

Childcare Provision in North Tipperary

According to the county Childcare Census of 1999, there were 56 childcare facilities in North Tipperary. 48 of these services were sessional, and 8 provided a full-day childcare service. Approximately 1,074 children were estimated at that time to be using these facilities which incorporate crèche, playgroup/preschool, afterschool/homework clubs, and parent and toddler sessions. Childcare participation rates were poor overall with only 1 child in 10 attending childcare facilities. Childcare provision was identified as particularly poor for children under one year and for children in the after-school age groups.

As detailed in the following pages a new childcare census for North Tipperary carried out as part of this research, the overall profile of childcare service provision has not changed significantly. Of significance is the finding that the gaps and pressure points identified in the preparation of the Childcare Strategy remain current.

Research carried out in preparation of the North Tipperary County Childcare Strategy estimated that there will be 1,414 more children aged 0-6 living in North Tipperary in 2016 than in 1996 due to normal population increases alone. The projected population figures indicate that over 15,200 children aged 0-14 will be in the childcare age range in 2016. In addition, increased female participation rates in the work force indicates that the demand for labour-force generated childcare could be as high as 5,000 places in 2016.

This trend towards population increase is borne out in the census 2002 figures, which indicate an increase of 5.3% in North Tipperary since 1996.

Population Data

Census Data Table For North Tipperary 2002¹

District	1996	2002			Change in population 1996-2002	
	Persons	Persons	Males	Females	Actual	Percentage
Nenagh Urban Area	5,645	6,115	2,982	3,133	470	8.3
Templemore Urban Area	2,115	2,152	1,102	1,050	37	1.7
Thurles Urban Area	6,603	6,874	3,246	3,628	271	4.1
Borrisokane Rural Area	7,029	7,062	3,632	3,430	33	0.5
Nenagh Rural Area	15,789	17,198	8,826	8,372	1,409	8.9
Roscrea No. 1 Rural Area	7,474	7,764	3,902	3,862	290	3.9
Thurles Rural Area	13,366	13,903	7,215	6,688	537	4.0
Tipperary North	58,021	61,068	30,905	30,163	3,047	5.3

As part of this information gathering exercise Childcare Service Providers were invited to participate in a childcare census update.

¹ Breakdown of figures into age cohorts is not yet available from Central Statistics office

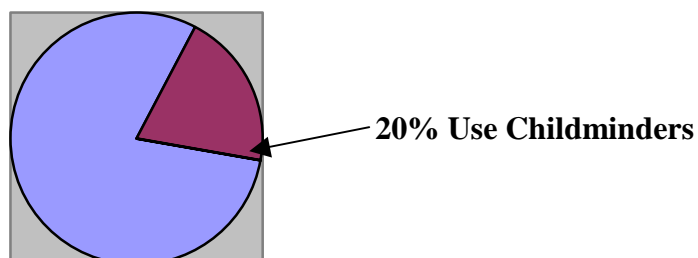
Table represents the services currently available

Area	Population 1996	No. of Childcare Services	No. of Sessional places	No. of Full Day Care places	No. of After school places	No. of drop in places	No of notified Childminding places	Total
Thurles	6,603	12	153	12	10	15		190
Nenagh	5,645	15	123	175	44	15	6	363
Roscrea	4,170	6	89	51				140
Templemore	2,115	4	60	15				75
Borrisokane	850	4	18	30	5		6	59
Newport	873	1	26					26
Ballina	598	4	53	7	2	7		69
Borrisoleigh	564	1	10					10
Littleton	544	1	15					15
Holycross	447	1	20					20
Portroe	441	1	18					18
Silvermines	202	0						
Toomevara	362	1	20					20
Puckane	235	0						
Templetouhy	293	1	14					14
Two Mile Borris	325	1	24					24
Cloughjordan	442	1	10					10
Birr Environ /Offaly	838	1		17	3			20
Birdhill	< 200	1	16					16
Ballycahill	< 200	0						
Rearcross	< 200	0						
Templederry	< 200	1	20					20

TOTAL NO OF PLACES - 1,109

Key Findings From Household Survey of 418 Households with 870 children 0-12 years

Use Of Childminders



Commentary:

- i. The term childminder refers to those who look after children either in their own or the child's own home. The service is normally offered all the year round for the full working day or for different periods during the day.
- ii. Payment rates are negotiated individually and vary in North Tipperary from nominal sums for family members to something below the national average for childminding as detailed in a later section.
- iii. There is a tension within the feedback from all of those consulted as part of this research between the identification of childminding as the childcare of choice, and difficulties with regard to availability, ability to pay and in a minority of responses quality of service.

Children Using Childcare Services

Table 1

Ex Parents & Schools	0-1	2	3-5	6-14	TOTAL
Non attendance	80%	45%	47%	88%	73%
Sessional/morning	6%	9%	24%	12%	16%
Full day	10%	21%	13%	0%	8%

Table 2

Childcare Service Usage 0-1 years		
	Morning	Full Day
Parents	64%	80%
Paid Childminder	8%	5%
Unpaid Childminder	20%	11%
Sessional Facility/Other	8%	4%

Table 3

Childcare Service Usage 2 years		
	Morning	Full Day
Parents	40%	45%
Paid Childminder	31%	33%
Unpaid Childminder	14%	9%
Sessional Facility/Other	13%	10%

Table 4

Childcare Service Usage 3-5 years		
	Morning	Full Day²
Parents	7%	35%
Paid Childminder	17%	27%
Unpaid Childminder	4%	6%
Sessional Facility/Other	24%	13%
School	47%	17%

Table 5

Childcare Service Usage 6-12 years		
	Morning	Full Day
Parents	0%	(Afternoons) 68%
Paid Childminder	0%	12%
Unpaid Childminder	0%	8%
Sessional Facility/Other	0%	1%
School	99%	0%

² Full day includes both full day and afternoon and evening

Accessing Childcare Services in a Rural Area – the Travel Implication – Children 5-12 years by Distance Travelled to School (Long Term)³

Table 1

MILES	DATE	TOTAL	DATE	TOTAL
0 miles	1981	57,364	1996	35,270
1 miles	1981	224,983	1996	190,791
2 miles	1981	78,196	1996	72,191
3 miles	1981	52,074	1996	47,066
4 miles	1981	20,929	1996	18,584
5-9 miles	1981	24,078	1996	23,288
10-14 miles	1981	3,601	1996	4,320
15 ml & over	1981	1,458	1996	2,144
Not Stated	1981	92,327	1996	75,879
Total Children	1981	555,010	1996	469,541

Table 2

Information provided through consultations with parents, childcare service users, and the household survey of 418 households gave the following information.

Average Distance Travelled

Less than 1 mile	-	23%
2-3 miles	-	15%
4-5 miles	-	32%
5-7 miles	-	22%
7-10 miles	-	6%
over 10 miles	-	2%

Key Findings

- (1) One example of car pooling was highlighted by a research participant.
- (2) One special needs project provides transport.

³ Central Statistics office

- (3) For those who use services there appears to be a general acceptance of a certain level of inconvenience in terms of travel. What is more difficult to gauge is the extent to which the necessity for travel is a factor preventing current non service users from accessing childcare services in North Tipperary.
- (4) In areas of special need the issue of travel and perhaps the lack of suitable transport becomes more significant.
- (5) A substantial amount of current childcare provision in North Tipperary is within the private sector where the ability to address any transport deficits is minimal as this sector, and particularly the private sessional providers currently experience themselves as overburdened with expectations that they should meet the needs of rural communities without additional resources.