

## WELCOME MESSAGE

Hello – and welcome to the second edition of GUI News, the **Growing Up in Ireland** newsletter for all our participants.

In this edition we are delighted to bring you some of the first results from the first wave of the study. As you will remember, our interviewers visited homes and schools all over Ireland in 2007/2008 when your child was 9 years old. In total, over 8,500 families and hundreds of schools took part and answered questions on a range of topics relating to childhood in Ireland.

As a result of everyone's participation, we are now putting together a picture of what life is like for children and their families in Ireland today. Right now we are working on the first main report. All our findings from the first wave of the study will be published later in the year. In the meantime, we thought that you, as participant families, would be interested in a selection of our key findings.

In this latest edition of *GUI News* you will find a range of interesting results from the study, such as types of families in Ireland today, children's health, how 9-year-olds feel about school, what they like to do and what makes them most happy. You can also read all the latest news on how the study is progressing, what we have been working on since we were last in touch and what we plan to do over the next year.



So, once again, we would like to say thank you to everyone taking part in **Growing Up in Ireland** – this important work would not be possible without you.

*James Williams*

James Williams  
Prof. James Williams  
Principal Investigator & Co-Director  
**Growing Up in Ireland**

*Sheila Greene*

Sheila Greene  
Prof. Sheila Greene  
Co-Director  
**Growing Up in Ireland**

PS – Don't forget to keep in touch using the contact card over the page.



### Message from the Minister

We have entered into a very exciting phase in the lifetime of **Growing Up in Ireland**. Already the first waves of data collection with over 19,000 families have been completed, preparations for future waves of data collection have commenced, and perhaps most significantly, the first results are starting to emerge.

These results give us a clear picture of the different life experiences of children in Ireland and guide our thinking on what we need to do to improve their lives. A flavour of these results on a range of issues, including parenting, family relationships, education and health are presented to you here in GUI News.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the commitment and contribution from you and your children, their teachers and principals and others who have generously given time to participate in **Growing Up in Ireland**. I would like to thank you all for your participation in this very important study.

**Barry Andrews TD**  
Minister for Children

## MINISTER FOR CHILDREN LAUNCHES FIRST RESULTS FROM 9-YEAR STUDY

When our team of fieldworkers finished interviewing all the participant children and families last summer, the Study Team began sorting and organising the data collected. Once this was complete, the analysis of all this information began, leading to the results described below.

We are now working on a detailed report based on this information. Our aim is to tell the story of 9-year-old children and their families in Ireland today. This report is due to be published by the end of this year.

In the meantime, we felt it was important to put together the main results – or first key findings – from the study, and bring them to you, our GUI families, through this newsletter.

As this newsletter was being posted to you, the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D., officially launched these key findings in Dublin.

We hope you enjoy reading the selection of results we have included in this newsletter and look forward to our next report.



## GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF INTERVIEWS

Now that we have finished the first round of interviews with our 9-year and 9-month families, our main tasks are to analyse all the information we have collected and write reports on our findings.

However, we have already started to think about the return visits to all the families. At this point, it is important for us to think about what questions we should ask on our return visit to you and your child.

As well as working with many child experts, we are getting a lot of help from the Children's Advisory Forum (CAF). The CAF, a committee of 84 children in 12 schools around Ireland, is helping us to make sure the voices and opinions of children are heard within the study. We recently met with the CAF to talk to them about what they feel are the important issues for teenagers.

We will be re-visiting you during 2011/12 when your child is 13 and returning to our infants when they turn 3 years old.

Meanwhile, if you are planning on changing address don't forget to keep in touch, using the contact card over the page.

## THE INFANT STUDY

Almost 20,000 families all over Ireland are now taking part in the GUI project.

In our last newsletter, we told you about the launch of our infant study, the second part of *Growing Up in Ireland*, which involves 11,000 9-month-old babies, their parents and minders.

Our team of fieldworkers interviewed the families of these infants between September 2008 and April 2009.

Around the same time, we also completed a qualitative study with 120 of these infant families. This part of the study aims to gather more detailed information on the everyday lives of the infants and their parents, as told in the parents' own words.

The 120 families were randomly selected from the original 11,000 infant families.

We have also carried out a similar study with 120 of our 9-year-olds and their families. The results from this qualitative study will be published later this year.

This means that in total we now have almost 20,000 families from right across Ireland participating in the *Growing Up in Ireland* project.



Pictured at the launch of the *Growing Up in Ireland* – the Infant Cohort, September 2008, are Niamh Finglas, John O'Callaghan, Julien Bell Baho and Oscar O'Ainhirgin.

