



Family





## Children's Rights

Children's rights are human rights for all children and young people under 18 years of age and are laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Ireland ratified the Convention but has not incorporated it into domestic law.

Children First are the national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children. These guidelines are intended to assist people identifying and reporting child abuse and to improve the practice in state and voluntary organisations that provide services for children and families.

## Age of consent to sexual activity

The age of consent is the age at which people can legally have sex. In Ireland the age of consent (in a homosexual or heterosexual relationship) is 17.

### What is the legal age to get married in Ireland?

You must be 18 years of age to get married in Ireland. If you are under 18 years of age you will need to get a Court Exemption Order so that the marriage is legally recognised.

## Children's Rights Groups

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 80 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to secure the rights and needs of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It aims to improve the lives of all children under 18, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland's laws, policies and services:

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

4 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

Telephone: 01 6629400

Email: [info@childrensrights.ie](mailto:info@childrensrights.ie)

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is here to make sure that the government and other people who make decisions about young people really think about what is best for young people. For information in different languages go to:

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

Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1

Telephone: 01 8656800

Free Phone: 1800 20 20 40

Email: [oco@oco.ie](mailto:oco@oco.ie)



Childline is part of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC). Childline provides a telephone and online help service for children: [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

Free Phone: 1800 66 66 66

Barnardos supports children whose well-being is under threat, by working with them, their families and communities and by campaigning for the rights of children:

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

National Office, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

Telephone: 01 4530355

Callsave: 1850 222 300

Email: [info@barnardos.ie](mailto:info@barnardos.ie)

## Immunisation

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting your child against certain diseases. In Ireland, all recommended childhood immunisations are free of charge. The HSE coordinates the immunisation programme.

For the timetable for childhood immunisation go to [www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)

If you have any questions about vaccinations you should contact your GP or your local health centre.

## Breastfeeding

Ireland has one of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in Europe. However, there are many benefits to breastfeeding, for example, breastfeeding provides the necessary nutrients for your baby and also helps strengthen your baby's immune system.

There are a number of organisations which offer support for breastfeeding:

The HSE has developed a national breastfeeding website: [www.breastfeeding.ie](http://www.breastfeeding.ie)

The Breast Way is an Irish breastfeeding website providing information, discussion forums and support on all aspects of breastfeeding: [www.thebreastway.ie](http://www.thebreastway.ie)

## Breastfeeding and the workplace

Under Irish law, breastfeeding mothers are entitled to time off or a reduction in working hours in order to breastfeed or express breast milk. In an eight hour working day, a breastfeeding mother is entitled to one hour off (with pay) as a breastfeeding break. This can be divided into:

- One break of 60 minutes



- Two breaks of 30 minutes or
- Three breaks of 20 minutes.

## Childcare options

There are different options for childcare in Ireland:

- Childminder – someone who minds your children either in your home or their home
- Day care – this includes crèches. Children are looked after for more than 3.5 hours per day with other children of a similar age
- Affordable childcare – for families on lower incomes. These are run by the local City or County Childcare Committee.

You can also bring your child to:

- A playgroup – where children meet other children of a similar age to play
- A Montessori group – where the focus is on child development and social skills
- A parent and toddler group – parents and their children meet up with other parents and children. The children play while the adults also meet to offer support and friendship.

## Childcare groups

Childminding Ireland is a membership organisation and a Registered Charity. Founded in 1983 by a small group of Childminders, it has grown to become the National Body for Childminders: [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie)

IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation is the largest voluntary organisation working for young children and their families in Ireland. Founded in 1969, IPPA's membership of over 2400 includes Playgroups, Parent and Toddler Groups, Full Day Care Groups, After-school and Out-of-School Groups and individual members: [www.ippa.ie](http://www.ippa.ie)

Telephone: 01 4630010

Email: [info@ippa.ie](mailto:info@ippa.ie)

The National Children's Nurseries Association (NCNA) supports those involved in the care of children by raising public awareness of the role of day-care and promoting the raising and maintenance of standards in relation to day-care.

