

**CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING
IN LITHUANIA**

Country Paper

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IN LITHUANIA**

VILNIUS – 2000

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1. INDICATORS FOR MONITORING CHILD AND FAMILY WELL – BEING

1. GENERAL INDICATORS

Gross domestic product. From the economic point of view the transition from planned economy to market economy was very painful.

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 ¹
GDP per capita, at current prices, USD	714	1136	1622	2128	2587	2903	2878

¹Provisional data

The period of 1995 – 1996 may be considered as the years of economy stabilisation after the first hard years of economy reorganisation. Since 1997 growth of the economy is noticeable. Quite successful economic environment created favourable conditions to social development. Simultaneously, the financial crisis in Russia had a negative effect on social and economic indicators during the last year.

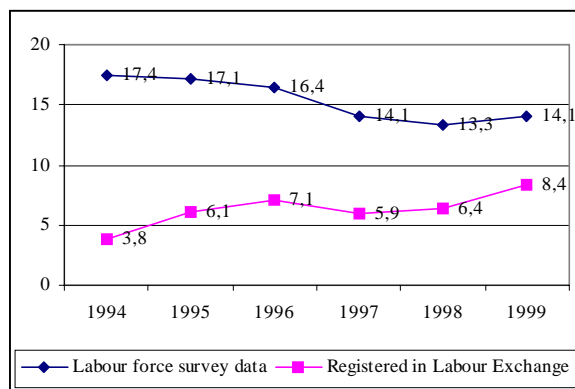
Employment. According to the data of the Labour Force survey the employment was decreasing until 1996 and from 1997 the tendency of growth is noticeable. After those positive changes the employment of population however remains lower than at the beginning of the decade.

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Employment rate (in percent)	56.1	55.2	54.6	52.8	53.5	53.2

Due to privatisation and development of private businesses the number of workers in the private sector increased rapidly, and in the public sector decreased.

Unemployment. According to the National Labour Exchange data, unemployment rate has been increasing every year, and at the end of 1999 unemployment reached a record level of 10%. In December 1999 the number of the unemployed amounted to 177 thous.

Unemployment rate (in per cent)



According to the data of the Labour Force Survey, the number of unemployed and unemployment level is much higher than that registered by the Labour Exchange. In November 1999 there were 281.8 thous. of them, unemployment rate was 15.3. More and more unemployed, however, appeal to labour exchanges, therefore the registered unemployment level increases and the difference between the data of the Labour Exchange and the survey decreases.

The unemployment level of men is higher than that of women, in urban areas higher than in rural areas. Unemployment level is also high among young people.

Inflation. Over the last five years inflation in Lithuania has been on a rapid decline. An extremely low rate was reached in 1999. A declining trend of many producer and consumer prices has remained this year.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Inflation, %	35.7	13.1	8.4	2.4	0.3

Household income per capita. In 1999 the disposable income of households equalled to 107 USD per capita per month, of which 84% was cash income. Total disposable income grew up by 31% as compared to 1996. With the concurrent increase in consumer prices, real income went up by 13.5%.

Disposable income, per capita per month, in USD

	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	81.7	92.2	105.6	107.0
Urban	88.2	100.8	115.9	118.8
Rural	67.2	74.6	84.1	81.8

2. INCOME AND POVERTY

Income. Per capita disposable income of households with children over the period under analysis was lower the country's average, whereas owing to slower growth rates this difference has increased. This is particularly noticeable in households with 2 and more children. Only in households with one child under 18 years of age, per capita disposable income was close to the country's average. In households with 3 and more children disposable income accounted for just 60% of average disposable income level.

Over the three years the level of real disposable income in Lithuania has grown by 13.6%, whereas in households with children it has risen by just 6.2%. This was influenced by the difference in household income structure. Earnings, the specific weight of which is higher in households without children, grew at a more rapid pace than benefits and other social payments.

Quite a considerable influence on different dynamics of incomes was exerted by the fact that rural areas accounted for 61% of households with 3 and more juvenile children (31% of total households), while real disposable income of rural residents over the last two years has slightly declined.

Sources of income. Income from employment, i.e. wages and salaries and income from self-employment in 1999 accounted for 65% of total disposable income. In households with children income from employment made up the bigger share of disposable income to compare with the country's average, however, the share of income from employment in total disposable income has been on the decline with an increase in the number of children per household. The share of social payments has been rising accordingly. The share of benefits and compensations in all households with children in total disposable income made up 6.2%. In households with 3 and more children income from employment in 1999 accounted for 66.4% of total disposable income, while benefits and compensations made up 18.7%. In incomplete families, i.e. households with a single adult with children, income from employment in 1999 made up just 53% of total disposable income. A quarter of such households' income was the so-called "other" income (alimonies, support provided by relatives, occasional income, etc.).

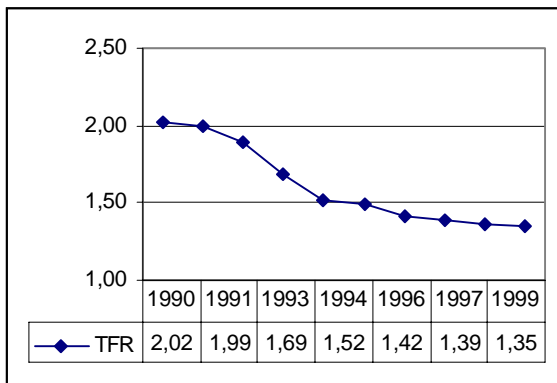
Poverty level. Poverty level in households with juvenile children is slightly higher than Lithuania's average. In 1999 below the relative poverty line, which equals 50% of the consumer expenditure median, lived 9.2% of total population. In households with juvenile children poverty level was 11% and it differed greatly according to the number of children per family. Poverty level in large families (3 children and over) equaled 24.7% and that in incomplete families totaled 12.5%.

3. FAMILY FORMATION AND STABILITY, FERTILITY

Marriages, divorces. During recent years the number of marriages has fallen. Two times less marriages were registered in 1999 to compare with 1990. Since 1994, the number of divorces and its rate has been rather constant at about 11.5 thous. In 1997-1999 the ratio of divorces per 100 marriages remains high – 60-64.

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Marriages, in thous.	36.3	22.2	20.4	18.8	18.5	17.9
Per 1000 population	9.8	6.0	5.5	5.1	5.0	4.8
Divorces, in thous.	12.7	10.2	11.3	11.4	11.8	11.4
Per 1000 population	3.4	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1

Total fertility rate. Starting with 1991 fertility has been falling: 36,4 thous. children were born in 1999, i.e. less by 20 thous. children than in 1990. Total fertility rate fell from 2.0 to 1.35 during that period.



Number of dependent children after divorce. The main negative phenomenon of divorces is the growth in the number of one-parent families. Because of that, about 12 thous. children remained without one of the parents (without a father in most cases) every year.

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of divorces with underaged children	8309	7301	8140	8063	8398	7913
In per cent from total	65	71	72	71	71	69
Number of children (0-17years), thous.	12,0	11,0	12,1	12,2	12,4	11,6

Extra-marital live-births. The number of children born out of wedlock is increasing: from 7% in 1990 to 19.8% in 1999.

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total extra-marital live births	3977	5253	5589	6236	6671	7215
In per cent from total births	7.0	12.8	14.3	16.5	18.0	19.8

Births by underaged mothers. One of the positive trends observed over recent years is contraction in the number of underaged mothers. In 1999 against 1990 their number decreased by 14%. However, the number of underaged extra-marital mothers grew twice over the respective period.

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total live births by mothers under 18 years	917	1239	1116	948	853	787
of which extra-marital	229	458	470	437	411	444
extra-marital in per cent from total	25.0	37.0	42.1	46.1	48.2	56.4

4. HEALTH AND MORTALITY

Morbidity of children. When analysing morbidity among children of the age group from 0 to 14 years old by addressing health care institutions, a trend of growing morbidity has been observed. In 1990, 730 newly registered patients fell per 1000 children, while in 1999 there were 1611 newly registered patients. Against 1998 the number of children sick with muscular-skeletal system and connective tissues diseases rose by 24%, that of children suffering from mental and behavioural disorders went up by 13% and that of children sick with traumas and poisoning increased by 9%.

Most frequently children suffer from diseases of the respiratory system (61% of total new cases), infectious and parasitic diseases as well as traumas and poisoning (5% of newly registered cases respectively). Results of diseases causing long-term consequences are unsatisfactory, e.g. in 1999 cases

Morbidity by active tuberculosis. The number of children suffering from active tuberculosis is on the increase. In 1990 first time tuberculosis was registered with 79 children, while in 1999 already 165 children first time suffering from it were registered. Morbidity of the entire population with this disease since 1990 grew as much as 1.9 times, whereas that of children increased as much as 2.3 times.

Children morbidity by active tuberculosis (up to 14 years)

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Newly registered patients	79	121	128	147	170	165
per 100000 children	9.4	14.9	16.0	18.7	21.8	21.9
Total number of sick children (at the end of year)	159	265	282	297	333	352
per 100000 children	18.8	32.5	35.2	37.7	43.2	46.7

Disability. In 1999 1,8 thousand children were recognised as disabled. Based on routine statistical data as of end 1999, there were 13,3 thousand disabled children in Lithuania, i.e. almost twice as much as in 1991. A quarter of disabled children suffer from disorders of nervous system, 19% from congenital defects and chromosome anomalies and 13% from mental and behavioural disorders.

Infant mortality. At the beginning of the decade infant mortality increased, in 1992 it moved up to even 16.5 promilies. Registration of infants born, complying with the WHO's recommendations, implemented in 1991 had an impact on that. Infant mortality since 1993 has shown a downward moving trend, thus in 1999 being lower than that in 1990.

