

Growing Up in Ireland

A Study Researcher from the ESRI will be in contact with you in the coming days. He/she will discuss in more detail the participation of your school and will be able to answer any questions which you may have in relation to the study

Your participation counts.

Although taking part in **Growing Up in Ireland** is voluntary, your participation and the participation of your school is very important to the success of the study.

It is only by carrying out studies such as this that we can paint a complete picture of the world of the child growing up in Ireland and, accordingly, find out how we can improve the future for all children and families in Ireland.

We hope that you can support us in our work and we would like to thank you, in anticipation, for your help.

Support for Growing Up in Ireland.

This study is being supported and endorsed by:
The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
The National Parents Council - Primary
Treoir
One Family

Where can I find out more information?

Visit our website:

www.growingup.ie

Phone:

Freephone 1800 200 434

**Contact our Communications Officer,
Jillian Heffernan, on 01 896 3378**

Email:

Email us at growingup@esri.ie

Post:

**Growing Up in Ireland,
Economic & Social Research Institute,
Whitaker Square,
Sir John Rogerson's Quay,
Dublin 2.**



PRINCIPAL'S INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is the Growing Up in Ireland study?

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

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

- tell us how children develop over time.
- help us to 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 one.
- help us to discover what children think of their own lives and learn what it means to be a child in Ireland today.

What will it tell us?

This study will focus on all aspects of a child's life including his/her social, emotional, and physical development, and health status etc. and not exclusively on a child's education.

From an educational perspective we will be looking at what role the education system plays in a child's development with a view to formulating policies to encourage positive educational outcomes for as many children as possible.

The data collected will be used to advise the Government on future policies and services that will be of most benefit for children and families in Ireland and which will ensure that all children can have the best possible start in life.

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 Department of Education & Science is represented on the Steering Group which oversees the project.

A group of researchers led by the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin is carrying out the study.

How was my school selected?

The study will include 8,000 nine-year-old children, their families, teachers and Principals.

The most effective way for us to recruit a representative sample of 8,000 nine-year-olds is through the National School system.

We have randomly selected National Schools from across Ireland from which to sample the children.

Your school has been one of those randomly selected to participate and we are asking permission from you (or your Board of Management if necessary) for your assistance.

We now need your help in selecting the sample of nine-year-old children from your school.

In the coming days a Study Researcher from the ESRI will contact you by telephone to discuss the school's participation in greater detail and how we would like to select the children.

What happens if my school takes part?

Step One: A Study Researcher will arrange a short meeting with you in your school, at a time which is convenient for you, to discuss participation in full detail.

Step Two: We need to select a sample from the nine-year-olds in your school.

Step Three: Once the children have been selected your school will be asked to distribute information materials, provided by the Study Researcher, to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each study child. This will include a leaflet giving a detailed explanation of the study as well as a consent form for the parent(s) to sign.

Step Four: The study child will be asked to return the consent form to the school. These forms, which will contain the family contact details, will be passed on by your school to the Study Researcher.

Step Five: We will be asking the Principal to complete a single four-page questionnaire about the school and asking the class teacher of each study child to complete a single questionnaire about him/herself, teaching experience and so on. In addition, the teacher will be asked to complete a questionnaire about each study child.

Step Six: The Study Researcher will administer the Drumcondra reading and maths tests to the study children in the school. The results of the tests will be kept strictly confidential and will not be available to the school or to the parents.

Step Seven: After the school-based component of the study, the Study Researcher will visit the child's home to carry out interviews with the child and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).

What does the Principal's questionnaire involve?

To complement the information we collect in the home you, as Principal, will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire about your school. This will include details about:

- the school in general

- teaching and other school resources
- student intake and allocation to classes

This should take about 10 minutes.

What does the teacher's questionnaire involve?

The class teacher of each study child will be asked to complete two short questionnaires.

- the first one will cover general questions about the teacher him/herself including age, qualifications and length of time teaching.
- the second questionnaire will relate to the study child and will cover questions including the child's subjects, computer usage, attendance record and academic performance.

Will this information be kept confidential?

All the information provided by you or your teachers will be treated as strictly confidential. The study is being carried out under the Statistics Act which governs the work of the Central Statistics Office e.g. the Census.

The information you provide will be used only for the statistical purposes of this study.

The information provided by you or your teachers can not be accessed by the child's parents and will not be available under the Freedom of Information Act.

Who are the Study Researchers?

The Study Researcher who will call to your school is from the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI).

Each researcher has been specially trained for the study and has been subject to security vetting by An Garda Síochána.

The Study Researchers have been appointed as Officers of Statistics by the Central Statistics Office and have signed confidentiality agreements in the same way as the enumerators who worked on the recent Census.

Each Study Researcher carries a photo ID card. If you have any concerns about him/her or would like to confirm his/her identity you can contact Ms Pauline Needham at 01 863 2000.

What are my rights if I take part?

- if you decide to take part you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, even after you have completed the questionnaire.
- if there are any question(s) on the questionnaire you do not wish to answer you do not have to do so.
- the Study Researcher is not allowed to have any contact with the participating child/children unless another adult is present in the room. This is for the protection of both the child and the researcher.

What do I do next?