



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Uniting Voices For Children

NO CHILD 2020

There are more than 100,000 children living in poverty in Ireland today. That equates to the combined populations of Waterford, Drogheda and Sligo. When kids grow up poor they miss out – and so do the rest of us. They miss out on the things most children take for granted: warm clothes, school trips, having friends over for tea. They do less well at school and earn less as adults. Poverty is a fact of life for many children living in Ireland today.

What is the impact of child poverty?

Life for children living in poverty is extremely tough. Poverty affects every aspect of your life – your health, wellbeing, anxiety levels and behaviour. Growing up in poverty, you are less likely to go to college and more likely to have mental health issues throughout your life. Investment to reduce poverty makes sense as it leads to better outcomes not only for children and their families but for society as a whole.

What is No Child 2020?

The Children's Rights Alliance and The Irish Times are working together to tackle child poverty through the No Child 2020 initiative. We want the Government to live up to the commitments it has made to children. We want no child to suffer from a lack of food, shelter and education. Poverty isn't inevitable and there are solutions.

What is the Government doing?

The Government has promised to lift almost 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020. Consistent poverty means a child is living in a household that cannot afford two out of 11 basic items including adequate clothing, food, heating and participation in social activities.

There has been some progress in tackling child poverty in recent years and the Government has succeeded in lifting 24,000 children out of consistent poverty between 2016 and 2017 through targeted payments to families on low incomes and help with back-to-schools costs.

Increases to support asylum-seeking children living in Direct Provision, lone parents and for older children in their teens who are more likely to be in poverty, will also help. A new National Childcare Scheme gives children access to quality childcare and relieves a financial load on parents. The Government has also invested in community based early intervention and prevention programmes to break the cycle of disadvantage – the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme. But more is needed – No Child 2020 is calling for action to lift almost 70,000 children out of poverty by 2020.

#NoChild2020

Join the campaign

What are the solutions?

There are certain measures we can take to work towards ending child poverty. Because Irish society cares about all our children living lives free from poverty, the Children's Rights Alliance is asking the Government and decision-makers to make these changes. These solutions will benefit all children but especially those in poverty:



Food

Every child will have a hot nutritious meal every day.

Many families on low incomes cannot afford to follow a healthy diet and families with infants and teenagers face higher food costs. We want schools and non-formal educational settings to provide a hot nutritious meal to every child by establishing a small grants scheme to put in place kitchens or cooking facilities.



Health

Every child will have access to basic healthcare when they need it.

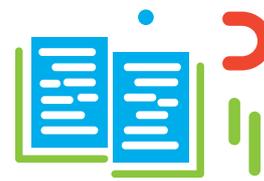
Differences in the health of children who grow up in poverty are obvious from three years of age. Thousands of children face long waiting lists to access public health care. We want to see an increase in medical card income thresholds for low-income families with children, the income threshold should match that set for people who qualify for the State pension at 66.



Participation

Every child will have the opportunity to take part in community-based arts and cultural activities.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate in arts and cultural activities. Taking part in cultural activities like singing, painting, dance and theatre benefits children academically and in developing better social skills and positive relationships. We want to ensure every child can access at least one community arts or cultural opportunity a year by providing a subsidy or a "culture card" to children.



Education

Every child will receive free primary education.

The Constitution requires the State to provide for free primary education. In reality, going to school costs a lot of money. Over a third of parents get into debt to pay for schools costs, according to the Irish League of Credit Unions. Others said that they are unable to buy their children certain school items, including new school shoes or pay for extracurricular activities. We want investment to introduce free school books for every child in primary school.



Housing

Every child will live in secure and affordable housing.

Almost 4,000 children are living in inappropriate emergency accommodation, including B&Bs and hotels. Children living in emergency accommodation often suffer high levels of anxiety, ill-health, exhaustion and hunger. While there is a policy to move families into family hubs which are more suitable, they are only another form of emergency accommodation. We want legislation to ensure the best interests of the child informs any decision about where to accommodate them and their family. This should also time-limit the use of emergency accommodation for families with children.

We believe these five solutions are realistic and achievable but most importantly we believe that they will make a real impact on children's lives.

To find out more and sign-up to campaign updates, contact us on 01 6629400 or at communications@childrensrights.ie