	1990	1992	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Deaths under 1 year	581	887	514	395	391	343	315
Infant mortality rate	10.3	16.5	12.4	10.0	10.3	9.2	8.6

Children mortality. An increase in population mortality at the beginning of the decade did not exert major influence on changes in children mortality. Since 1995 total mortality of the population has been declining, thus that of children, girls in particular, has been going down accordingly. Children mortality within all age groups in 1999 was lower than that observed in 1990.

Children mortality (per 100 000 population)

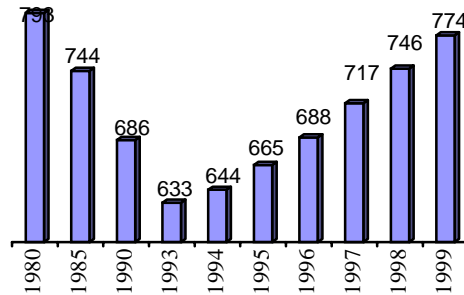
	1990	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1-4 years aged							
Boys	99.3	102.9	77.1	54.9	74.0	71.8	71.2
Girls	55.3	60.3	75.1	73.1	50.7	51.6	48.7
1-17 years aged							
Boys	71.0	70.3	60.1	52.0	50.3	48.7	55.7
Girls	41.0	42.0	42.0	36.2	27.7	35.3	32.7

5. EDUCATION

Gross and net enrolment rates. The number of school children and students in Lithuanian schools has been rising. Compared with 1993, gross enrolment ratio of persons under 25 years in all educational levels has increased from 64% to 78%, while that in tertiary education has grown from 21% to 39%.

Expected years of schooling for youngsters aged 7-24 against 1996 have become longer from 12.1 year to 13.4 years.

Changes in the number of young people enrolled, thous.



Pre-school care. Although the number of pre-school age children has been decreasing, the number of those willing to attend pre-school establishments has been rising. In 1999 such institutions were attended by 74% of urban and 17% of rural children aged 3 years and over. However, owing to former reorganisation within the system of such institutions, children, in urban areas in particular, experience shortage of seats and the majority of kindergartens are overcrowded. In 1999 86 seats fell per 100 children in urban kindergartens.

Children out of school. Intellectual differentiation of the society in Lithuania has been on the increase. Each year the primary and lower secondary educational level misses over 20 thousand or 3-4% of children, who according to provisions of the law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania have to attend school until they are 16 years of age. Approximately 2 thous. 7-8 year-olds do not enter the first form; 5 thous. drop out during the academic year.

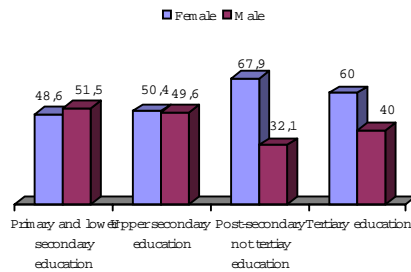
Number of children out of compulsory education

	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Thous.	28	17	24	23	21	22
% of the population of 7-15 age group	6	3	5	5	4	4

Continuation of schooling after compulsory education

The number of school children having graduated from the compulsory education of nine years and further pursuing high education is on the rise. Their share during the entire period of independent Lithuania was the biggest in 1998 and equalled 99.5%. 70% of such pupils continue their education at senior grades of secondary schools, the remaining share (mainly boys) choose vocational schools. In 1999 tertiary education establishments housed 47% of girls and 31% of boys aged 19-24.

Percentage of females and males by level of education



6. SOCIAL PROTECTION, FAMILY SUPPORT, CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

Support for families and children. Since end 1997, the Social Family Policy was directed towards supporting large families. Benefits for families with three and more children were introduced. In 1999 benefits were received by 32,5 thousand families bringing up three children and 11,8 thousand families with more than four children.

Since 1998 children without parental care have become the priority. This benefit is paid to a child until he is 18 years of age. The number of such benefit-recipients from 1995 to 1999 rose as much as 2.2 times whereas the expenditure for this type of benefit grew as much as 9.4 times.

When a child is 18 and continues his education he receives an orphan's scholarship, equals to the foster benefit. In order to support children without parental support and orphans, which graduated education and started independent life, they are entitled to a settlement benefit, which since the year 2000 has risen from 18 MSL to 50 MSL (Minimum standard of living).

Children's care. As of end 1999 Lithuania counted 14,1 thousand orphans and waif children, of whom 54% were taken care of in families, 3% in foster-families and 43% in different child care institutions.

Decentralisation of social services has been gaining momentum over recent years. Following the restoration of Lithuania's independence more foster homes have been established by municipal institutions and NGOs.

With the Law on Child Guardianship coming into force (July 1998), more and more children who have lost parental care are placed under guardianship of families or foster-families. If in 1997 41% of orphans and waif children were directed to such guardianship, in 1998 this figure grew to 46% and in 1999 to 59% of children who have lost parental care and waif.

Asocial families.

(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service, as of December 31, in thous.)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of families	9.7	12.6	14.9	15.1	16.0
Children in them	25.6	29.9	34.3	34.4	36.9

7. CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

Accused juveniles. According to the data of the Ministry of Interior there were 3,3 thousand juveniles between 14-17 years of age in 1999 who were accused of committing a crime, which made up 13% of total offenders (in 1990 this proportion was 16%). Their number over the last five years has not manifested major changes.

Tried juveniles. In 1999 courts tried 2,2 thousand juveniles, which is twice as much as in 1990. Over recent several years, punishments for juveniles are becoming more lenient.

In 1999 75% of convicted minors remained in freedom when the execution of the court sentence was waived (in 1995 they accounted for 67%).

2. LIVING STANDARD OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Household budget survey results

The altered Household budget survey methodology permits comparisons only for indicators of 1996-1999. The living standard of households with children was formerly not analysed in entering the survey data.

Composition of households

Based on the Household budget survey data, average household size in 1999 was 2.65 persons (2.76 in 1996). Average household size is quite constant, though a moderate decline has been observed over the recent years. This is related not only with a fall in the number of births and marriages, but also with the fact that many young families living in the flat or house together with parents run their own budget.

According to demographic composition the majority of households fell per married couples with children under 18 (26%). Households with children under 18 years made up 42% of total households. Comparing with 1996 the specific weight of households with children has declined by almost 4 percentage points. Households with one child under 18 made up 21%, while households with two children accounted for 17%, and households with three and more children made up 4%. In rural areas households with 3 and more children accounted for 8% of total households, while in urban areas just 2%. Almost 5% of all households-survey participants fell per one adult (mainly mother) and juvenile children.

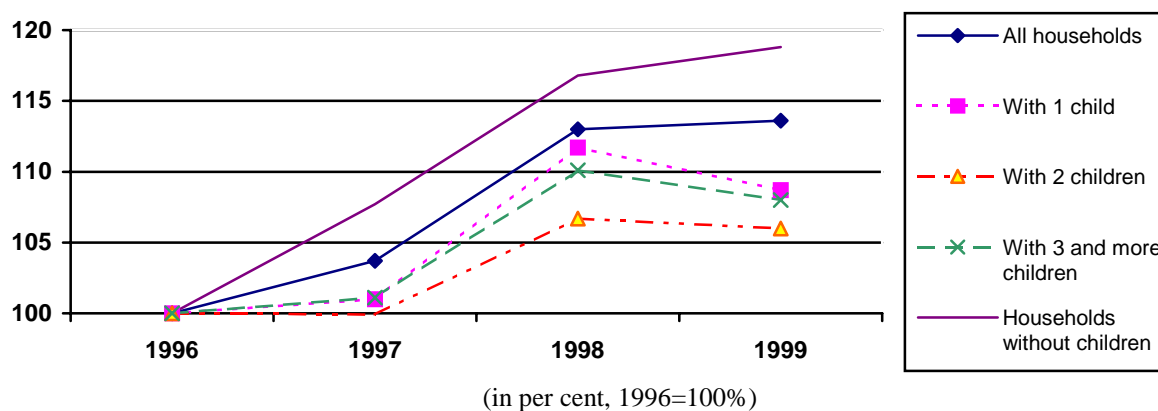
*Distribution of households by number of children in household
(in per cent)*

	1997	1998	1999
All households	100.0	100.0	100.0
With children under 18	43.4	43.8	41.7
1 child	21.9	22.3	21.3
2 children	16.9	17.4	16.5
3 and more children	4.6	4.1	3.9
Without children under 18	56.6	56.2	58.3

Income

The 1996-1998 Household budget survey results lead to certain positive trends in changes of income and expenditure and consumption structure of the population, however, the year 1999 was not favourable for welfare improvement. Household disposable income in 1999 against 1998 grew by 1.3%, while compared with 1996 it increased by 31%. Whereas consumer prices showed a yearly rise of 0.8%, real income increased by just 0.5% (against 1996 real income went up by 13.6%).

Dynamics of real disposable income



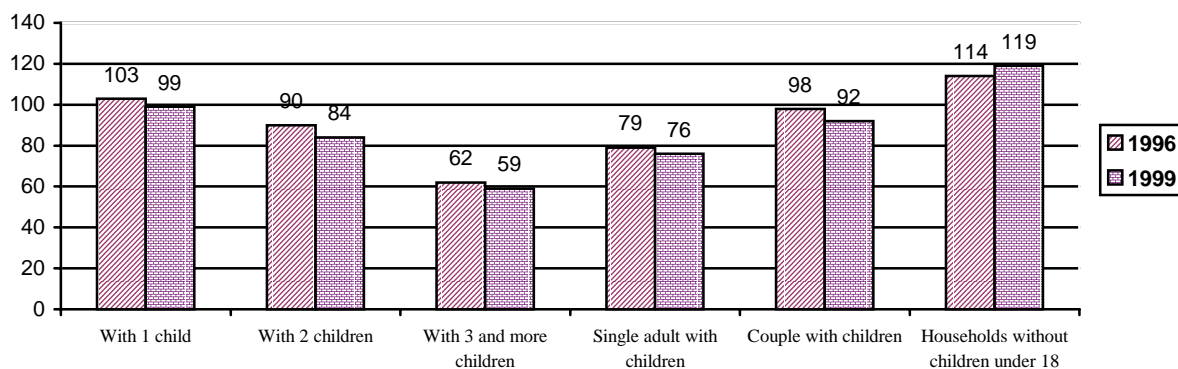
Over the period under consideration disposable income in households without children increased at a more rapid pace than in households with children under 18. This was influenced by different place of residence and income structure as a result. 61% of households with 3 and more children fell per rural areas (31% of total households), while real disposable income of rural population over the last two years has not shown a rise, on the contrary, it has displayed a decline. Besides that, wages and salaries, the specific weight of which in income of households with fewer children is also higher for households with fewer children, grew at a more rapid pace than benefits. Unemployment rate, emerging over recent years has also more affected families with children (the majority of households without children were pensioners). Hired employment as the main source of income was indicated by 76.2% of households with children. Every 7th household with 3 and more children indicated benefits, savings, alimonies, etc as the main source of income.

