

**The Situation of Children and
Young People at the Regional Level in Lithuania**

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The project to monitor the impact of economic and social change on children in Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (MONEE) was initiated at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in 1992. The project seeks to monitor, analyse and disseminate information on economic and social trends affecting children's rights and wellbeing in countries in the region. A key feature of the Project is a network of correspondents in the 27 National Statistical Offices (NSOs). On an annual basis these correspondents complete an extensive data template which in turn is used for calculating indicators, supporting research of the project and, in due course, being made publicly available as the TransMonee database and in tables and graphs of the Innocenti Social Monitor.

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STATISTICS LITHUANIA

**THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
IN LITHUANIA BY REGIONS**

Vilnius
2004

1. INTRODUCTION

Administrative territorial Division of the Republic of Lithuania

Since 1995, based on the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Territorial Administrative Units and their Borders the territory of Lithuania has been divided into administrative units: counties and municipalities.

There are 10 counties, as follows: Alytus, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Marijampolė, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Tauragė, Telšiai, Utena and Vilnius.

At the beginning of 2004 the territory of the Republic of Lithuania comprised 10 counties and 60 municipalities. Territories of the counties included the following municipalities:

The **Alytus** county included municipalities of Alytus town, Alytus district, Druskininkai, Lazdijai district, Varėna district;

The **Kaunas** county included municipalities of Birštonas, Jonava district, Kaišiadorys district, Kaunas city, Kaunas district, Kėdainiai district, Prienai district, Raseiniai district;

The **Klaipėda** county included municipalities of Klaipėda town, Klaipėda district, Neringa, Palanga town, Skuodas district, Šilutė district;

The **Marijampolė** county included municipalities of Kalvarija, Kazlų Rūda, Marijampolė, Šakiai district, Vilkaviškis district;

The **Panevėžys** county included municipalities of Biržai district, Kupiškis district, Panevėžys town, Panevėžys district, Pasvalys district, Rokiškis district;

The **Šiauliai** county included municipalities of Akmenė district, Joniškis district, Kelmė district, Pakruojis district, Radviliškis district, Šiauliai town, Šiauliai district;

The **Tauragė** county included municipalities of Jurbarkas district, Pagėgiai, Šilalė district, Tauragė district;

The **Telšiai** county included municipalities of Mažeikiai district, Plungė district, Rietavas, Telšiai district;

The **Utena** county included municipalities of Anykščiai district, Ignalina district, Molėtai district, Utena district, Visaginas, Zarasai district;

The **Vilnius** county included municipalities of Elektrėnai, Šalčininkai district, Širvintos district, Švenčionys district, Trakai district, Ukmergė district, Vilnius city, Vilnius district.

The administrative units consist from residential areas. The residential areas of the Republic of Lithuania are divided into urban and rural residential areas. Towns are attributed to urban residential areas and small towns and villages are attributed to rural residential areas. There are 103 cities and towns and 21.8 rural type settlements.

The municipalities (but not all of them) are divided into wards. The wards are structural territorial unit of the municipal administration. Municipalities covered 506 “seniūnija” (or *wards* - the smallest administrative units), of which 469 were rural ones.

NUTS1 – Lithuania

NUTS2 – Lithuania

NUTS3 – counties (10)

NUTS4 – municipalities (60)

NUTS5 – neighbourhood (506)

2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

At the outset of 2004 in Lithuania lived 3445.9 thousand inhabitants. Counties of Lithuania differ greatly in the number of population. A quarter of the population has been concentrated in the Vilnius county while one-fifth in the Kaunas county. The smallest counties are Tauragė, Telšiai, Utena, Alytus and Marijampolė. They count from 3.9 to 5.4 per cent of the population. The number of the population has declined since 1995 by 197.1 thousand or 5 per cent. During this period changes in the number of population in counties was not even. The most visible decrease was recorded in such counties as Utena (8.9 per cent), Panevėžys (6.9 per cent), Alytus (6.6 per cent), Kaunas (6.5 per cent) and Šiauliai (6.3 per cent), while the least fall was observed in such counties as Klaipėda and Telšiai (by 3.6 per cent in each), Marijampolė (3.9 per cent), Vilnius (4.1 per cent) and Tauragė (5 per cent).

