Our 2,200 first-grade children were reported to have healthy social and emotional well-being and an average or above average academic performance, but boys and children from low-income families or rural hukou status families had somewhat worse well-being. In addition, these 2,200 children tended to be in good health, but a noticeable proportion of them were considered to be overweight or obese, and this may be particularly true for boys and children from top-income families. In understanding the contexts for which these children were growing up, we looked at their family and school environments, two contexts considered the most important in young children’s life. In general, our 2,200 first-grade children were raised in a family with happily married parents in their mid-thirties who are gainfully employed, but with long weekly working hours. Their annual family income put our children right at about middle-income status both objectively and subjectively. Our parents viewed their children in a positive light and provided nurturing parenting behavior. Not surprisingly, academic learning was emphasized for this generation of children. Homework was reported for every school day; in addition, a good proportion of children attended many extracurricular activities (e.g., tutors on academic subjects, sports, drawing, dance, and piano lessons). Parents hold very high educational expectations for their children (e.g., achieve master’s degree or above). And parents ensured to attend every parent-teacher conference that was called for by the school.

Children tended to attend schools with a large student body that are served by educated and experienced school administrators and teachers who strive to provide an academically rigorous curriculum. Schools also provided many services to their students and families during the school year as well as during summer break. Most of the schools were equipped with adequate facilities in terms of classrooms, libraries, and computer rooms. In contrast, most of the schools did not have facilities such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, or multi-purpose function rooms. Both school administrators and classroom teachers agreed they provided a positive school environment and learning environment for both the teachers and students to learn and grow everyday. Our teachers were very satisfied with their current teaching career.