

The Lives of 5-Year-Olds

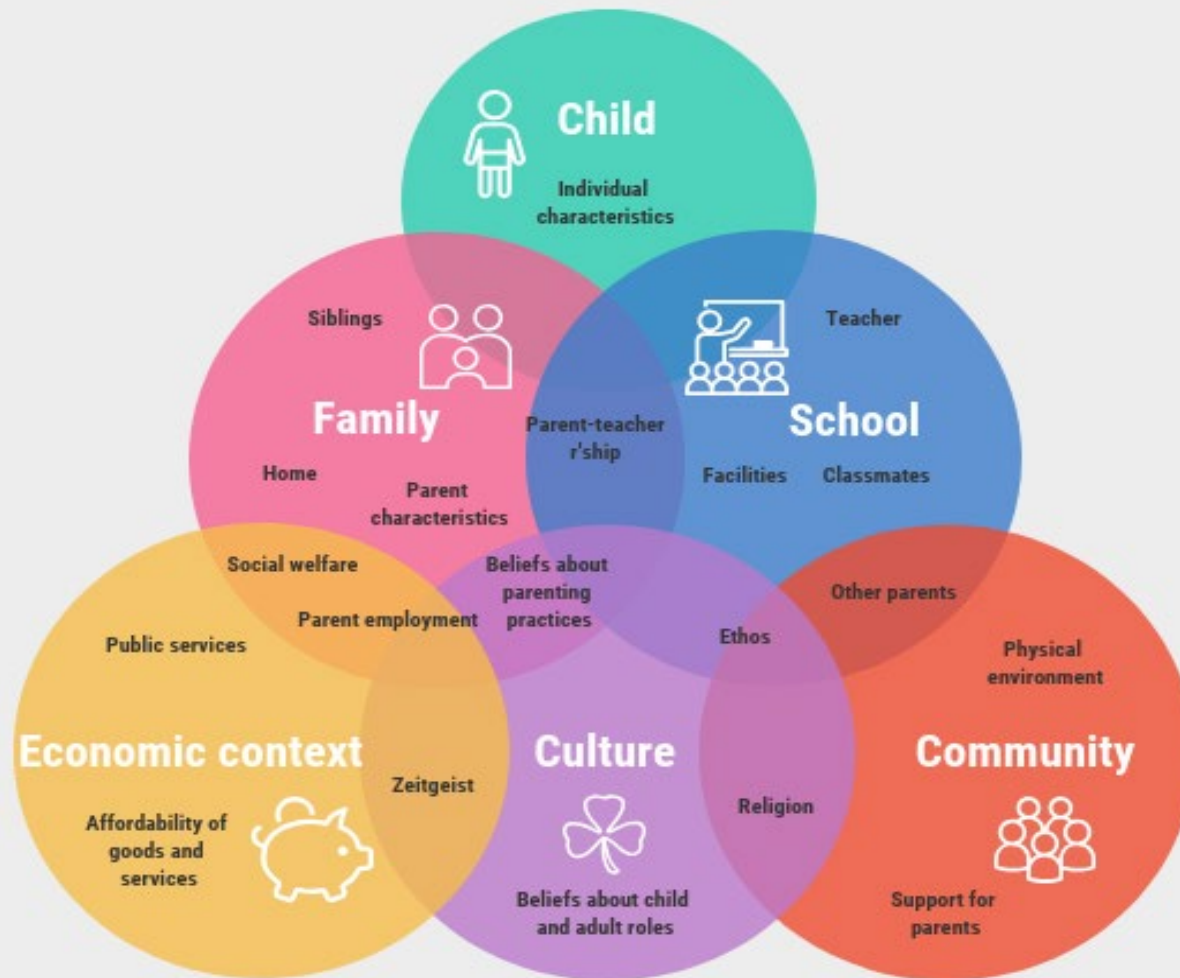
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What's special about being 5?

- Most children in Ireland start school at this age
 - contact with new places, new people; learning new skills
- Cognitive skills are expanding
 - facilitates learning new material
 - language is broader & more sophisticated
- Motor skills are more co-ordinated
 - play more complex games and self-care tasks
- Social skills are improving
 - label their emotions
 - better regulation

Development in context





Growing Up in Ireland at 5 years

- 9,001 5-year-olds
 - Families first interviewed at 9 months, then 3 years, then at 5
- Interviews with Primary and Secondary Caregivers of 5-year-olds in 2013
- Direct assessment of child's cognitive skills, height and weight by interviewers in the home
- Postal questionnaires to teachers and principals in Autumn/Winter of 2013



