



State of the Nation's Children: Key Findings



Ireland 2016



KEY FINDINGS 2016

- The child population of Ireland increased by an estimated 17.8% between 2006 and 2016 (Population and Migration Estimates, Central Statistics Office, 2016).
- 61.6% of all child deaths in 2015 occurred in the period of infancy (Vital Statistics, Central Statistics Office, 2015).
- Approximately one in six children in Ireland live in a lone-parent household (Census of the Population, 2011).
- One in three children live in families where the mother has a third-level degree or higher (Census of the Population, 2011).
- The number of Traveller children increased by 30.3% between 2006 and 2011 (Census of the Population, 2011).
- The number of foreign national children increased by 49.5% between 2006 and 2011 (Census of the Population, 2011).
- Almost 6% of the child population in Ireland have a disability (Census of the Population, 2011).
- 5.6 per 1,000 children provide regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability (Census of the Population, 2011).
- Older children find it more difficult to talk to their mother when something is really bothering them (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children who report that they find it easy to talk to their father when something is really bothering them increased from 56.2% in 2002 to 70.2% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Significantly more girls than boys report that their parents spend time just talking with them several times a week (PISA Survey, 2015).
- More than half of 15-year-old children report that their parents discuss with them how well they are doing at school several times a week (PISA Survey, 2015).
- 76% of 15-year-old children report that their parents eat a main meal with them around a table several times a week (PISA Survey, 2015).
- Almost nine out of ten children have three or more friends of the same gender (HBSC Survey, 2014).

- Three out of four children have a pet of their own or a pet in their family (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Immigrant children, Traveller children and children with a disability and/or chronic illness were more likely to report being bullied at school (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Approximately 38% of the 4,178 pre-school services contracted to deliver the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme in June 2016 met the higher capitation requirements (ECCE Database).
- Approximately one in every ten primary school children misses 20 days or more in the school year (Tusla, the Child and Family Agency Annual School Attendance Data, 2013/2014).
- Approximately one in every six post-primary school children misses 20 days or more in the school year (Tusla, the Child and Family Agency Annual School Attendance Data, 2013/2014).
- Retention rates to the completion of the Leaving Certificate have increased by 6.4 percentage points - from 83.8% of children in the 1999 school entry cohort to 90.2% of children in the 2009 school entry cohort (Education Statistics Database, 2016).
- Children in Ireland have maintained their strong performance in reading literacy since 2012, and the gender gap in favour of girls has narrowed (PISA Survey, 2015).
- In 2015, overall performance in mathematics in Ireland was approximately the same as in 2012 (PISA Survey, 2015).
- Science literacy scores of 15-year-olds in Ireland are above the OECD average (PISA Survey, 2015).
- The percentage of low birth weight babies increased slightly between 2011 and 2015, from 5.4% in 2011 to 5.9% in 2015. (National Perinatal Reporting System, 2015).
- Breastfeeding initiation rates have continued to increase (National Perinatal Reporting System, 2015).
- Almost half of the total hospital discharges of children in 2015 were children aged under five years (Hospital In-Patient Enquiry, 2015).
- The total number of hospital discharges of children with a principal diagnosis of 'injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes' was relatively stable between 2011 and 2015.
- The percentage of children aged seven years classified as being in the 'normal' weight category increased by three percentage points over the period 2010-2012 (WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative, 2012).

- Two-thirds of children registered as having an intellectual disability in 2015 were boys (National Intellectual Disability Database, 2015).
- In 2015, approximately one in three children on the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database were registered as having multiple disabilities. (National Physical and Sensory Disability Database, 2015).
- The number of child welfare and protection referrals increased by 8.5% between 2012 and 2015 (Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, 2015).
- The percentage of children aged 10-17 who reported that students at their school participate in making the school rules increased by about three percentage points between 2010 and 2014 - from 32.6% in 2010 to 35.5% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- In 2012, more than one-third of 15-year-old children reported that reading is one of their favourite hobbies (PISA Survey, 2012).
- The percentage of children who reported smoking cigarettes every week decreased from 11.6% in 2006 to 5.3% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children aged 10-17 who reported never smoking cigarettes increased from 59.8% in 2002 to 84.2% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children aged 10-17 who reported having been drunk at least once in the past 30 days decreased from 18.3% in 2010 to 10% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children aged 10-17 who reported never having had an alcoholic drink increased from 47.2% in 2006 to 58.3% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children who reported taking cannabis at least once in their lifetime decreased from 15.7% in 2006 to 8.8% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The number of babies born to girls aged 17 and under decreased by 23% between 2011 and 2015 (Vital Statistics, Central Statistics Office, 2015).
- In 2014, approximately one in four children aged 15-17 reported that they have had sex (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Approximately three out of ten girls aged 15-17 reported feeling happy with the way they are (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Approximately nine out of ten children aged 10-17 reported being happy with their lives at present (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- In 2015, there were 14 suicides of children aged 10-17 (Vital Statistics, Central Statistics Office, 2015).

- In 2015, 2.5 times as many girls as boys presented at hospital emergency departments following self-harm (National Self-Harm Registry Ireland, 2015).
- Children in Ireland have one of the highest levels of physical activity among 42 WHO countries and regions (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Children in higher social class categories are more likely to eat breakfast on five or more days per week (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children aged 10-17 who report drinking soft drinks that contain sugar at least once a day has fallen from 26% in 2006 to 12.6% in 2014 (HBSC, 2014).
- In 2013, Ireland's public expenditure on educational institutions between primary and tertiary level was 5.2% of gross domestic product (GDP) and was above the EU-28 average (Department of Education and Skills; OECD report *Education at a Glance*, 2016).
- In 2014, 18.6% of children were considered to be at risk of poverty (European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2014).
- In 2014, 11.2% of children experienced consistent poverty (European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2014).
- In 2016, there were 46,294 households with children identified as being in need of social housing (Summary of Social Housing Assessments, 2016).
- In 2014, nine out of ten children reported feeling safe in the area where they live (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- The percentage of children who reported that there are good places in their area to spend their free time increased from 51.2% in 2010 to 61.5% in 2014 (HBSC Survey, 2014).
- Over the five-year period 2010-2014, the number of children referred to the Garda Diversion Programme decreased by 44.5% (An Garda Síochána, 2014).
- Early antenatal care is lowest among younger pregnant women (National Perinatal Reporting System, 2016).
- In 2015, 97.5% of newborn babies were visited by a public health nurse within 72 hours of discharge from hospital for the first time.' (Outturn of Quarterly Performance Indicator Returns, 2015).
- In 2015, 93.7% of children had their 7-9 Month Developmental Check on time (Outturn of Monthly Activity Data Returns, 2015).

- In 2014, the national uptake rates of D₃, P₃, T₃, Hib₃, Polio₃ and HepB₃ for children at 24 months of age reached the target of 95% (Health Protection Surveillance Centre, *Annual Epidemiological Report 2014*).
- The number of children on an inpatient/day case waiting list awaiting treatment increased by 44.4% between 2011 and 2015 (Patient Treatment Register, 2015).
- The number of children in the care of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency increased by approximately 3.6% between 2011 and 2015 (Tusla, 2014).
- In 2015, among children, 'depressive disorders' were the most common reason for admission to psychiatric hospitals/units and child and adolescent units (National Psychiatric In-Patient Reporting System, 2015).