

Open Call: Exploring and Measuring “Trivsel” and “Mistrivsel” from the Perspectives of Children and Adolescents

Aim of the call

Center for Childhood Health (Center for Sundt Liv og Trivsel, CSLT) invites proposals (expression of interests) for an innovative study that explores how children and adolescents across different age groups, sexes, and social and geographical contexts understand and experience the concepts of *Trivsel* (mental well-being) and *Mistrivsel* (distress or lack of mental well-being).

With this call, CSLT aims to support a study that explores how children and adolescents *assign meaning to*, and *practice Trivsel and Mistrivsel*, and how these are shaped by the social arenas and dynamics they navigate (e.g. school, home, peer groups, digital spaces).

A key objective is that the study uses these insights to develop new – or significantly improve existing – instruments for quantitatively assessing *Trivsel* and *Mistrivsel*. These new or revised measures should be grounded in the language, logic, and lifeworlds of children and adolescents themselves.

Thus, the overall aims of the funded study are to:

- Provide empirically grounded understandings of *Trivsel* and *Mistrivsel* from the perspective of children and adolescents
- Produce new and/or improved measurements that more accurately assess children’s and adolescents’ experiences of *Trivsel* and *Mistrivsel*.

Background

What does *Trivsel and Mistrivsel* mean to children and young people – from their own perspectives? This question remains insufficiently answered. *Trivsel* is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and our current methods for capturing and assessing it are often inadequate. The need for more nuanced understandings and better, child-centered measurement approaches is more urgent than ever – particularly in light of the national focus on child well-being, such as the recent work of the Danish “Trivselskommission.”

There is a growing body of literature discussing how to define “*Trivsel*” and/or “*Mistrivsel*” often translated as “Mental well-being” and “Poor mental well-being” indicating that they are opposites of the same underlying construct. Yet, in fact, “*Trivsel*” and “*Mistrivsel*” may be influenced by different factors and in different ways. While there is an elaborated mainly theoretical literature on how to define “*Trivsel*”, there is a lack of knowledge on how children and adolescence themselves define and understand these constructs, and especially how and if these understandings differ across certain characteristics including age, sex, social position and geographical location.

Several large-scale quantitative studies assess the mental well-being (“*Trivsel*”) among Danish children and adolescence. These include “Den Nationale Trivselsmåling”, “Skolebørnsundersøgelsen” (HBSC), and “Ungeprofilundersøgelsen” among others. Typically, such surveys assess “*Trivsel* and/or “*Mistrivsel*” in terms of various indicators including life satisfaction, emotional well-being, socio-emotional skills, self-esteem, loneliness etc. There is a general agreement that none of the existing measures comprehensively captures the full construct of “*Trivsel*” and/or “*Mistrivsel*”. Using child- and adolescence generated understandings to develop items to assess “*Trivsel*” and “*Mistrivsel*” may thus be an important contribution to the future research in this area.

Methods

We strongly encourage proposals that are methodologically innovative and that seek to challenge or expand traditional approaches to research and measure development. This may include the incorporation of AI-based methods, the use of language models, digital ethnography, or other approaches that open new ways of understanding and measuring what matters most to children and young people.

More specifically, the submitted proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Clarity and coherence of the proposal

The proposal must be clearly written and well-argued, with explicit justifications for key design choices and delimitations—e.g., in relation to age groups, geographical scope, and methods.

2. Innovation and methodological ambition

We are particularly interested in projects that apply innovative methodologies and/or draw on alternative data sources to capture children and young people’s own perspectives. Proposals should demonstrate how the chosen approach contributes to methodological renewal in this area of research.

3. Relevance and applicability

The project should have clear practical relevance, including the potential to inform the development of tools or frameworks for assessing children and young people’s well-being in ways that reflect their own understandings. Proposals should also consider the applicability of the resulting tools in practice and their potential for tracking changes in *Trivsel* and *Mistrivsel* over time.

4. Analytical and comparative potential

Proposals should describe how the project will enable meaningful comparisons of *Trivsel* and *Mistrivsel* across different groups (e.g., age, geography, social conditions) and over time.

5. Feasibility and ethical considerations

The proposal must present a realistic and feasible plan, including identification of potential risks and strategies for managing them. It should also address ethical issues, particularly those related to capturing and representing children and young people’s own views and experiences in a responsible and respectful manner.

Applicant and organization

The applicant must hold a PhD and be affiliated with a Danish research institution.

The described project requires a wide range of qualifications covering both qualitative and quantitative methods. [In Centre for Childhood Health, we promote interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships and, thus, prefer this project to be organized as a collaboration between specialties.](#)

Dissemination of results

The dissemination of results should engage both the academic community and the Centre for Childhood Health’s target groups. Thus, this includes publications in academic journals, as well as other communication formats such as a comprehensive report or other communication materials in Danish, tailored for professionals working with children and adolescents, volunteers in child health-related associations, and/or parents. Besides presenting results, this publication should offer actionable insights on “Trivsel” among children and adolescents, key takeaways, and/or recommendations. Additionally, the dissemination of results will involve oral presentations and discussions of research findings with the Center for Childhood Health.

Budget

4.5 million DKK

Submission Guideline

- **Expression of interest:** Applicants are required to submit a max 2-page (5000 characters) outline of their proposed activity or project. This should include:
 - Title of the project
 - Objectives and goals
 - Summary of the proposed methodology with emphasis on the innovative aspects
 - Expected outcomes and impact
 - Motivation and expertise of the applicant(s)
 - Tentative budget

Important Dates:

- Deadline for expression of interest: Monday Aug 4, 2025
- Deadline for full application: November, 2025 (invited applicants will be notified)

Submission Instructions:

Please submit your expression of interest to application@cslt.dk by Aug 4, 2025.

Please insert title on the call for expression of interest in the subject line.

Procedure for the evaluation and decision of applications

The Centre for Childhood Health will establish an internal committee holding specific expertise within the field and aim of the call. Additionally, an external committee will review applications proceeding to the second stage. All full applications will be kept confidential within the centre and the committees.

1. Pre-screening for formality requirements

The internal committee will screen received expressions of interest to ensure they meet the requirements outlined in the submission guideline. Only submissions meeting these requirements will be accepted and proceed to scientific screening.

2. Screening for expertise

The internal committee will screen accepted applications for their scientific relevance and contribution to the field. Accepted submissions with strong alignment to the call's objectives will continue to the second stage.

3. Invitation to submit full application (second stage)

Based on the evaluation of the expression of interest, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

4. Review of full applications

An external committee will review the scientific quality and feasibility of the received applications.

5. Decision making

Based on a joint evaluation of the full application, the internal committee finally decides whether an application will be accepted or not.

All applicants will be contacted directly by e-mail regarding the decision (accept or decline).

Questions and inquiries regarding this call for expression of interest may be addressed to application@cslt.dk.

The study is project managed by senior researcher Cathrine Lawaetz Wimmelmann (clw@cslt.dk) at The Center for Childhood Health under the leadership of Head of Research Nina Geiker (nge@cslt.dk).