

# 11. Children and Parenting

## Birth Registration

The birth of a baby must be registered before the baby is three months old in the office of any Registrar of Births which are located in Health Service Executive Offices. If this is not done, a statutory declaration must be completed, signed in the presence of a Peace Commissioner and brought to the Registrar for the district where the birth took place. No fee is payable for registering a birth but a fee is payable for every Birth Certificate that is requested. Check with your local CIC.

## Immunisation

Immunisation (also known as vaccination) is a safe and effective way to help the body prevent or fight off certain diseases. Vaccinations under the Childhood Immunisation Programme in Ireland are provided free of charge to all children. Parental consent is required for the administration of vaccinations to children and young people up to the

age of 16. Vaccination is not mandatory in Ireland, but is strongly advised by the health authorities. Parents who wish to have their children vaccinated should contact their GP/family doctor or local health service centre.

## Childcare Options

There is no state provision of pre school services for young children. However there is a range of childcare facilities available including preschools, Montessori schools, nurseries, crèches, playgroups and individual childminders. Many of these are privately run and fees can be high. Some community facilities provide subsidised childcare for people in the area. A list of childcare services and the contact addresses for crèches and preschools can be obtained from the Health Service Executive. Information on Childcare services, and some useful free publications are also available from the County Childcare Committees. Please see contact details of your local County Childcare Committee below.

Demand for childcare is usually high and it may be difficult to secure a place for your child. An alternative to crèches and preschools is to find a private childminder. These are usually advertised in local papers. You may also be able to find the details of childminders and babysitters on the notice boards in shopping centres



## Contact Details

### County Childcare Committees Carlow

Tel: 059 9140244

[www.carlowchildcare.com](http://www.carlowchildcare.com)

### Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7752865

[www.kkccc.ie](http://www.kkccc.ie)

### North Tipperary

Tel: 06744886

[www.northtipperarychildcare.ie](http://www.northtipperarychildcare.ie)

### South Tipperary

Tel: 052 82274

[www.southtipppccc.ie](http://www.southtipppccc.ie)

### Waterford City

Tel: 051 860444

[www.waterfordcitychildcare.com](http://www.waterfordcitychildcare.com)

### Waterford County

Tel: 058 43601

[www.waterfordcoco.ie](http://www.waterfordcoco.ie)

### Wexford

Tel: 053 9237156

[www.wexfordchildcare.ie](http://www.wexfordchildcare.ie)

## School System

The law requires that all children must participate in full-time education between the ages of 6 and 16 (although most children start school at age 4 or 5). Most schools in Ireland are state-aided and attendance is free for all children – regardless of nationality or status. However, there are usually some costs involved (e.g. towards books, photocopying or school uniforms).

Some support is available to people on low income or receiving social welfare benefits (e.g. the Back-to-School Clothing & Footwear Allowance may help with uniform costs (See Chapter 6 Community Welfare). Transport is available to bring pupils to school if they live a particular distance from the school. Information on transport is available from the school. Many schools offer additional supports to pupils who have particular needs. The school year starts in September and all schools close during July and August (secondary schools are also closed in June). Other school holidays take place at Christmas, Easter and between terms (usually end of October and February).

## Primary Schools

When starting school, usually at age 4 or 5, children enrol in primary (or national) school, where they study for 8 years. You can send your child to any school of your choice, provided that a place is available there. Lists of local schools are available from the Department of Education & Science (contact details below).

Once you've chosen a school, contact the principal to see if a place is available. If not, he/she may be able to suggest an alternative school. Most primary schools are under the management of a church (the majority are Roman Catholic) but there are some multi-denominational schools.

## Post Primary/Second Level Schools

At age 12 or 13 children go to post primary/second level school. There

are a number of different types of post primary schools – the most common is the secondary school.

Other types of school include community and comprehensive schools and community colleges. As with primary schools, most second-level schools are denominational.

Children must stay in second level until they reach 16 years of age. While the Irish language is a compulsory subject some students may be exempt, e.g. children who attended education outside Ireland up to 11 years of age.

Second level education involves two cycles, each of which ends with an examination:

**Junior cycle** – a three-year programme ending in a Junior Certificate exam

**Senior cycle** – a two or three year programme (three year programmes include a “transitional year” focusing on personal development, work experience and other new skills). Most students do the regular Leaving Certificate programme, which involves six or seven subjects. However, other options include the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied. Entry to third level education is usually linked to the results achieved in the Leaving Certificate, with the most popular courses taking only those with the highest scores.

### How to find a school

A list of all primary, second level and schools with classes that provide additional supports for pupils with special needs is available on the Department of Education website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or Tel. 090 6483600.

### Child Protection

Each Community Care Area has a Duty Social Work Team who should be contacted in the event of concerns arising in relation to children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, or in relation to any other serious concerns, which threaten the physical or emotional well-being of a child.

The telephone number for each Community Care Centre is listed in Chapter 6 of this Guide.

