

INFORMATION SHEET – 7-year postal questionnaire

It is now seven years since your family kindly agreed to be part of the **Growing Up in Ireland** study, and just over two years since we last visited you when your child was five years old.

Growing Up in Ireland is a unique study which follows the progress of the same group of children and young people over time to help improve our understanding of all aspects of their development. We hope to return to interview you in your home when your child is 9 years old, but in the meantime **we would like you to fill in this short postal questionnaire to tell us how your child is getting on now that they are 7 years old.**

A reminder about what *Growing Up in Ireland* is all about ...

The purpose of the study is to improve our understanding of all aspects of children and young people and their development. It will help us to look at what makes for a healthy and happy childhood or adolescence and what might lead to a less happy one.

This information will help the Government to make decisions on what future policies and services will be most beneficial for children, young people and their families in Ireland. **Growing Up in Ireland** results were an important source of data in the development of the new national children's strategy for Government which was published last year.

What has been happening since our last visit?

There are two big groups of children (known as 'cohorts') taking part in **Growing Up in Ireland** and your child is part of the younger group known as the 'Infant Cohort'. The other group of children, known as the 'Child Cohort', were 9 years old when first interviewed and are now 17 years old. We have been preparing to go back to them as they move from school to college and the workplace later in 2015.

In December 2013, we published the first findings from the Infant Cohort at age 5 years and we are planning a more detailed report for later this year. In January 2015, the Study Team published a report on how mothers' lifestyles in pregnancy and after the birth affected the health of their infants. These, and other results from the Study, are published on our website: www.growingup.ie.

Why should your family take part in the age 7 years follow-up?

Your family's continued participation in the study is crucial to help get the most benefit from this research. The real value of this study will come from having *more* information on the *same* children and young people, and this will help us to better understand the changes that take place in their lives as they grow and, very importantly, why they grow and develop at different rates.

Who is running the study?

Growing Up in Ireland is a Government study. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is funding it, in association with the Department of Social Protection and the Central Statistics Office.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is overseeing and managing the study, which is being carried out by a group of independent researchers led by the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin.

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What is involved in taking part this time?

At this stage, now that your child is age 7 years, we would like to collect some key information on how he or she is getting on between our main visits when a researcher interviews you in person. There are some aspects of a child's life that are not only important for their overall development but might also change a lot between the ages of 5 and 9. These include people leaving and joining the family; the child's health and development; how the child is settling in at school; how s/he is getting on with others; and how s/he likes to spend free time.

We hope to collect this information by asking the parent/guardian who takes most care of the child to complete a paper questionnaire and post it back to us. For this stage, we are only asking this main caregiver to participate – there are no other questionnaires for children, partners or school staff. You can skip any questions that you prefer not to answer, and as before, your participation is completely voluntary.

Confidentiality

As with previous stages when you were interviewed, **all the information you provide in the questionnaire is treated in the strictest confidence**. By this we mean that it could not be associated with you or your family by anyone other than a very small number of the people who are running the project. It will be used exclusively for research purposes.

Under no circumstances could anyone in Government or any government agency or department be able to identify information given by you. The study is being carried out under the Statistics Act (1993). This is the same legislation as is used to carry out the Census of Population and ensures complete confidentiality of all information collected.

What are my rights if we take part?

- **You and your family may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.**
- If there are any questions on the questionnaire you do not wish to answer, you do not have to do so.

Where can I find out more information?

Phone: Freephone 1800 200 434

or contact Ms Fiona Burke, on 01 863 2050

or call 01 863 2000 and ask for the ***Growing Up in Ireland*** team

Visit our website: www.growingup.ie

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