RESULTS OVERVIEW

School and learning

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Starting school

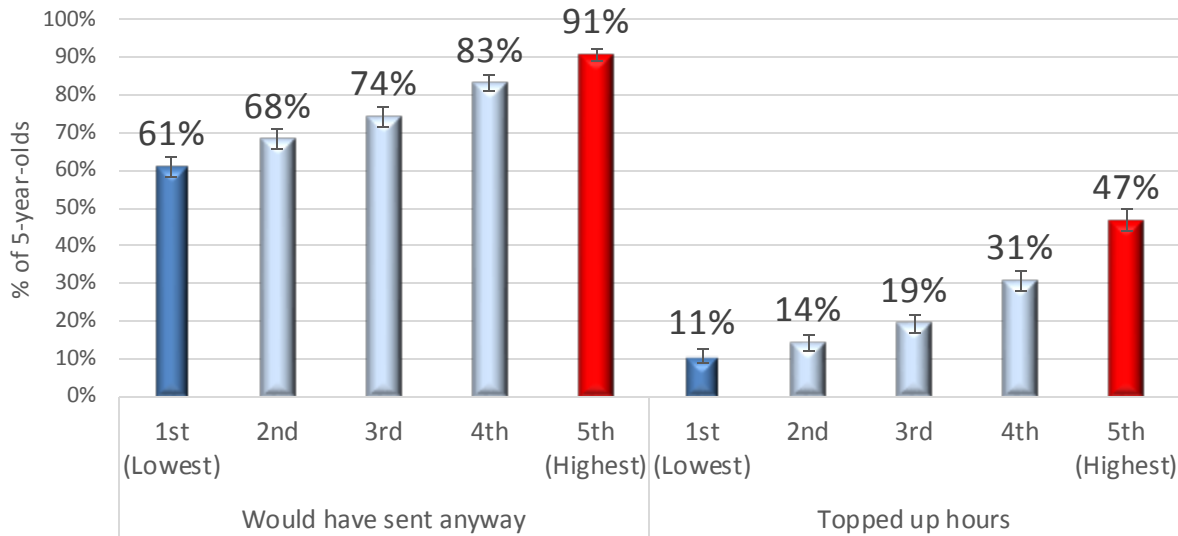
- By Spring/Summer 2013, almost three-quarters of 5-year-olds were already in school (i.e. since Sept 2012)
- Nearly all of the oldest children had already started school (i.e. those 4 yrs, 9m in Sept '12)
- Just one-third of the youngest children had started school (i.e. those who were 4 yrs, 3m in Sept '12)
- The most common reasons for delaying school start were 'I thought child was too young' and 'I didn't think child was ready'
- Nearly all children completed the Free Pre-School Year before starting school



Teachers' Reports

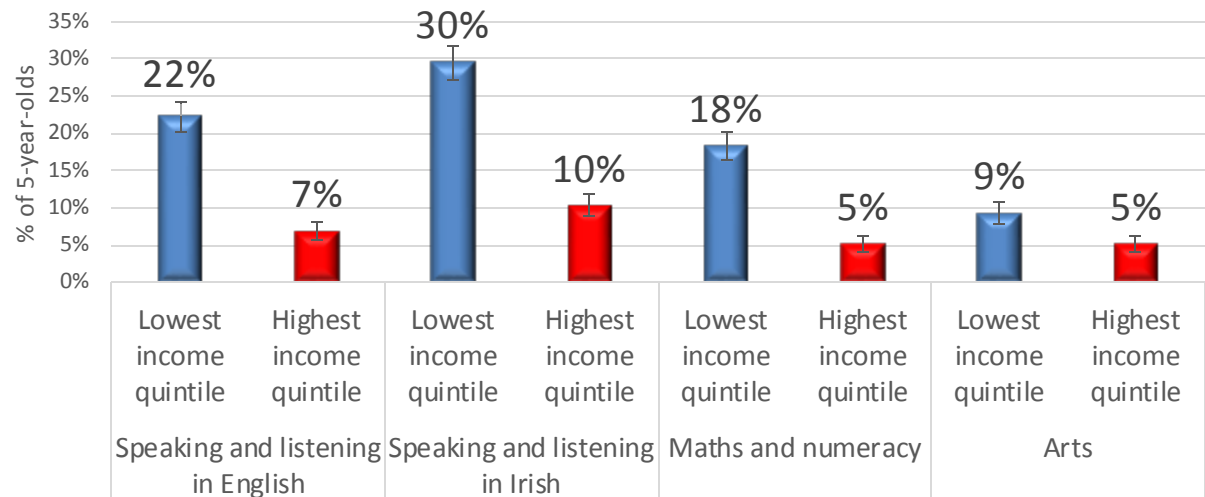
- Information from teachers was collected in Autumn/Winter 2013 when virtually all children had started school
- Teachers were asked about developmental milestones associated with a child being ready for school
 - Almost three-quarters of 5-year-olds were said to meet the three basic indicators for **'dispositions/attitudes'** (e.g. dressing and managing personal hygiene with adult support)
 - A similar proportion met the three basic indicators for **'language for communication and thinking'** (e.g. 'listens and responds')
- Teachers also rated the child's ability on school subjects
 - Highest ratings for **'speaking and listening in English'**- 43% above average
 - 42% average – 14% below average
 - 23% 'above average' rating for **Irish** (56% average; 19% below)
 - 35% 'above average' rating for **Maths and numeracy** (54% average; 10% below)