Distribution of households with children under 18 by socio-economic group in 1999
(in per cent)

	Self employers in agriculture	Hired workers	Self employers (non agriculture)	Pensioners	Others
All households with children under 18	6.2	76.2	6.1	6.6	4.9
With 1 child	4.1	77.7	6.1	8.8	3.3
With 2 children	6.9	77.4	6.7	4.2	4.8
With 3 and more children	14.4	62.8	3.8	5.2	13.8
Single adult with children	2.9	61.6	2.6	11.8	21.1
Couple with children	6.6	80.3	7.5	2.6	3.1
Households without children under 18	3.9	40.2	1.9	51.6	2.5

Per capita disposable income of households with children over the entire period under analysis was lower the country's average, while due to slower growth rates this difference has increased.

Disposable income per capita in households with children under 18, in comparison to average disposable income
(in per cent, all households = 100%)



Upon application of equivalent scales the difference in income level between households with the different number of children goes down, however, remaining quite high. Both per capita and per equivalent user the lowest disposable income was in households with 3 and more children and incomplete families.

Based on the 1999 survey data income from employment (i.e. wages and salaries and income from self-employment) accounted for 65% of total disposable income. Against 1996 income from employment grew by 27%, however, compared with 1998 it went down by 2%. Per capita income from wages and salaries has slightly risen, however, income from business, handicrafts and from agriculture has contracted, which resulted in a decline of average disposable income of rural population.

Income from employment in households with children made up a bigger share in disposable income than Lithuania's average, however, the share of income from employment in disposable income has been declining with an increase in the number of children per household. The share of social payments has been rising accordingly. Income from employment in incomplete families, i.e. households with a single adult with children in 1999 accounted for just 53% of total disposable income. A quarter of such income was the so-called "other" income (alimonies, support rendered by relatives, gains in lotteries, etc.).

Disposable income structure in 1999
(in per cent)

	All households	Households with children under 18			Single adult with children under 18	Couple with children under 18	Households without children under 18
		with 1 child	with 2 children	with 3 and more children			
Disposable income	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Income from employment	53.2	63.8	62.9	41.3	44.2	65.0	44.5
Income from self employment	12.2	11.1	15.0	25.1	8.9	14.0	10.3
income from agriculture	7.8	5.4	9.0	20.5	6.7	7.7	7.3
income from business, handicrafts, free professional activity	4.1	5.4	5.7	4.3	2.0	6.1	2.7
income from other activities (non-business)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3

No essential changes have occurred in the structure of disposable income over the last three years. The share of income from employment in disposable income has slightly reduced in households with 1-2 children, while the share of social payments has increased. This was also influenced by a benefit to families with 3 and more children established at the end of 1997.

Differentiation of households by expenditure level

One of the results of the market economy development is quite considerable differentiation in the living standard of households. To differentiate poverty stricken and wealthy levels of population, the surveyed households were divided into deciles on the basis of consumption expenditure.

Consumption expenditure of the poorest and the wealthiest population, and their possibilities to satisfy the needs differed greatly. Per capita consumption expenditure in the wealthiest decile in 1999 was as much as 8.1 times bigger than in the poorest one and in 1996 it was 8.7 times bigger.

The number of children under 18 accounted for 39% in the poorest households, i.e. with the lowest consumption expenditure, while that in the wealthiest households was 15%. The wealthiest households resulted in the biggest specific weight of working-age members. Average household size in deciles varies from 2 persons in the household in the X decile to 3.7 persons in the I decile. Half of households with 3 and more children under 18 and one-third of households with a single adult with children come under the first two poorest deciles.

Distribution of households by number of children under 18 in poorest and richest deciles in 1999
(in per cent)

	All households	Of which by decile:			
		I	II	IX	X
All households	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Households with children under 18					
1	21.3	21.0	22.0	20.1	14.6
2	16.5	30.1	31.1	11.0	7.1
3 and more	3.9	18.0	8.4	0.9	0.6
Households without children under 18	58.3	30.9	38.5	68.1	77.8

Food accounted for the major part in consumption expenditure in all deciles. All households spent on average 45.7% on food in 1999. The households in the I decile had the least possibilities to satisfy their needs and spent two-thirds of consumption expenditure on food, which equaled LTL 89 (USD 22) per household member per month. Meanwhile the X decile households (wealthiest) spent 30% of consumption expenditure on food and each month spent LTL 326 (USD 81), i.e. 4 times more. Such huge difference was partly determined by peculiarities of these two groups of households; however, the main cause was that wealthy people could afford buying more expensive and better quality food products. The same could be said about all households with 3 and more children – spending on food approximately half of consumption expenditure (51.5%), per capita they spent 70% of the average expenditure level.

Poverty level

Relative poverty line, which is calculated as 50% of average consumption expenditure was taken as the main criterion in analyzing widespread of poverty and in projecting strategic measures of reducing poverty covered by the social and economic policy. Minimum Standard of Living (MSL) is considered as the level of extreme (absolute) poverty. Calculation and application of this indicator for the social policy purposes was started in 1992. At the beginning the MSL amount applied for the social policy purposes corresponded to the monetary value of the calculated minimum consumer basket. Currently the official MSL is used as the base amount for calculation of many benefits and compensations and equals LTL 125 (USD 31.25), however, its size reflects not minimal needs of a consumer, but the states' capacity to render support (the official MSL is considerably lower the calculated one).

The Household budget survey releases information both on household income and expenditure. Any of the said indicators can be used for poverty analysis, however, according to experts' opinion data on consumption are more reliable and better reflect the standard of living of the surveyed households. This is particularly related with those receiving irregular income: their income level can differ greatly in different periods (or no income at all), while consumption expenditure for daily consumer goods and services in particular varies significantly less.

According to the 1999 Household budget survey data consumption expenditure lower than 50% of the average consumption expenditure (USD 68.65) fell per 15.8% of population. As compared with 1998 the relative poverty level decreased by 0.2 percentage point.

Poverty level (head count ratio)

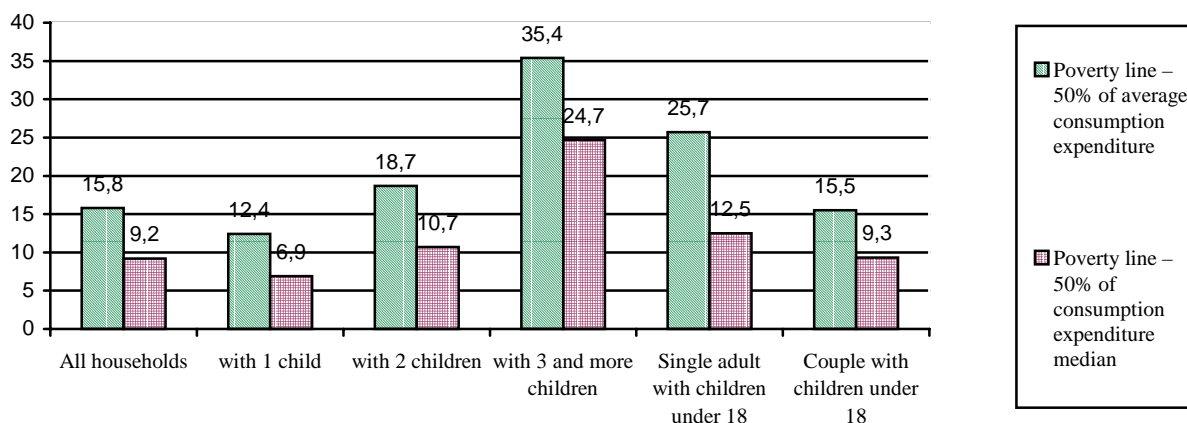
(in per cent)

Poverty lines	1996	1997	1998	1999	Poverty lines in 1999, litas per equivalent per month
Official MSL	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.9	125.0
50% consumption expenditure median	10.3	10.2	...	9.2	230.5
50% average consumption expenditure	18.0	16.6	16.0	15.8	274.6

While comparing households of different types one can observe that the highest poverty was in households with juvenile children, of which in incomplete families with a single adult with children and in the so-called other households with children (this group covers households with adult and juvenile children, households consisting of several couples with children and etc.).

Poverty level in households with juvenile children is slightly higher than Lithuania's average (18.2%), and it greatly differs according to the number of children per family. Poverty level in large families equaled 35.4%, while poverty gap was 26%.

Poverty level (head count ratio) in different types of households in 1999
(in per cent)



Among population in relative poverty the specific weight of children exceeds that of total population. Children under 18 made up 23% of total households and 29% of poverty stricken household members. Comparing poverty level by age group one can observe that children of pre-school age appear in poverty most often.

