

Niamh at 9 months



Niamh at 3 years



Niamh at 5 years



What do we know about parenting?

A review of the findings from *Growing Up in Ireland and the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative*

Stella Owens



Outline of presentation

- **Why supporting parents matters**
- **Example of data from 9-year cohort in *Growing Up in Ireland* to examine aspects of parents and families and how this is related to child outcomes**
- **Findings from the Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative in these areas**
- **Key messages emerging**
- **Show how *Growing Up* and PEI can work together to inform policy and practice**



Why is Supporting Parents Important?

Children of **depressed mothers** are more likely to show poorer cognitive, social, behavioural & psychological outcomes

Studies of **paternal depression** show similar effects

Poor maternal diet before & during pregnancy can increase the risk of congenital defects, pre-term delivery & pre-eclampsia amongst others

Parents in **poverty** are at increased risk of mental health problems & their parenting behaviours are less stimulating & more punitive

Parents play a critical role in their children's lives, both before and after birth.

Why is Supporting Parents Important?

The antenatal period is as important as infancy to the health and well-being of a child because maternal behaviour has such strong impacts on the developing foetus

Children growing up in families affected by parental substance misuse, inter-parental conflict and mental ill health will require additional support and intervention.

Children who develop secure attachments to their primary caregivers are less likely to have social and emotional difficulties and reduced likelihood of developing problems associated with substance abuse and domestic violence.

Parents play a critical role in their children's lives, both before and after birth.



Why is Supporting Parents Important?

The cost of using health and social services at age 28 was found to be 10 times higher for people with childhood conduct disorder than those without.

Behavioural and conduct problems in children and young people, and also familial and parenting difficulties, can result in increased service use often over a long time period, at significant cost to the State.

Indicators of problem childhood behaviour at age 7 have significant negative effects on school attendance and risk of early school leaving at age 16.

Parents play a critical role in their children's lives, both before and after birth.



Why is Supporting Parents Important?

Supporting parents to develop positive parenting skills promotes **healthy child adjustment** and reduces the effect of risk factors, such as poverty.

Parenting programmes have been shown to reduce the likelihood of **child behavioural and emotional problems.**

Behavioural parent training is effective in reducing childhood behavioural problems and can produce a **60-70%** improvement in children

Parents play a critical role in their children's lives, both before and after birth.



Background and Objectives of *Growing up in Ireland*

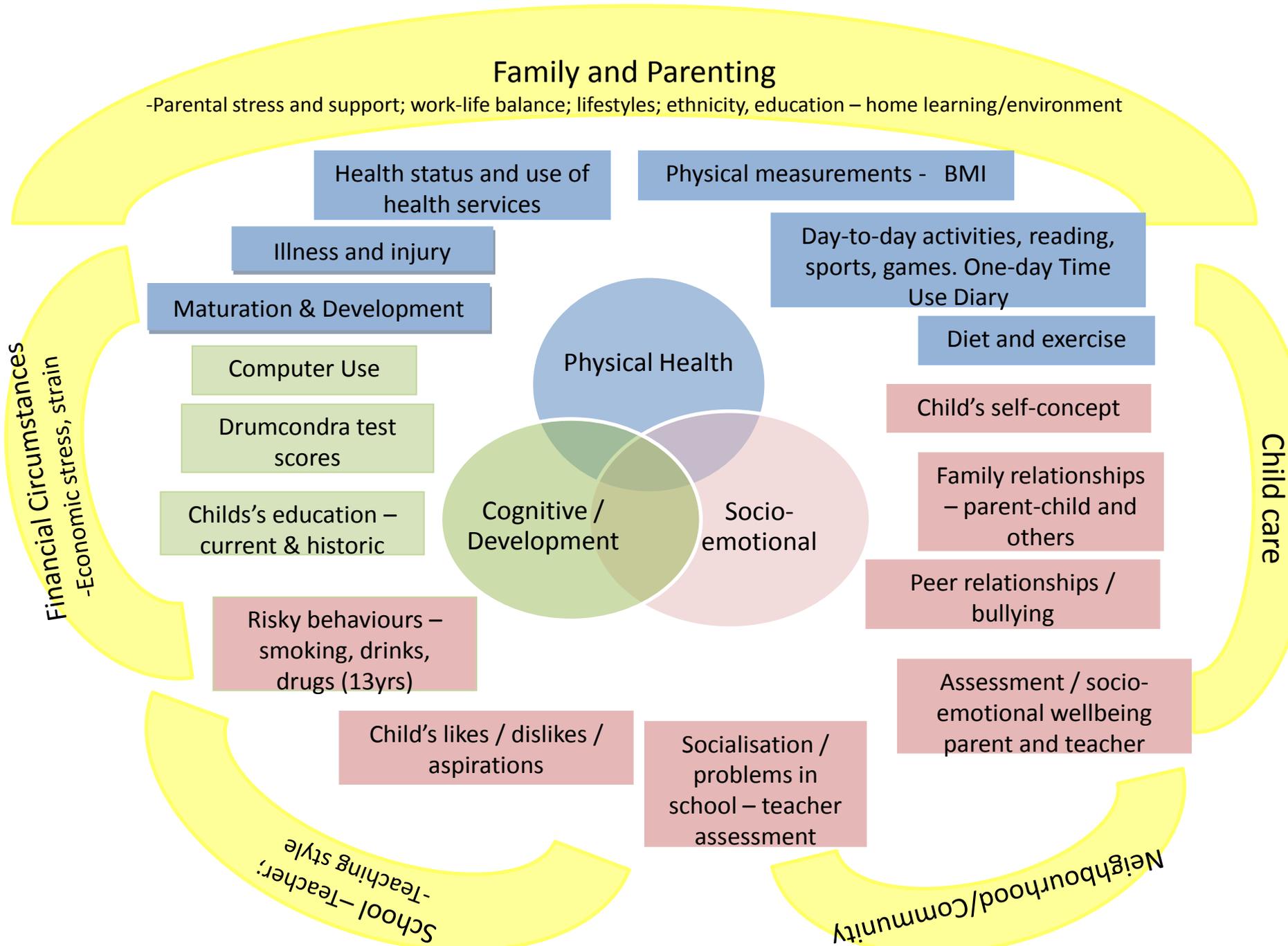
- Study the lives of children and young people in Ireland
- Establish what is typical and normal as well as atypical and problematic
- Identify the key factors that most help or hinder children's development
- Very strong policy focus – evidence-informed policy and practice.
- Develop part of the research infrastructure for all stakeholders involved in children and young people
- Wholly funded by Department of Children and Youth Affairs in association with the Department of Social Protection and the Central Statistics Office
- Being carried out by a consortium of researchers led by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College