Telephone: 01 4601138

Email: [info@ncna.ie](mailto:info@ncna.ie)

National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative works towards the development of excellence in childcare services in Ireland:

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



Cuidiú (caring support in Irish) is a voluntary parent-to-parent support group who offer support services in three areas:

- Antenatal classes
- Breastfeeding Counselling
- Postnatal and Parenthood Support

There are branches throughout the country:

[www.cuidiu-ict.ie](http://www.cuidiu-ict.ie)

Telephone: 01 8724501

Email: [generalenquiry@cuidiu.com](mailto:generalenquiry@cuidiu.com)

Irish Montessori Education Board provides accreditation for Montessori schools in Ireland: [www.imbtrust.org](http://www.imbtrust.org)

Telephone: 01 2805705

Email: [info@imebtrust.org](mailto:info@imebtrust.org)

Parent and Toddler Groups can be a great way of meeting other people with children the same age as yours in the local area. For more information about your local group contact your GP, district nurse or your local health centre.

There is also a Parent and Toddler Group Initiative which provides grants to groups. For more information contact your local City/County Childcare Committee or go to:

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



## Parenting

Parentline provides a confidential helpline for parents and guardians: [www.parentline.ie](http://www.parentline.ie)

Telephone: 01 8787230

Helpline: 1890 927 277

Email: [info@parentline.ie](mailto:info@parentline.ie)

[www.rollercoaster.ie](http://www.rollercoaster.ie) provides information on parenting, pregnancy and childcare.

[www.schooldays.ie](http://www.schooldays.ie) is an online resource for parents and teachers.

Parents Plus is a community trust committed to developing educational materials for parents and children and to providing support to professionals working with children and families in the community: [www.parentsplus.ie](http://www.parentsplus.ie)

Telephone: 086 172 1902

Email: [admin@parentsplus.ie](mailto:admin@parentsplus.ie)

## Family Supports

For information and support on family life contact:

- Your local partnership: [www.planet.ie](http://www.planet.ie)
- Your local family resource centre: [www.familyresource.ie](http://www.familyresource.ie)



## One-Parent Families

The following organisations provide information and support to one-parent families in Ireland:

Treoir – The National Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and their Children provides information and support to parents who are not married to each other: [www.treoir.ie](http://www.treoir.ie)

Telephone: 01 6700120

Lo-Call: 1890 252 084

Email: [info@treoir.ie](mailto:info@treoir.ie)

OPEN (One Parent Exchange and Network) is the national network of local lone parent self-help groups representing the diversity of interests of lone parents (particularly those living in/or at risk of living in poverty) and promotes their inclusion and progression within wider society:

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

Telephone: 01 8148860

Email: [enquiries@oneparent.ie](mailto:enquiries@oneparent.ie)

One Family is a leading national organisation for one-parent families in Ireland: [www.onefamily.ie](http://www.onefamily.ie)

Telephone: 01 6629212

askonefamily Lo-call info line: 1890 66 22 12

Email: [info@onefamily.ie](mailto:info@onefamily.ie)

## Social Welfare Payments

### Family Income Supplement (FIS)

Family Income Supplement is a weekly tax-free payment for low paid working families.

#### How do I qualify?

You may qualify if you:

- are an employee in paid full-time employment which is expected to last for 3 months
- work at least 19 hours every week, or 38 hours every fortnight (if you are married or living with a partner, you can combine the hours worked by your spouse or partner).
- have at least one qualified child who normally lives with you and/or is supported by you. A qualified child is any child under age 18 or aged 18 to 22 if in full-time education
- have an average weekly family income

#### What counts as family income?

The following count as family income:

- Your earnings and your partner's earnings
- any other income including social welfare or Health Service Executive payments



## Child Benefit

### What is Child Benefit?

In Ireland, Child Benefit is payable to the parents or guardians of qualified children normally living with you and being supported by you.

### Who is a qualified child?

A qualified child is:

- Under 16 years of age or
- Aged 16-18 if in full-time education, attending FÁS Youthreach Training or is physically or mentally disabled and dependant on you

From January 2010 child benefit will stop when your child reaches 18 years of age.

## Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is designed to help meet the cost of uniforms and footwear for students in Ireland attending school. The scheme operates from June 1st to September 30th each year.

