

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

A few years have now passed since you and your family kindly agreed to be interviewed as part of the *Growing Up in Ireland* project. This is a unique study which follows the progress of the same group of children over time to help improve our understanding of all aspects of their development.

Your child was one of over 11,000 children and their families who took part in the first phase of the study, when they were nine months of age. We would like to re-interview you when your child is five years old, to find out how he/she has grown and changed over recent years.

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

*Growing Up in Ireland* is a national, government-funded study of children and is the first and most important of its kind ever to take place in Ireland.

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.

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 has been happening since our last visit?**

A total of 11,000 families of 9-month-old infants were interviewed in the first phase of the study and almost 10,000 in the second phase when the children were three years old. We have been busy analysing all that information since then. The first report on the 3-year-old children will be published very shortly.

Don't forget that you can keep up-to-date with all of our publications on our website, [www.growingup.ie](http://www.growingup.ie).

### **Why should your family take part in the follow-up interview?**

Your continued participation in the study is crucial. The real value of this study will come in having more information on the same children as it will help us better understand the changes which happen in their lives as they grow and, very importantly, to understand why children grow and develop at different rates.

The information collected in the study will be used in a series of reports which the government can use to help make improvements and bring real benefits for children and families for many years to come.

# GROWING UP IN IRELAND

## Who is running the study?

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

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.

## What does taking part in the follow-up interview involve?

Taking part in the follow-up interview is very simple and is similar to the last interview with your family.

**Step One:** An interviewer will contact you to make arrangements to interview you and your spouse/partner (where relevant).

**Step Two:** When the interviewer calls to your home, you and your partner (if relevant) will each be asked to fill out a separate questionnaire with the interviewer. The visit to your home will last about 2 – 2½ hours.

**Step Three:** With your consent we would like to administer two short assessment tests to your child. The first assessment test is a short task which involves showing your child some pictures and asking him/her to name the items in those pictures. The second involves the child matching shapes. Both of these tests are used very widely in research with children. Most children like doing them but there is no problem in stopping them at any point if your child doesn't like them. They will take about 20 minutes. The results of these tests will be kept strictly confidential and are only for the purposes of the study.

**Step Four:** If there is another parent living outside the home we would, with your permission, like to send him/her a short questionnaire in the post.

**Step Five:** As part of the study we would like to interview the Principal in your child's school from September 2013. We would also like you to give us permission to send a questionnaire to your child's teacher. You will not be able to see what the teacher says about your child, though you will be able to see a copy of the blank questionnaire in advance if you want to.

**If you decide not to take part in the study it will in no way adversely affect any future health or social care which you or your family will receive from the State.**

## Confidentiality

As previously, all the information given to the *Growing Up in Ireland* interviewer is treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used exclusively for research or statistical purposes. The information given by your partner (if relevant) and child's teacher will not be seen by anyone else in your family – not even you will have access to it. Similarly, other participants such as your partner will not see the information you give to us.

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.

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

The details you provide in *Growing Up in Ireland* will have your names, addresses and other identifying information removed. The information will then be stored on a computer so that it will be available to researchers for statistical analysis only. The information can be used only for statistical analysis and research purposes. It would be an offence to use it for any other reason.

# GROWING UP IN IRELAND

## What kind of questions will my family be asked?

Similar to our last interview, you and your partner (if relevant) will be asked questions about:

- your child'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 relatively sensitive 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:

At this point in time it is undecided if there will be a further round of follow-up interviews. However it is possible that we may wish to return to your household again, perhaps when your child is seven years old.

## Who are the Interviewers?

The interviewer who will call to your home is from the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI). He/she is an Officer of Statistics appointed by the Central Statistics Office and is similar to the interviewers 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 vetted by An Garda Síochána.

The interviewer is not allowed to be alone with your child at any time during his/her visit to your home.

**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- 863 2000.**

## What are my rights if I take part?

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

## What do I do next?

An interviewer will call to your home to discuss the study with you, and you can tell him or her whether or not you would like to take part.

## Your participation counts.

Just as before, taking part in *Growing Up in Ireland* is 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.

# GROWING UP IN IRELAND

## Where can I find out more information?

**Phone:** Freephone 1800 200 434  
or contact Claire Kirwan, on 01 863 2053  
or call 01 863 2000 and ask for the *Growing Up in Ireland* team

**Visit our website:** [www.growingup.ie](http://www.growingup.ie)

**Email:** Email us at [growingup@esri.ie](mailto:growingup@esri.ie)

## Post:

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