Social gradients relating to school



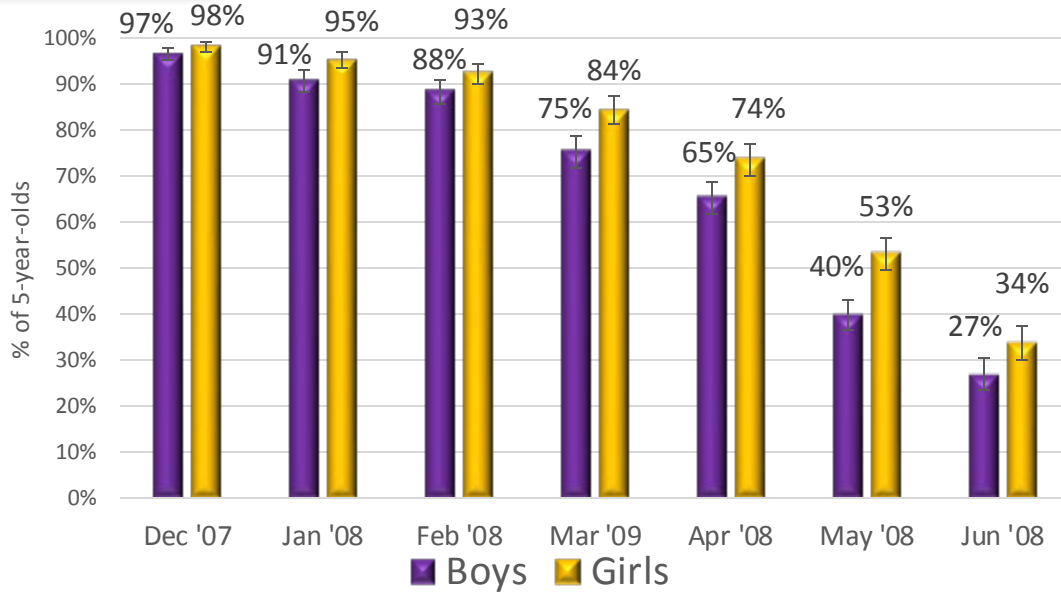
The lowest-income families least likely to have sent child to pre-school without FPSY—and the least likely to have paid for top-up hours

Children from the lowest-income families were more likely to be rated as below average on school subjects by their teachers



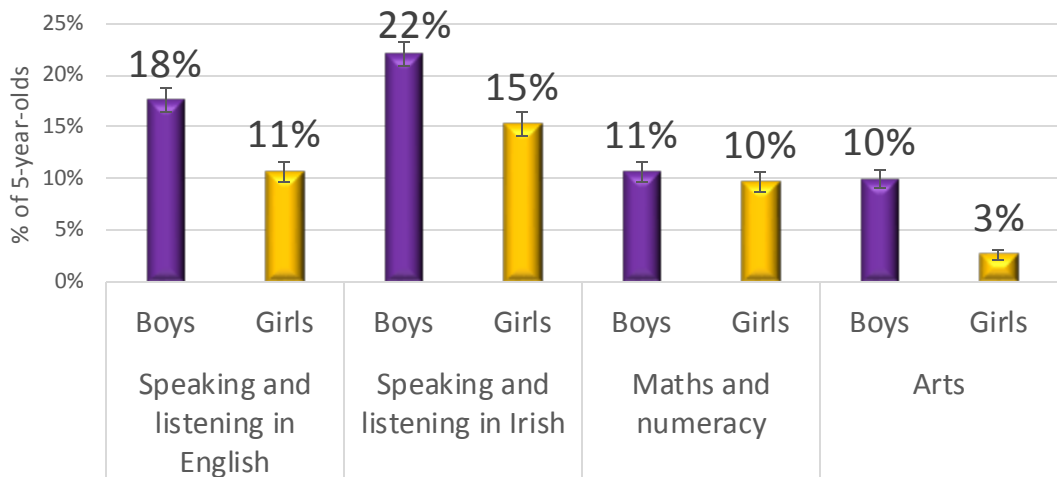


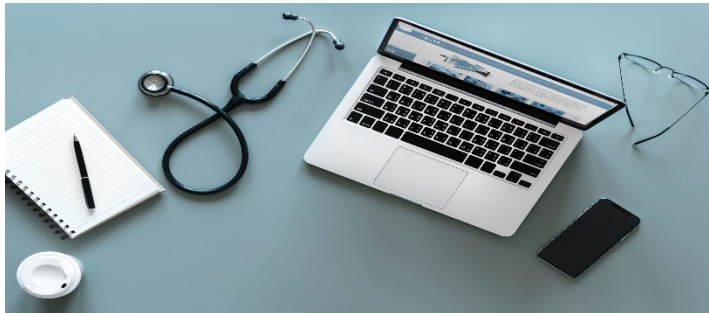
Differences between girls and boys



Younger children were more likely to delay school start (until Sept 2013) if they were boys