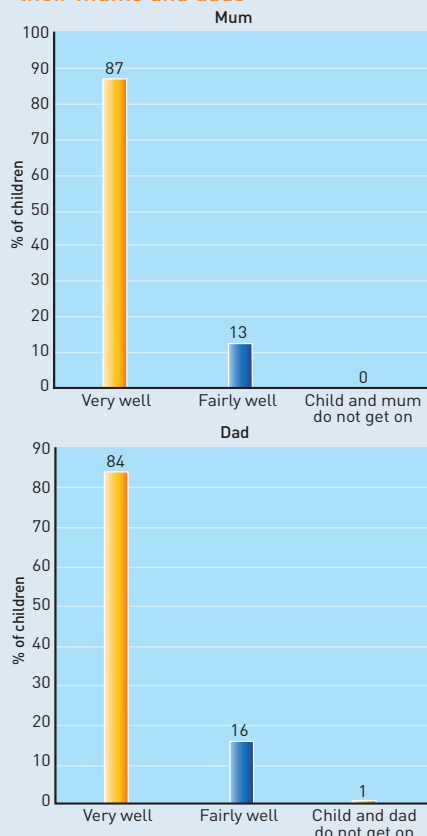
# SELECTION OF KEY FINDINGS

Here is a selection of some of the first results from the study on a range of topics including families, child health, education and activities. Don't forget to visit [www.growingup.ie](http://www.growingup.ie) to keep up to date with future publications.

## The families of 9-year-olds

- Many different types of families took part in **Growing Up in Ireland**. About three-quarters (76%) of 9-year-olds lived with both of their biological parents. 4% lived with a biological parent and his/her partner, and 18% lived with a lone parent. The remaining 2% lived in other types of families, for example with foster parents, grandparents and so on.
- 87% of children reported they got on 'very well' with their mother and 84% reported that they got on 'very well' with their father (**Figures 1 & 2**).
- Nine out of 10 children said they would talk to their mother about a problem and six out of 10 would talk to their father.
- Comparing the top 20% of families in terms of income to those in the bottom 20%, 29% of smaller two-parent families were in the top income group. In contrast, only 5% of the largest lone-parent families were in the top income category.

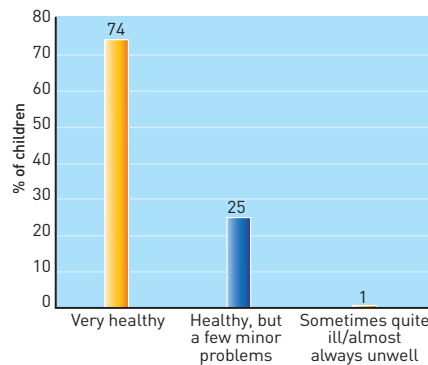
**Figures 1 & 2: How children get on with their mums and dads**



## How healthy are our 9-year-olds?

- Almost three-quarters of 9-year-olds were described by their parents as 'very healthy'. One-quarter of children were described as 'healthy with a few minor problems' (**Figure 3**).

**Figure 3: Parent's rating of children's health**



- 11% of 9-year-olds had a chronic illness or disability.
- 47% of those children who had an ongoing health problem had a respiratory illness such as asthma.

## Do 9-year-olds brush their teeth regularly?

- 61% of 9-year-olds visited the dentist at least once a year, 22% every two years. However, 12% of children visited the dentist only when there was a problem and 2% 'never' or 'almost never' visited the dentist

**95% of all 9-year-olds brush their teeth at least once a day.**

- Children from families in the highest income group were more likely to visit the dentist at least once a year than children from families in the lowest income group – 71% compared with 53%, respectively.

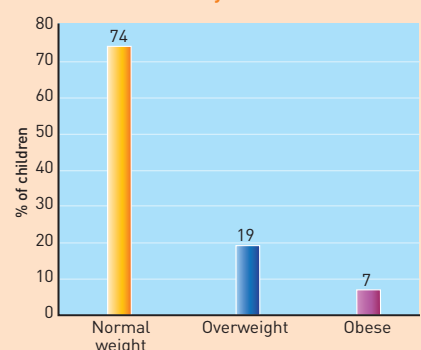
## How often do the children see the doctor?

- 9-year-old girls were taken to the doctor more often than boys. On average, in the course of a year boys visited their GP 0.9 times. Girls, on average, visited their GP 1.05 times.
- Children from families with full medical cards had more visits to the doctor than those who were not covered by a medical card – 1.42 visits compared with 0.77, respectively.

## 9-year-olds height and weight

- The average height of 9-year-old boys was 137.3 centimetres (about 4' 6"). Girls were just slightly shorter at around 136.3 cms (about 4' 5.5").
- Average weight for both boys and girls was 34 kilograms (about 5 stone, 5 lbs).
- By international measures, almost 20% of 9-year-olds were overweight and 7% were obese (**Figure 4**).

