

British childhood ends at age 11

More than half of all British parents think childhood now ends at the age of 11, a survey by a children's book publisher indicates.

Random House Children's Books said parents are feeling increasingly pressured to allow their children to stay out late, drink alcohol and spend the night with their boyfriend or girlfriend, The Daily Telegraph reports. The survey of 1,170 parents said it's the parents who deserve much of the blame for the demise of their children's innocence because they buckle to "pester pressure," the British newspaper said.

Almost three-quarters of parents allow their children to drink alcohol before they turn 18 and 45 percent of parents permit their 16-year-old children to spend the night at a boyfriend's or girlfriend's house, the survey said.

Famed children's author Jacqueline Wilson said parents should not allow their young daughters to wear revealing clothes. "I'm not saying all under-12s should wear puff-sleeved dresses and little white socks and tee-strap sandals but at least you could run about and play properly in them," she told the newspaper. "And it seems so sad that girls feel embarrassed if they want to play with dolls past the age of six."

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