistence, responsibility and self-control), engaging with others skills (energy, assertiveness and sociability), emotional control, trust

and optimism. On the other hand, differences in tolerance by socio-economic background in Spain were smaller than on average across sites.

Figure 2. Largest differences between advantaged and disadvantaged students in skills in Spain

Standardised differences between the scores of 15-year-old advantaged and disadvantaged students in Spain



Note: The five skills with the largest differences between advantaged and disadvantaged students in Spain are included, ordered from the largest to smallest difference. All standardised differences between advantaged and disadvantaged students are statistically significant with a threshold $p < 0.05$. Differences in Spain that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

Source: OECD, SSES 2023 Database Table B2.5

How are students' social and emotional skills linked to their educational outcomes and career prospects in Spain?

Levels of absence and tardiness and students' ambitions for the future

- In Spain, 43% of 15-year-olds had arrived late for school at least once in the two weeks prior to the SSES assessment, below the average across sites (48%). On the other hand, students in Spain were more likely to say they had skipped classes in the same timeframe compared to the average across sites (36% compared to 29%), while the proportion reporting to have skipped at least one whole day of school was similar to the average (33% compared to 31%).
- In Spain, 81% of 15-year-olds expect to complete tertiary education, slightly below the average across sites (84%), while 58% expect to have a managerial or professional job when they are 30, similar to the average across sites (57%).

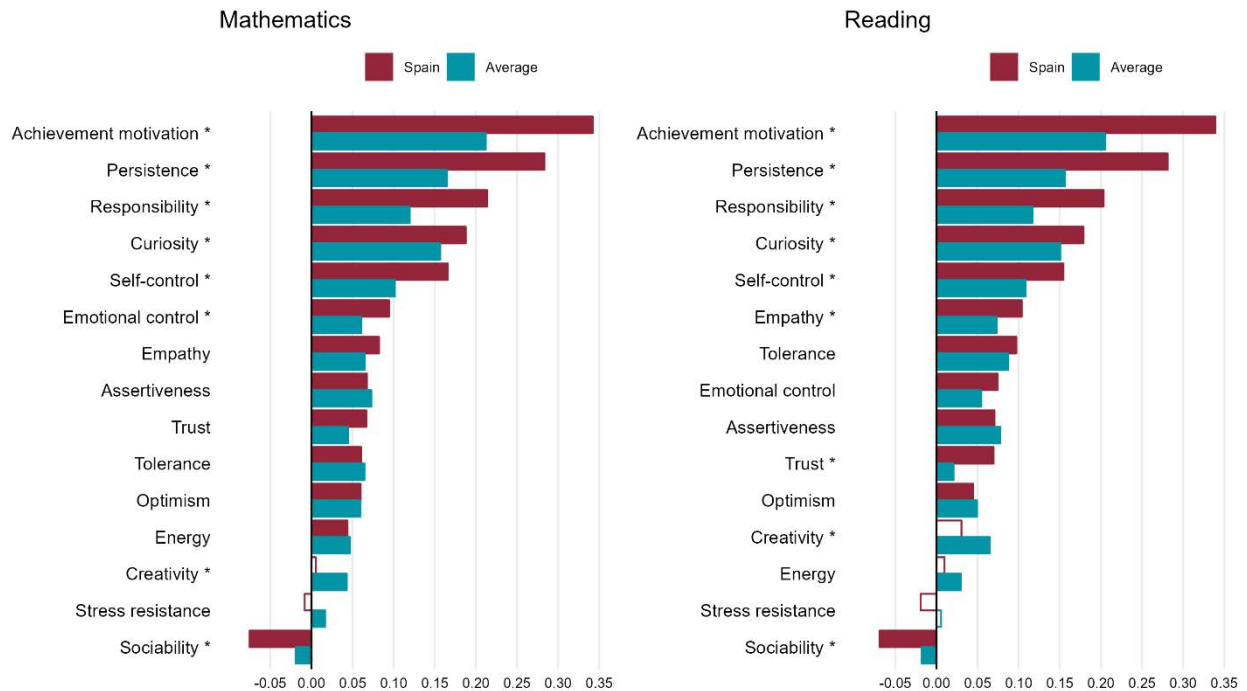
Relationships between social and emotional skills and academic outcomes

- In Spain, 15-year-old students with higher task performance skills (achievement motivation, persistence, responsibility, self-control), curiosity, empathy, tolerance, emotional control, and assertiveness tend to achieve higher grades in mathematics, reading and arts. The relationships between grades and task performance skills and curiosity are stronger in Spain than on average across sites.
- In Spain, 15-year-old students with higher levels of task performance skills, emotional regulation skills, trust, curiosity, and tolerance tend to report less tardiness and skipping school. This pattern matches the overall SSES trends.

- Spain is one of a minority of participating sites where students who report higher levels of sociability tend to achieve poorer grades in mathematics, reading and arts and greater absence and tardiness.

