



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



LIFE AS A CHILD IN IRELAND

National Consultation



WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A CHILD IN IRELAND?

1. GETTING AN EDUCATION

Children said that getting an education is the BEST thing about being a child in Ireland because:

- There are good schools in Ireland
- Going to school is free
- Everybody in Ireland can go to school

"We have lots of cool ancient castles, legends and myths."

3. FRIENDSHIP

Children said that having friends is the third best thing about being a child in Ireland because:

- Children have lots of friends
- You can make new friends all the time to play with
- Friends are nice to you
- You can spend time with friends

"The best thing about being a child is we have nice friends."

The children had lots of ideas about what are the **BEST** things about being a child in Ireland. The **FOUR THINGS** that they think are the **BEST BEST BEST** things about being a child in Ireland are:

"I like living in Ireland because we have traditional games like Gaelic and hurling."

2. SPORTS

Children said that sports are the second best thing about being a child in Ireland because there are:

- Lots of different sports to play, like football, tennis, GAA and swimming
- Lots of places where you can play sports, like soccer pitches, swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball courts and schools
- Lots of sports to watch

"There are plenty of sports that young people can get involved in."

4. BEING IRISH

Children said that the fourth best thing about being a child in Ireland is being Irish because:

- We have our own Irish sport as we are the only country in the world that plays Gaelic football, hurling and camogie
- Irish people are very friendly and nice
- We have St. Patrick's Day
- We have our own Irish ways, like Irish dancing and Irish music
- We have our own language

Other things that children said are the **BEST** things about being a child in Ireland are:

- Play
- Places to go
- Activities
- Not having lots of things to worry about like parents have
- Fun
- Food
- Family



WHAT'S THE WORST THING ABOUT BEING A CHILD IN IRELAND?

The children also had lots of ideas about what are the **WORST** things about being a child in Ireland. The **FOUR THINGS** that they think are the **WORST** things about being a child in Ireland are:

1. THE RECESSION AND NOT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY

Children said that the worst thing of all about being a child in Ireland is the recession and not having enough money because:

- There is no money in the country
- People are not as happy as they used to be
- Children will have to pay back the banks when we grow up
- Parents are worried about losing their jobs and having less money
- Everything is expensive, like clothes, fuel, sweets and toys
- Children might not be able to get a job and earn money when we leave school

2. WEATHER

The second worst thing about being a child in Ireland is the weather because:

- The weather is wet and cold
- There is not much sunshine
- Children cannot go outside and play with their friends when the weather is bad
- Sometimes there are floods and lots of heavy snow and it is hard to go anywhere because you cannot get around

3. EDUCATION AND SCHOOL

Even though education was top of the list of what is best about being a child, it is also the third worst thing about being a child in Ireland because:

- Children get too much homework and it takes too long to do it
- Children spend about six hours at school and then have to do homework so there is no time for play
- Children do not get taught about science and computers in primary school
- There are no woodwork rooms, art rooms or science rooms in primary schools – everything is all in one classroom
- School is very long – it starts too early and it ends too late
- Children have to wear a school uniform

4. BAD BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME

The fourth worst thing about being a child in Ireland is bad behaviour and crime because:

- There is a lot of crime like murders, shootings and robberies in Ireland
- Criminals are mean and rob houses and shoot people
- Young people start to drink, smoke and take drugs when they are very young
- There is too much vandalism (damage) and graffiti in parks
- Some children get kidnapped
- There is a lot of violence

Other things that children said are the worst things about living in Ireland are:

- Rules
- Bullying
- The environment
- Driving
- Having to wait until you are 18 to vote, drink and see certain films

"Children's mummies and daddies are out of work and we don't have as much money."

"Our classrooms are too crowded."



WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU CHANGE IN IRELAND FOR CHILDREN TO BE HAPPY?

Children were also asked about what they would like to **CHANGE** in Ireland for children to be happy. The **FOUR THINGS** that children said that they would most like to **CHANGE** in Ireland are:

1. EDUCATION

The top thing that children want to change is school and education. They want to change things like:

- Having less homework
- Making days at school shorter and holidays longer
- Having less pupils in each classroom
- Having more equipment for sports and art
- Putting more money into teaching science and having science labs in schools
- Having more computers in school

2. THE RECESSION AND NOT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY

The second thing that children would like to change is the recession and not having enough money.