You must be receiving certain social welfare payments or payments for training, employment schemes or adult education.

Your total household income must be below a certain amount.

For more information contact your local Community Welfare Officer (CWO) who is based at your local Health Centre.

## One-Parent Family Payment

One-Parent Family Payment is a payment for men and women in Ireland who are raising children without the support of a partner. It is payable to an unmarried person, a widow(er), a separated or divorced person, a person whose marriage has been annulled or a prisoner's spouse. It is subject to certain conditions and you must satisfy a means test.

## Information for young people

**I am a teenager. What are my options for meeting other teenagers and getting involved in the local community?**

You should check your local community centre as this is where most youth and sports groups meet. You can also contact Foróige and Youth Work Ireland.



You could also take part in Gaisce - the President's Award which is Ireland's National Challenge Award. It is the country's most prestigious and respected individual award programme and a challenge from the President of Ireland to young people between 15 and 25 years of age. For more information go to: [www.gaisce.ie](http://www.gaisce.ie)

Telephone: 01 4758746

Email: [mail@gaisce.ie](mailto:mail@gaisce.ie)

[www.whencani.ie](http://www.whencani.ie) is a website developed by Youth Work Ireland and provides information in English about the legal age at which children can do certain things or seek out certain information, for example, the age of criminal responsibility, employment rights and medical advice.

Youth Work Ireland is a co-ordinating and development agency for Youth Services throughout the country, which seeks to give voice to the needs and aspirations of young people and to improve the quality of life for young people in the context of community based youth services:

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

National Youth Council of Ireland seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society. It is the representative body for national voluntary

youth work organisations in Ireland: [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

Telephone: 01 4784122

Email: [info@nyci.ie](mailto:info@nyci.ie)

Dáil na nÓg is the National Youth Parliament of Ireland and gives young people the opportunity to represent, at a national level, the views of those under the voting age of 18.

Email: [info@dailnanog.ie](mailto:info@dailnanog.ie)

SpunOut.ie is an independent, youth-led national charity working to empower young people to create personal and social change: [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

Telephone: 091 533693

Email: [info@spunout.ie](mailto:info@spunout.ie)

Teenspace.ie is a new national website provides information on events, activities and recreation services for children and young people from the ages of 10 to 18.

Teen-Line Ireland provides information and support for teenagers through their helpline and website:

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

Free Phone: 1800 833 634

Email: [info@teenline.ie](mailto:info@teenline.ie)

ISPCC Teenfocus provides a comprehensive support service, including out of hours access, to teenagers aged 13-18 years



who are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties. ISPCC Childfocus provides a comprehensive one to one support service (including out of hours access) to children aged 12 years or under who may be experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Phone: 01 6767960

Email: [ispcc@ispcc.ie](mailto:ispcc@ispcc.ie)

Crosscare's Young Adult Support Centre aims to deliver programmes that will enable young people return to and remain in education and training. These group and individual activities are run together with external counselling and family and peer support.

Telephone: 01 8600877 or 085 1461452

Email: [yass@crosscare.ie](mailto:yass@crosscare.ie)

Crosscare's Teen Counselling is an 'adolescent friendly' service whose aim is to enable young people and their parents or carers deal with difficulties, within the context of the family.

Telephone: 01 8371892

Email: [materdei@teencounselling.com](mailto:materdei@teencounselling.com)



## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights in Ireland

The Civil Partnership Bill 2009 provides for civil registration of same-sex partnerships with a range of rights and duties.

There are a number of organisations who represent the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities in Ireland:

outhouse is the resource and community centre for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered communities in

Dublin: [www.outhouse.ie](http://www.outhouse.ie)

Telephone: 01 8734999

Email: [info@outhouse.ie](mailto:info@outhouse.ie)

GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) works to achieve full equality and inclusion for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people in Ireland, and protection from all forms of discrimination: [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie)

Phone: 01 4730563

Email: [admin@glen.ie](mailto:admin@glen.ie)

BeLonG To is an organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) young people, aged between 14 and 23: [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

Telephone: 01 6706223

Email: [info@belongto.org](mailto:info@belongto.org)



MarriageEquality is an initiative working for civil marriage for gay and lesbian people: [www.marriageequality.ie](http://www.marriageequality.ie)

Telephone: 01 6599459

## Senior Citizens

Senior Help Line is a confidential listening service for older people by older people for the price of a local call anywhere in Ireland: [www.seniorhelpline.ie](http://www.seniorhelpline.ie)

Help Line: 1850 440 444

Home help services are sometimes provided to older people so they can continue living in their own home instead of going into long-term care. For more information contact your local public health nurse.