At the beginning of 2004 the number of females was by 228.5 thousand higher than that of males (1837.2 thousand and 1608.7 thousand, respectively). Females accounted for 53.3 per cent of total population and per 1000 males there fell 1142 females (1121 at the beginning of 1995). At the beginning of 2004 the ratio of males and females in counties was uneven. The bulk of females per 1000 males fell in such counties as Kaunas (1168), Vilnius (1166), Panevėžys (1145) and Šiauliai (1136), while the least number was recorded in such counties as Alytus (1092), Marijampolė (1100) and Tauragė (1107).

At the outset of 2004 cities counted 2297.4 thousand (66.7 per cent) of the country's population. Other 1148.5 thousand (or 33.3 per cent) lived in rural areas. The number of urban population within the period of 1995-2004 contracted by 160.8 thousand or 6.5 per cent. Counties differ greatly in terms of the number of urban population. At the beginning of 2004 Vilnius county towns counted even 78.2 per cent of the county's population, Klaipėda 73.1, Kaunas 72.2, while towns of the Tauragė county had just 40.8 and the Marijampolė county 49.4 per cent of the population. Five largest cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys) have accumulated over half of the country's population (59 per cent). At the beginning of 2004 in the Vilnius city there lived 541.1 thousand inhabitants (23.6 per cent of urban or 15.7 per cent of Lithuania's population) and in Kaunas 368.9 thousand (16.1 per cent of urban or 10.7 per cent of the country's population).

Density of the population in Lithuania is 53 persons per square kilometre. Territorial location of the largest cities makes an impact on the population density in counties. The most densely populated counties are: Vilnius (87 persons per square kilometre), Kaunas (86), Klaipėda (74), while the least densely populated ones are: Utena (25) and Tauragė (30).

Average age of Lithuania's males is by 4.8 years shorter than that of females, i.e. at the beginning of 2004 average age of males was 35.4 years and that of females 40.2 years. Average age of males in all counties is lower than that of females. The difference is most visible in Utena (5.3 years) and Panevėžys (5.2 years) counties, while the least notable difference is in counties of Klaipėda (4.3 years) and Vilnius (4.6 years).

With a decline in the number of population in Lithuania age composition of the population has also altered. The number of children (aged 0–17 years) has been rapidly decreasing. At the beginning of 2004 in Lithuania lived 775.2 thousand children, i.e. 22.5 per cent of total population. Over the nine-year period the number of children has contracted by more than one-fifth. The share of children as compared

with the total number of population in counties was the highest in counties of Telšiai (26.0 per cent), Tauragė (25.6 per cent) and Marijampolė (25.1 per cent), while the lowest one in counties of Vilnius (20.6 per cent), Utena (21.4 per cent) and Kaunas (21.8 per cent). The number of children decreased in all counties during the period of 1995–2004: by more than a quarter in the Vilnius county and by almost one-fifth in Kaunas and Utena counties.

At the outset of 2004 the working-age population in Lithuania accounted for 60.9 per cent as compared with the total number of population. Distribution of this age population by county is not even. The bulk of the working-age population fell per Vilnius (63.8 per cent), Klaipėda (61.7 per cent) and Kaunas (61.3 per cent) counties.

The share of elderly population (aged 60 years and over) as compared with the total number of population has been on the increase, i.e. the process of “ageing” has turned more intensive. At the beginning of 2004 population aged 60 years and over made up 20.3 per cent of the total population (17.4 per cent at the beginning of 1995). The highest share of the said age population was recorded in Utena (23.7 per cent), Panevėžys (22.2 per cent), Alytus (22.0 per cent), Marijampolė (21.2 per cent) and Tauragė (21.0 per cent) counties.

