

HBSC IRELAND

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams¹ in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Professor Candace Currie of the University of St Andrews. This factsheet is based on data collected in 2010 from 12,661 10-17 year olds in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:
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HEALTH BEHAVIOUR IN
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



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Summary

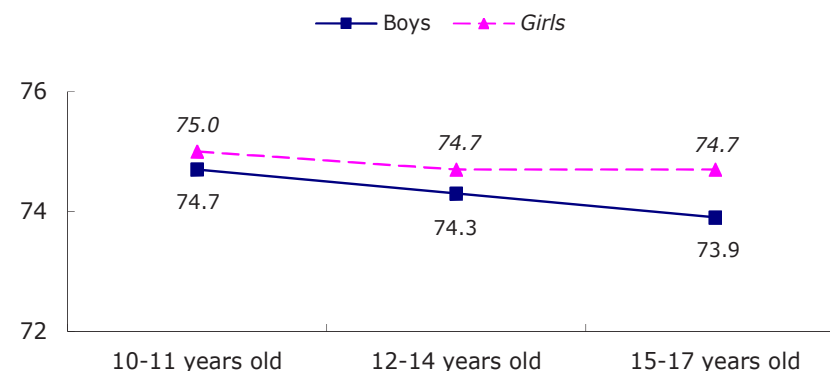
HBSC Ireland 2010 has found that 74.4% of schoolchildren in Ireland are living with both parents; a percentage that has decreased since 2006 (80.5%). Overall no significant differences were found between boys and girls or across age groups with respect to living with both parents. Schoolchildren in Ireland who report living with both parents are more likely to report excellent health, feeling very happy about their lives and engaging in physical activity four or more times per week, similar to the findings of the 2006 HBSC survey. They are less likely to report emotional and physical symptoms, experiencing drunkenness, currently smoking, being injured and having bullied others. Living with both parents in this factsheet refers to young people living with their mother and their father and does not include stepmother or stepfather.

Why this topic?

There has been a continuing shift in the definition and composition of a family in recent years¹, with one in six children in Ireland living in lone-parent households². Children in family structures other than two-parent families tend to be at greater risk of emotional and behavioural problems³. Family structure is integral to young people's healthy development¹.

Change 2006-2010

The percentage of schoolchildren living with both parents has decreased from 80.5% in 2006 to 74.4% in 2010. This decrease is apparent among both genders from 2006 to 2010, with boys decreasing from 81.6% to 74.2% and girls from 79.4% to 74.7% respectively. This decrease is also apparent across all age groups, with the smallest decrease among girls aged 15-17 years (77.8% to 74.7%). A marked decrease is seen among boys aged 10-11 years (84.0% to 74.7%).