Boys were more likely to be rated as below average on school subjects – but not Maths





RESULTS OVERVIEW

Health and development



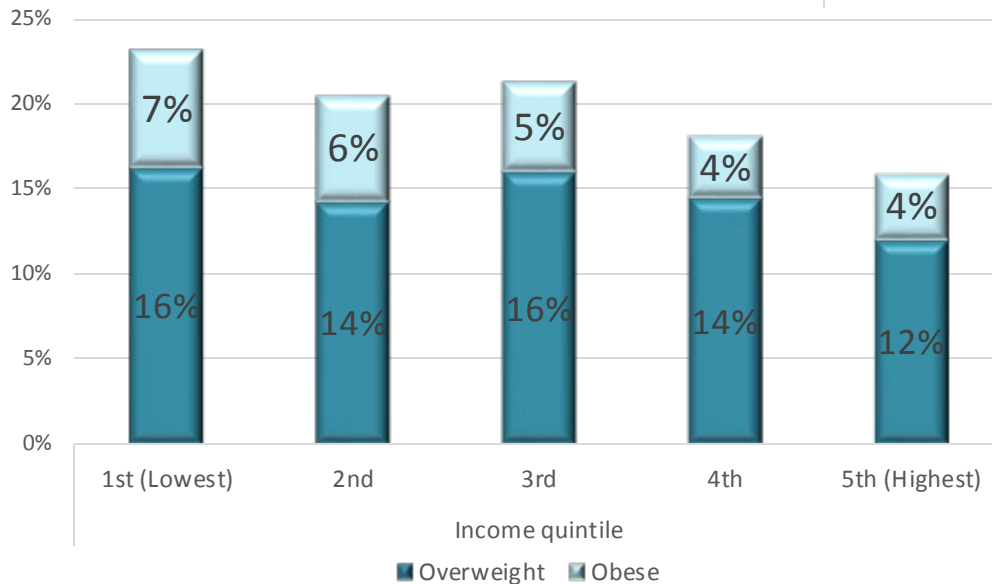
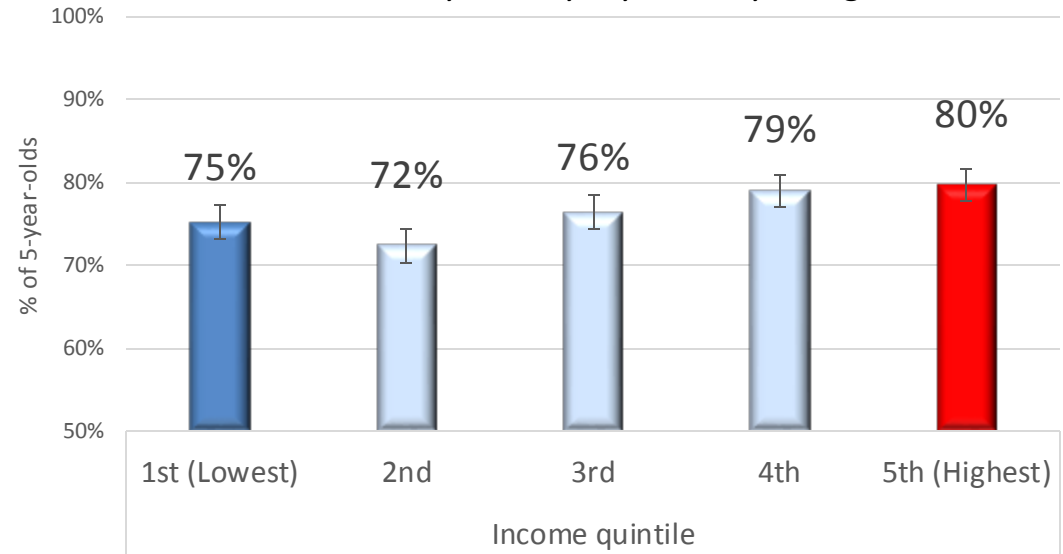
Health – key indicators

- Over $\frac{3}{4}$ were described as ‘very healthy’
 - 21% ‘healthy but a few minor problems’
 - 2% ‘sometimes quite ill’ or ‘almost always unwell’
- 18% reported to have longstanding illness, condition or disability (affecting their physical health, emotional health or learning)
 - Most common were asthma (8%) & eczema/skin allergy (4%)
- 20% were overweight (15% overweight plus 5% obese)
 - Higher among those overweight at 3 years old, among girls, and where parents were overweight

