



## **Pavee Point Travellers' Centre**

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# **Traveller Children**

"There is a special minority within each minority culture – children. In the dominant society, the children of a minority must endure along with their parents the problems of social and cultural discrimination, and they are even more exposed to risk of cultural dissolution," Children of Minorities, UNICEF 1993.

Traveller children represent a minority within a minority, Accordingly they suffer all the ill-effects of inadequate provision that the Traveller community as a whole experiences. This can lead to restricted opportunities in society and can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem and on pride in Traveller culture. In addition, children are especially vulnerable to ill health and poor physical and cognitive development.

### **Facts**

According to Census, 2002:

- Forty two percent of Travellers are under 15 years
- Twenty one percent of Travellers are under 14 years
- The average family size is 3.5 children.

Traveller children participate actively in family life and are confident and mature in adult company. However, children experience and are affected by hostility from the majority community both directly and indirectly.

### **The Traveller Child**

Traditionally the Traveller child has been fully part of the adult society, speaking freely and frankly within adult company. Space for work, home and children is not segregated. From the earliest age children are integrated into the family work unit, learning skills by apprenticeship. The acquisition of these essential skills supports the positive identity of the child. Unfortunately, these skills are not always appreciated when the Traveller child enters mainstream provision. This can have a negative effect and damage the self worth of the Traveller child.

### **Rights of the Child**

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Articles 2, 28, 29 & 30 Traveller children have the right to:

- Adequate accommodation
- Respect for their cultural identity and values
- Appropriate education
- Freedom and protection from discrimination

### **Issues Facing Traveller Children**

- The voice of the Traveller child needs to be heard in policy development
- Research on the wellbeing of the Traveller child is urgently needed
- Measures to tackle discrimination, which effect the development of full potential of the Traveller child, need to be put in place urgently

**Visit our web-site at [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie)**



*"Recognition of their ethnicity and distinct cultural identity is a prerequisite to the Traveller child being fully respected and included in the wider community,"*

*Colette Murray,  
Pavee Point.*