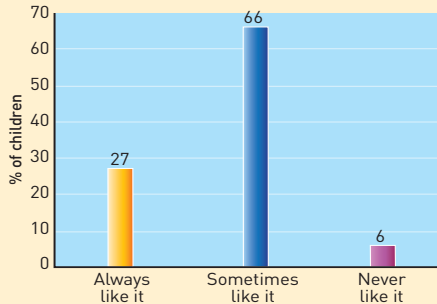
**Figure 4: The Body Mass Index (BMI) classification of 9-year-olds**



### Our children's education

- A very large majority of 9-year-olds liked school. 27% said they 'always' liked it and a further 66% said they liked it 'sometimes'. Only 6% said they 'never' liked it (Figure 5).

Figure 5: How much children like school



- Almost two-thirds of children felt that they were doing 'well' at school and hardly any felt that they were doing 'poorly'.

- 53% of 9-year-olds 'always' liked their teacher while 41% liked their teacher 'sometimes'. 6% of children said they 'never' liked their teacher.
- Nearly three-quarters of parents said they or their spouse/partner helped their child with homework 'regularly' or 'always'.
- Almost one-fifth of children spent between one and 1½ hours doing their homework on an average evening.

**76% of the parents of 9-year-olds expected that their child would go to university and get a degree.**

- Parents tended to report that children spent longer at their homework than teachers expected. While less than 1% of 9-year-olds had teachers that intended them to spend between 1 and 1½ hours on homework, nearly 20% did spend this amount of time, according to parents.
- 9-year-old children typically spent four hours a week learning English and 3½ hours each on Irish and Maths. Two hours per week was spent on Religious Studies and one hour on subjects such as History, Geography, Science or Art.



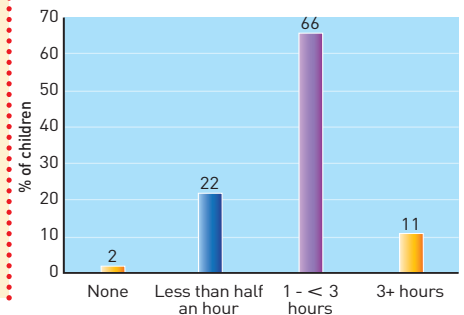
### What do 9-year-olds most like doing?

- Over a third of children ranked 'hanging out with friends' as the number one thing to do in their free time.
- The most popular hobby or pastime was sport; some type of sport was mentioned by 65% of children.

**Half of the children who had a computer at home used it to surf the internet for fun and nearly all used it to play games.**

- Around four out of ten 9-year-olds had their own mobile phone.
- 66% of children typically spent between one and three hours a day watching TV (Figure 6). Nearly half (45%) had a TV in their bedroom.

Figure 6: How much time children spend watching TV, videos or DVDs on a normal weekday during term time



**What else did the children say ... ?**

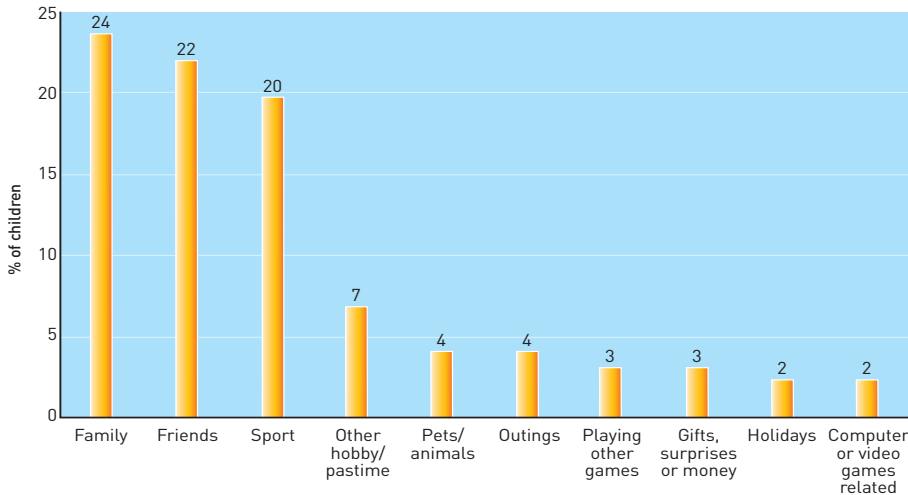
- Almost all children (96%) said they liked living where they did and felt safe in their neighbourhood (95%).
- 83% felt there were good places to play near their home and 81% said they had plenty of friends to play with close to where they lived.
- Four out of 10 boys wanted to be a professional sports person when they grew up.

- One in five girls wanted to be a primary school teacher when they grew up.