Inequalities in health indicators

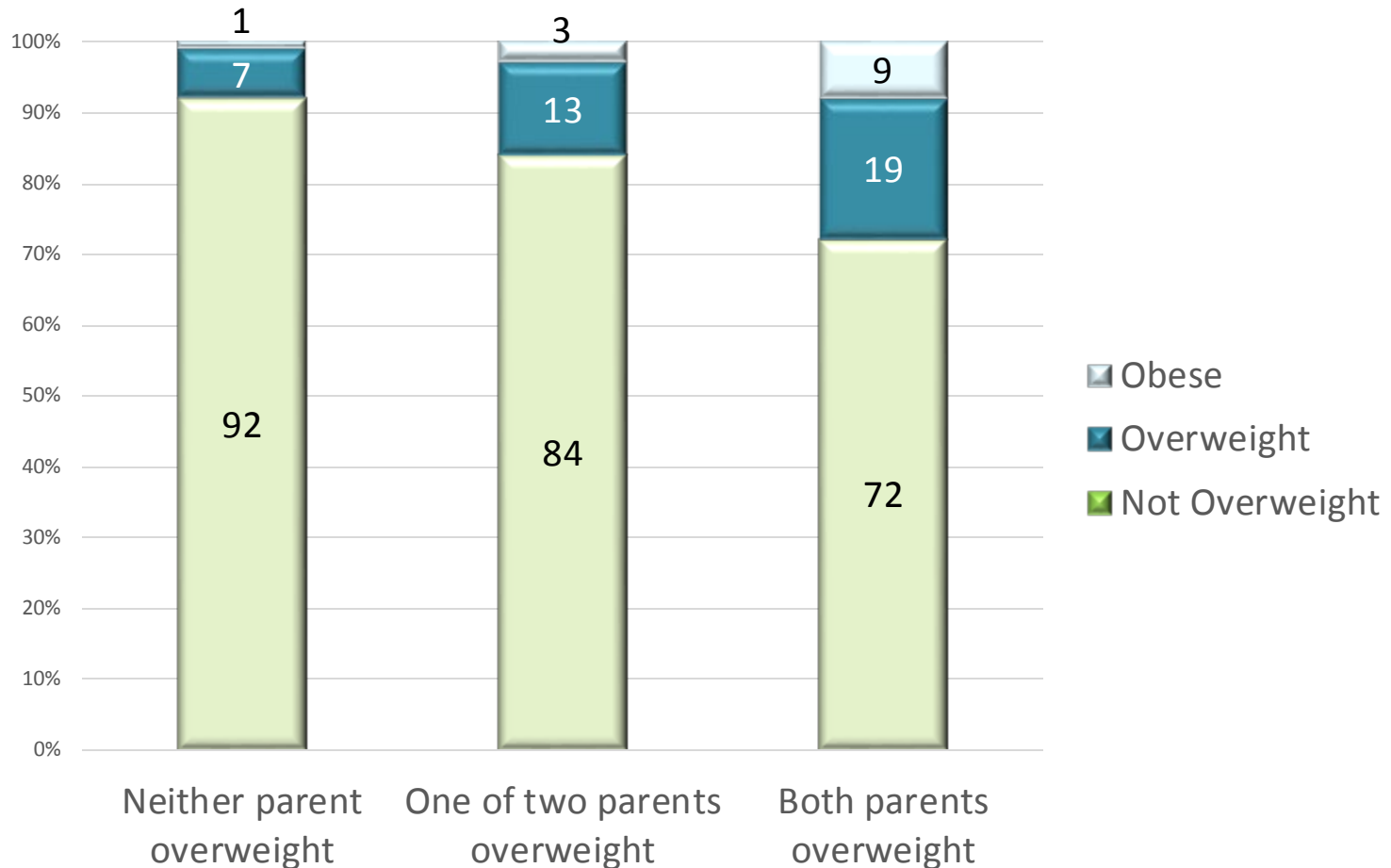
Children in the highest income quintile were the most likely to be 'very healthy'

Rated 'very healthy' by Primary Caregiver



....and the least likely to be overweight or obese

Importance of context for overweight



- 5-year-olds in two-parent families were much more likely to be overweight if one, but especially both, of their parents were overweight



Childhood injuries

- Growing Up in Ireland collected new detailed information about childhood injuries *up to* 5 years of age
- 28% had sustained an injury requiring a trip to a doctor, health centre or hospital
 - 5% had more than one such injury
- Primary Caregivers were asked about the child's *most recent* injury
 - The most common type was a head injury without loss of consciousness (30% of injuries – 8% of all children)
 - Followed by a cut needing stitches/glue (19%) and a broken bone (19%)
 - Injuries were most likely to happen in the child's own home (61%)



