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For Immediate Release

Raising the next generation: Top traits that Singaporeans feel children in SG should possess in today's world

In an increasingly complex and uncertain world, which traits do Singaporeans believe are important for our children to thrive? And how do today's biggest concerns shape these priorities? **Drawing on insights from 6,821 Singaporeans from our online panel, Happydot.sg, surveyed across multiple studies, conducted over 7 years (2020 – 2026)**, this study reveals how perceptions of the most important traits for children have evolved alongside changing societal concerns.

Respondents were given the same 15 options over 7 years. They are:

Being responsible	Being well-mannered	Empathy for others	Tolerance	Respect for elders and authority
Hard work	Helping others	Obedience	Persistence	Filial piety
Religious faith	Independence	Creativity	Curiosity	Humility

What has stayed the same every single year – the top 2 spots

#1 spot - **Being Responsible**. Sitting approximately at 49% throughout, this remains the anchor value for Singaporeans, regardless of whatever else is shifting,

#2 spot – **Empathy for Others**. At approximately 33%, this signals a strong desire for children to grow up socially aware and considerate of others - especially in a diverse, interconnected society like Singapore.

Top risers (Net change; 2020 -> 2026)

Two traits have surged, especially in the most recent wave of 2026. They are:

- **Curiosity:** 6.7% → 23.0% (+16.3 percentage point)
- **Creativity:** 8.6% → 23.2% (+14.6 percentage point)

This could be part of a broader trend towards greater adaptability and continuous learning in response to an increasingly dynamic environment. The growing visibility and adoption of AI may have further accelerated this shift by encouraging people to embrace new technologies in both work and daily life.

Top fallers (Net change; 2020 -> 2026)

- **Being Well-Mannered:** 28.1% → 17.9% (-10.2 percentage point)
- **Filial Piety:** 24.1% → 14.6% (-9.5 percentage point)
- **Respect for Elders/Authority:** 25.2% → 17.7% (-7.5 percentage point)
- **Religious Faith:** 16.0% → 9.1% (-6.9 percentage point)

Overall, traits related to traditional values appear to have declined in prominence, while traits associated with intellectual curiosity have gained ground. This pattern is particularly evident among Singaporeans aged below 40. *See Annex for full details.*

What can we interpret of these findings?

Notably, “Being Responsible” has not moved at all, suggesting this is not a wholesale rejection of structure, but rather a re-weighting of which values matter most.

Over the years, this consistent pattern – intellectual traits like curiosity and creativity rising, while conformity and tradition-based traits like manners, filial piety, and religious faith fall – looks less like statistical noise and more like a generational reorientation of what “good parenting” means.

In the current era, driven by the profound influence of technology and AI, the 2026 data wave highlights a distinct pivot. It suggests evolving parental priorities, with greater emphasis placed on differentiated and creative skills, alongside a lower emphasis on institutional religiosity and more hierarchical child-rearing approaches. These shifts may reflect broader social, economic, and technological changes. Ultimately, the very tools we created to reshape our world have, inevitably and inadvertently, rewritten the blueprint for how we raise the next generation. It will be interesting to see how these trends develop in future waves as society continues to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological influences.

Based on surveys across multiple studies conducted over 7 years, 2020 – 2026 with 6821 Singapore residents (parents and non-parents) from RySense’s online panel, HappyDot.sg, aged 15+ and representative of national population. 2026 is a partial wave (n=526 vs ~1,050 in prior years).

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About RySense

Set up by the Ministry of Digital Development and Information (MDDI), RySense is a Singapore-based research organisation which seeks to understand what people in Singapore think, feel and do. We are specialists in research methods, public opinion research and social trends and have conducted research on a range of socio-economic issues as well as current affairs topics. Using robust approaches, we seek to generate reliable insights about the Singapore landscape, which reflect both subtle nuances and macro perspectives. We are run by a diverse team of market research professionals.

For more information, please visit www.rysense.sg.

About HappyDot.sg

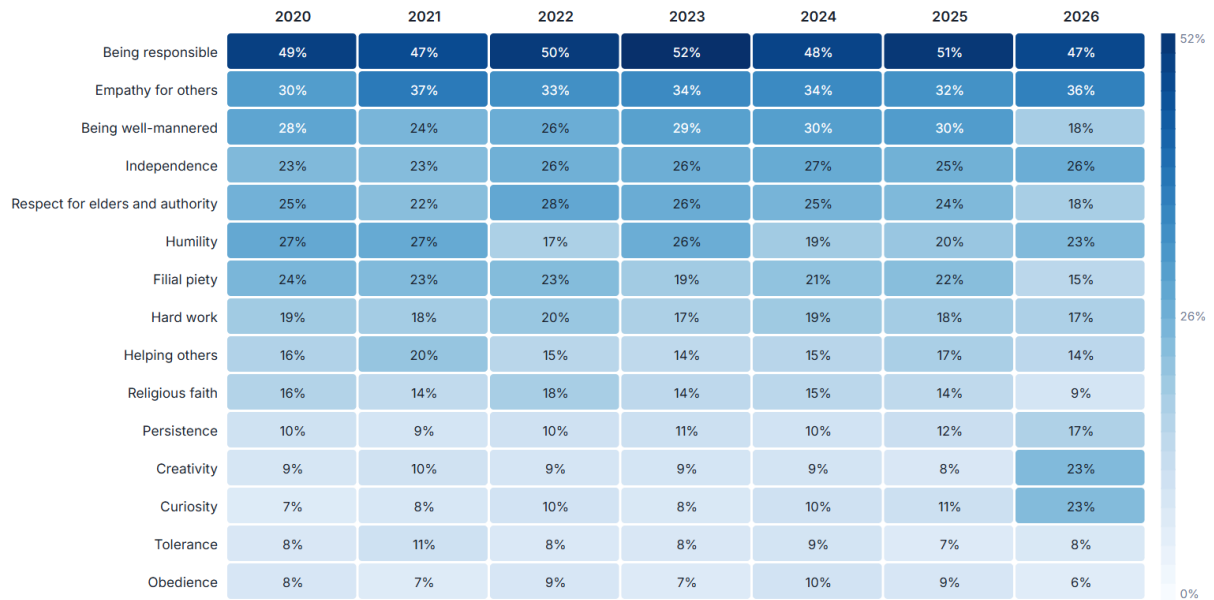
HappyDot.sg is an online survey community for Singapore residents to voice their opinions on issues that impact Singapore. We survey our panellists on a variety of social issues to understand the aspirations of Singaporeans. HappyDot.sg is owned by RySense.

For more information, please visit www.happydot.sg.

ANNEX

Full Trend Heatmap

All 15 traits × 7 years. Darker blue = higher % selecting that trait.



Is it generational? Age group breakdown

Overall selection rates by age group for the 5 most-changed traits.

	Curiosity	Creativity	Being well-mannered	Filial piety	Respect for elders and authority
15-19	16%	13%	33%	14%	15%
20-24	19%	14%	29%	13%	15%
25-29	15%	15%	31%	16%	16%
30-34	11%	11%	29%	16%	19%
35-39	13%	11%	31%	18%	21%
40-44	8%	7%	26%	21%	25%
45-49	7%	9%	27%	23%	22%
50-54	7%	8%	25%	27%	29%
55-59	6%	10%	22%	27%	30%
60-64	7%	7%	24%	29%	31%
65-69	4%	8%	28%	26%	39%
70 and above	7%	10%	23%	29%	38%