Poverty level in different age groups in 1999
(in per cent)

	Poverty level, when poverty line equals to:	
	50% of consumption expenditure median	50% of average consumption expenditure
All persons	9.2	15.8
Children under 16:	12.0	19.8
Under 1 year	10.7	18.3
1-2 years	16.7	21.6
3-5 years	14.2	22.0
6-8 years	11.8	19.5
9-12 years	11.4	18.5
13-15 years	9.6	19.7
Male 16-17 years	11.3	16.9
Female 16-17 years	11.8	20.7

Households below the poverty line are more numerous than average ones. Households with 3 and more juvenile children accounted for 18% of those living in relative poverty (8% of total surveyed). Over half (57%) of poor lived in rural areas (32% of total surveyed).

Following the initiative taken by the President of the Republic of Lithuania to develop the Strategy for reducing poverty in Lithuania, children were attributed to the group of the most poverty stricken population. First of all this refers to waifs and strays, children in large and incomplete families and families of unemployed with children.

The Strategy provides that the state should pursue the policy of integrating orphans and waif children into families and foster families. Monetary assistance in the form of child-care benefit will be supplemented with social services. Children without adequate care in their families will be provided expanded assistance rendered by social workers. Monetary assistance to parents of such children will be changed into assistance in kind directly rendered to children.

The Strategy also foresees advancement of support rendered to large families. Benefits paid should be increased according to the growth of average wages and salaries and consumer prices. Cash support rendered to large families will be also applied to single-parent families with two and more children. Simultaneously financial responsibility of parents who do not raise and support their own children will be increased.

The state will undertake to cover education costs for children from large families and those having only one parent, when education is provided in public educational establishments and is charged.

Developing assistance to families raising children will envisage conditions for provision of possibilities for both spouses to participate in the labour market.

The Monitoring Scheme for children and teenagers under 16 attending secondary or any other formal educational establishment is foreseen to get rid of truancy and achieve better progress.

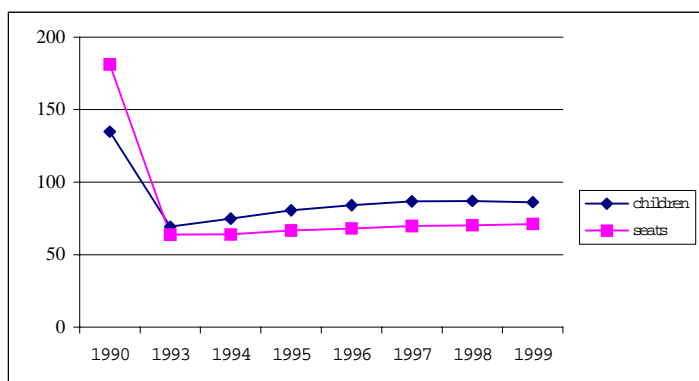
The main initiator and coordinator of activities in fight against poverty is the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

3. EDUCATION

Pre-school care

The period of 1990-1993 witnessed closure and reorganisation of almost 900 pre-school establishments and as a result the number of children in them over the said period decreased from 163,1 thous. to 78,6 thous. or from 41 to 21 % against the total number of children aged 1-6 years. However, at the same time parents' need to educate their children in pre-school establishments was getting less urgent, therefore, virtually there were enough seats for those applying. Later the situation changed significantly: economic development in Lithuania did not create conditions for providing qualified training at home, therefore, the demand for pre-school establishments was rapidly growing. However, this demand was not met by a considerably decreased number of pre-school establishments.

Change in the number of children and seats in pre-school establishments



(in groups aged 3 years and over)

In 1999 kindergartens were attended by 56% of children aged 3 years and over, i.e. their share increased almost to reach the 1990 level (in 1990 it was 59 %). However, the number of both pre-school establishments and seats in them over the mentioned period halved. If in 1990 per 1000 pre-school age children there was 591 seat, in 1999 this figure equalled 343. Under such conditions of poor supply with seats it is difficult to get a seat in a pre-school establishment. For the fifth year in succession per 100 inmates fell 82-84 seats. In 1999, 439 kindergartens out of 719 or 61% were overcrowded, of which in every fourth kindergarten the number of children exceeded the actual number of seats by 50 and more, thus amounting to more than 30 children per group.

To solve the problems of pre-school education, pre-school education groups were set up in general schools. If in 1993 such groups functioned in ten schools, in 1999 they were in 264 schools with 1,7 thous. children of pre-school age attending them. In addition to that children aged 5-6 years with no prior attendance of kindergartens could attend pre-school education groups since 1996, where they start preparation for school. The number of groups of pre-school education against 1996 grew from 204 to 576, while the number of children prepared for school rose from 2,9 thous. to 7,0 thous.

Enrolment

More and more young people study in schools. Compared with 1993 their number increased from 633 thous. to 774 thous. (by 141 thous. or 22%). If enrolment into the primary and lower secondary level was growing due to births (though in the primary level the number of pupils is currently decreasing), enrolment into the upper secondary and tertiary level was growing due to the demand for high qualification specialists on the labour market and the fair to be jobless. If in 1992 93.9% of pupils continued education after primary and lower secondary level, in 1998 they accounted for 99.5%. The percentage for those continuing education after secondary school was 64.5 and 85.4%, respectfully.

Gross and net enrolment rates

Educational levels	Theoretical age group	1993	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
Pre-primary	3-6	Net	...	...	39.9	44.5	49.6	53.4
		Gross	30,1	36.8	41.7	46.7	51.9	55.9
Primary	7-10	Net	...	...	91,9	91,8	91,0	93,1
		Gross	93,5	94,9	95,5	96,8	97,7	99,7
Secondary	11-18	Net	...	...	83,9	85,4	86,0	87,1
		Gross	82,7	85,4	87,4	89,6	91,9	92,6
Tertiary	19-24	Net	...	...	17,9	20,9	23,6	26,1
		Gross	20,7	22,8	25,9	30,5	34,4	39,2

Quite a proportion (70%) of young people in Lithuania study at primary and lower secondary educational level (the EU average in 1996 was 55%). To solve the employment and education problems of children and teenagers the Ministry of Education has recently prolonged the duration of basic level from 9 to 10 years.

The amended law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania provides not the compulsory education (as was the case in the former law), but the age margin: children have to attend school at any level until they are 16. However, based on expert evaluations made by Statistics Lithuania each year about 20 thousand pupils or 4 per cent of this age children do not attend school and about 5 thousand drop out during the academic year (see table). The pupil who is 16 and has not graduated from the lower secondary education level (prior compulsory) disappears from the eyesight and, as a rule, joins the ranks of unqualified labour force or unemployed. With nothing to do such youngsters most often choose the street, drugs (journalistic investigations in Lithuania state that half of persons buying syringes in drug stores are young drug addicts aged 10-20). Based on the Labour Force Survey data released by Statistics Lithuania, 6 thousand (2%) young persons aged 20-29 had only primary education and 86 thousand (16%) did not study and work.

*Percentage of drop outs from primary and lower secondary general education
(in the academic year)*

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Moved up from previous grade	95.3	96.9	96.9	97.0	97.5	98.0	98.4
Were left to repeat the course	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.9
Dropped out	2.9	2.2	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.8

One of the basic principles of Lithuania's Educational Policy is to ensure equal rights to education for all citizens regardless of sex, place of residence, social standing and beliefs. However, in Lithuania increases not only property but also social differentiation of people. Currently it is obvious that possibilities of rural and urban schools have never been equal and they still are not equal. In rural areas selection of education and additional training is narrower, material base of schools is poorer, educational level of parents is lower which, accordingly, releases lower influence on motivation of their children. Results of the international TIMSS survey proved that the pupils' level of knowledge very much depends on education of parents. Just one-third of parents in rural areas has completed tertiary education, therefore, a certain part of parents in general did not see the need to educate their children.

If 14-16% of pupils pursue upper - secondary education in urban general schools, in rural schools this percentage is two times lower (7%). Reorganisation of rural schools in transition to basic education from 9 to 10 years of basic schooling, in the opinion of many pedagogues, will diminish education of rural children even more: the number of secondary schools will fall down, part of basic schools will become primary ones or remain schools of eight forms, therefore their pupils will have to attend neighbouring larger schools to obtain lower secondary general education, which in many cases are located far away from their place of

residence. It has been forecast that less rural pupils will graduate from secondary schools and, consequently less will have a possibility to continue education.

Driving of children living far away from schools

Envisaging to optimise the net of schools, solution of problems of driving pupils who reside far away from schools has been commenced. First time after the restoration of independence special schools' bus fleets have started their existence in municipalities of districts and towns (formerly pupils from rural and district schools used to get to school by public transport, having adjusted their timetables accordingly). Municipalities have been obliged to find funds for renewal of roads and bus fleets, for recruiting and training of drivers. This year the government has allotted LTL 4,9 million for purchasing of buses and the subsequent two years have foreseen additional LTL 5 million each year for this purpose.

Free meals

Each year the government of Lithuania allocates funds for provision of meals for pupils from low-income families, who learn at general schools. In 1995 and 1996, 5% of pupils, funds being allocated from the budgets of municipalities, took free meals. Since 1997 funds for free meals were allocated from the state budget: 142 thousand pupils were delivered LTL 40 million, in 1998 157 thousand were given LTL 60 million and in 1999 142 thousand pupils were given LTL 60 million. It has been observed that children from indigent families (rural in particular), who get free meals are more willing to attend school; for some of them this appears to be the most important stimulus to return to school.

Extracurricular services

Each year schools individually develop and approve extracurricular schemes, content of which is reflected in plans of general education. The objective of extracurricular education is to develop artistic, sports, technical and other skills, and to provide conditions for self-expression of pupils. If the 1999/2000 academic year had 3-5 hours allotted for extracurricular education weekly, the academic year 2000/2001 foresees 4-7 hour per week. Partly financed by parents schools organise individual (basically art-oriented) extracurricular education. More pupils attend art, choreographic and musical schools (20 thousand in 1990 and 28 thousand in 1999), whereas sports-schools are attended by 50 thousand pupils each year. In addition, there also operate informal institutions of extracurricular education: centres organising pupils' free time, technical creativity, young naturalists, tourist centres and clubs, each year attended by 30-35 thousand children and teenagers. In 1999 summer camps of different trends hosted and educated 27 thousand or 5 per cent of school children.