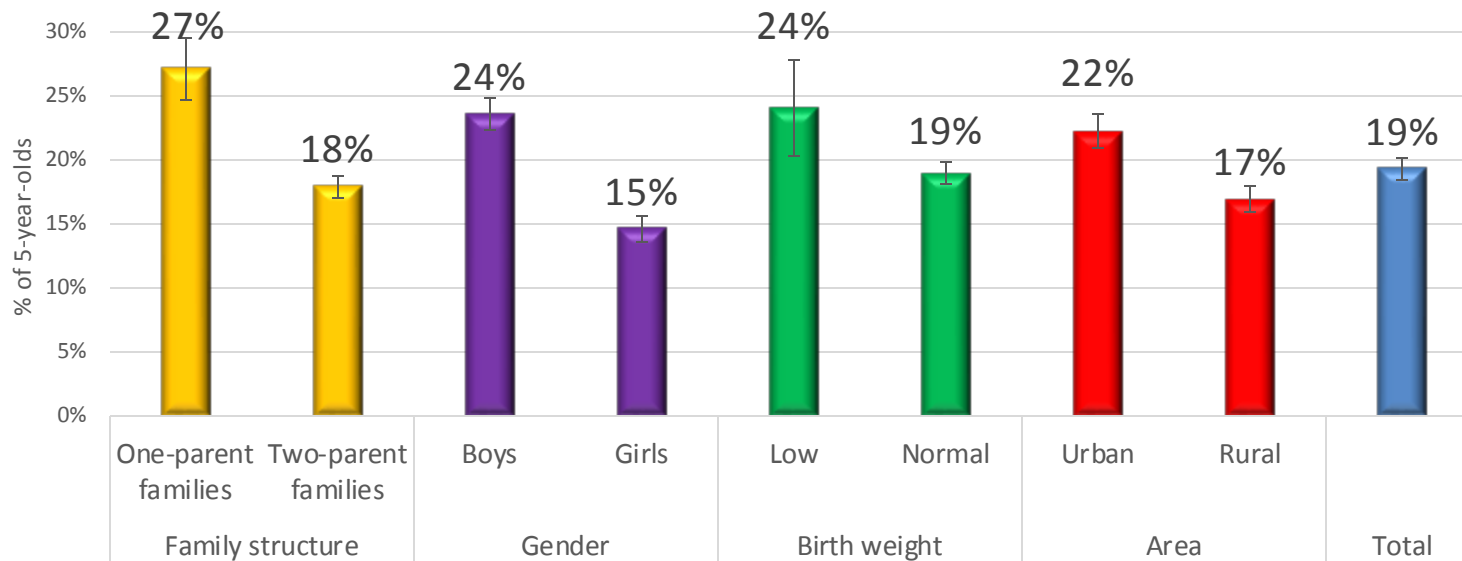
RESULTS OVERVIEW

Socio-emotional development and play

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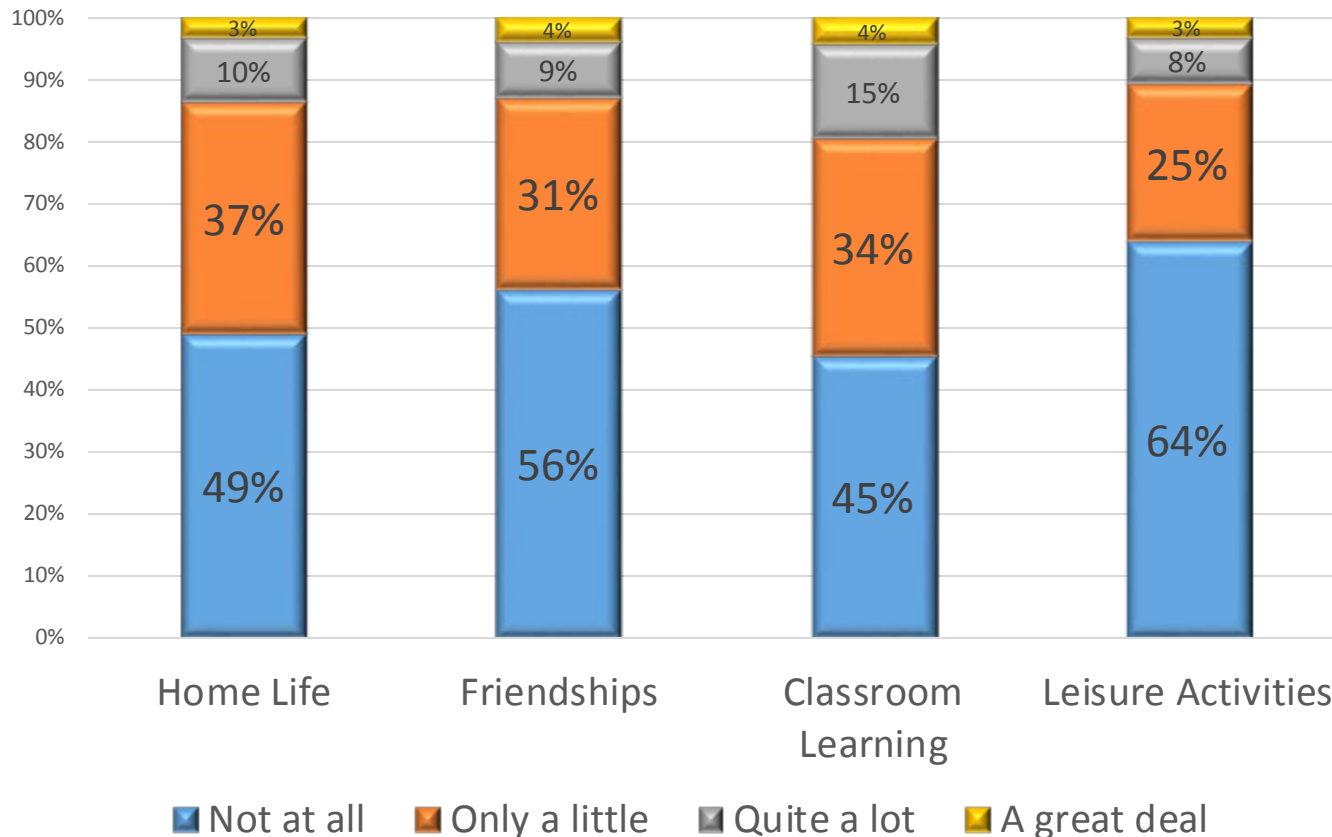
Difficulties in socio-emotional well-being

