



HANDS UP FOR CHILDREN

Prevention and Early Intervention

Invest in children, build a brighter future for Ireland



**Adopt the
5 Thriving
Childhood
Principles**

5 Thriving Childhood Principles



Inside are five simple, powerful principles that you and your Party can adopt to ensure that Prevention and Early Intervention is a core commitment in your election manifesto and is included as a priority in your new Programme for Government.

Ireland's Children Today*

- > Nearly 12% of Irish children are living in consistent poverty. 18% are at risk of poverty.
- > By age 13, 1 in 3 Irish children will have experienced a mental health difficulty. This rises to one in two by age 24. Half of mental illnesses emerge before the age of 14.
- > 15 to 20% of Irish 9 year olds experience significant emotional or behavioural problems.
- > 1 in 4 Irish children are overweight or obese. By 2030, if things don't change, it is predicted that 7.5% of the population will have diabetes.
- > Ireland invests less than 0.2% of GDP in early years services, well below the OECD average of 0.8%

Prevention & Early Intervention - Proven benefits for all*

All the evidence tells us that if we offer quality supports and programmes during every key phase of childhood the results are outstanding. It is also cost effective to intervene early.

Prevention is better than cure.

Young children...

- > Higher birth weight. Improved bonding and attachment with parents.
- > Improved conduct, higher education scores.
- > Better physical & mental health.
- > Less likely to experience maltreatment and be in care.

Older Children...

- > Less likely to use drugs & alcohol, get pregnant, be involved in crime.
- > Higher school grades, & life long earnings.

Parents...


- > Improved mental health & self esteem,
- > Less stressed and enjoy parenting more.

Communities...

- > Reduced use of health, justice, care & special educational services.
- > Less anti-social behaviour and crime.



1




Commit to Prevention and Early Intervention

Publicly commit to prevention and early intervention as the one thing that you can do to make the greatest difference for children and young people

We know that the culture of late intervention is not just expensive. We know it doesn't work.

You can make voters aware, through your decisions, of the enormous benefits of prevention and early intervention. Adopt a policy which uses tested programmes that are proven to build thriving, happy childhoods, inspire confident parents and strengthen communities.



Children were the group most affected by the recession in Ireland. Now is the time to change that and make investment in our children's future the building block of Ireland's recovery.



2

Invest in Childhood Futures

Audit the current spend on universal services, early intervention, and late intervention.

Incrementally re-align resources from crisis intervention towards prevention and early intervention.

Allocate a defined level of funding from ALL department budgets to prevention and early intervention. Ring-fence it so that it can be effective and guaranteed.

Children were the group most affected by the recession in Ireland (Unicef 2014). Now is the time to change that and make investment in our children's future the building block of Ireland's recovery.

Let's look at some of the facts today.* Keeping a child in detention school costs €314,000 a year. Keeping a child in residential care can cost more than €150,000 a year. Overweight and obesity issues cost Ireland €1.3 billion a year. Poor mental health costs us €3 billion a year.

Prevention and early intervention costs a fraction of this. In fact, it saves money and, most importantly, it secures futures.





Deliver on the national policy framework for children and young people, 2014-2020

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures is the overarching national policy framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. Its implementation is the responsibility of all government departments and key state agencies.

Co-ordinate local planning for Prevention and Early Intervention programmes with appropriately resourced Children's and Young People's Services Committees and other statutory, voluntary and community-based organisations. Also support the Tusla Mainstreaming Programme for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support.

Issues such as poverty, early school leaving, poor health and behaviour problems need a whole of Government approach.


Realise the following commitments to Prevention and Early Intervention contained within Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures:

- > Lift 70,000 children out of consistent poverty.
- > Increase access to high quality, affordable early years education.
- > Re-balance resources to place a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.
- > Ensure universal and targeted parent supports.
- > Implement the Area Based Childhood Programme.
- > Up-skill professionals to identify risk and provide preventative and early intervention support.

Issues such as poverty, early school leaving, poor health and behaviour problems need a whole of Government approach. To address these issues holistically, and decisively, there has to be joined-up thinking and smart resourcing.



4



Support What Works

Review the effectiveness of existing child and family services, clarify their role/purpose and incrementally introduce an outcomes assessment for all services.

Capitalise on the Irish evidence that already exists which shows that Prevention and Early Intervention works. This research should inform all local and community programmes aimed at children and families.

Continue to invest in proven models of Prevention and Early Intervention. Ensure existing effective programmes are continued and expanded into and beyond 2016.

Investment in children needs to be outcomes driven and informed by evidence of what works – it makes no sense to continue to invest in services that are not effective.

In Ireland we have research that proves that prevention and early intervention improves the lives of children. Use it, learn from it, build on it.



5


Choose Your Legacy

Ensure that the best interests of children are central to all government and service decisions.

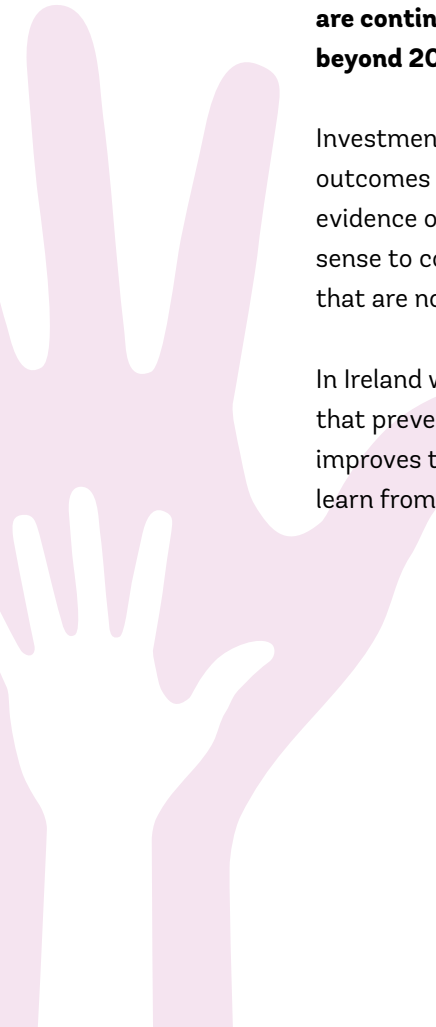
The recession is NOT an excuse for 12% of children living in consistent poverty.

Some countries in recession actually reduced child poverty rates (Unicef 2014) because they made brave choices to put the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society at the heart of political and economic decisions.

Children live in families, who live in communities. You can choose to make them your priority and ensure your legacy.



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To find out more about what you can do to help your Party in Government build thriving childhoods:

Check out:
www.handsupforchildren.ie

Call us:
01-4160525

Follow us on Twitter:
@handup4children
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Hands up for Children is an initiative of the Prevention and Early Intervention Network (PEIN)
www.preventioninpractice.ie

* Full references available on
www.handsupforchildren.ie