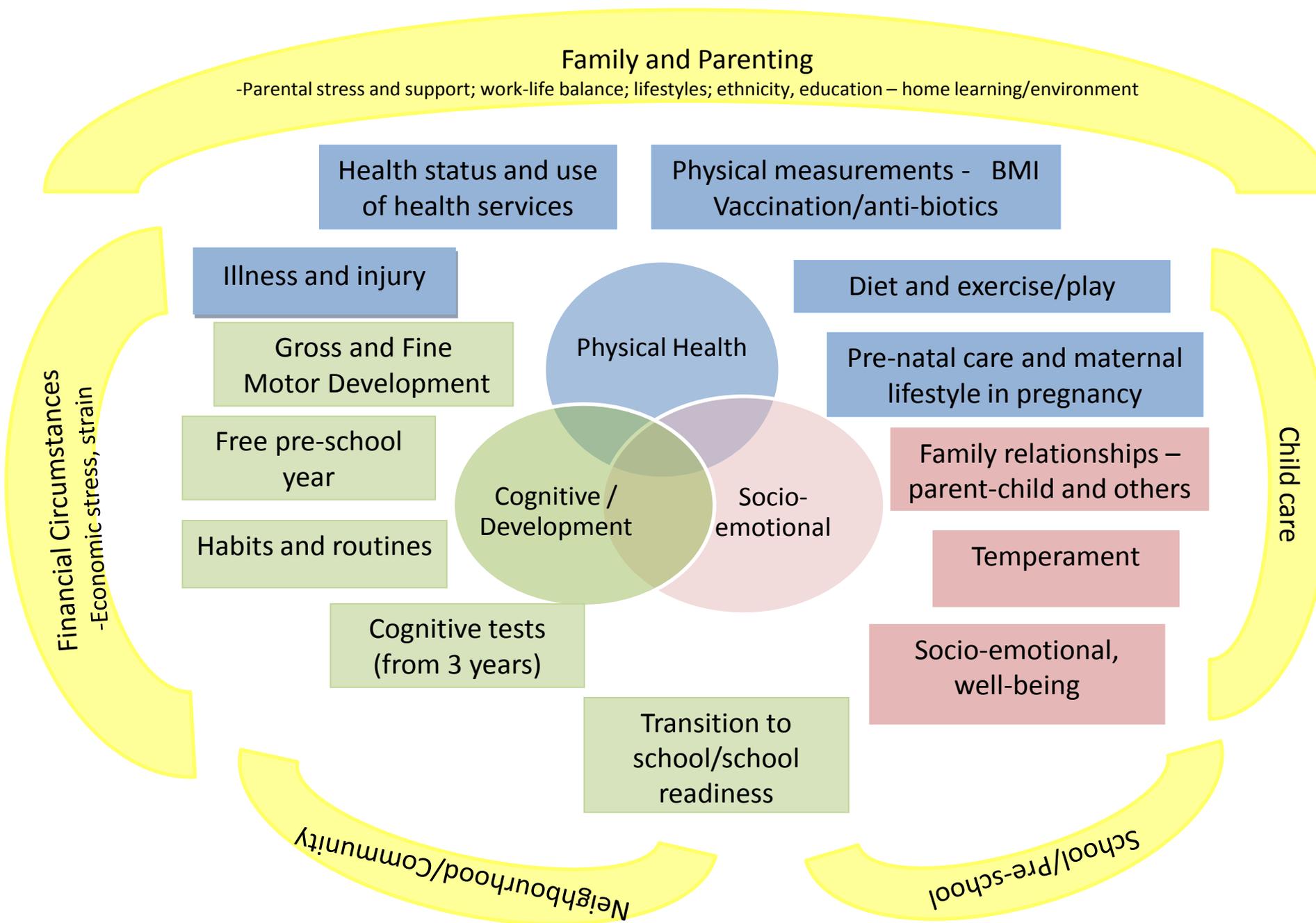
Growing up in Ireland

- Two cohorts of children
 - **“Infant Cohort”**:
 - 11,134 **9-month-olds** and their families
 - 9,800 **3-year-olds** and their families
 - 9,100 **5-year-olds** and their families and teachers being interviewed from March-September 2013
 - **“Child Cohort”**:
 - 8,568 **9-year-olds** and their families and teachers
 - 7,700 **13-year-olds** and their families and school Principal
- Very large, nationally representative statistical samples