The project of extracurricular education strategy is currently under preparation, its understanding is defined aiming at integration of extracurricular education into the system of general education. Regulations of extracurricular education institutions are under preparation, programmes are adjusted and the regional extracurricular education policy is under development. Having audited artistic education, the system of artistic education of Lithuania will be improved.

Wages and salaries of pedagogues

With the economic situation becoming worse and with the overall savings programme commenced by the government in 1999, the pay-roll fund of budgetary institutions was cut by 5-10%. Therefore, annual earnings fund of pedagogues in 2000 should decrease by LTL 61,5 million or 5%. Savings in half of the funds are foreseen by primarily cutting the number of hours meant for extracurricular education, the remaining half - by cutting extra pay to tariff salaries in certain schools (youth schools, boarding schools, foster homes), reviewing payment of pensions for pedagogues still in employment, conditions of their dismissal, etc.

In April 1999 average monthly earnings of employees in educational activity was LTL 1222 or 2.1 times higher than that in July 1995. However, they continue to be lower the average earnings of employees in the national economy, though the gap is narrowing.

Salaries of employees in the public educational sector

	July 1995	October 1996	October 1998	April 1999
Average gross monthly earnings, LTL	587	834	1134	1222
Per cent against total earnings in the national economy	78	84	89	91

Reserves are being looked for to increase salaries for pedagogues while reforming education. Hourly pay of pedagogues should be shortly changed by full-time salaries according to the fixed full-time working time and labour inputs for a specific position.

Textbooks

With the restoration of independence and the outset of the reform in educational system problems of renewing educational literature have been solved concurrently. Authors of new textbooks were to be consolidated and funds for publishing were to be found. The major difficulty was to find authors for textbooks meant for non-Lithuanian schools. During the period of 1991-1995 new textbooks were supplied only to primary schools. Over 1200 titles of textbooks for general schools were published during the last ten years, of which 559 were newly written (original).

Publication of textbooks

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995		1997	1998	1999	2000
Titles of textbooks published	93	102	116	98	90	106	78	117	177	228
of which original	38	60	54	59	50	51	47	74	60	66

Prior to 1998 the Ministry of Education distributed textbooks according to the number of pupils in schools. The most indispensable books were distributed free of charge and one textbook served four years on average. Recently the procedures for orders and publishing are changed and schools themselves decide and order textbooks they need. In 1999 schools received at their disposal 75% of total publication funds.

In 1998 training facilities for senior classes counted 100 titles, while 170 titles in 1999, 69 titles were published for the first time. Certain textbooks of the reformed school are renewed, improved and published repeatedly or certain subjects have several alternative textbooks as a choice. Recently the publishing process of textbooks has advanced, an efficient system of assessment is under development as well as the system of preparation of authors of textbooks and assistance to them is under creation. The survey of pedagogues' opinion on new textbooks and training facilities will be conducted in the nearest future in schools.

Though foreign countries and funds support publishing of textbooks, printing of certain textbooks was frequently delayed owing to shortage of funds. Allocations of the State budget funds used to delay, indebtedness to publishing houses was growing. At the beginning of 2000 funds planned for the publication of textbooks for the year 1999 were still not received in the amount of LTL 4,3 million. The debt for publishing houses made up LTL 3,2 million.

Publication of educational literature

Titles of books and brochures published	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
for general schools	136	125	158	177	178	202	309	307	365	407
for vocational schools	12	4	8	6	2	1	-	3	8	2
for colleges schools	39	21	8	4	12	9	16	3	17	10
for higher schools	254	331	211	247	266	279	226	332	322	240
teachers' methodology and curricula for pedagogues	339	316	199	113	110	208	215	210	212	272

The amount of funds allocated from the State budget per supply of one pupil with textbooks has been decreasing each year: in 1998 this amount was LTL 30, in 1999 it was LTL 20 and in 2000 it equalled LTL 10.5. A set of textbooks for one pupil costs from LTL 60 to 240. Therefore, each year more textbooks are bought by pupils themselves. In certain schools (rural in particular) almost half of pupils are socially supported and are entitled to free meals. In 1999 in families with three and more juvenile children consumption expenditure per household member per month equalled LTL 189. With the unemployment on the rise and the number of socially supported families on the increase, payment for textbooks should be differentiated and compensated while a certain category of pupils should be entitled to free textbooks. It is expected that part of textbooks' price is covered by the state.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, HEALTH AND MORTALITY

Family formation

The number of marriages has been contracting since 1991 and the year 1999 showed twice fewer marriages than in 1990. The descending trend, especially obvious in 1992-1993, has currently remained, though the process has considerably slowed down: the indicator of marriages in 1999 decreased by 2%.

Marriages and divorces

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Marriages, in thous.	36.3	22.2	20.4	18.8	18.5	17.9
Per 1000 population	9.8	6.0	5.5	5.1	5.0	4.8
Divorces, in thous.	12.7	10.2	11.3	11.4	11.8	11.4
Per 1000 population	3.4	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1

The number of marriages within the age group under 25 years has fallen most of all. In 1999 the specific nuptiality rates for males aged 20-24 were 125, while in 1999 just 54. For females this figure was 117 and 61, respectively. The number of minors getting married has considerably contracted: in 1999 got married 980 girls aged 14-17 and 94 boys aged 16-17, i.e. respectively 2.6 and 6 times less than in 1990.

Divorces

Following a rise at the outset of the decade, the number of divorced has become stable since 1996: 11 thousand couples get divorced per year, i.e. 3 divorces per 1000 population. The composition of age was similar for a long period: the highest divorce indicators fell per age-group of 30-34 years and slightly lower per age-group of 25-29 years.

The main negative impact of divorces is a growing number of incomplete families. Just one-third of the divorced do not have juvenile children. After the divorce approximately 12 thousand children per year remain without one parent (without a father in most cases) and during the period of 1990-1999 even 120

thousand children remained to live in incomplete families. Such children are not only morally injured, but also face worse material conditions.

Fertility

Since 1991 the trend of declining fertility has started. 36,4 thousand children were born in 1999, i.e. by 20 thousand (or 36%) less than in 1990. Aggregate fertility rate has contracted from 2.0 to 2.35, respectively.

Age-specific fertility rates, TFR

	Live births per 1000 females at age specified						TFR
	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40+	
1990	40.8	168.1	112.2	55.9	22.2	2.8	2.02
1999	25.9	95.6	81.2	45.0	17.7	2.2	1.35

Fertility rates were falling within all age groups, however, intensity was different. The major decline was observed for the age group of 20-24 years (even 42%), while under 20 years it was slightly lower (37%). In 1999 787 infants were born, mothers of which were under 18, of which 70 infants were born to mothers under 16. This figure in 1990 was 917 and 62, respectfully.

The number of children born out of wedlock in 1999 against 1990 jumped by 81% and they currently make up 19.8% of new-borns. Their share is bigger among younger mothers, e.g. it accounts for 56%, mothers of which are under 18 (in 1990 this share equalled 25%).

General changes in mortality

Changes in mortality have commenced since 1990 with a rise at the beginning of the decade and a decline in the second half of it. The said changes affected not all age groups and both sexes to the same extent. During the period of 1990-1994 mortality grew in urban areas at a more rapid pace, while male mortality increased at a more rapid pace than that of female. After a fall in 1995-1999, higher mortality than the 1990 level remained only within the age group of 20-29 years. Mortality of other age groups was already lower as compared with the beginning of the decade.

Death rates (per 1000 population)

	Total population			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
1990	10.7	11.7	9.8	8.3	9.2	7.6	15.8	17.1	14.6
1994	12.5	14.4	10.8	10.1	11.8	8.6	17.5	19.8	15.4
1999	10.8	12.0	9.7	8.7	9.7	7.9	15.3	16.8	13.8

Average life expectancy has been rising after a fall in the middle of the decade. In 1999 average life expectancy of males already exceeded that of 1990 and that of females reached its peak.

Life expectancy at certain ages in 1999, years

Age	Total population			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
0	72.3	67.1	77.4	74.1	69.2	78.6	69.2	63.5	75.5
15	58.3	53.1	63.4	59.9	55.0	64.3	55.4	49.6	61.8
40	35.4	30.9	39.4	36.6	32.3	40.2	33.4	28.6	38.1
60	19.6	16.5	21.8	20.4	17.5	22.4	18.7	15.4	21.2

Average life expectancy of females is by 10 years longer than that of males (by 12 years in rural areas). Life expectancy in urban areas is longer than in rural areas.

Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality, causes of which are pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium anomalies has maintained the similar level with minor fluctuations after a fall at the beginning of the period.

Maternal mortality

	Deaths	Per 100 000 women aged 15-49	Per 100 000 live births
1990	13	1.4	22.9
1991	11	1.2	19.6
1992	11	1.2	20.5
1993	6	0.6	12.6
1994	7	0.8	16.5
1995	7	0.8	17.0
1996	5	0.5	12.8
1997	6	0.6	15.9
1998	6	0.6	16.2
1999	5	0.5	13.7

Availability of health care

Laws regulating activities of the Health care system of the Republic of Lithuania define rights of each patient to receive certain free health care services irrespective of his race, nationality, religion, income and other grounds, with the exception of cases, when the patient himself chooses more expensive medicine, measures of medical treatment and additional services. Patients are entitled to select the health care institution and the doctor as well as to receive medical services adequate to their health status.

The state's guaranteed (free) health care covers indispensable medical aid to all population, children under 16 and orphans under 18, pregnant women and persons entitled to the I disability group (the most serious one). Free health care is granted to all persons covered by compulsory health insurance and other persons sick with tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, infectious, endocrine, mental, oncological diseases, alcohol dependency syndrome, drug addiction, toxicomania and other diseases listed by the Ministry of Health Care as well as persons belonging to other risk-groups.

