

KEY FINDINGS



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STATE OF
THE NATION'S
CHILDREN





Key Findings

- In 2021, there were **1,191,125** children living in Ireland. This accounted for **23.8%** of the total population (see Table 1).
- In 2019, **284** children died in Ireland. This equated to an overall mortality rate of **2.36** per 10,000 (see Table 4).
- In 2016, **16.5%** of children lived in a lone-parent household (see Table 9).
- In 2016, **8.1%** of children had a mother with 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).



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 (see Table 34).
- 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).



Key Findings

- For the 2020/21 pre-school year there were 4,023 pre-school services under contract to deliver the ECCE Programme to 104,137 children. Of these pre-school services 39% met the basic capitation status and 61% met the higher capitation status (see Table 45 & Table 46).
- Over the period 2013 to 2018, the percentage of primary school children who were absent from school for 20 days or more increased from 10.4% to 12.1% (see Table 47).
- Over the period 2013 to 2018, the percentage of post-primary school children who were absent from school for 20 days or more declined from 15.4% to 14.6% (see Table 50).
- The Leaving Certificate retention rate for children entering secondary school in 2014 was 91.5% i.e. out of the 61,161 enrolled on 30 September 2014 in year one of the Junior Cycle, 55,992 sat the Leaving Certificate by 2019, or sat the Leaving Certificate or received a calculated grade in 2020 (see Figure 9).
- 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 2019, 5.8% of all babies born were in the low birth weight category (weighing less than 2,500 grams) (see Table 61).
- In 2019, 60.7% of infants were breastfed on being discharged from hospital. This includes 45.5% who were breastfed exclusively and a further 15.2% who were fed using a combination of bottle and breastfeeding (see Table 63).



- In 2020, there were 109,777 hospital discharges of children (see Table 65).
- In 2020, there were 11,617 hospital discharges of children with a principal diagnosis of 'injury, poisoning, and certain other consequences of external causes' (see Table 67).
- In 2018, 76.8% of children were classified as being in the 'normal' weight category according to the International Obesity Taskforce Standards. 15.8% were classified as either 'overweight' or 'obese' (see Table 69).
- In 2020, there were 5,205 children registered as having an intellectual disability (see Table 70).
- In 2020, there were 2,805 children registered as having a physical and/or sensory disability (see Table 72).
- In 2020 Q4, there were 14,654 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 2020, there were 168 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, 88.2% of children aged 10-17 reported being happy with their lives at present. This decreased between 2014 and 2018 (see Table 104).
- In 2020, there were 12 suicides by children aged 10-17 (see Table 107).
- In 2019, the rate (per 100,000) of children and young people aged 10-24 presenting at a hospital emergency department following self-harm was 392 (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).



Key Findings

- Public expenditure on educational institutions between primary and tertiary level decreased from **5.21%** of gross domestic product (GDP) in **2013** to **3.23%** in **2018** (see Figure 26).
- In **2020**, **13.2%** of the population were considered to be at risk of poverty (see Table 122).
- In **2020**, **5.0%** of the population experienced consistent poverty (see Table 123).
- In **2020**, there were **24,646** 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 **2019**, **9,842** 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 were **18,567** (see Table 132).
- In **2019**, **88.3%** of pregnant women attended antenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy (see Table 135).
- In **2020**, **97%** of newborns were visited by a public health nurse within 72 hours of discharge from hospital for the first time (see Table 136).



- In 2020, 51.4% of newborn children had their developmental health screening before reaching 12 months of age (see Table 137).
- In 2020, for children at twelve months of age, uptake rates among Local Health Offices (LHOs) for D₃, P₃, T₃, and Polio₃ ranged from 61% to 96% (see Table 139).
- In 2020, for children at 24 months of age, uptake rates among Local Health Offices (LHOs) for D₃, P₃, T₃, Polio₃, HepB₃, and Hib₃ ranged from 87% to 97% (see Table 140).
- As of December 2020, there were 7,551 children on an inpatient/day case (IPDC) waiting list and 80,801 children on an outpatient (OP) waiting list (see Table 142 and Table 143).
- In 2020, there were 5,818 children in the care of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (see Table 144).
- In 2020, there were 486 admissions of children to psychiatric hospitals/units and child and adolescent units (see Table 146).

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An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
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