CHILD COHORT – 9 Yrs / 13 Yrs



INFANT COHORT – 9 Mths / 3Yrs / 5Yrs





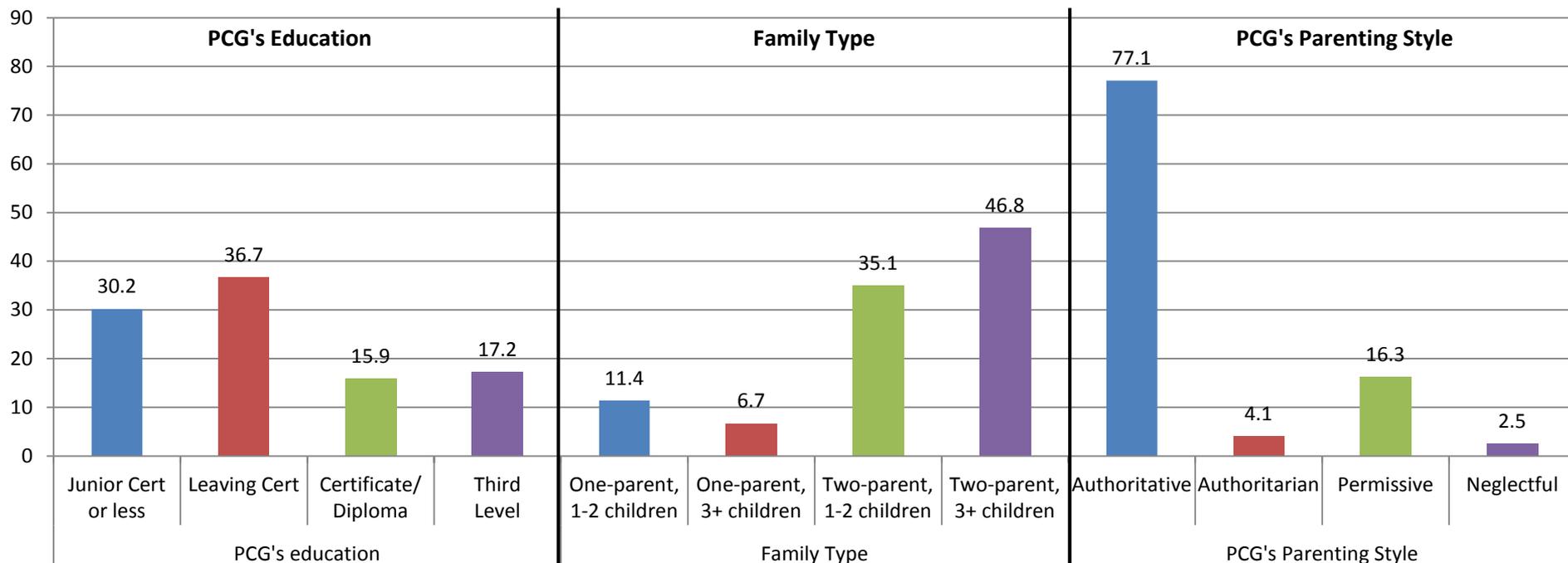
Strengths of *Growing Up in Ireland* for Policy & Practice

- **Very large statistical samples**
 - Generalisable to the population of children and young people
 - Drill down to subgroups of children and young people
 - Variance across subgroups of children and young people
- **Very comprehensive**
 - Cover all aspects of child's life – outcomes and context
 - Cross domain analysis
 - Relate to all policy areas