During the reorganisation of the health care system ways for changing and rationalising available resources have been searched for. The number of beds in hospitals decreased most of all. In 1990, per 10,000 of children aged 0-14 years fell 73 beds, while in 1999 this figure was 53 beds. The number of doctors has changed moderately: in 1999 per 10,000 of children aged 0-14 years fell 21 doctor paediatricist, while in 1999 this figure was 20.

Health of children

Health of children and teenagers is assessed on the basis of monitoring of children growth and development, mortality of children, the survey of lifestyles, basic indicators of mortality and morbidity and the scale of immunisation and basic infectious diseases.

Over recent years the share of pregnant women within the fertile age women (15-49 years) has contracted. In 1991 there were 60 pregnant women per 1000 fertile-age women, while in 1999 just 37 pregnant women. An ever-increasing share of births ends in the Caesarean cut operation. In 1999 every twelfth woman underwent the Caesarean cut, while every eighth woman had it in 1999. Each year 5% of premature new-born infants are born and about 4% of live births are of lower weight than normal (under 2500 g).

Over the last decade acceleration in Lithuania has shown stabilisation, height of children and young people has remained as it was ten years ago.

The main concept of the National Immune-prophylactic programme is to form a high-level collective immunity of children in order to decrease morbidity, mortality and disability from tuberculosis, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, rubella, mumps and other infectious diseases. With the outset of the said programme the scale of prophylactic vaccination has begun ascending while morbidity with the infectious diseases against which vaccination has been applied has decreased. In 1999 over 99% of new-borns were vaccinated against tuberculosis and over 93% of one-year children against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough, while over 96% of two-year children were vaccinated against measles and mumps. Since

1998 Lithuanian children have been vaccinated against hepatitis B and 95.7% of new-borns were vaccinated in 1998 and 95.6% in 1999.

Morbidity indicators very much depend on diagnosing possibilities and the scale of prophylactic health care inspection. In 1999 725 thousand children under 15 underwent preventive examination. Only 47% of them were acknowledged as entirely healthy (62% in 1990). 9.1% of children were ascertained seeing disorders and 6.2% carriage disorders.

Morbidity of children

When analysing morbidity among children of the age group from 0 to 14 years old by addressing health care institutions, a trend of growing morbidity has been observed. In 1990, 730 newly registered patients fell per 1000 children, while in 1999 there were 1611 newly registered patients. Against 1998 the number of children sick with muscular-skeletal system and connective tissues diseases rose by 24%, that of children suffering from mental and behavioural disorders went up by 13% and that of children sick with traumas and poisoning increased by 9%.

Most frequently children suffer from diseases of the respiratory system (61% of total new cases), infectious and parasitic diseases as well as traumas and poisoning (5% of newly registered cases respectively). Results of diseases causing long-term consequences are unsatisfactory, e.g. in 1999 cases of epilepsy increased as much as 2.6 times as compared with 1990, those of bronchial asthma went up as much as 1.4 times and behavioural disorders as much as 1.8 times.

Morbidity by active tuberculosis

The number of children suffering from active tuberculosis is on the increase. In 1990 first time tuberculosis was registered with 79 children, while in 1999 already 165 children first time suffering from it were registered. Morbidity of the entire population with this disease since 1990 grew as much as 1.9 times, whereas that of children increased as much as 2.3 times.

Children morbidity by active tuberculosis

(up to 14 years)

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Newly registered patients	79	121	128	147	170	165
per 100000 children	9.4	14.9	16.0	18.7	21.8	21.9
Total number of sick children (at the end of year)	159	265	282	297	333	352
per 100000 children	18.8	32.5	35.2	37.7	43.2	46.7

Disability

In 1999 1,8 thousand children were recognised as disabled. Based on administrative statistical data as of end 1999, there were 13,3 thousand disabled children in Lithuania, i.e. almost twice as much as in 1991. A quarter of disabled children suffer from disorders of nervous system, 19% from congenital defects and chromosome anomalies and 13% from mental and behavioural disorders.

Children recognised as disabled

(up to 15 years)

	1991	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Children recognised as disabled for the first time	1534	1962	2025	2013	1974	1782
per 10000 children aged 0-15 years old	17.1	22.8	23.9	24.2	24.2	22.3
Total number of disabled children at the end of year	6875	10710	11341	12025	12912	13276

Mortality of children

Stillbirths

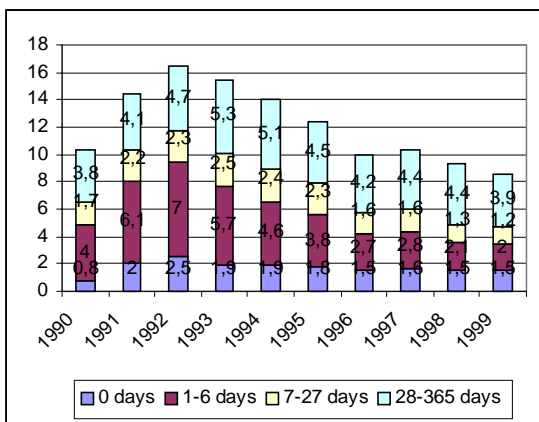
In 1999 207 infants were still born, i.e. by 32% less than in 1990 and by 52% less than in 1992. The number of stillbirths per 1000 live births, showing a rise of 7-8% in 1991-1993 was 5.7% in 1999. The number of stillbirths is quite similar in both urban and rural areas. The educational attainment of a mother does not exert an impact on it either. However, quite a visible link with the age of a mother has been observed: probability that the child is still born falls per elderly women.

Infant mortality under 1 year of age

Following a decline over several decades, infant mortality in 1990 equalled 10.3‰, however, already in 1992 it went up to 16.5‰. This was influenced by changes in registration of infants, when the WHO recommendations were introduced. Infant mortality has been on the decline since 1993 and this was primarily stipulated by a fall in infant mortality during the first week of life. In 1999 against 1992, when infant mortality reached its peak, mortality of new-borns (0 days of life) decreased by 39%, that of 1-6 days of age fell by 72%.

However, infant mortality of 7-27 days contracted by 47%, while that of 28 days and over decreased by 17%.

Infant mortality by age (per 1000 live births)



Infant mortality in rural areas exceeded that in urban areas by 36% in 1999. Though at the end of the ninth decade mortality rate in both urban and rural areas was almost similar (10.0‰ in urban areas and 10.6‰ in rural areas in 1990), differences have become more apparent since 1991.

The lowest mortality rate (7 deaths per 1000 births) fell per infants, mothers of which were 25-34 years old. This indicator was higher for infants, mothers of which were over 35 and younger than 20. The highest mortality rate (21‰) fell per infants, mothers of which were over 40.

Direct relationship exists between infant mortality and education level of mothers. The highest infant mortality fell per mothers with the lowest level of education, while the lowest infant mortality fell per mothers with the high education.

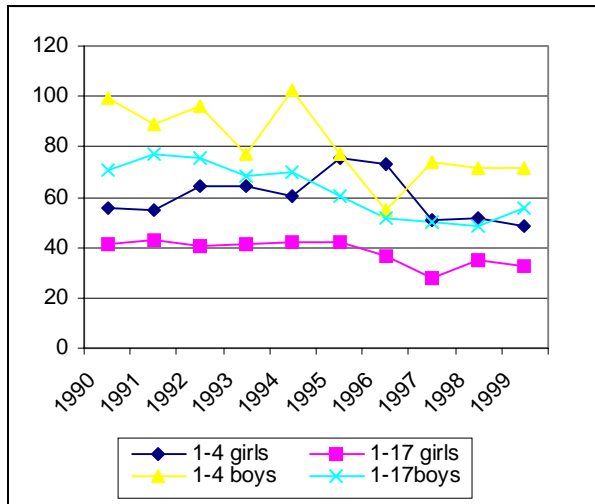
The year 1999 showed the biggest number of infants (37%) dying from congenital anomalies and perinatal period diseases (32%), accidents (10%) and diseases of respiratory system (6%).

Children mortality aged 1-17 years

Last year 386 children aged 1-17 years died, of which 247 boys and 139 girls. There were 45 deaths per 100 000 children of the said age group (56 in 1990). Mortality of boys is higher in all age groups: 44% for the age group of 1-9 years, 78% for the age group of 10-14 years and twice as much for the age group of 15-17 years.

Within the current decade children mortality rate showed a declining trend, however, separate age groups displayed different figures and the most obvious trend has been observed among younger children, boys in particular.

Children mortality by age group and sex
(per 100 000 children of corresponding age)



Causes for children mortality can be divided into two groups: deaths caused by diseases and accidents. 35% children died from diseases, which basically were malignant neoplasms, congenital anomalies, and diseases of circulatory system. However, 65% of boys and girls perished during accidents. The specific weight of such deaths was higher among elder children. If accidents cause half of deaths of children aged 1-4 years, they cause 71% of deaths of children aged 10-17 years. The nature of accidents also differs. Small children get drowned, children aged 5-9 years get drowned and killed in traffic accidents. Among youngsters aged 15-17 every third was killed in traffic accidents and every fifth committed suicide.

Lifestyles

Lifestyles exert major impact on health. The first survey of health and lifestyles of school children in Lithuania was conducted in 1994. It was co-ordinated by the WHO. Every four years the survey of representative groups of 11, 13 and 15 year old school children is conducted according to uniform methodology.

The 1998 survey data show that nutrition of many school children is unbalanced; they use too little fruit, fresh vegetables and dairy products. Many school children eat too much sweet stuff and consume sweet beverages.

Physical activity of Lithuanian children is too low. The 1998 survey data indicate, that 25% of boys and 54% of girls went in for sports insufficiently.

