



Children's rights are in your hands

Your choice of TD in the General Election on 25 February will impact on how children are treated by the new Dáil. Make sure that the 1 million children in Ireland are better off by putting children's rights on your TD's agenda.

Key facts about children in Ireland

- > 1 in 11 children lives in consistent poverty, in families that cannot afford basics like food, warm clothes and heating
- > 1 in 10 children leaves school with literacy problems, rising to 1 child in 3 in disadvantaged communities
- > Over 23,000 children are on waiting lists for speech and language therapy
- > 703 children are in State care with no allocated social worker to support them
- > 1 in every 6 cases of child abuse is attributed to alcohol misuse
- > Over 120 children with mental health difficulties were admitted to adult psychiatric units during 2010
- > 227 children were detained in 2009 in an adult prison: St Patrick's Institution, Dublin
- > 442 Traveller families live at the side of the road, without access to water or adequate sanitary facilities
- > Over 500 children in State care have gone missing since 2000, 90% remain missing, and it is feared that many have been trafficked



Children's rights in Ireland today

- > The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs is a 'super' junior Minister post, with a seat at the Cabinet table. The Minister is supported by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs; and his work is guided by a National Children's Strategy, which is due to be redeveloped this year.
- > The Ombudsman for Children independently reviews complaints against public bodies and undertakes investigations.
- > Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992. This means that Irish governments are bound by the Convention and must work towards its implementation. Every five years the Government reports on its progress to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The latest report was due in 2009 and is now late.

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 90 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to secure the rights and needs of children in Ireland through the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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How can the new Government make Ireland one of the best places in the world to be a child?

By signing up to our General Election 2011 Charter for Children

- 1 **Make children's rights real:** hold a constitutional referendum on children's rights within one year of taking office
- 2 **Safeguard childhood:** ensure that all children enjoy a childhood free from abuse, neglect and degrading treatment
- 3 **Give children an equal chance:** ensure that children in poor families are protected from budget cuts
- 4 **Invest in the future:** break the link between poverty and educational failure
- 5 **Prioritise children's wellbeing:** guarantee that all children can access timely health and therapeutic services

What should you ask your TD candidate on the doorstep?



- > **As a TD, what will you do to improve things for children?**
- > **Do you support a referendum to strengthen children's rights in the Constitution?**
- > **How will you protect poor children from the impact of budget cuts?**
- > **What will you do for Ireland's most vulnerable children: those at risk of abuse or neglect, those in care or detention, migrant and Traveller children and children with disabilities?**
- > **What will you do to ensure that all children have a positive experience of school?**
- > **How will you ensure that children in this community will have timely access to health and other social supports?**

So how did your candidates do? Let us know at:
info@childrensrights.ie