Growing Up in Ireland – Characteristics of 9-year-olds and their families

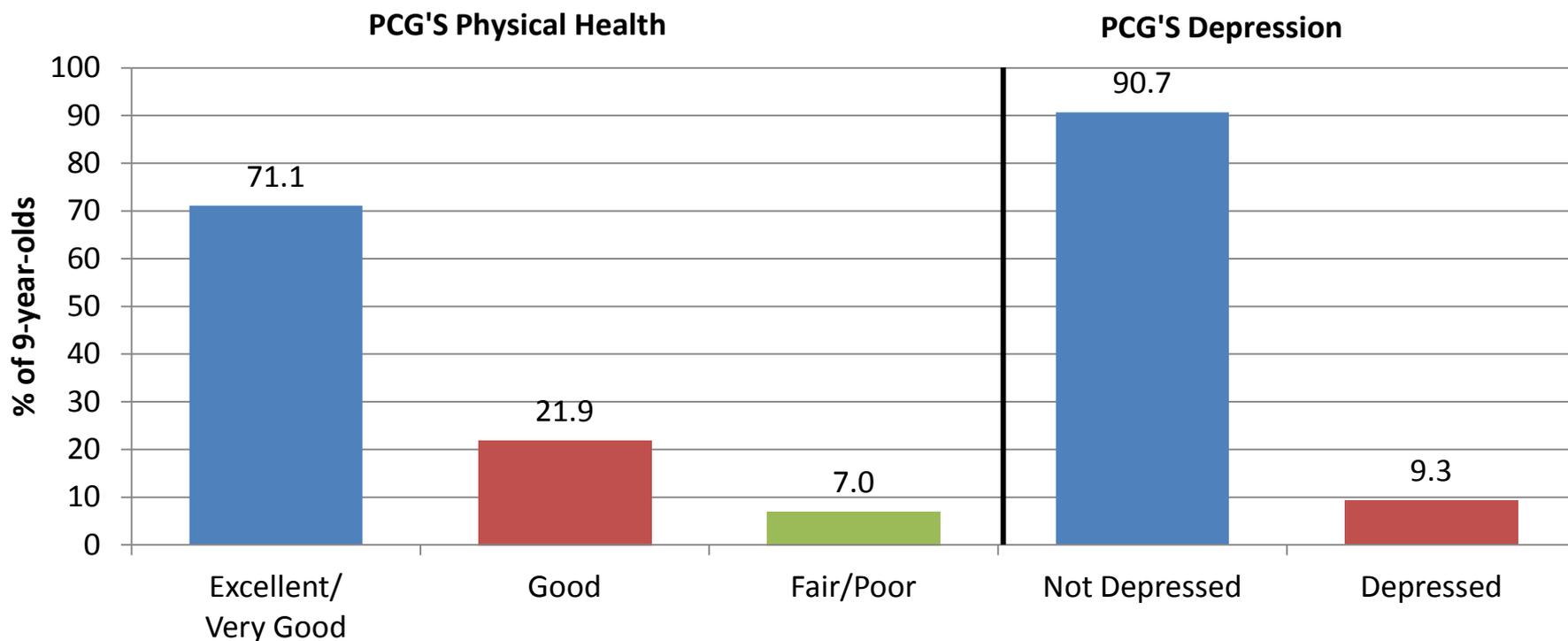
- 56,500 9-year-olds in the country
- Primary Caregiver (PCG) of 95.5% is their mother; 2.2% their father. Remainder are step-/adoptive/foster parents or other relatives
- PCG’s education; Family type and PCG’s parenting style