As compared with 1994 the share of teenagers who smoke has been rising rapidly within the age group of 11-15 year-olds. The number of boys who smoke grew from 11.3% to 20.1%, while that of girls rose from 3.8% to 8.1%, respectively. Based on the survey data the share of school children-smokers among teenagers has been increasing rapidly, i.e. in 1998 just 7% of 11 year-old boys smoked, while already 15 year-old boys accounted for 35% of smokers (of which 15% smoked every day). Just 1% of 11 year-old girls smoked, while 15 year-old girls made up already 17% of smokers.

Since 1995 the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs has been ongoing in Lithuania and other 25 European countries. Its objective is to compile data on prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs among European school children.

The survey has shown that sobriety is not popular among Lithuanian teenagers and alcoholic drinks have become an indispensable means of communication. The group of 15-16 year-olds counts very few abstinent (3.5% according to the 1995 data and 2.5% according to the 1999 data). Even 74% of this age-group school-children have been drunk at least once. Consumption of alcoholic drinks in big quantities has been indicated by 54% of juveniles in vocational institutions and 32% in secondary education institutions, the number of juveniles in urban schools in this respect outpaced that of rural schools.

Prevalence of drugs over recent years has increased rapidly and is directly proportional to smoking and alcohol consumption spread among school children, i.e. illegal drugs are more frequently used by pupils who smoke and use alcoholic drinks. Cases of new drugs' abuse have been noticed: those belonging to amphetamine group, preparations of hallucinogens LSD and abuse of ecstasy (XTC) is on the increase. The 1999 survey data show the prevalence of smoking-drugs, use of alcohol together with marijuana and tablets. By type of school drugs are more widely spread in vocational schools (indicated by 19.3% of pupils) than in secondary schools (indicated by 14.5% of pupils).

Prevention of drug abuse in schools is a constituent part of the National Programme on Drug Control and Drug Addiction Prevention for 1999-2003. In addition to the mentioned Programme the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has approved the State Tobacco Control Programme for 1998-2008 and the State Alcohol Control Programme for 1999-2009. Based on the said programmes the Programme on Prevention of Abuse of Narcotic Substances in Educational Institutions has been prepared. In secondary schools preventive education against abuse of drugs is integrated with health training, while the latter is integrated with many subjects taught or presented as an optional subject of supplementary training.

5. CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

Cash assistance for families bringing up children

With the restoration of independence, the Social Family Policy was primarily aimed at social security guarantees for families raising children. Already in 1991-1994, new benefits for families were introduced, while since 1 January 1995 the Law on State Benefits to families raising children has come into force. It provided benefits for families most of all vulnerable in terms of social perception.

Benefits for families raising children
(in thousand)

	<i>Recipients</i>					<i>Expenditure, in litas</i>				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
State Social Insurance maternity (paternity) benefit										
pregnancy and childbirth	26.4	24.6	24.5	24.8	24.6	25536.9	35680.6	52104.3	63144.7	71565.8
until child is 1 year of age	20.8	25.9	20.7	19.3	20.3	38470.0	63226.2	87646.6	102257.5	119021.3
State benefits for families bringing up children										
pregnancy benefit for studying mothers	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.35	60.5	72.6	72.7	76.9	76.6
extraordinary childbirth benefit	36.4	38.6	38.4	37.3	36.0	13483.8	20646.3	25696.3	27481.0	27004.9
family benefit	98.9	99.5	96.5	93.9	89.5	60202.6	79020.6	93533.7	101057.6	98375.8
foster benefit	3.3	4.2	4.9	5.6	7.3	4057.0	6804.2	9615.7	14573.6	38055.5
military family benefit	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	254.9	251.0	205.5	156.6	223.6
orphan scholarship	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.7	1012.6	1890.4	2730.0	3498.1	7456.5
settlement benefit for orphans and children without parental support	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	402.7	736.9	1023.7	1076.9	1245.3
benefit for families with 3 and more children	-	-	41.4	42.3	44.3	-	-	4772.7	79269.3	81132.1

Data provided by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Board of State Social Insurance Fund and Statistics Lithuania.

Benefits for families are paid on the grounds of two principles: by supporting families with children irrespective of their income and by supporting families, income of which does not meet the fixed rate of the state's supportable income. Cash social assistance irrespective of the family income is provided to families bringing up children and children without parental care.

Since end 1997, the Social Family Policy was directed towards supporting large families. Benefits for families with three and more children were introduced. However, in granting the benefit for families with three children family income is taken into consideration, while for families with four and more children this factor is not taken into account. In 1999 benefits were received by 32,5 thousand families bringing up three children and 11,8 thousand families with more than four children.

Since 1998 children without parental care have become the priority. To support such a child a monthly foster benefit is paid. In 1995 this benefit accounted for 1.5 of the MSL rate, since July 1998 it increased to 2 MSL, while since 1999 it went up to 4 MSL per month. This benefit is paid to a child until he is 18 years of age. The number of such benefit-recipients from 1995 to 1999 rose as much as 2.2 times whereas the expenditure for this type of benefit grew as much as 9.4 times.

When a child is 18 and continues his education he receives an orphan's scholarship. It was increased from 1.5 MSL in 1995 to 3 MSL in July 1998 and since 2000 it has amounted to 4 MSL and equals to the foster benefit. In order to support children without parental support and orphans, which graduated education and started independent life, they are entitled to a settlement benefit for orphans and children without parental

support, which since the year 2000 has risen from 18 MSL to 50 MSL. This sort of benefit is aimed at either acquisition of a dwelling or settlement.

Children without parental care

One of the basic reasons why children lose parental care is asocial families or the so-called risk-group families. If all causes of losing parental guardianship are broken down into unavoidable (death of parents, parents' location by legal provisions is proclaimed as indeterminable and etc.) and into avoidable (disfunctioning families, parents themselves abandon their children, fail to take care of them, parental violence), only every tenth child under guardianship falls within the group of unavoidable guardianship.

Children by cause of lost guardianship
(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service)

Cause of lost guardianship	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total number of children who have lost parental guardianship per year	2907	3391	3175	3502	3261
asocial families	1183	1020	843	1046	951
one parent is absent, another neglects their children ¹⁾	...	531	396	600	554
deprivation of parental rights	403	392	362	354	397
became orphans	330	397	317	293	273
long-term parents' diseases	113	98	142	168	236
because of poverty	...	...	462	361	201
parents are in prison	271	194	184	197	182
parents refused children themselves	262	279	236	177	182
undetermined parents' location	122	123	117	132	123
because of disability	...	...	25	9	23
because of violence (of parents)	...	...	30	24	28
because of parents' departure to foreign countries	...	...	...	...	33
other reasons	223	357	61	141	78

¹⁾Until 1996 together with asocial families.

The major share of children who have lost parental care falls per asocial families, the number of which is on the increase. As of end 1999, the Register of Children's Rights Protection Services counts 16,0 thousand families with 36,9 thousand children in them, i.e. respectfully by 6,3 thousand and 11,3 thousand more than in 1995.

Asocial families

(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service, as of December 31, in thous.)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of families	9.7	12.6	14.9	15.1	16.0
Children in them	25.6	29.9	34.3	34.4	36.9

In case parents avoid their obligations to raise their children or abuse their parental rights, treat them brutally and exert deleterious influence by their immoral behaviour, by law they can be deprived of their parental rights. Over the last five years approximately 400 children lose parental care each year because of deprivation of parental rights. About 200 children lose parental care because their parents serve a term in prison. Such cases do not show a trend of decline. Quite often parents of the risk-group families refuse their children themselves.

The order for organising a child's guardianship

According to the Law on Child Guardianship the guardianship is organised and supervised by Children's Rights Protection Services (CRPS) of municipalities. Territorial CRPS in organising and monitoring children's guardianship co-operate with other local administration and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), related with protection of children's rights.

Children's guardianship falls into two types, i.e. temporary guardianship and permanent guardianship.

Temporary guardianship by proposal of a CRPS is instituted since the registration date within the municipality. Temporary guardianship is defined as temporary care, up bringing as well as representation and protection of rights and lawful interests of children, which temporarily have lost parental support. The objective of such temporary guardianship is to return the child into the family.

Permanent guardianship is provided by court decision. Permanent guardianship of children is defined as care and up bringing as well as representation and protection of rights and lawful interests when upon existing circumstances they cannot return into the family.

There are the following forms of guardianship: guardianship in the family, in foster-families and institutions.

Children's guardianship in the family is defined as guardianship in family environment counting no more than 5 children (own children included).

Children's guardianship in foster-families is guardianship when the family takes care of 6 and more children (no more than 12 children with own children in total) in family environment. One of the family's parents receives fixed wages and salaries; another parent receives the amount of 0.5 MSL. In both cases the number of children can be bigger, when brothers and sisters are not separated.

The child who has lost parental guardianship is accommodated in a public institution or NGO, when there is no possibility to maintain him in the family or foster-family. In appointing a guardian, priority is given to the closest relatives if they are suitable to serve as guardians and possess adequate conditions of life.

In selecting a guardian such principles of placing under guardianship are followed:

- 1) priority of the child's interests;
- 2) priority to become a guardian is given to close relatives if this meets the child's interests;
- 3) guardianship of the child in the family;
- 4) non-separation of brothers and sisters, except the cases when the child's interests are abused;

In establishing and revoking the child's guardianship and in appointing the guardian the child, who can express his opinion, is given such possibility to have his say and his opinion is deemed important in taking decisions.

Fate of children who have lost parental care

As of end 1999 Lithuania counted 14,1 thousand orphans and waif children, of whom 54% were taken care of in families, 3% in foster-families and 43% in different child care institutions.