Figure 3. Relationships between students' social and emotional skills and grades in Spain compared to the average across sites

Standardised regression coefficients of individual skills on maths and reading grades among 15-year-olds in Spain compared to the average across sites



Note: Significant coefficients at a threshold of $p < 0.05$ are coloured, non-significant coefficients are outlined. Coefficients in Spain that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

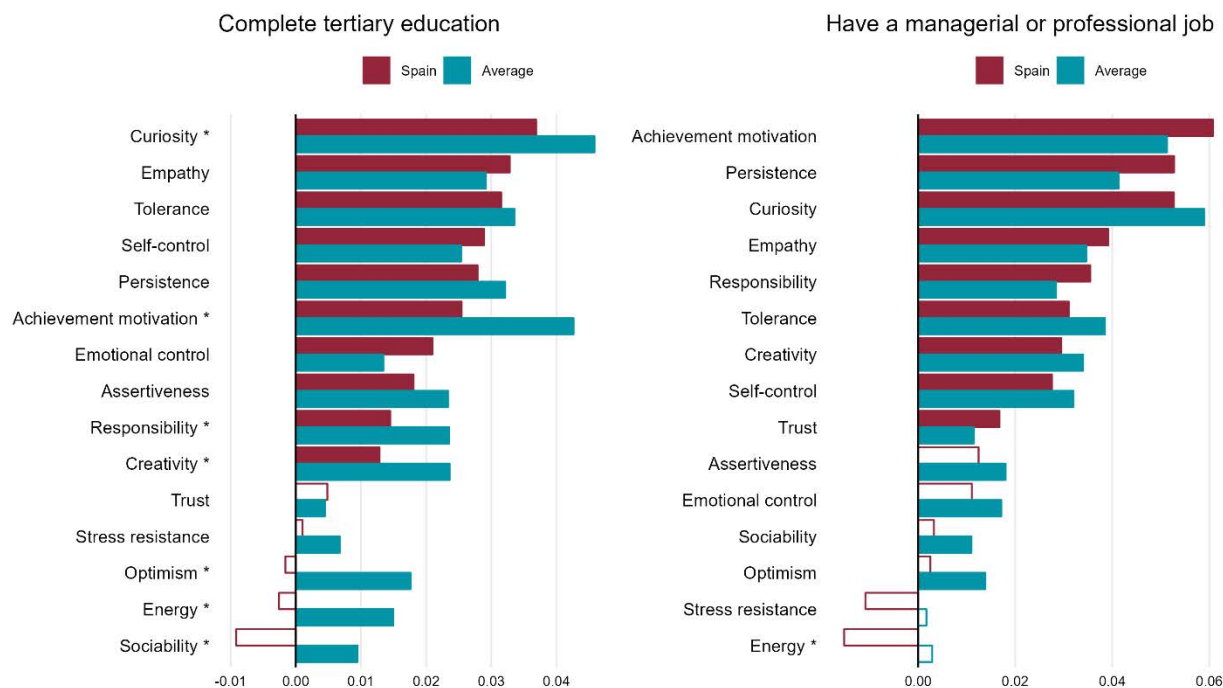
Source: OECD, SSSES 2023 Database Tables B4.1 and B4.4

Relationships between social and emotional skills and students' ambitions for the future

- In Spain, 15-year-old students with higher levels of task performance skills, open-mindedness skills and empathy have higher expectations of both completing tertiary education and having a managerial or professional job at age 30. In addition, students with higher levels of emotional control and assertiveness were more likely to expect to complete tertiary education, while students with higher trust tended to have greater expectations of having a managerial or professional job.
- The relationship between skills and students' expectation to attend tertiary education in Spain were smaller than the average across sites for curiosity, achievement motivation, responsibility, and creativity. For holding a managerial or professional job at age 30, the relationships between skills and this expectation were broadly similar to the average across sites.

Figure 4. Relationships between students' social and emotional skills and their future aspirations in Spain compared to the average across sites

Standardised regression coefficients of individual skills on students' expectations to complete tertiary education and have a managerial or professional job in the future among 15-year-olds in Spain compared to the average across sites



Note: Significant coefficients at a threshold of $p < 0.05$ are coloured, non-significant coefficients are outlined. Coefficients in Spain that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by the asterisk against each skill.