Characteristics of 9-year-olds and their families

PCG's Physical and Mental Health

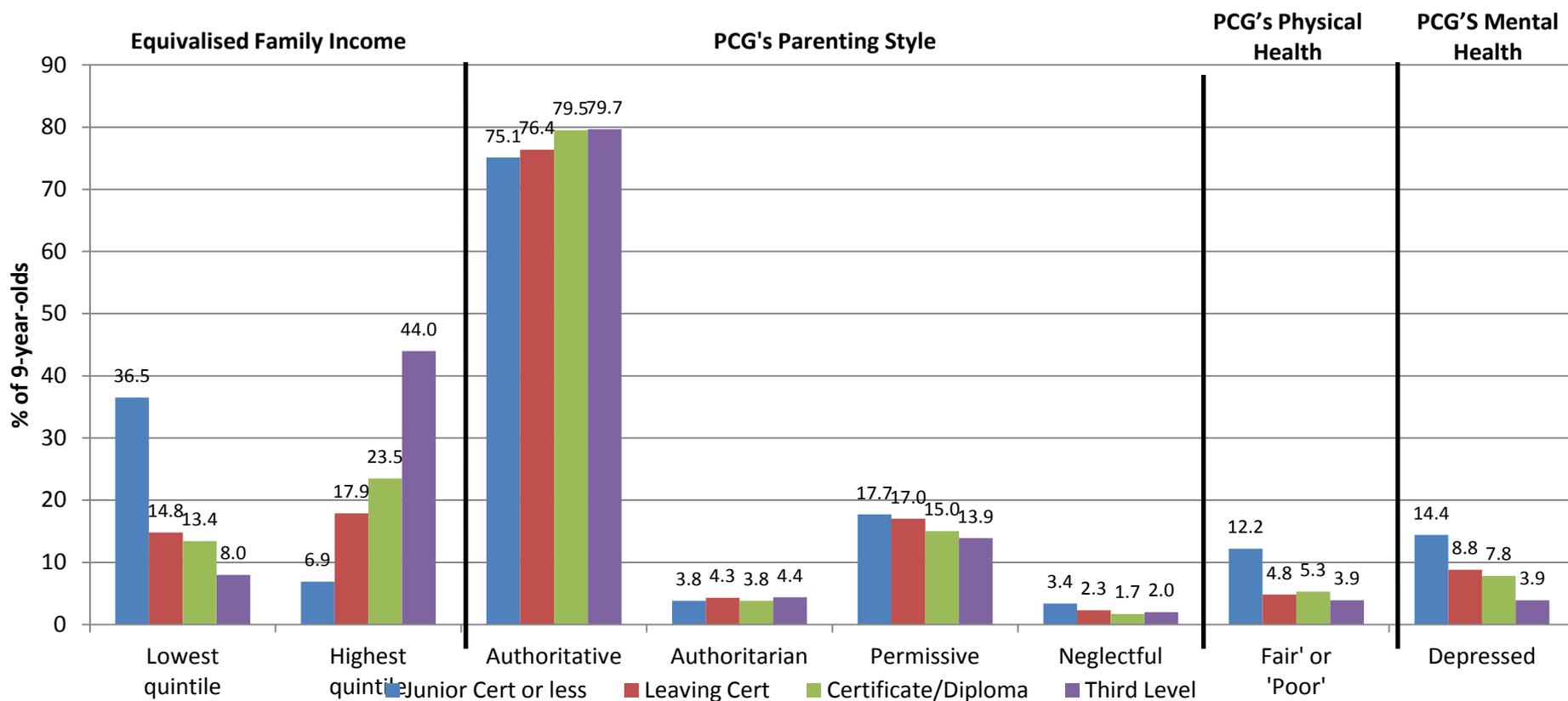




Characteristics of 9-year-olds and their families

How are some of these characteristics inter-related?

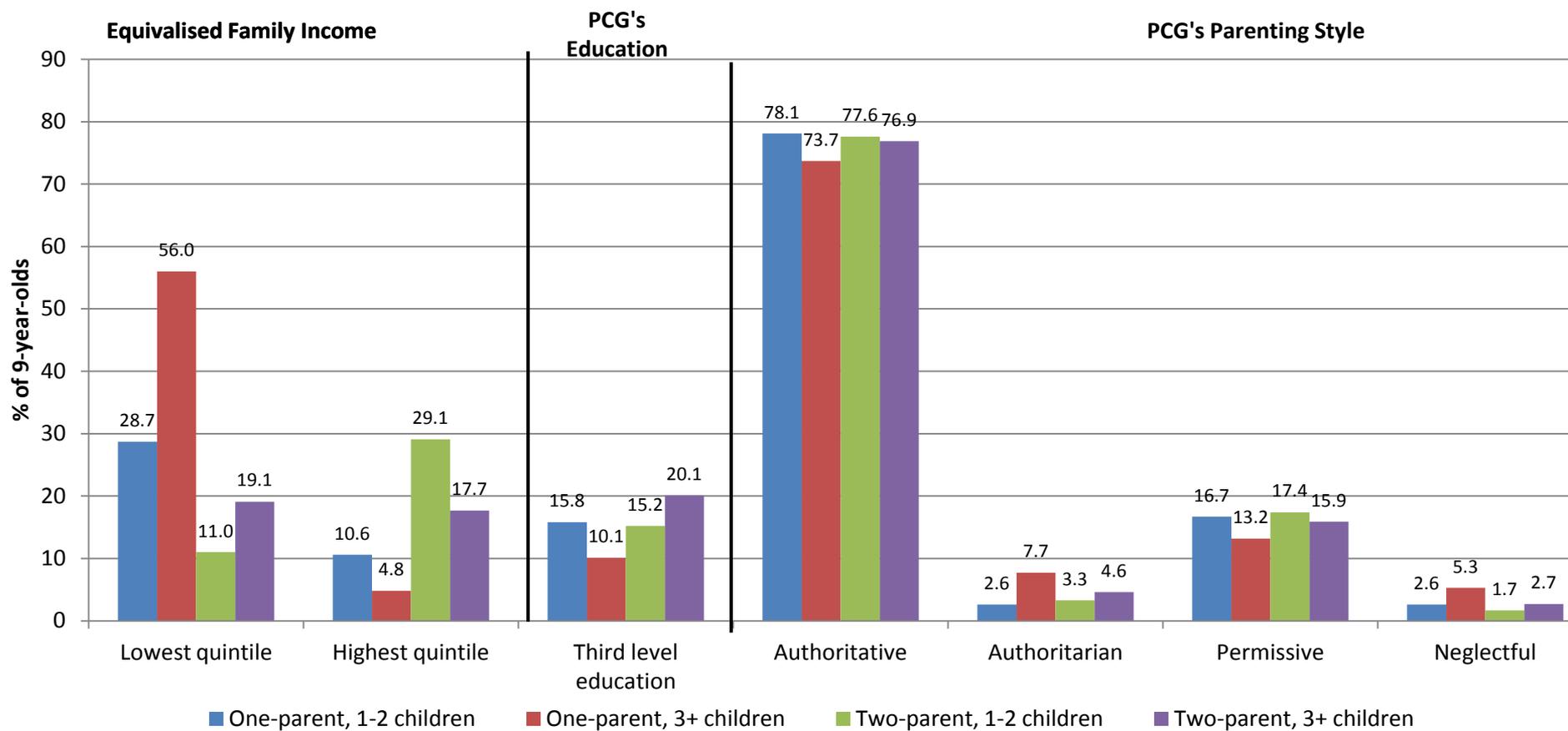
Mother's Education:





Characteristics of 9-year-olds and their families

Family Type:





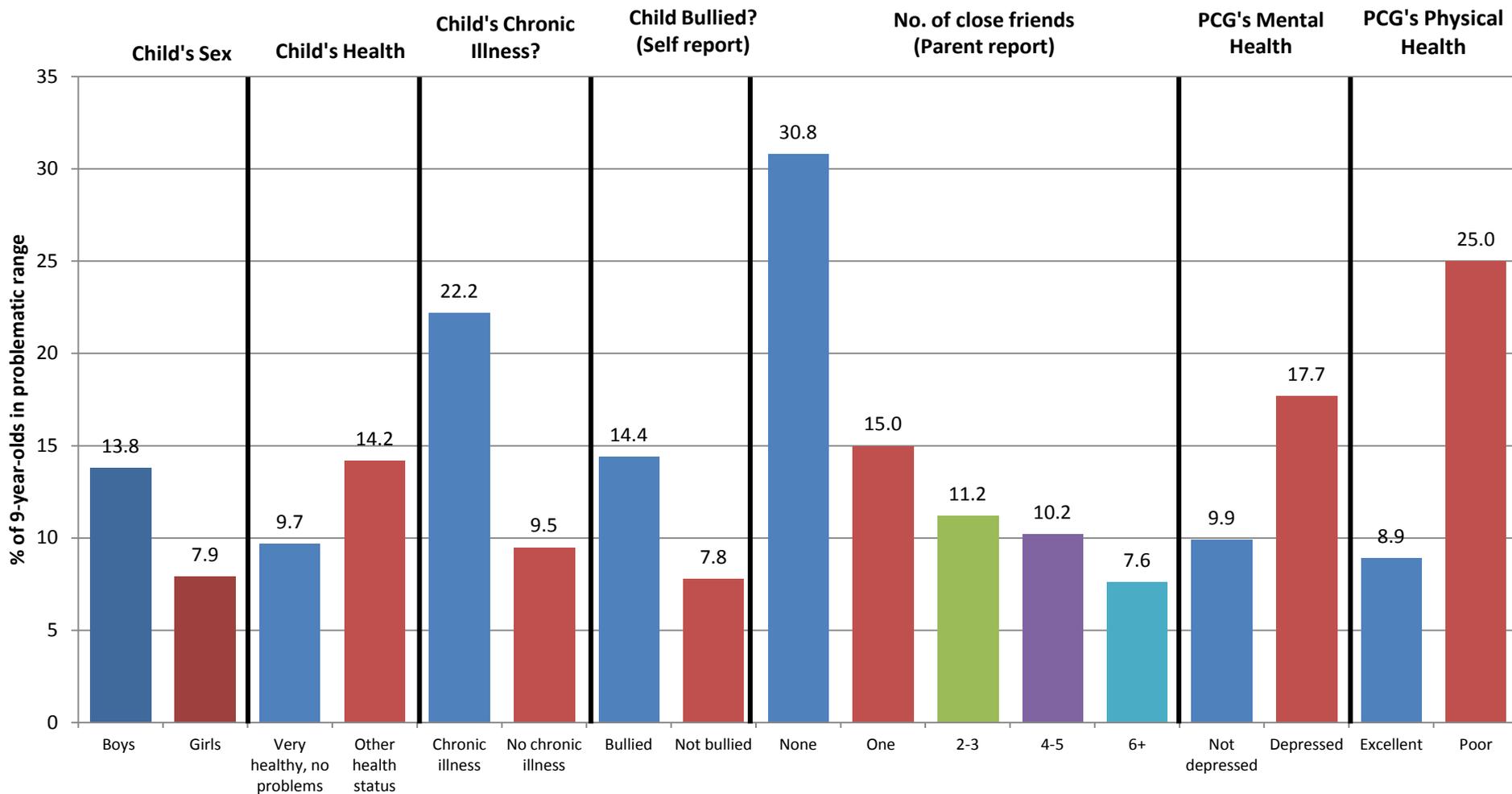
Are family and parenting characteristics related to child outcomes?

- Consider socio-emotional/behavioural outcomes
- **Socio-emotional/behavioural outcomes - SDQ**
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
 - emotional problems; conduct problems; hyper activity/inattention; peer relationship problems
 - Higher the score the greater the child's socio-emotional and behavioural problems
 - Teacher and parent report recorded in respect of 9-year-olds. Teacher report used here
 - Top 10% of children in potentially “problematic” range – referred to in literature as “abnormal”
 - Focus on this 10% problematic group.



Socio-emotional/behavioural difficulties (SDQ)

Problematic Range – child’s characteristics





- **In terms of socio-emotional development we have seen:**
 - importance of child's gender (boys)
 - chronic illness
 - network of friends
 - over-riding importance of mother's education
 - parenting styles
 - family income, for some groups



What is the Prevention & Early Intervention Initiative (PEII)?

