Ireland

● Children in formal family-based care
● Children in residential care
● Children in other care
● Children in alternative care

Total number of children in alternative care[1]

● All children in alternative care covered

● Groups of children excluded: Children with disabilities

Children in formal family-based care	5,458
Children in residential care	525
Children in other care	0
Children in alternative care[2]	5,983

9%
91%

● Formal family-based care   ● Residential care
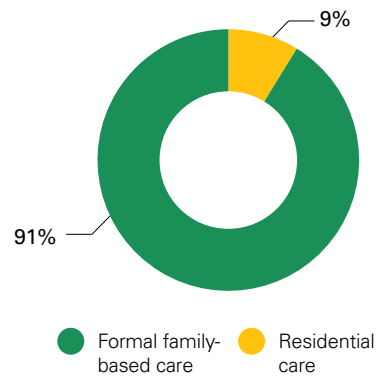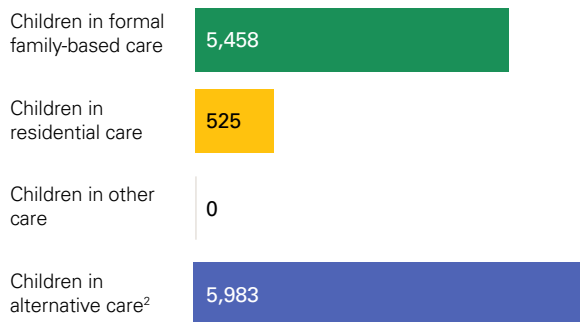
Headline statistics[3]

The rate of children aged 0-17 in alternative care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)	491
The rate of children aged 0-17 in residential care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)	43
The rate of children aged 0-17 in formal family-based care at a specific point in time (per 100,000)	448
The percentage of children aged 0-17 in residential care (of the total number of children in alternative care) at a specific point in time	8.8%

Country system

● Decentralised alternative care and data system

● Data on alternative care published

● Is the data system on children in alternative care covered in legislation?

● Is the overarching term, in line with 'alternative care', used in legislation?

● Formal kinship care is a subdivision of foster care

Data system

● Recent or current reform of data system on children in alternative care

● Data collected per individual child

● Personal identification numbers used

● More than one agency mandated to collect data

● Data collected on quality of care and outcomes

Variables collected on

🟢 Age

🟢 Sex

🟢 Unaccompanied minor status

🔴 Statelessness

🟢 Disability status

🔴 Parental status

🟢 Reason for entry into care

🟢 Placement decision maker

🟢 Reintegrated with family

🟢 Adopted

🔴 Leaving care due to death

🟢 Age on leaving care

Residential care

🔴 Official maximum number of places in a small group home

🔴 Official maximum number of places in largest type of residential care facilities

🔴 Data collected on length of stay

🔴 Data collected on number of staff and their qualifications

🔴 All forms of residential child care are recognised as alternative care

Helpful examples

Significant improvements have been made to the quality and timeliness of the publicly available data on child protection and alternative care since the establishment of Tusla in 2014. The creation of the Data Hub site enables the user to access, analyse and share information.

Room for improvement

One issue of note is that parliamentary questions often seek data that are publicly available on Tusla's website, which indicates that more could be done to raise awareness of these data sources to politicians and other stakeholders.

Source: The DataCare project, 2021.

Endnotes

1   Data provided on request by Tusla- Child and Family Agency.

2   Does not include data in a disability care setting or accommodation for homeless children.

3   Calculated by the DataCare project team using, where relevant, country-specific population statistics from the UNICEF Data Warehouse. Source:
     https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&df=DM&ver=1.0&dq=.DM_POP_U18...&startPeriod=2010&endPeriod=2020.