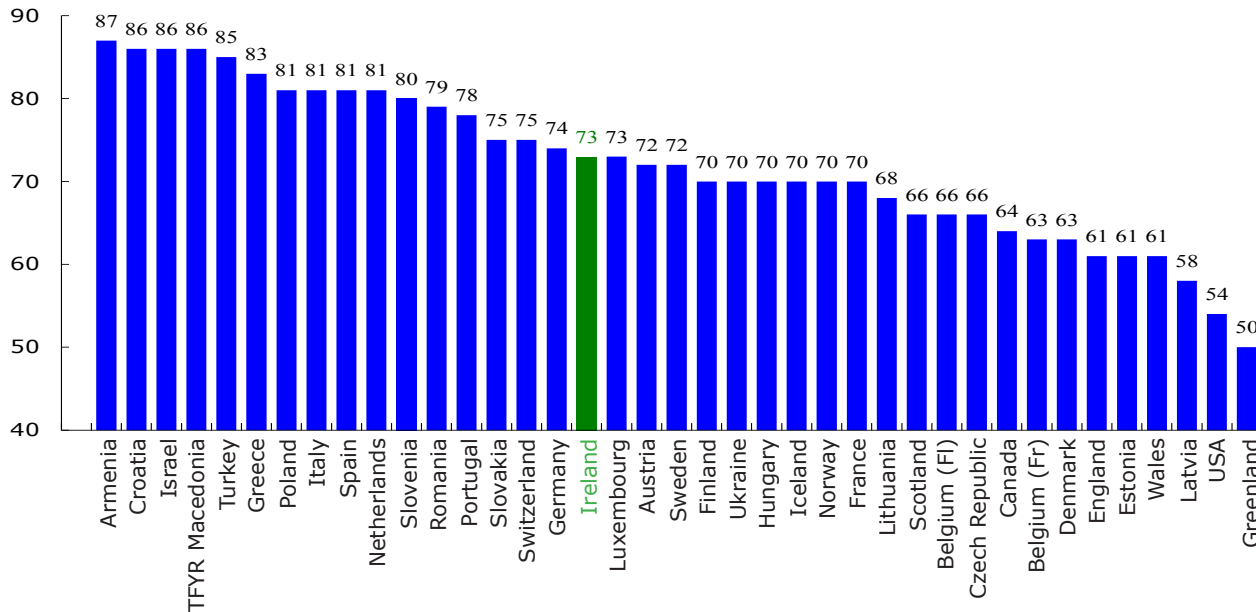


Percentage of children living with both parents, by age and gender

Family structure in context

- Children from higher social classes (SC) are more likely to report living with both parents (SC1-2: 82.5%; SC3-4: 77.5%; SC5-6: 73.3%).
- Children living with both parents are more likely to report excellent health (34.2% vs. 28.6%) and feeling very happy (52.2% vs. 44.9%) than children who do not.
- Children living with both parents are less likely to report frequent emotional (49.7% vs. 58.9%) and physical symptoms (50.3% vs. 59.7%) than children who do not.
- Children living with both parents are less likely to report having been drunk (25.5% vs. 35.8%) and current smoking (9.9% vs. 16.3%) than children who do not.
- Children living with both parents are less likely to report that they bullied others (15.5% vs. 19.6%) and have been injured (38.7% vs. 42.0%) than children who do not.
- Children living with both parents are more likely to report engaging in physical activity more than four times a week (51.6% vs. 46.9%) than children who do not.

...Family structure among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting living with both parents, by country

International

With 72.9% reporting that they live with both parents, 15 year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 17th among 39 countries in Europe and North America. Ireland is ranked 20th (72.7%) among 13 year old children, and 23rd (73.7%) among 11 year old children.

Implications

These findings highlight the continuous decrease in the number of school-children living with both parents in Ireland. Ireland ranks midrange internationally for 15, 13 and 11 year old children living with both parents. These illustrate the relationship between children living with both of their parents and many positive health outcomes and suggest that family structure is an important predictor of both positive and negative health behaviours. Children living with both parents are more likely to report positive outcomes such as; excellent

health, feeling happy and engaging in physical activity, where as, those who do not live with both parents are more likely to report experiencing physical and emotional symptoms and engaging in risk behaviours. This highlights the need for greater supports in relation to these outcomes for children who do not live with both parents. This information is very important to all of those who work with young people to recognise and develop skills to respond appropriately.

References

1. Currie, C., Zanotti, C., Morgan, A., Currie, D., de Looze, M., Roberts, C., Samdal, O., Smith, R., & Barnekow, V. (eds). (2012). *Social determinants of health and well-being among young people. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study: international report from the 2009/2010 survey*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 6).
2. Brooks, A-M., Hanafin, S., Cahill, H., Nic Gabhainn, S., & Molcho, M. (2010). *State of the Nations Children 2010*. Dublin: Department of Health and Children.
3. Pedersen, M., Grando Alcon, M.C., Rodriguez, C.M., & Smith, R. (2004). Family and health. In: Currie C et al., eds. *Young people's health in context. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study: international report from the 2001/2002 survey*. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2004 (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 40 (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/110231/e82923.pdf, accessed 11 May 2012).

This factsheet was prepared by Mary Callaghan, Natasha Clarke, Aoife Gavin, Colette Kelly, Michal Molcho, Saoirse Nic Gabhainn and Larri Walker.

HBSC Ireland is funded by the Health Promotion Policy Unit of the Department of Health.

We would like to thank all the children, teachers and schools who participated and acknowledge the contribution of our colleagues in the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway.

All factsheets and other HBSC publications and reports can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc>

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