- For more than a decade, The Atlantic Philanthropies, sometimes in conjunction with Government and other organisations, has invested over €100m in agencies and community groups running 52 prevention and early intervention programmes throughout the island of Ireland.
- The initiative works across areas such as early childhood, youth mentoring, parenting, literacy and learning, and child health and behaviour.
- A condition of funding was that organisations rigorously evaluated their work.





Breadth of the PEII

- **A complex initiative consisting of 52 programmes in 18 agencies.**
- **26 evaluations conducted so far....**
- **In which over 10,000 children participated**
- **Over 4,000 parents, teachers, day care professionals, youth workers and volunteers received direct services and/or training.**
- **15 randomised control trials conducted so far, in addition to quasi-experimental studies, process evaluations and action research studies.**
- **Mixed methods approach adopted in numerous evaluations which paints a holistic picture of programme implementation and impact at local level.**

Diversity of the Programmes in the PEII

The Programmes in the PEI Initiative contain a diversity of approaches, service providers & investment of resources:

Aimed to improve outcomes for children and families across an array of areas

Age ranges of children from pre-birth to 18 years

Targeted and Universal

Diverse modalities of delivery – school based, home visiting, family therapy, community

Mixture of evidence based programmes, & locally developed & adapted evidence based programmes

Dosage varied from 2 hours a week over a number of weeks, to 5 year programmes.



Capturing the Learning from the PEII

- CES is synthesising the overarching, collective learning from evaluations conducted as part of the Prevention & Early Intervention Initiative:

- Six outcome reports & briefing papers

- Organisational Learning report

- Parenting

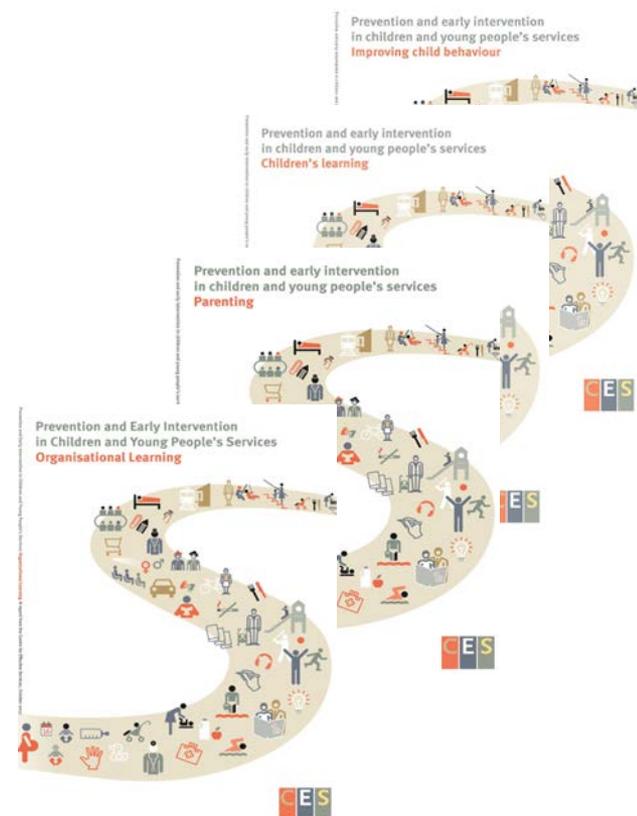
- Children's Learning

- Improving Child Behaviour

- Promoting Inclusion

- Child Health & Development

Synthesis does not endorse any particular programme or make comparisons between one programme or another. Extracts findings from the programme, interventions or service as a whole





Organisational Learning – Key Learning

- There is no one magic bullet to improving outcomes for all children.
- Development & Implementation of a new approach takes time.



Parenting - Overview

Draws on evaluation reports from 10 programmes which aimed to make improvements in Parenting

Longford Westmeath Parenting Partnership – *Triple P*

Lifestart – *Growing Child Parenting Programme*

Archways – *Incredible Years Parent Programme*

Northside Partnership – *Preparing for Life*

Parenting NI – *Parenting UR Teen*

Tallaght CDI – *Doodle Den, Mate-Tricks, Early Years*

Early Years NI – *Eager & Able to Learn, Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference*



