



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Your baby has been chosen to take part in a new and historic national study of 10,000 children in Ireland called *Growing Up in Ireland*.

What is the Growing Up in Ireland study?

Growing Up in Ireland is a new, national, Government funded study of children.

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 it means to be a parent in Ireland today.

What will it tell us?

The study will help us to find out all about children's social, emotional and physical development.

This 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.

What does taking part involve?

Taking part in *Growing Up in Ireland* is very simple.

An interviewer will call to your home to discuss the survey with you and arrange a time, which suits you and your family, to carry out an interview with you and one with your spouse/partner (where relevant). The interviews in your home will last about 110-120 minutes.

If there is another parent living outside the home or someone else, such as a childminder, who looks after the child on a regular basis, we would like to send them a questionnaire in the post. If you prefer, however, we will not send a questionnaire to him/her.

If you don't wish to take part, simply tell the interviewer when he/she calls.

Why should your family take part?

By taking part, your family will play a crucial role in helping us to find out what it's like to be a child growing up in 21st century Ireland. This information will help us to give the Government advice on how to help make childhood a better experience for all children and to make improvements for children and families for many years to come.

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.

Confidentiality

All the information given to the *Growing Up in Ireland* interviewer is treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used exclusively for research purposes. The information given by your partner, childminder, and so on will not be seen by anyone – not even you will have access to it.

Growing Up in Ireland is being carried out under the **Statistics Act 1993**. All personnel associated with the study have been appointed Officers of Statistics under the Act by the Director General of the CSO. This means that study personnel are legally obliged to treat all information collected during the study as strictly confidential. This protects all the information you give as part of the study. Your information will be used only for statistical purposes. Under no circumstances could any government department identify information given by you.

We will use an ID number on your questionnaire and this will help to ensure that your information is kept anonymous.

How was your child selected?

Each family has been selected on a random basis from the Child Benefit Register (Children's Allowance records). This will make sure that the study will cover children and families from all parts of the country. We have been able to access the Child Benefit Register under the Statistics Act 1993 which allows Officers of Statistics access to the records of public bodies for statistical purposes only

What kind of questions will your family be asked?

You and your partner (if relevant) will be asked questions about:

- your baby's health and temperament
- his/her daily routines
- your own health
- your family life and experiences as a parent

All the questions are very straightforward, though some are quite detailed and some will address issues like your family's income, your relationship with your partner (if relevant) and so on. The study interviewer will be able to help out if you have any concerns or questions about the actual survey questionnaire itself.

Following up in a few years time:

The unique part of *Growing Up in Ireland* is that it is a long-term study. This means that we would like to return to your home in three years time when your child is three years of age.

When the time comes we will arrange another visit to your home and ask some more questions about how your child has grown and changed over these years.

Who are the Interviewers?

The interviewer who will call to your home is from the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI). They are Officers of Statistics appointed by the Central Statistics Office and are similar to those who carry out research on behalf of the Central Statistics Office, including the Census. Each interviewer carries a photo ID card.

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

The interviewer is not allowed to be alone with your child. You or another adult must be present in the room. This is for the protection of both your child and the interviewer.

If you are unhappy with the way in which the survey has been conducted or with the interviewer or would like to confirm his/her identity, please contact the *Growing Up in Ireland* team at 01- 8632000.

What are your rights if you take part?

- If you decide to take part you and **your family may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, even after the interviewer has called to your home.** At that stage, if requested, we would delete all information previously collected about you.
- If there are any questions on the questionnaire you do not wish to answer you do not have to do so.

Your participation counts.

Taking part in *Growing Up in Ireland* is entirely voluntary. Your participation will play a major role in the success of the study.

It is only by carrying out studies such as these that we can understand the role of all caring adults in the life of a child and 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.

Where can you find out more information?

Phone: Freephone 1800 200 434

or contact our Communications Officer, Jillian Heffernan, on 01 896 3378
or call 01 8632000 and ask for the *Growing Up in Ireland* team

Visit our website:

www.growingup.ie

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

