

Budget 2024: A Children's Budget

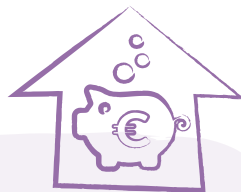
**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE**
Uniting Voices For Children

Poverty is not inevitable. Children living in poverty is not inevitable. Political choices are allowing it to happen and your political choices can stop it. The upcoming Budget is an opportunity for you to show leadership and help steer Ireland on a course that will turn the tide on child poverty.

There are more children living in consistent poverty than any other age group in Ireland (89,288). Over 236,000 children see poverty seep into every aspect of their young lives – that is more than the entire population of Kilkenny and Waterford combined.

Join us in our campaign to end child poverty and make Budget 2024 a Children's Budget.

Department of Social Protection



Income: Social Welfare Rates

- Prioritise an increase of €10 per week for children under 12 and €15 per week for children over 12 to retain the purchasing power of the 'Increase for a Qualified Child' (IQC).¹ The minimal increases to the IQC in last year's Budget were simply not effective enough to help children and families living with the weight of poverty.

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



- Supports for children in homelessness
- Provide every child living in homeless accommodation, or at risk of homelessness, access to a dedicated Child and Family Support Worker

Department of Education



End Education Inequality

- Expand the Home School Community Liaison programme to non-DEIS schools on a phased basis. Half of children living in poverty are outside the DEIS programme and this would directly help them.
- Properly staff up TESS by increasing the number of Educational Welfare Officers by 90 so that every child needing TESS support can get an adequate service.
- Expand the Free School Book Scheme to second level. The average cost of the basic materials needed for a fourth-class pupil is €320. This sharply increases for secondary school students with the average cost for a first-year pupil at.

¹ Data from the Vincentian MESL Research Centre shows that an increase of €8.50 for children under 12 and €12.50 for children over 12 is needed to restore the Qualified Child Payment to 2020 levels in real terms. These figures assume that the €100 increase in the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance will be retained. The rate recommendation above these rates stems from the need to make progress on tackling child poverty, particularly among older children. Vincentian MESL Research Centre, MESL Annual Update Report (2023) https://www.budgeting.ie/download/pdf/mesL_2023_-_annual_update_report.pdf

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Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Income: Children in Direct Provision

- Introduce the International Protection Child Payment for children living in Direct Provision at the same rate of the universal Child Benefit payment.



Early Years

- Fund the first phase of a new early years DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) model, focused on wraparound services, provision of food and parental support. The scale of last year's investment of €1 billion is at the level it needs to be, but it needs to shift toward implementing the new Equal Participation Model.
- Remove 98% of the cost of childcare for families on the lowest income by increasing subsidies under the National Childcare Scheme for all families in receipt of the Medical Card. (This can be done by amending the current IT system to include an additional field for Medical Card holders.)



Prioritise Child Welfare

- Increase Tusla's overall funding by a minimum of 10% to meet the demand for services
- Provide Tusla with additional resources to increase investment in Community and Voluntary Sector funded organisations to build their capacity to retain staff and deliver frontline services to children and families.
- Ringfence an increase of 1 per cent of Tusla's budget for Family Support Services. This funding should be utilised to increase the capacity of services to ensure more children and their families can access support.
- Support foster carers by increasing the foster carer payment to €500 so that it reflects the rise in inflation since 2009 and provide an inclusive package of supports for these carers to ensure the number of foster care placements available for children and young people is both retained and increased.



Together, we can make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child.

#EndChildPoverty

#ChildrensBudget24