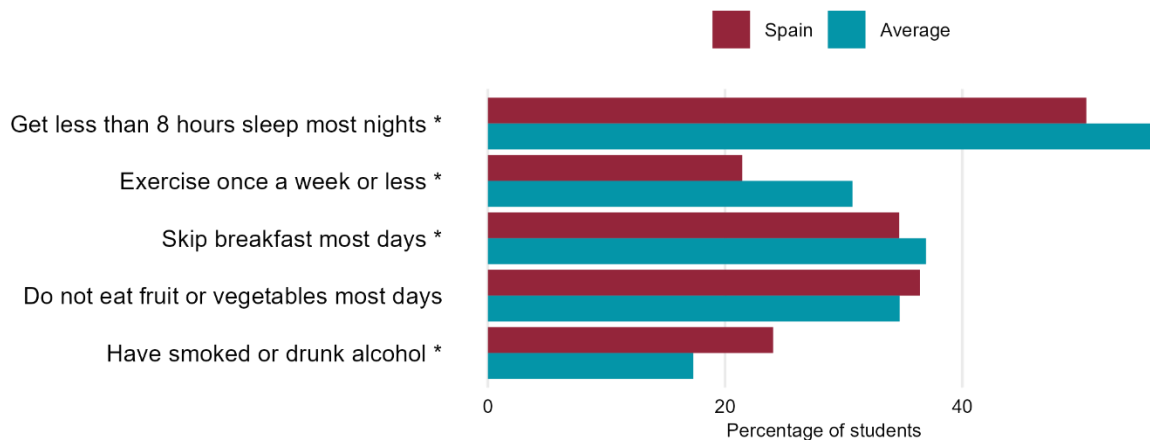
Source: OECD, SSES 2023 Database Tables B4.19 and B4.30

How are students' social and emotional skills linked to their health and well-being outcomes in Spain?

Students' health behaviours

- 15-year-old students in Spain reported higher levels of having ever smoked or drunk alcohol compared to the average across sites (24% compared to 17% on average).
- Frequencies of other unhealthy behaviours in Spain tend to be lower than or similar to the average across sites. In Spain, 35% of students skip breakfast most days, compared to 37% on average, while 36% do not eat fruit or vegetables most days, similar to the average across sites (35%). In addition, 21% of students in Spain report exercising only once a week or less, while 50% get less than 8 hours sleep most nights, both below the average across sites (31% and 57% respectively).

Figure 5. Percentage of 15-year-old students engaging in unhealthy behaviours in Spain compared to the average across sites



Note: Frequencies of each behaviour that are significantly different to the average across sites are indicated by an asterisk against the behaviour.
Source: OECD, SSES 2023 Database Table B3.3

Gender differences in health and well-being outcomes

- In Spain, as in almost all sites, girls report worse levels of all six measures of health and well-being (life satisfaction, current psychological well-being, test and class anxiety, health behaviours, relationship satisfaction and body image) than boys, on average.
- Gender differences in all health and well-being outcomes except relationship satisfaction were larger in Spain than on average across sites.

Relationships between social and emotional skills and students' health and well-being outcomes

- In Spain, all social and emotional skills, especially emotional regulation skills (optimism, emotional control, stress resistance) and energy are positively associated with higher psychological well-being, life satisfaction, health behaviours, and relationship satisfaction. In addition, higher levels of all skills except empathy are linked to better body image in Spain.
- Students with greater emotional regulation skills, engaging with others skills (energy, assertiveness, sociability), trust and self-control tend to report lower anxiety during tests and in class in Spain, while higher levels of empathy, tolerance and achievement motivation are associated with greater anxiety.
- The relationships between most skills and health and well-being outcomes are smaller in Spain than on average across sites. However, there are some exceptions. For example, the relationship between positive body image and both optimism and energy are larger in Spain than on average across sites. For test and class anxiety, the relationships between emotional regulation skills and lower levels of anxiety are stronger compared to the average across sites.

Key features of SSES 2023

What is the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills?

The Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) is an international survey designed by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation to improve understanding of social and emotional skills among 10- and 15-year-old students. The Survey aims to understand how levels of these skills differ among students with different characteristics; how these skills matter for important student outcomes; and how students' school and home environments influence skill development.

Which social and emotional skills are covered in the Survey?

The 15 skills measured in the Survey were selected to provide a comprehensive coverage of those that are relevant for children's and adolescents' success and well-being. Further information on why and how these skills were selected can be found in the SSES assessment framework (Kankaraš and Suarez-Alvarez, 2019^[1]).

How were these skills measured?

All students complete a questionnaire where they indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. Examples of statements include: 'I keep working on a task until it is finished', 'I stay calm even in tense situations' and 'I am able to defend my interests when they are challenged'.

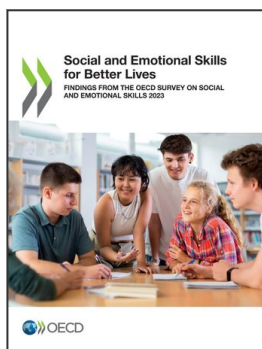
Who participated in the Survey?

All sites in SSES 2023 surveyed 15-year-olds and surveying 10-year-olds was optional. Students in sixteen sites – six countries and ten sub-national entities - participated in SSES 2023. Data from seven sites who participated in the first round of SSES in 2019, but not in 2023, are also included in analyses in this report wherever possible to expand the coverage of the international average.

Some 18,000 10-year-old and 52,000 15-year-old students took the SSES assessment in 2023, representing about 630,000 10-year-olds and 3 million 15-year-olds in the schools of the 16 participating sites. In Spain, approximately 3,300 15-year-old students completed the assessment, representing about 487,600 15-year-old students.

References

- Kankaraš, M. and J. Suarez-Alvarez (2019), "Assessment framework of the OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 207, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5007adef-en>. [1]



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