In 2003 birth was given to 30.6 thousand infants, i.e. by 584 infants more than in 2002 and per 1000 population there fell 8.9 of births. However, the number of births over 1995–2002 decreased as much as 1.4 times. In 2002 per 1000 population fell 8.6, while in 1995 11.4 of births. Total fertility rate (the number of births per 1000 population) in 2003 was lower than the country’s: in Utena (7.5 ‰), Vilnius and Panevėžys (8.6 ‰), Alytus and Kaunas (8.8 ‰) counties. In the Marijampolė county per 1000 population fell 10.1 of births, i.e. the highest indicator observed in counties. Total fertility rate (average number of children, which females might give birth to during their reproductive period) in the period of 1995–2002 declined by one-fifth. It slightly ascended in 2003 and stood at 1.26. Such a low birth rate does not secure changes in generations. In 2003 the lowest total fertility rate was in Vilnius (1.09), Kaunas (1.18), Klaipėda and Utena (1.24) counties. In 1995–2003 the total fertility rate in counties of Kaunas, Telšiai, Tauragė and Šiauliai went down by more than one-fifth.

In 2003, per 1000 population fell 11.9 and in 1995 12.5 of deaths. In 2003 mortality rate was the highest in Utena (14.7 ‰), Tauragė (13.1 ‰), Marijampolė (12.8 ‰), Panevėžys (12.6 ‰) and Alytus (12.5 ‰) counties. Social development, healthiness of the population and mortality rate is best reflected by average life expectancy. This is the number of years, indicating probable average length of life of every person, provided mortality rate of every age group of the population during the expected life remains unchanged. In 2003 average life expectancy of the country totalled 72.2 years with the notable difference between male and female average life expectancy remaining 11.4 years (66.5 for males and 77.9 years for females). Average male life expectancy was lower the country’s average in such counties as Tauragė (64.6 years), Telšiai (64.8 years), Utena (65.1 years) and Marijampolė (66.0 years). In the period of 1995–2003 average male life expectancy grew in all counties, i.e. the most visible rise was noted in Kaunas (4.5 years), Panevėžys (3.8 years), Alytus and Vilnius (by 3.6 years in each) counties. Average female life expectancy was lower the country’s average in such counties as Šiauliai and Tauragė (77.3 years), Utena (77.6 years), Vilnius (77.7 years) and Kaunas (77.8 years). Average female life expectancy over the period of 1995–2003 has also ascended. Most of all it grew in Klaipėda (3.8 years), Vilnius (3.4 years) and Kaunas (3 years) counties. The biggest difference in

average life expectancy of males and females was observed in Telšiai (13.4 years), Tauragė (12.7), Marijampolė (12.2) and Klaipėda (11.9 years) counties.

By the data of the Population Census 2001, there lived 115 different ethnicities in Lithuania, of which Lithuanians made up 83.5 per cent of total population, Poles 6.7 per cent, Russians 6.3 per cent, Belarussians 1.2 per cent and Ukrainians 0.7 per cent. The Jew, German, Tatar, Latvian and Roma minorities each accounted for about 0.1 per cent. Compared to the Population Census 1989 data, there was a decrease in the population of all ethnicities.

By the data of the recent census, the Pole population has become the largest ethnical minority. The number of the Russian minority fell by 124.7 thousand (36.2 per cent), that of the Ukrainian by 22.3 thousand (49.8 per cent), followed by the Belarussian and Jew minorities with a drop of 20.3 thousand (32.1 per cent) and 8.4 thousand (67.7 per cent), respectively.

Lithuanians in all counties are in the majority (about 94 per cent or more), except Vilnius, Utena and Klaipėda counties. By the census 2001 data, Lithuanians accounted for 54.9 per cent of the Vilnius county population, proportion of Pole residents was 25.4 percent, Russians made up 11.6 per cent, in the Utena county 77.1, 4.5 and 13.4 per cent, respectively and in the Klaipėda county 84.2, 0.3 and 11.4, respectively.

During the census 2001, 962.6 thousand families were enumerated. The average family size was 3.18 persons. The average family size in urban and rural areas differed insignificantly. Families in rural areas were somewhat larger (3.32 persons) than in urban areas (3.11 persons).

The average family in some counties was larger than Lithuania's average family. The largest families were observed in Marijampolė (3.29 persons), Tauragė (3.29 persons) and Telšiai (3.25) counties. The smallest families were in Utena (3.08 persons) and Panevėžys (3.13) counties.

3. REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

2002 year	Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita		Structure of value added of counties by economic sector			
	in thousand LTL	Compared to average, %	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Industry and construction	Services	Total
National total	14.9	100.0	7.0	29.9	63.1	100.0
The Alytus county	11.5	77.2	9.2	34.5	56.3	100.0
The Kaunas county	14.0	94.2	6.3	31.3	62.4	100.0
The Klaipėda county	16.1	108.5	4.9	30.3	64.8	100.0
The Marijampolė county	9.9	66.5	21.6	26.8	51.7	100.0
The Panevėžys county	12.9	86.6	12.1	36.8	51.1	100.0
The Šiauliai county	11.0	74.0	15.1	26.2	58.7	100.0
The Tauragė county	8.6	57.8	20.1	24.2	55.7	100.0
The Telšiai county	12.4	83.6	8.2	45.1	46.7	100.0
The Utena county	12.3	82.7	7.7	46.5	45.8	100.0
The Vilnius county	21.3	143.3	2.4	24.6	73.0	100.0

The above results show that differentiation among counties is marked enough. For example, the per capita GDP in the Vilnius county is more than twice as big as that in Marijampolė and Tauragė counties. In Alytus, Marijampolė, Šiauliai and Tauragė counties GDP per capita made up 80 per cent of the country's average. The Vilnius county (143.3 per cent) and the Klaipėda county (108.5 per cent) as in previous years continue to maintain the leader's positions.

The service sector takes the biggest part as compared with other sectors by county. It is distinctly visible from figures on the Vilnius county (73.0 per cent). In the Marijampolė and Tauragė counties the bulk of value added is generated by agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (21.6 per cent and 20.1 per cent, respectively).

Differences in the development of Lithuania's counties are marked and have tendency to widen. The Vilnius county is a leader in terms of total capital investment and foreign direct investment (FDI). As of 1 January 2004, FDI in the Vilnius county amounted to about LTL 8127.0 million (59 per cent), Kaunas and Klaipėda counties take the second and the third positions, with LTL 1849.4 million (14 per cent) and LTL 1547.4 million (11 per cent), respectively. For comparison, the FDI level in the Tauragė county was LTL 22.6 million (0.2 per cent) and the Marijampolė county LTL 78.2 million (0.6 per cent). In the remaining counties the FDI was lower than the national average.

4. LABOUR MARKET SITUATION BY REGIONS

Significant disparities in unemployment rate by counties have been observed. According to the data of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) conducted by Statistics Lithuania, average national annual unemployment rate in 2003 reached 12.4 per cent. The highest unemployment rate was registered in Šiauliai (16.5 per cent), Utena (15.3 per cent) and Alytus (13.6 per cent) counties, and the lowest unemployment rate in Marijampolė (7.6 per cent) and Tauragė (9.5 per cent) counties, where the majority of residents are employed in the agricultural sector.

In 2003, according to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange data, the highest registered unemployment rate was as high as the annual average value in the country (10.3 per cent), i.e. 21 per cent in Mažeikiai district and 23 per cent in Druskininkai municipalities. At the same time the lowest registered unemployment rate was twice as low as the country's average, amounting to 4.9 per cent in the Trakai district and 5.0 per cent in the Vilnius city municipalities.

The major regional development disparities in Lithuania are between urban centres (primarily Vilnius and Klaipėda as well as other large cities of the country) and rural areas (the periphery). The disparities were caused by the following main reasons: a better-developed infrastructure of urban centres, in particular the public transport system and thus, a significantly stronger service sector. Besides, there are differences in the structure of the secondary economic sector (industry). In the biggest cities a large part (in terms of production, labour force resources, etc.) belongs to new, relatively modern branches of industry, while industrial capacities in peripheral regions are to a great extent "inherited" from past times and obsolete. Disparities in the labour force qualifications are also big.