- One-in-five parents reported that the child had some difficulties with “emotions, concentration, behaviour or being able to get on with other people”
 - 16% minor; 3% ‘definite’ and 1% ‘severe’
- Some groups were more likely to report difficulties than others



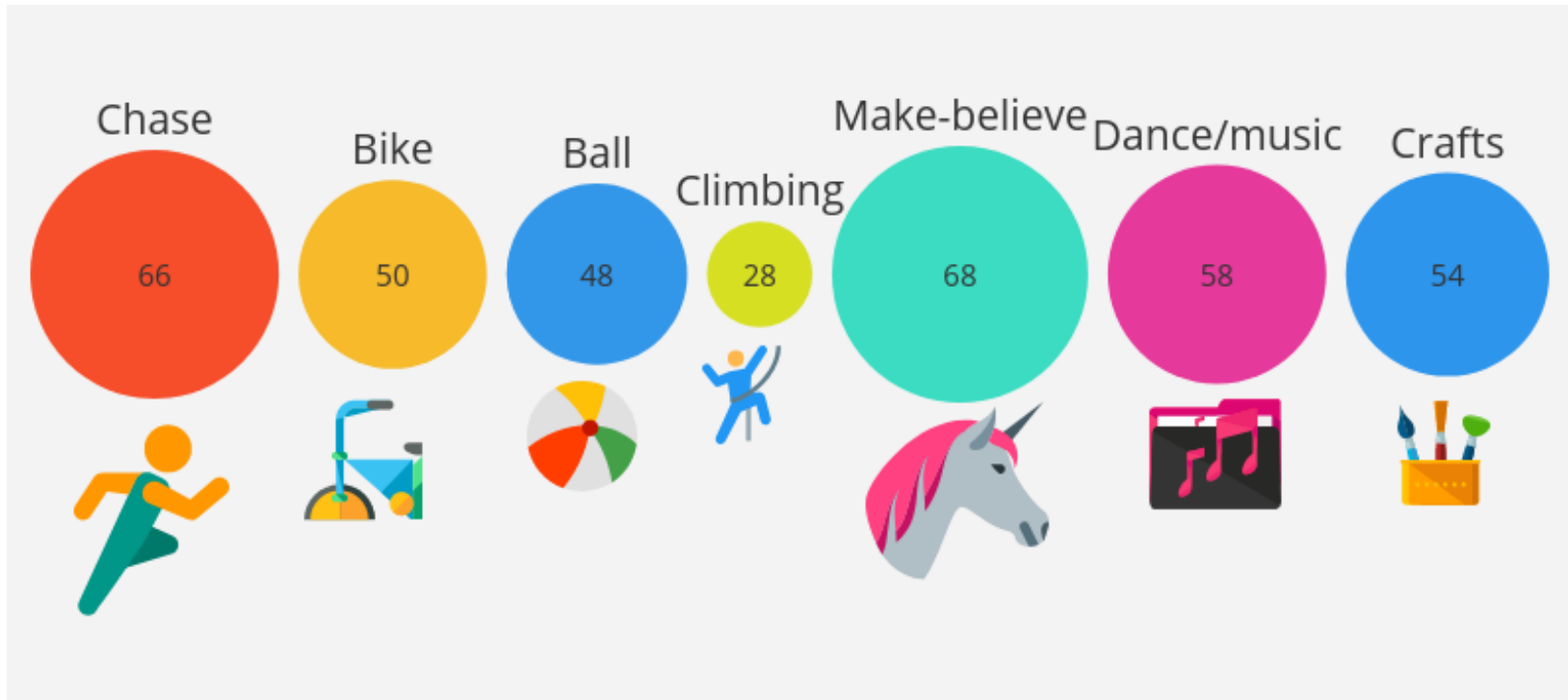
Difficulties in socio-emotional well-being