**What makes our children happy?**

- The thing that made 24% of 9-year-olds 'most happy' was their family, closely followed by 'friends' (22%) and 'sport' (20%). The top 10 things that children said made them happy are shown in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7: Top ten things that 9-year-olds said made them happy



**Your feedback is important to us...**

We are always interested to hear your views, experiences and feedback on the **Growing Up** study.

If you have something you would like to tell us, please contact our Communications Officer, Jillian Heffernan, at [jheffern@tcd.ie](mailto:jheffern@tcd.ie) or write to: The Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please contact Jillian at [jheffern@tcd.ie](mailto:jheffern@tcd.ie)

**PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH**

The GUI study depends on your support and we hope you will continue to be part of this unique and important project. If this newsletter has been forwarded to you at an address that is different from the one we have on record or if you are moving, please give us your new details by filling in the attached change-of-address form and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope provided.

Alternatively you can contact us through any of the following ways:

Freephone us at 1800 200 434

Contact our Communications Officer, Jillian Heffernan, at 01 8963378

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

Write to: **Growing Up in Ireland**, Economic and Social Research Institute, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

**PLEASE FILL IN YOUR DETAILS**

Your First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Child's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (mobile) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Old Residential Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date this card \_\_\_\_\_

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New Residential Address \_\_\_\_\_

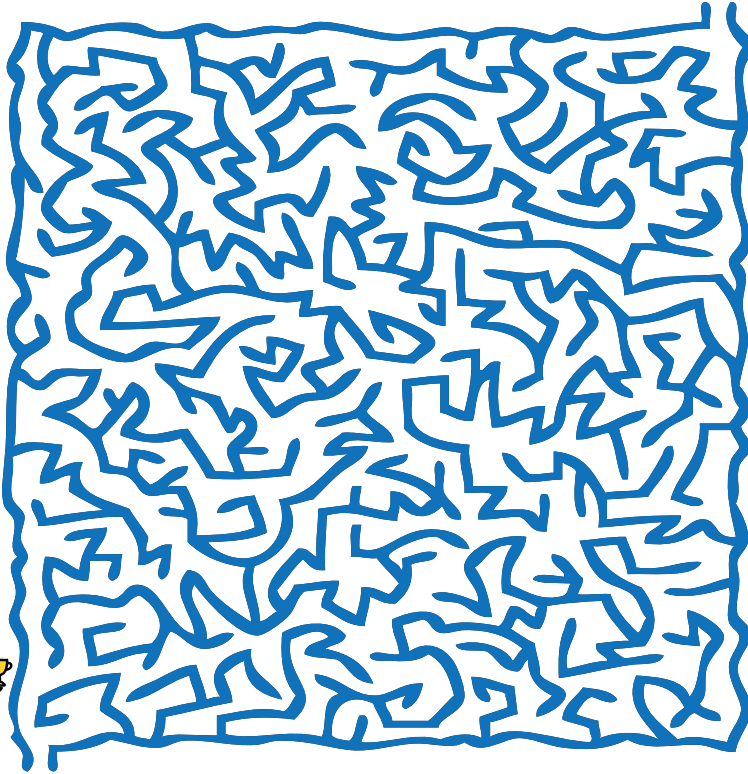
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# CHILDREN'S CORNER

## Amazing Maze

Trace your way out of the Amazing Maze!



## Pastimes and Hobbies

n	f	y	n	t	t	i	s	r	r	y	b
o	r	l	e	h	i	e	e	e	n	l	i
i	i	i	l	o	m	t	a	p	n	t	e
s	e	m	t	a	u	d	d	s	r	t	k
i	n	a	g	p	i	r	u	r	i	a	n
v	d	f	m	n	e	o	h	t	s	i	a
e	s	o	g	s	a	a	l	h	e	a	m
l	c	e	y	a	p	a	i	d	c	r	o
e	n	i	a	r	t	o	r	n	n	o	t
t	m	u	s	i	c	a	r	g	a	f	m
n	t	e	t	a	m	h	o	t	d	o	i
w	h	d	a	a	a	a	v	e	u	t	u

- Words to find:**
- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| computer | games      |
| dance    | music      |
| drama    | reading    |
| family   | sport      |
| friends  | television |



## Mixed-Up Words

Find the 'words' below that match the words shown in the box at the bottom of the page.

- ALLIROG
- RAEB
- SUMATOPPIH

4. ROTAGILLA

5. ARBEZ

6. TNAHPELE

7. REED

8. ENIPUCROP

9. OORAGNAK

10. EPOLETNA

11. YEKNOM

12. ANEYH

13. ELIDOCORC

14. MUSSOPO

15. SORECONIHR

- |           |            |              |
|-----------|------------|--------------|
| alligator | monkey     | deer         |
| crocodile | antelope   | gorilla      |
| elephant  | bear       | hippopotamus |
| kangaroo  | hyena      | opossum      |
| porcupine | rhinoceros | zebra        |