Due to all the measures implemented in the areas with highest unemployment the reduction of the annual unemployment rate was much more rapid than the country's average. According to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange data, in 2003 the

officially registered unemployment rate gap between the highest and the lowest average annual unemployment rate at the county level was reduced from 7.2 to 5.9 percentage points, and at the municipality level – from 20 to 17.7 percentage points. At the end of 2003 Lithuania had only 2 areas where the registered unemployment rate exceeded the 20 per cent threshold.

The new measure of the active labour market policy implemented in Lithuania is the projects of Local Employment Initiatives (PLEI). The projects allow joining efforts of local communities, companies, institutions and social partners envisaging to increase the employment of the municipality residents and create new jobs to employ the unemployed registered with local labour exchanges.

In 2003, through the process of implementation of the PLEI, 791 jobs were created (in 2001 – 151 jobs, in 2002 – 377 jobs). In total, the number of jobs created within the three years of the local employment initiatives is 1310.

As a result of the PLEI implementation, 2.8-3.0 thousand new job places are expected to be created in the period of 2004-2006.

To curb unemployment in regions with the highest unemployment, the population mobility within the country should be stimulated. Traditionally internal territorial mobility of the population of Lithuania is insignificant: between 1990 and 2003 about 1.9 per cent of the country's residents changed their place of residence. The main centres of migration of the population are cities in which demand for workforce is higher.

Territorial mobility of rural residents is conditioned by rising transport costs, underdeveloped housing market in the country, high prices for apartments in cities and dependence of part of rural residents' activities and income on small household. Moreover, the bulk of rural unemployed or part-time agricultural employees have no vocational education necessary for occupying job vacancies in towns. Therefore, it is forecasted that in the meantime agriculture will remain the principal sphere of economic activity of rural residents. Concurrently, vocational training and mobility of rural residents, particularly of youth, which forms the basis for their territorial mobility, will be promoted.

Differences in average gross earnings among counties are observed in Lithuania. The highest average gross earnings has been earned by employees in Vilnius and Utena counties; whereas the lowest ones earned by employees in Tauragė and Marijampolė counties.

The largest proportion of the whole economy's employees (35.2 per cent in 2002) worked in the Vilnius county. Average gross earnings were by 16.2 per cent higher than the average in the whole economy in 2002. The highest average gross earnings were recorded in public administration and financial intermediation in the Vilnius county.

The average gross earnings in the Utena county were higher as compared with the average gross earnings in the whole economy, too. This is stipulated by the fact that the nuclear power-station is located in the county.

Employees of sole proprietorships earned the lowest earnings. The least part of employees working in sole proprietorships compared to the total number of employees in the appropriate county were in Vilnius and Kaunas counties; whereas the bulk of such employees were in Tauragė and Šiauliai counties.

The Tauragė county is the smallest one in terms of the number of employees in Lithuania. About one-fifth of the county's employees work in sole proprietorships, where earnings made up 41.4 per cent of average gross earnings in the county in

2002. Average monthly gross earnings in manufacturing and in wholesale and retail trade (in those working almost 36.6 per cent employees) in this county were the lowest compared to the average monthly gross earnings in the said sections in other counties.

The Marijampolė county is one of the smallest counties, too. Only 3.7 per cent of the whole economy's employees worked in this county in 2002. About one-fourth of employees worked in manufacturing and earned lower average gross earnings compared to the county's average and average in the whole economy in manufacturing.

5. EDUCATION

Education and training are one of the most important factors defining the life quality of the population, human resources and economic development of the country. Despite visible achievements in the system of education observed over the last decade as well as the new Law on Education passed in 2002, numerous problems still remain unsolved with some new ones entering into the scene. The number of children, facing problems of adaptation at school, lacking motivation for learning or owing to unfavourable social conditions not attending schools at all has been on the rise.