- However, many parents said that these difficulties posed little disruption to the child's engagement with different aspects of life



Play

% of 5-year-olds playing an activity every day



- Playing chase and make-believe/pretend games were the most popular play activities for 5-year-olds
- Children who had shown a preference for physically active play at age 3 years were the most likely to pursue physically active games at 5 years



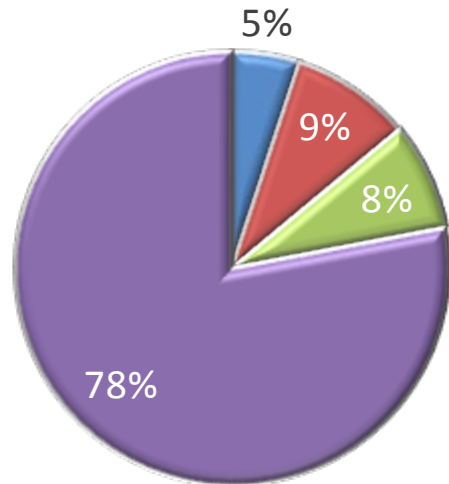
RESULTS OVERVIEW

Family life

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Family type

Family Type at 5 Years:



- One parent, one child
- One parent, two+ children
- Two parents, one child
- Two parents, two+ children

Change in Family Type, 9 months to 5 years:

Family Type: 9 Months → 5 Years	%
Two-parent → Two-parent	82
Two-parent → One-parent	4
One-parent → One-parent	10
One-parent → Two-parent	4



Work/life balance

	Primary Caregiver (mostly mothers)	Secondary Caregiver (mostly fathers)
At Work Outside the Home	55%	84%
Home Duties	35%	1%
Unemployed	5%	11%

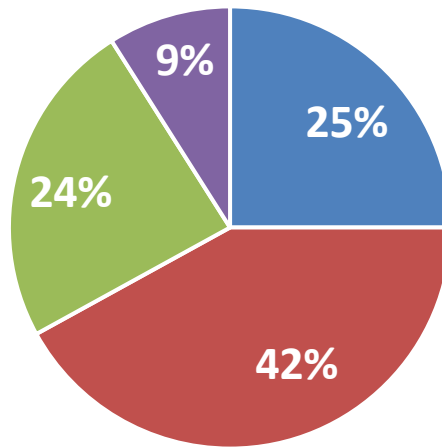


Work/life balance

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At Work Outside the Home	55%	84%
Home Duties	35%	1%
Unemployed	5%	11%
<i>“Because of work responsibilities, you missed out on family activities”</i> (agree/strongly agree)	46%	54%
<i>“Because of family responsibilities, you have to turn down work activities or opportunities”</i> (agree/strongly agree)	28%	19%

Parenting context

Making ends meet



■ Great difficulty/difficulty ■ Some difficulty ■ Fairly easily ■ Easily/very easily

- A majority of families were experiencing at least some difficulty in making ends meet.
- Nearly one-third experienced difficulty at all three waves (9m, 3y and 5y) – highest among larger one-parent families (54%)

Despite the economic circumstances, most parents viewed their relationship with the child as:

- high in positive aspects
- low in conflict, and
- warm and consistent in their parenting, and
- regularly used positive discipline strategies such as explaining why a behaviour is wrong



Non-resident parents

- The child's resident parent described arrangements/contact with the non-resident parent - 14% of 5-year-olds
- A majority had never lived with the non-resident parent (58%)
- Almost half had no parenting arrangement in place (47%)
 - 24% formal arrangement; 29% informal
- Some children had very frequent contact but others none at all
 - Face-to-face contact: daily/more than once a week 37%; never 27%
- 36% received a regular maintenance payment
 - 14% on a 'as required' basis;
- The most frequent additional support was 'buying clothes, gifts, etc for the child'
 - 19% of non-resident parents 'often' did this; 25% 'sometimes'



Thank you to . . .

- Participating families and children
- Teachers, principals and school staff
- Research and Evaluation Unit, DCYA
- Members of the Research Ethics Committee, Scientific Advisory Group and Steering Group
- CSO
- Colleagues on the GUI team and field interviewers
- Colleagues in the ESRI and TCD