## Getting married in Ireland

**I would like to get married in Ireland. What do I need to do?**

You must notify the local Registrar of your marriage (three months before the intended date of the marriage) and provide the following documents:

- Passport as ID
- Birth Certificate
- If either of you are divorced, original final decrees in respect of all previous divorces

- If either of you are widowed, death certificate of the previous spouse and the civil marriage certificate for the first marriage
- Your PPS numbers (if you have one)
- Fee of €150.

You will also need to provide the following information:

- the intended date of marriage
- whether you require a civil or religious ceremony
- the names and dates of birth of your witnesses, and
- details of the proposed solemniser and venue.

### I am divorced. Can I still get married in Ireland?

Yes. However, either you or your former spouse must have been living in the country where your divorce was granted. If neither of you were, then you may need to get divorced in Ireland before you can remarry.

For more information on getting married in Ireland go to:

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

General Register Office

Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon.

Tel: 090 6632900

LoCall: 1890 252076



## Separation and Divorce

The Family Support Agency's Family Mediation Service is a free, professional and confidential service for couples, married and non-married, who have decided to separate or divorce and who together want to negotiate the terms of their separation or divorce. There are Family Mediation Centres throughout the country: [www.fsa.ie](http://www.fsa.ie)

### How do I apply for a divorce in Ireland?

You must apply to the Circuit Family Court for a divorce decree which legally ends a marriage.

You must submit the following documents:

- An application form called a Family Law Civil Bill
- **Form 37A** which lists your income, assets and debts
- **Form 37B** which provides information on your children
- **Form 37D** which states that you have been advised of the alternatives to divorce.

The court will issue the divorce decree, if your marriage has broken down and you fulfill the following conditions:

- You and your spouse have been living apart for four out of the previous five years before the application is made

- There must be no reasonable prospect of reconciliation
- Proper arrangements have been made or will be made for the spouse and any dependent members of the family.

## Family Law Courts

There are two courts which deal with family law issues – the District Family Court and the Circuit Family Court.

### What does the District Family Court do?

The District Family Court deals with:

- Domestic violence
- Guardianship, custody and access to children
- Passport applications for underage children where one guardian refuses to sign the form or their whereabouts is unknown
- Blood tests to determine parentage
- Guardianship for grandparents
- Maintenance payments

You should contact your local District Family Law Office for more information: [www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)



## What does the Circuit Family Court do?

The Circuit Family Court deals with:

- Divorce
- Judicial Separation
- Relief following a foreign divorce or separation outside the jurisdiction
- Nullity of a marriage
- Declaration of Marital Status
- Determination of property disputes
- Declarations of parentage

You should contact your local Circuit Family Law Office for more information: [www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)

## Funeral arrangements

**A member of my family has died. Where can I get information about funeral arrangements?**

For general information and contact details for local funeral directors you should contact

Irish Association of Funeral Directors

Telephone: 1800 927 111

Website: [www.iafd.ie](http://www.iafd.ie)

## What are the traditions and customs related to death in Ireland?

The majority of Irish people are Catholic. Therefore, when someone dies there is a wake which usually takes place in the person's home. People come to the house to pay their respects to the family. The body is then taken to the church for the removal service. The following morning the funeral mass is said and the body is taken to a cemetery for burial or crematorium for cremation.

People close to the family usually give a floral wreath which is placed on the grave after burial. Other people usually get a mass said for the deceased which is written in a mass card and given to the family. A month after the funeral there is a mass said for the deceased. It is called the Month's Mind.

For more about 'Family' visit our website:

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