Statistical data for the period of 1995–2003 demonstrate a rising need for pre-school training. The number of children trained at pre-primary establishments as compared with the number of children of the respective age has been on the increase. In 1995 pre-primary education establishments were attended by 30.1 per cent of Lithuania's children aged 1-6 years, in 2003 this figure equalled 47.7 per cent. Attendance at rural and urban pre-primary education establishments differs: in 2003 pre-primary establishments in urban areas were attended by 66.2 per cent and in rural areas by 14.1 per cent of children aged 1-6 years. Major impact on the increasing attendance at pre-primary education establishments was exerted by legalisation of full-scale pre-primary education, which aimed at creation of equal possibilities for all children with different needs as well as for those who did not attend pre-primary education establishments (in rural areas in particular) to prepare for school. However, the share of children attending pre-primary education establishments significantly differed by county: in 1995, the Vilnius county counted the highest number of children attending pre-primary education establishments (37.7 per cent), the lowest number was recorded in the Tauragė county (15.0 per cent). Rather similar situation continued in 2003: the share of children attending pre-primary education establishments in the Vilnius county stood at 52 per cent, which was almost twice higher than the one observed in the Tauragė county (25.2 per cent). Over the said period attendance of pre-primary education establishments has grown in all counties by 14 per cent on average.

Following the rise in the demand for pre-primary education, the number of places in them was increased and general schools set up additional groups. In 2003 per 100 children aged 1-6 years fell 42 places (25 places in 1995) in pre-primary establishments and groups in general schools. The bulk of places for the said age-group of children fell per Vilnius (52), Klaipėda (49) and Alytus (44) counties, while the least fell per the Tauragė county (21).

Although an ever-growing share of pre-school age children attended pre-primary establishments, general number of children in pre-primary establishments demonstrated insignificant changes and as compared with 1995 decreased by 1 per cent totalling 89.5 thousand. This was also influenced by the fact that the number of

pre-school age children in Lithuania has been shrinking in general: from 1995 until 2003 the number of children aged 1-6 years decreased by 103.6 thousand or by 10 thousand in each county on average. The number of children attending pre-primary establishments increased only in Alytus, Marijampolė, Tauragė and Telšiai counties.

As compared with 1995 the number of pre-primary establishments in Lithuania contracted from 729 to 672 (by 8 per cent). This number fell in all counties, the Telšiai county being an exception to that. The number of establishments in the Utena county shrunk by even 40 per cent. In 2003 almost all pre-school establishments belonged to municipalities and just four were non-public ones: three of them operated in the Vilnius county and one in the Kaunas county. The non-public pre-primary establishments educated just 0.3 per cent of total number of children attending pre-primary establishments.

Owing to a lower birth rate less and less children enter first-form training at secondary schools. As compared with the 2000–2001 academic year, the number of first-formers decreased by 17 per cent. Schools, rural ones in particular, became deserted. In 2003, due to the small number of children certain classes were missing or joint classes were formed in 775 schools of Lithuania. In such cases one teacher simultaneously worked with elder and younger pupils. Therefore, since 2001, taking into consideration demographic trends observed in Lithuania as well as striving to more rationally use the funds, reorganisation of the network of general education schools has been started. Schools underwent reorganisation: some were merged (integrated), while others were closed (liquidated). The number of general schools over the last decade contracted from 2361 to 1932 (by 18 per cent). As a result, average number of students at school and average number of students per one teacher was growing. In 1995 one teacher had on average 11.5, while in 2003 – 12.4 students. Ten new general schools were built and 48 renovated in 2002–2003.

The ratio of teachers and students in general schools, full - time education

	1995	2002	2003
Total	11.5	12.3	12.4
The Alytus county	11.8	12.6	12.4
The Kaunas county	11.5	12.4	12.8
The Klaipėda county	11.8	12.9	12.9
The Marijampolė county	11.3	12.5	13.0
The Panevėžys county	11.2	12.8	12.9
The Šiauliai county	11.8	12.5	12.6
The Tauragė county	10.7	12.3	11.9
The Telšiai county	12.5	13.1	13.3
The Utena county	10.2	11.2	11.3
The Vilnius county	11.6	11.7	11.7

There are 19 non-public schools of general education, with 2.2 thousand pupils learning in them (in 1995 there were 20 schools and 1.1 thousand pupils). The bulk falls per secondary and basic schools (14), although in 1995 the majority fell per primary schools (13). Non-public general schools account for 1 per cent of the total number of schools of general education with 0.4 per cent of students learning in them. Almost half of non-public general schools operate in the Vilnius county, with 1.1 per

cent of the county's students learning in them. In 2003 non-public general schools operated only in five counties. In 2003 in higher non-public schools, i.e. colleges and universities there were 11.9 thousand or 7 per cent of higher school students. The bulk of non-public schools in which young people could acquire speciality or profession are in the Vilnius county (10 or 44 per cent), with 6.2 per cent of the county's students learning in them. The Klaipėda county's four non-public colleges and one non-public university count 13.9 per cent of the county's students. No non-public schools exist in the Tauragė county.

