Factors that Foster Resilience in Outcomes for Vulnerable Children: An Analysis using Growing Up in Ireland Data

Charlotte Silke, Bernadine Brady and Caroline Heary (2026)

Commissioned by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality

The report identified two ways of summarising 'risk' when children were age 9 in 2007, with a third group - the majority of children - having generally low risk on most indicators (80%). The first 'at risk' group were more likely to be in a family who were having financial difficulties and/or were in a lone parent family (the 'family ses risk group', 9.5%). The second 'at risk' group tended to have a health condition that often co-occurred with difficulties getting along with their peers (the 'social-health' risk group, 10.5%).

The data from the same individuals at age 25 suggested two broad categories of outcome: those who were 'doing well' on most indicators (73%) and a second 'struggling' group who were not doing well in several domains (27%) such as mental and physical health and financial wellbeing.

In between age 9 and age 25, the report identified some experiences and circumstances that increased the likelihood of an individual 'doing well' by early adulthood such as achievements in education and participation in extra-curricular activities.

The infographics in this booklet aim to summarise potential pathways between early life risk (age 9) and subsequent well-being (age 25), outlining possible factors that might help or hinder development along these pathways. Whilst based on the analysis in the report, they illustrate how one individual's pathway may develop over time but not everybody will have the same experience or have the same outcome.

The full report contains all the detail on how the 'risk' and 'outcome' profiles were identified. You can read it at:

https://www.growingup.gov.ie/pubs/Resilience-Report.pdf

Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland

An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais agus Comhionannais
Department of Children, Disability and Equality

Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

unesco Chair

Potential Pathway #1

THE ‘FAMILY SES’ RISK GROUP (9.5% OF CHILDREN)

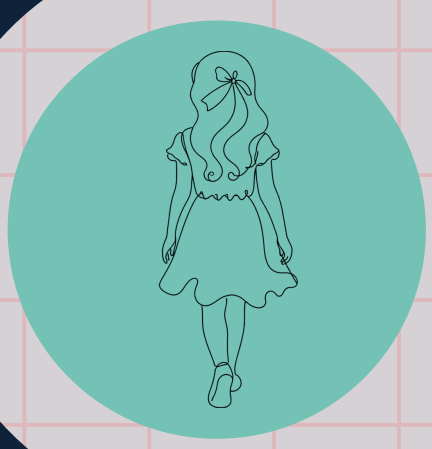
Those children that may be in a familiy experiencing financial difficulties and/or a lone parent family.

Age 9

These children may belong to lone-parent families or are growing up in households experiencing financial strain - which may affect access to resources, supports and opportunities.



Age 13



Some children may continue to experience financial pressures at home, but benefit from having regular opportunities to engage in leisure activities, such as hanging out with their peers at their local youth club.

Age 17/18

While financial issues may be a barrier for accessing higher education opportunities, through the support they received from their teachers, parents and friends some of these young people decided to pursue a University Degree.



Age 25



Thanks to their continued education, the support they received from parents, peers and teachers, and their frequent engagement in hobbies and pastimes as teenagers, some of these young people are now doing well.

Potential Pathway #2

THE 'SOCIAL-HEALTH' RISK GROUP
(10.5% OF CHILDREN)

Those children that may have several social, learning and health issues that often co-occurs with difficulties getting along with their peers.

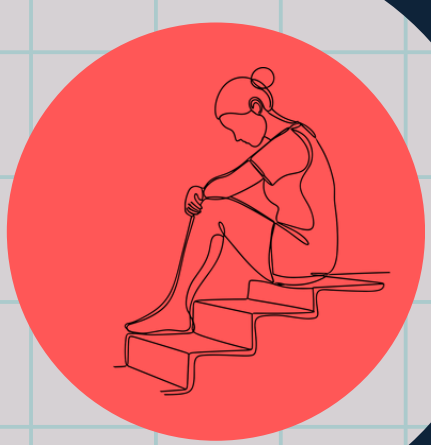


Age 9

These children may already be navigating a combination of challenges - such as living with a disability or health condition, struggling with school, or having difficulties with peers

Age 13

Some children continue to experience challenges. Participation in lesure activties, such as sports, might become more difficult and they may withdraw from these opportunities.



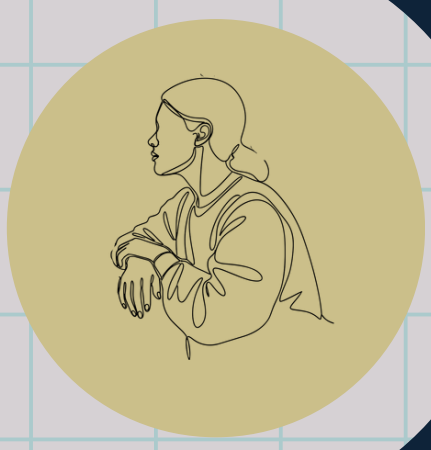


Age 17/18

Some of these young people may have struggled to form strong friendships, feel less able to seek support from teachers or have difficulties going to College/University.

Age 25

These young people are more likely to be struggling compared to children who did not experience these challenges.



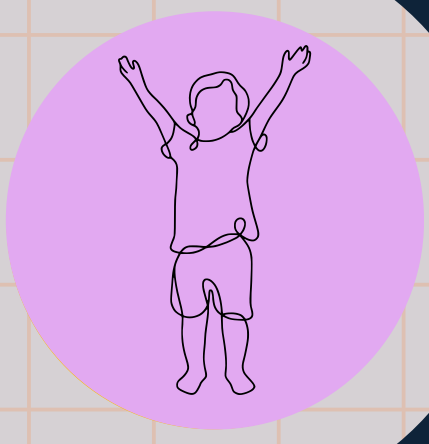
Potential Pathway #3

THE ‘LOW’ RISK GROUP
(80% OF CHILDREN)

Those children that have a low probablility of experiencing specific negative life events and developmental challenges.

Age 9

These children have likely experienced few adversities.



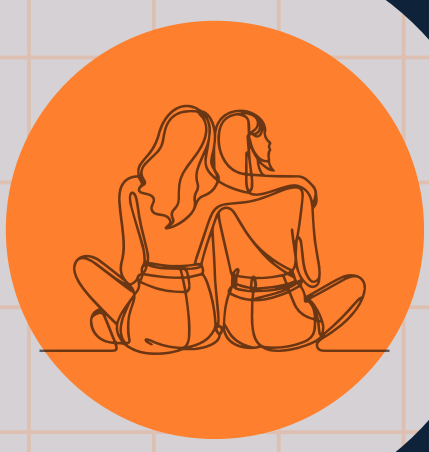


Age 13

These children have large support networks and often engage in fun out-school activities.

Age 17/18

Many of these young people have built strong relationshops with their parents.





Age 25

Most of these young people are doing well in many areas in life.