

STATE OF THE NATIONS CHILDREN: KEY FINDINGS 2020

Part I: Key Findings

- In 2019, there were 1,203,103 children living in Ireland. This accounted for 24.4% of the total population (see Table 1).
- In 2018, 301 children died in Ireland. This equated to an overall mortality rate of 2.51 per 10,000 (see Table 4).
- In 2016, 16.5% of children lived in a lone-parent household (see Table 9).
- In 2016, the mothers of 8.1% of children had either no formal education or primary education only; and 50.6% of children had a mother whose highest level of education was either a lower secondary or upper-secondary education (see Table 12).
- In 2016, there were 14,223 Traveller children in Ireland. This accounted for 1.2% of the total child population and 45.9% of the total Traveller population (see Table 15).
- In 2016, there were 79,536 foreign national children in Ireland. This accounted for 6.6% of the child population (see Table 17).
- In 2016, there were 75,963 children with a disability in Ireland. This accounted for 6.4% of the child population (see Table 20).
- In 2016, there were 6,108 children providing regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability in Ireland. This accounted for 0.5% of the child population (see Table 22).

Part II: Key Findings

- In 2018, 83.3% of children aged 10-17 reported finding it easy to talk to their mother when something is really bothering them. This changed only marginally between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 24).
- In 2018, 67.9% of children aged 10-17 reported finding it easy to talk to their father when something is really bothering them. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 27).
- In 2018, 69.6% of children aged 15 reported that their parents spend time just talking with them several times a week (see Table 30).
- In 2018, 51.9% of children aged 15 reported that their parents discuss with them how well they are doing at school several times a week (see Table 32).
- In 2018, 69.1% of children aged 15 reported that their parents eat a main meal with them several times a week.
- In 2018, 89.3% of children aged 10-17 reported having three or more friends of the same gender. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 36).
- In 2018, 71.7% of children aged 10-17 reported having a pet of their own or a pet in the family. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 39).
- In 2018, 31.1% of children aged 10-17 reported having been bullied at school in the past couple of months. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 42).

Part III: Key Findings

- For the 2018/19 pre-school year, there were 4,216 pre-school services under contract to deliver the ECCE Programme to 116,116 children. Of these pre-school services, 36.3% met the basic capitation status and 63.7% met the higher capitation status (see Tables 45 & 46).
- Over the period 2013 to 2017, the percentage of primary school children who were absent from school for 20 days or more increased from 10.4% to 11.8% (see Table 47).
- Over the period 2013 to 2017, the percentage of post-primary school children who were absent from school for 20 days or more declined from 15.4% to 14.7% (see Table 50).
- The Leaving Certificate retention rate for children entering secondary school in 2011 was 91.6%, i.e. out of the 59,641 enrolled on 30 September 2011 in year one of the Junior Cycle, 54,631 sat the Leaving Certificate by 2016 or 2017 (see Figure 10).
- In 2018, 15 year-old children in Ireland achieved a mean score of 518.1 on the reading literacy scale (see Table 55).
- In 2018, 15 year-old children in Ireland achieved a mean score of 499.6 on the mathematics literacy scale (see Table 57).
- In 2018, 15 year-old children in Ireland achieved a mean score of 496.1 on the science literacy scale (see Table 59).
- In 2017, 5.9% of all babies born were in the low birth weight category (weighing less than 2,500 grams) (see Table 61).
- In 2017, 59.7% of infants were breastfed on discharge from hospital. This includes 48.3% who were breastfed exclusively and a further 11.4% who were fed using a combination of bottle and breastfeeding (see Table 63).

- In 2018, there were 150,686 hospital discharges of children (see Table 65).
- In 2018, there were 13,683 hospital discharges of children with a principal diagnosis of 'injury, poisoning, and certain other consequences of external causes' (see Table 67).
- In 2015, 77% of children were classified as being in the 'normal' weight category, according to the International Obesity Taskforce Standards. 16.9% were classified as either 'overweight' or 'obese' (see Table 69).
- In 2017, there were 8,809 children registered as having an intellectual disability (see Table 70).
- In 2017, there were 5,041 children registered as having a physical and/or sensory disability (see Table 72).
- In 2019 Q2, there were 15,401 child welfare and protection referrals to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (see Table 74).
- In 2018, 32.6% of children aged 10-17 reported students at their school participate in making the school rules. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 76).
- In 2018, 30.8% of children aged 15 reported that reading is one of their favourite hobbies (see Table 79).
- In 2018, 2.4% of children aged 10-17 reported smoking cigarettes every week. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 81).
- In 2018, 89.4% of children aged 10-17 reported never having smoked cigarettes. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 84).
- In 2018, 6.9% of children aged 10-17 reported having been drunk at least once in the past 30 days. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 87).
- In 2018, 69.4% of children aged 10-17 reported never having had an alcoholic drink. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 90).

- In 2018, 7.8% of children aged 10-17 reported having taken cannabis at least once in their lifetime. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 93).
- In 2017, there were 211 births to mothers aged 10-17 (see Table 96).
- In 2018, 24.8% of children aged 15-17 reported having ever had sex. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 98).
- In 2018 57.6% of children aged 10-17 reported feeling happy with the way they are. This changed only marginally between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 101).
- In 2018, 48.8% of children aged 10-17 reported being happy with their lives at present. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 104).
- In 2018, there were 7 suicides by children aged 10-17 (see Table 107).
- In 2017, the rate (per 100,000) of children and young people aged 10-24 presenting at a hospital emergency department following self-harm was 384 (see Table 109).
- In 2018, 51.1% of children aged 10-17 reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on more than four days per week. This changed only marginally between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 111).
- In 2018, 78.2% of children aged 10-17 reported eating breakfast on five or more days per week. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 114).
- In 2018, 6.5% of children aged 10-17 reported drinking soft drinks that contain sugar at least once a day. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 117).

Part IV: Key Findings

- Public expenditure on educational institutions between primary and tertiary level decreased from 5.21% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 to 3.58% in 2016 (see Figure 27).
- In 2018, 14% of the population were considered to be at risk of poverty (see Table 122).
- In 2018, 5.6% of the population experienced consistent poverty (see Table 123).
- In 2017, there were 42,911 households with children identified as being in need of social housing (see Table 124).
- In 2018, 90.2% of children aged 10-17 reported feeling safe in the area where they live. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 126).
- In 2018, 67.2% of children aged 10-17 reported that there are good places in their area to spend their free time. This increased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 129).
- In 2016, 9,451 children aged 10-17 were referred to the Garda diversion programme. Some children were referred more than once and so the total number of referrals was 17,615 (see Table 132).
- In 2017, 87.3% of pregnant women attended for antenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy (see Table 134).
- In 2017, 98.3% of newborns were visited by a public health nurse within 72 hours of discharge from hospital for the first time (see Table 135).
- In 2017, 92.8% of newborn children had their 7-9 month developmental check on time.

- In 2016, for children at twelve months of age, uptake rates among Local Health Offices (LHOs) for D₃, P₃, T₃, and Polio₃ ranged from 81% to 96% (see Table 138).
- In 2016, for children at 24 months of age, uptake rates among Local Health Offices (LHOs) for D₃, P₃, T₃, Polio₃, HepB₃, and Hib₃ ranged from 91% to 98% (see Table 139).
- As of December 2019, there were 6,861 children on an inpatient/day case (IPDC) waiting list and 81,316 children on an outpatient (OP) waiting list (see Tables 141 and 142).
- In 2018, there were 5,974 children in the care of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (see Table 143).
- In 2018, there were 408 admissions of children to psychiatric hospitals/units and child and adolescent units (see Table 145).