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**Growing Up
in Ireland**
National Longitudinal
Study of Children



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About Growing Up in Ireland

Growing Up in Ireland is a new, national, Government funded study of children in Ireland. This exciting study is the first and most important of its kind ever to take place in this country.

The purpose of the study is to understand all aspects of children and their development. It will:

- tell us how children develop over time.
- help us find out what factors affect a child's development.
- look at what makes for a healthy and happy childhood and what might lead to a less happy childhood.
- help us to discover what children think of their own lives and learn what it means to be a child in Ireland today.

The information will help the Government to make decisions on what future policies and services will be most beneficial for children and their families in Ireland.

Why is it so important?

Growing Up in Ireland is the most significant piece of research on children to be carried out in Ireland. The unique part of the study is that it is long-term and involves interviewing children and their families on a number of occasions over a number of years.

By following children over time, we will be able to find out the individual, family and broader social and environmental factors that affect children's development.

We can then use this information to help government policymakers plan for future policies and services that will benefit families and their children in the years ahead and ensure that all children can have the best start in life.

How does it work?

The study will take place over seven years and will follow the progress of two groups of children - 8,000 nine-year-olds and 10,000 nine-month-olds.

During the first part of the study we will collect information from 8,000 nine-year-old children, their parent(s)/guardian(s), school teachers and Principals. We will visit these same children again when they are 13 years of age to find out how they have grown and how their lives have changed over the four intervening years.

The second part of the study involves collecting information from 10,000 nine-month-old infants and their parent(s)/guardian(s). We will re-visit these infants when they are three years old to find out how they have grown and developed from infants to young children.

How are these children and families being selected?

The nine-year-old children will be selected from Primary Schools across Ireland on a purely random basis.

The nine-month-old infants will be selected randomly using the Child Benefit Register kept by the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

The random selection for both groups of children will make sure that we can talk to all different types of children and families from all parts of the country.

The Study Team has met with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) and the National Parents Council (Primary), both of which fully support the Study.

Who is running the study?

Growing Up in Ireland is a Government study. The Department of Health & Children is funding it through the Office of the Minister for Children in association with the Department of Social & Family Affairs and the Central Statistics Office.

The Office of the Minister for Children is overseeing and managing the study, which is being carried out by a group of researchers led by the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin. They are the Study Team.

Is there anyone else involved?

The Study Team works with a number of other bodies to ensure that the study is carried out to the highest possible standards:

- the Scientific and Policy Advisory Committee is a non-executive group made up of ten members who provide scientific and policy advice on the content and best practice for the design, implementation and rollout of the study.
- the Children's Advisory Forum is made up of 12 committees of children in schools across Ireland. Seven nine-year-old children sit on each committee which meets a number of times a year. The Children's Advisory Forum represents the voice and opinions of children in the study and during each meeting the committee members give their views and advice to the Study Team on how they feel the study should be developed and run.
- Growing Up in Ireland is being conducted under ethical approval from the Health Research Board's Research Ethics Committee. This involves a rigorous ethical review of each part of the study including international reports on the project's design and content. This process will ensure that every step possible is taken to safeguard the rights, safety and well-being of those who will participate in the study as well as the researchers.

When will the results of the study be published?

A series of research reports will be published throughout the seven years of the study. We expect that the first of these will be ready within two years.

Confidentiality

All the information collected in **Growing Up in Ireland** is treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used exclusively for research purposes.

Only a few members of the Study Team will be able to associate the information given by a respondent with his/her name.

Under no circumstances will anyone in Government or any government agency or department be able to identify information given by any participant in the study.