



# Growing Up in Ireland: Social-Emotional and Behavioural Outcomes in Early Adolescence

Turning 13 was a key stage in the lives of Cohort '98 as they transitioned from primary to secondary school and entered puberty, all in the context of the Great Recession of 2008-2013. The report is based on interviews with over 7,400 children and their families, conducted first when the children were 9 years old (2007/8), and again when the children were 13 years old (2011/12). The report documents the mental health and well-being of those 13-years-olds in the study and examines factors that were associated with these outcomes. Here are a few of the main findings . . .



## **Most parents felt children were doing well**

88% of 13-year-olds were not displaying any significant levels of difficulty, as reported by their parents



## **Risk factors included family change**

Having older friends and experiencing change in family structures were associated with a higher risk for poorer well-being across time



## **But 16% self-reported symptoms of depression**

Girls were more likely than boys to have symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of depression (18% vs 14%)



## **But there were protective factors too**

Good quality relationships with peers - rather than having many friends - was important for young people's well-being



## **Experimenting with alcohol more likely than smoking or drugs**

16% had had an alcoholic drink  
9% had smoked a cigarette  
3% had sniffed glue or chemicals  
1% had tried cannabis



## **Relationships with mothers and fathers were important**

The effect of parental relationships differed for boys and girls: for example, conflict and a lack of closeness with mothers affected girls more negatively than boys