Organisation	Service/ Programme	Target group(s)	Duration/ intensity	Description
Longford Westmeath Parenting Partnership	Triple P Parenting Programme (Levels 1 – 5)	All parents in Longford and Westmeath of children aged 0-7	2 hour stand alone session (Level 3) or 8 weeks (Level 4)	A multi-level parenting programme focused on reducing childhood emotional and behavioural problems. Includes support for parenting in the general population but the focus here is on Levels 3 and 4 aimed at parents who are experiencing problems with their children.
Archways	Incredible Years Parent	Parents of children Aged 3-7	2-2.5 hours per week for 12-14 weeks	Trains parents to support their children's social and emotional development.
	Incredible Years Teacher	Teachers of children aged 4-7	1 day per month for 5 months	Trains and supports teachers in classroom management techniques.
Northside Partnership	Preparing For Life	Families of children aged 0-5	Fortnightly home visits and a range of other support for 5 years	An intensive home-based early intervention/prevention programme designed to support families from pregnancy until their child starts school.
Lifestart	Growing Child Parenting Prog.	Parents of children aged 0-5	Monthly home visits of between 30-60 minutes for 5 years	To help parents to support their child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development and to promote school readiness.
Parenting NI	Parenting UR Teen	Parents of young people aged 11-18	2 hrs per week for 8 weeks	A group training programme for parents of teenagers developed by Parenting NI. overall aim is to improve family functioning. Parents refer themselves.
Childhood Development Initiative (CDI)	Doodle Den	Children aged 5-6	1.5 hours per week for 36 weeks and 3 family & 6 parent sessions.	Doodle Den is an in-school and after school literacy programme including child, parent and family components. It aims to improve literacy, school attendance, parent involvement in and out of school time, and improve child relationships with their parents and peers.
	CDI Early Years	Children Aged 2½-3	Preschool and other types of support for 2 years	An early care and education programme designed to support all aspects of children's development including their social and emotional learning.
	Mate-Tricks	Children aged 9-10	1.5 hours twice a week for 1 year and 6 parent and 3 family sessions	An after-school mentoring programme focused on supporting pro-social behaviour, reducing anti-social behaviour and developing confidence. Delivered in youth settings or school.
Early Years	Eager and Able to Learn	Children aged 2-3	Delivered over 8-9 months to children and 3 home visits to parents	A comprehensive centre-based and home-based early care and education programme. It aims to motivate children to learn; to socially and emotionally be able to enter relationships with adults and other children so learning can be promoted; and cognitively to ensure children are able to take advantage of learning opportunities.
	Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Difference	Children aged 3-5, their parents and teachers	1 academic year and 5 one minute media messages for 3 weeks, 3 times per year	This programmes uses a combination of cartoon media messages around diversity with an Early Years programme. It aims to promote positive attitudes to physical, social and cultural differences among young children, practitioners and parents. The messages also address bullying behaviours.



Approaches to Supporting Parents

Population approaches

- Legislative changes e.g. physical chastisement ban.
- Universally accessible parenting programmes (Triple P)

Home Visiting Programmes

- Nurse Family Partnership
- Preparing for Life

Group Based Parenting Programmes

- Incredible Years
- Triple P

One-to-One Individual Parenting Programmes

- Marte Meo

Family Based interventions

- Strengthening Families Program



Parenting – Key Learning

Programmes that worked directly with parents as their main focus **successfully reduced levels of parenting stress and improved child behaviour.**

To increase parental engagement, programmes needed to be **accessible** to parents, **convenient** & a **legitimate** setting for the work being done, or delivered at home.

The quality of the relationship between the **parent & practitioner** contributes to the success of the programme.



Targeted v Universal

Both targeted and universal programmes were able to achieve positive changes, but targeted programmes had a tendency to produce a bigger effect

When children are already displaying problems, there is more scope for improvement

Universal programmes are usually less intensive and cost less per child BUT the greater costs of targeted interventions is focused on those who would likely incur greater future service costs

Universal services may help to avoid the stigma associated with being singled out for targeted services

Achieving smaller changes for larger groups of children is also worthwhile



Interagency Working

Costs of prevention and early Interventions programmes are borne by a variety of agencies, highlighting the need for a partnership approach

The PEII has increased collaboration between children's services & helped improve planning at local level

Collaboration in service delivery means practitioners can share good practice across interventions

Interagency working can increase engagement & buy-in from key stakeholders, avoid duplication of services & make successful implementation more likely

Collecting cost-benefit information over time can encourage interagency working and investment.



Recommendations for consideration

- Develop a focused parenting framework/action plan within the wider National Children and Young People's Policy Framework being developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Intervene early (ante natally – post natally) – GUI data from 9mths and 3 years illustrate social gradients from earliest age
- Easily accessible community-based integrated early intervention wrap around services or programmes through, for example, primary care teams
- Consider population approaches to supporting parents, by providing information to prospective parents through public information and media campaigns or the provision of universal parenting programmes, e.g. Triple P Parenting programme



Recommendations for consideration

- Parent focused programme/interventions – increasing parenting skills/capacity, reducing stress and improving child behaviour – all shown in GUI to be associated with child’s socio-emotional development
- Address wider parental and familial factors impacting on parenting capacity and family functioning e.g. mental health, substance abuse, through the provision of intensive home visiting, individual one-to-one or family based interventions for high risk families and those living in disadvantaged areas– characteristics identified in GUI
- Longer term programmes – parental education (especially mothers) in parallel to children’s learning – importance of maternal education identified in GUI



Recommendations for consideration

- Include parental well-being indicators, as well as the existing child well-being indicator sets, in Growing up in Ireland and the bi-annual State of the Nation's Children's Reports
- The integration of this data with information from the Central Statistics Office will inform future planning and service development, and enable cross comparison of progress in improving outcomes for children at national and local level.
- Interagency and cross government structures to supporting parents can be implemented under national interagency collaborative structures, such as Children's Services Committees.