- End the recession
- Have more jobs so people would not have to leave the country to get a job
- Have better wages for people so that they have more money
- Put down the prices of food and other things

3. BAD BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME

The third thing that children want to change is bad behaviour and crime.

- Stop all crime such as murders and robberies in Ireland
- Have more guards so that there would be less crime
- Have no drugs in Ireland so children cannot take drugs
- Ban smoking completely
- Stop teenagers from smoking and drinking
- Give big fines to people who are selling drink to people who are underage

4. PLAY

The fourth thing that children want to change is play or being able to play, such as:

- Have more playgrounds
- Have things in playgrounds that are not too babyish for 9 and 10 year-olds
- Have monkey bars, swings and slides in every school
- Have more security guards in playgrounds so things do not get broken or damaged
- Have more time to play

Other things that children would like to change in Ireland for children to be happy are:

- Places to go
- Weather
- Sport
- The environment
- Driving and transport
- Having to wait until you are 18 to vote, drink and see certain films

"I would fix the recession so people would not have to emigrate."

"I would make sure that there were no drugs in Ireland so that children won't take any drugs."

"More Garda so that there would be less crime."

"Play all day!"



QUOTES FROM CHILDREN:

THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING A CHILD IN IRELAND...

"The best thing that ever happened to me was all the sports."

"There are lots of sports, like rugby, football, tennis and hockey."

"The best thing about being a child in Ireland is that we have a good education."

THE WORST THINGS ABOUT BEING A CHILD IN IRELAND...

"People smoke and drink alcohol at a very young age."

"Sometimes the weather is bad and I can't go outside and play with my friends."

"We have homework and it takes a long time to do it. After school you come home and have to do homework and when you're done it's nearly time for bed!!"

"I would make sure that there were no drugs in Ireland so that children won't take any drugs."

THE ONE THING THEY WOULD CHANGE ABOUT BEING A CHILD IN IRELAND...

"I would change the classroom numbers and I would get new schools."

"I would change it so that there would be no robbers because I worry about it sometimes."



WHAT WAS THE CONSULTATION ABOUT?

DO YOU REMEMBER ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS?!

In April 2011, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs asked every school in Ireland to take part in a survey. Children were asked to answer these questions:

- What's the BEST thing about being a child in Ireland?
- What's the WORST thing about being a child in Ireland?
- What one thing would you CHANGE in Ireland for children to be happy?

Consultation on National Children's Strategy 2012-2017

Age: _____
Boy/Girl: _____
Class: _____
County where you live: _____

What's the best thing about being a child in Ireland?

What's the worst thing about being a child in Ireland?

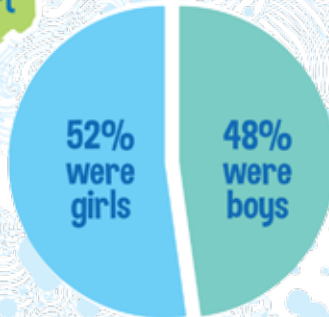
What one thing would you change in Ireland for children to be happy?

WHO TOOK PART?

66,705
children and young people
from every part of Ireland took part

38%
of schools
took part

50%
of the people that
filled out the survey
were aged between
10 and 12



This was **four times** more than expected!

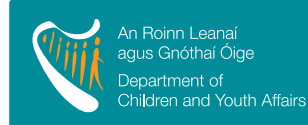
SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF THE CHILDREN WHO HELPED US WITH THIS LEAFLET:

Abby Eoghan Klea Oisín Trisha
Cáitlyn Fatima Luísa Tori Vanessa
Conor Iona Max

The main things that CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL said are in THIS leaflet. The main things that YOUNG PEOPLE over the age of 12 said are in a different leaflet.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE INFORMATION FROM THE CONSULTATION?

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will use the information from the consultation to help them develop plans for children and young people over the next five years.



An Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Department of Children and Youth Affairs
43 Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Tel: +353 (0)1 647 3000
Fax: +353 (0)1 667 0826
E-mail: citizenparticipation@dca.gov.ie
Web: www.dca.ie