PARENTS COPING WITH COVID-19
Global Messages from Parents of Post-Primary Children across the island of Ireland

N/S Surveys
OPEN TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF POST-PRIMARY AGE BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE 2020
ACROSS THE ISLAND OF IRELAND
2,424 PARENTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED

WHO RESPONDED?
76% OF RESPONDENTS IN ROI AND 90% IN NI WERE MOTHERS
14% OF RESPONDENTS IN ROI AND 15% IN NI REPORTED FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT (FSME)
OVER 10% OF RESPONDENTS IN BOTH JURISDICTIONS REPORTED HAVING A CHILD WITH A DIAGNOSED SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED (SEN)

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY:

Read more at www.ulster.ac.uk/education.
KEY FINDINGS
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Challenges of home-schooling

The experience of home-schooling highlighted the role of relative deprivation in the quality of technology available such as the minimum internet connectivity and equipment required for equitable learning across the education system.

Familiarity with the curriculum was low, with only a minority of parents familiar or very familiar with the curriculum which their child(ren) were studying.

While many parents expressed confidence in supporting the learning of their child(ren), there was a significant proportion who were not at all confident in doing so.

Parents of Special Educational Needs Students reported many issues relating to home-schooling.

Schools’ role in supporting learning

The initial communication provided to parents varied from school to school.

To support student learning, curriculum materials/learning resources were provided by many schools, often using email as the mechanism for communication with parents.

Communication from schools in most cases was sustained with parents getting updates from school authorities, although a number of parents reported a lack of updates from their child(ren)’s schools.

The majority of parents report that they could contact their child(ren)’s teachers if required.

A proportion of learners were reported by parents as having no-one to check their schoolwork.

Parents in adapting to home-schooling

Almost all parents agreed or strongly agreed on the benefits from talking and listening to their child(ren) during school closures, with most parents agreeing that, although challenging, they found it beneficial to learn together with their child(ren).

Juggling work commitments and, by association, the sharing of ICT resources was seen as being a significant challenge for parents in supporting their children’s learning.

Most parents experienced difficulties with keeping their child(ren)’s attention and understanding the subject content.

Managing social isolation was identified as a major issue by many parents.
1. **Today’s Digital Divide**

The digital divide needs to be tackled even more vigorously to address already known inequities and to ensure that all teachers and students have equitable access to the necessary resources needed for effective digital teaching and learning.

2. **Tomorrow’s Digital Future**

A sustainable and equitable digital future must be developed to meet the needs of all users (learners, teachers, teacher leaders, and parents), whether in a system that has already invested heavily in ICT or in a system where priorities have, until now, been elsewhere.

3. **Attitudes**

Attitudes to and engagement with remote teaching and learning in Initial Teacher Education and through professional development learning opportunities across the teaching workforce must be addressed.

4. **Skills**

Skills must be developed in learners to get the maximum benefit from online or blended learning approaches.

5. **Partnerships**

Home-school partnerships should be reset, and communication between schools and home during school closures should be evaluated and reconsidered, including the appropriateness of demands for schoolwork and communication-related to assessments.

6. **Quality Indicators**

There is a need for a coherent set of quality indicators relating to what constitutes effective remote teaching and learning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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