Child care institutions
(as of December 31)

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Infants' homes	6	6	6	6	6	6
inmates in them	470	479	516	510	506	479
Boarding schools of general education	24	9	9	9	9	8
number of orphans and children without parental support	897	751	648	663	833	599
Special boarding schools	56	53	55	57	55	55
number of orphans and children without parental support	1417	968	965	928	831	893
Care homes for disabled children	4	5	7	6	6	6
children in them	1097	822	865	840	884	886
County child care homes	22	29	28	28	28	30
children in them	2382	2844	2755	2762	2723	2738
Municipal child care homes ¹	-	13	15	15	19	20
children in them	-	562	668	740	821	821
Municipal child care groups and centres	-	...	40	44	47	48
children in them	-	...	1227	1792	1876	1498
Non-governmental child care homes ¹	-	4	6	14	14	14
children in them	-	122	164	316	361	355
Foster families	12	36	39	46	46	51
foster-children	58	279	261	345	374	427
Temporary child care homes	-	...	...	8	15	18
children in them	-	...	...	156	243	295

¹ Joint care homes for children and elderly (3 in 1999) and children residing there are included.

Decentralisation of social services has been gaining momentum over recent years. Following the restoration of Lithuania's independence more foster homes have been established by municipal institutions and NGOs. Qualitative changes have been observed in state guardianship of children. Less and less children who have lost parental care are settled in larger child care institutions and boarding schools while more children are accommodated in child care homes of municipalities and NGOs.

The network of care institutions for disabled persons has not shown major changes. As of end 1999 in Lithuania operated 6 care homes for children with disabilities, housing 886 disabled children and 55 specialised boarding schools with 893 inmates in them - orphans and disabled without guardianship. In addition to that as of end 1999 child care homes hosted children without guardianship together with 270 disabled children (7% of total number of care homes' inmates, non-governmental included). The number of disabled children in child care institutions has remained quite similar for several years.

To secure that wards coming of age (18 years) do not become homeless, sometimes they continue to reside in care homes. As of end 1999 there were 70 such children. More and more children leave state care homes before they are 18. If in 1994 this number was 252 (6.5% of total inmates in child care institutions), in 1999 it reached 692 (15%). In 1999 some inmates left state child care homes: 385 (8.4%) children returned to live with their biological parents, 23 (0.5%) were sheltered by relatives, 262 (5.7%) were placed under guardianship and 22 (0.5%) were adopted.

With the Law on Child Guardianship coming into force (July 1998), which provides more significant support to families, which provide guardianship for children, more and more children who have lost parental care are placed under guardianship of families or foster-families. If in 1997 41% of orphans and waif children were directed to such guardianship, in 1998 this figure grew to 46% and in 1999 to 59% of children who have lost parental care and waif.

Parents in foster-families, bringing up their own children, undertake to take care of children without parental care. Such children grow in usual family environment. Family child care homes have been established in the majority of Lithuania's municipalities.

Children who have lost parental guardianship
(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service)

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total number of children who have lost parental guardianship per year	1116	2907	3391	3175	3502	3261
of which under 7 years of age	463	1049	1254	1136	1219	1130
Children, who have lost parental guardianship per year, directed						
to private persons	787	1260	1372	1236	1550	1844
to foster families	...	76	54	56	59	74

The majority of children directed for guardianship into families adapt very quickly. A certain part of children is adopted by guardians, i.e. in 1999 guardians adopted 56 wards. In 1999 approximately 40% of children who have lost parental care were taken care of by close relatives serving as guardians.

Guardians of children in 1999
(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service)

Children who have lost parental guardianship per 1999	of which directed to private persons	Children whose guardians became:				Children directed to foster families	Children directed to child care institutions
		grand-parents	child's sisters, brothers	sisters, brothers of child's parents	other persons		
3261	1844	737	166	371	570	74	1343

With the increasing number of families, which take care of children, the number of foster-parents has declined. About one-fifth of children are adopted by former guardians and one-third - by foreigners.

Adopted children
(data provided by the Children's Rights Protection Service)

	1992	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Adopted children	332	220	418	421	362	302
of which by foreign citizens	15	94	104	129	135	96

Children - law-breakers

Children, who have committed minor offences, provided they committed them for the first time, entirely admitted their fault and compensated damages to victims, the court in acquitting from criminal liability, imposes compulsory measures of educational effect. One of such measures is appointing the child to specialised education and foster homes. They can stay there until 18 years of age. Meanwhile in Lithuania exist 4 institutions of this type. As of beginning of the year 2000 they had 273 inmates, of which 185 were under 16. Children, who constantly break administrative laws, violate schools' discipline, go on tramp, can be placed with such an institution without the court judgement, but following the request of parents, employees or principles of institutions of the interior system and Children's Rights Protection Services.

The National budget expenditure

The National budget expenditure on public children's institutions (mln. LTL)

	Pre-primary establishments			Comprehensive primary and secondary schools			Boarding schools and child care homes			Children's residential institutions		
	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999	1997	1998	1999
Total expenditure	321.8	398.8	402.5	955.2	1244.6	1325.6	121.0	143.9	142.8	31.1	45.8	43.5
Expenditure on goods and services	319.5	394.2	400.8	901.6	1168.3	1298.5	117.4	137.6	139.8	28.4	43.4	42.9
wages and salaries	168.5	221.9	245.3	562.5	763.3	899.7	56.7	72.5	80.6	14.9	23.5	25.5
social security contribution	56.2	67.8	74.1	177.7	230.2	267.0	17.0	21.6	23.9	4.4	6.9	7.5
meal	35.3	38.7	32.5	3.6	4.1	3.6	18.5	18.9	17.7	3.0	4.1	4.0
medicine	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.6
heating	30.7	33.6	20.3	79.8	79.9	54.7	9.9	8.4	7.2	1.4	1.8	1.3
lighting	9.9	8.6	7.6	21.2	19.1	17.0	3.4	2.5	2.2	0.6	0.7	0.5
communication	0.9	1.3	1.4	2.9	4.2	4.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.2
maintenance of transport vehicles	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.9	2.6	2.6	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3
office supplies	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.5	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.5	0.3
printing	20.2	0.3	0.3	3.6	3.6	3.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
other	16.7	20.6	18.3	48.2	61.1	46.0	8.9	10.5	5.9	2.8	4.4	2.7
Subsidies and other transfers			0.0	1.8	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0			
transfers to households			0.0	1.8	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0			
Capital expenditures	2.3	4.7	1.8	51.8	72.8	23.6	3.6	6.3	2.9	2.7	2.5	0.5

Government expenditure on goods and services allocated for children's institutions (with exception of children's residential institutions) has been growing over recent years. It accounted for the major share of total funds allocated for the said institutions. The basic part of this expenditure fell per maintenance of the staff (wages, salaries and social security contributions). This expenditure has been increasing in all types of institutions.

In 1999 the government started the budget savings scheme, thus expenditure on goods and services in 1999 showed a lower rise than in 1998, whereas capital expenditure in 1999 fell considerably. If in 1998 capital expenditure on comprehensive primary and secondary schools made up 5.8 per cent of total expenditure, in 1999 it was just 1.8%.

Juvenile delinquency

According to the data of the Ministry of Interior there were 3,3 thousand juveniles between 14-17 years of age in 1999 who were accused of committing a crime, which made up 13% of total offenders (in 1990 this proportion was 16%). Their number over the last five years has not manifested major changes. Every 62nd - 65th youngster of the said age group has committed a crime.

The biggest share of juvenile delinquents falls per age group of 16-17 year-old youngsters. In 1999 every second offender of that age group did not work or study at the moment of delinquency, whereas in 1990 this was every fifth juvenile. Among minors, who were charged of committing an offence, the number of 14-15 year olds has slightly increased and in 1999 they accounted for 30% (in 1990 they made up 26%). According to criminal laws of the Republic of Lithuania, minors of the said age are criminally charged only when committing grave premeditated crimes.

Detected juvenile crime committers

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total number of detected juvenile crime committers	2042	3385	3408	3313	3322	3339
Age groups, years, %:						
14-15	25.9	31.5	30.2	29.8	31.7	30.4
16-17	74.1	68.5	69.8	70.2	68.3	69.6
Number of juvenile crime committers per 10 000 youth of 14-17 years old	96	161	162	156	154	155

In 1999 juveniles committed 5 thousand offences, which accounted for 16% of total crimes cleared. The major share of them was crimes against property (85%). Every fourth crime was a serious criminal offence.

In 1999 courts tried 2,2 thousand juveniles, which is twice as much as in 1990. Over recent several years, punishments for juveniles have been becoming more lenient. If juveniles for the first time are tried for corrective labour or imprisonment for a premeditated, but not grave crime or negligence crime, the court may pass a ruling to waive execution of the imposed punishment for the period of 1 to 3 years. In 1999 75% of convicted minors remained in freedom when the execution of the court sentence was waived (in 1995 they accounted for 67%).

Conviction or imprisonment for the period from 3 months to 10 years was applied to 22% of juvenile delinquents (in 1995 it was 29%). This punishment is served in the Corrective labour colony of juveniles. In 1999 this colony counted 186 juveniles, average term of conviction of which was 3 years and 2 months, while the real term was 1 year and 22 days.

Convicted juveniles by court sanction

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total number of convicted juveniles	2010	2193	1957	2121	2240
of which, %:					
Waived prosecution	67.3	37.4	46.6	62.1	74.6
Convicted to principal punishments:					
imprisonment	28.9	46.9	41.2	31.4	22.2
corrective labour	0.7	0.7	1.6	1.0	0.7
fine	1.3	6.2	6.1	3.5	0.5
Other punishments	1.8	8.8	4.5	2.0	2.0

Sexual violence against children

The number of crimes when children suffer sexual violence is on the increase. The year 1995 witnessed 128 such crimes registered, while in 1999 their number amounted to 202. These data do not reflect the real situation as not all children suffering from such abuse, in families in particular, refer to legal institutions.

Sexual violence crimes against children

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	128	131	138	117	202
Rape and attempts	84	83	80	67	106
Sexual intercourse with a sex-immature person	7	5	2	5	20
Depraving actions against a person under 16	27	35	48	27	60
Sexual intercourse between men (victim is under 18)	10	8	8	18	16