Non-public schools

Beginning of the academic year

	<i>General schools</i>	<i>Vocational schools</i>	<i>Professional colleges</i>	<i>Colleges</i>	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Total</i>
Schools						
1995–1996	20	1	15	-	-	36
2000–2001	20	1	14	3	4	42
2002–2003	18	1	9	9	4	41
2003–2004	19	2	4	11	6	42
Students						
1995–1996	1092	145	1860	-	-	3097
2000–2001	1744	42	4022	575	722	7105
2002–2003	1957	19	1826	5281	1259	10342
2003–2004	2201	38	324	8319	3599	14481

Children and young people in Lithuania are obliged to complete the 10-years duration compulsory education and receive basic education, or study until they are 16 years. According to the latest Population census data, in 2001 compulsory education not attended by 5.2 thousand or 1.1 per cent of children from 7 to 16 years.

Drop-outs of students from schools is a loss to the education system. Annual statistical data on schools demonstrate that during one academic year from 1-9 classes drop out 4-5 thousand or 1 per cent of pupils on average among which two-thirds account for elder pupils (5-9 classes). In addition to that, each year over 3 thousand (1 per cent) of pupils of 1-9 classes remain for the repetition of the course.

The share of drop-outs from compulsory education at general schools, per cent

	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Primary and lower secondary education	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.9
of which lower secondary education	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.1

Each year more and more students having graduated from secondary education continue their studies at upper level of education. In 2003, 80.6 per cent of students with secondary education continued education the year of graduation in vocational, high and higher schools. The most of secondary school graduates applied for entering higher schools: colleges and universities (68.8 per cent). As compared with other counties, young people of the Alytus county stand out in their initiative of seeking higher education: in 2003, 72.4 per cent of boys and girls who graduated from secondary schools became students of higher education in the same year. Although

the Vilnius county has the most widely spread network of educational establishments, 68 per cent of the county's secondary school graduates strive for higher education.

Secondary school graduates continuing their studies at post secondary and higher educational levels, per cent

	2001	2002	2003
The Alytus county	90.9	88.0	87.2
The Kaunas county	85.2	84.3	79.7
The Klaipėda county	91.3	87.6	74.6
The Marijampolė county	84.4	86.7	81.0
The Panevėžys county	85.7	90.5	84.4
The Šiauliai county	88.0	87.5	85.7
The Tauragė county	79.4	73.6	77.9
The Telšiai county	81.2	74.1	74.3
The Utena county	79.4	75.3	79.6
The Vilnius county	82.0	83.0	81.1

The analysis of education possibilities by counties shows great differences. The best possibility of receiving higher education has been offered by the Vilnius county. Small counties (like Tauragė and Telšiai) with the majority of rural population display lower interest in sending children to pre-primary establishments, the said counties face higher unemployment and they have no non-public education establishments.

6. HEALTH

Over the recent decade, health care of children like of all Lithuania's population has been significantly influenced by the country's health system reform, the key objective of which was not only to reorganise the health care sector, but also to improve the population's health. Ever increasing attention is paid to primary health care. The number of general practitioners (family doctors) has been rapidly growing, the practice of doctors' group (in rural areas in particular) has been introduced and average duration of hospitalisation has become shorter. The compulsory health insurance was introduced in 1997 and it lead to changes in the system of payment for services. As provided by the Health Insurance law, pregnant women during the maternity leave period and mothers raising children under 8 years of age (or 2 children under 18) as well as children under 18 are covered by the compulsory health insurance from the state's funds.

To use health care resources more efficiently, the number of hospital beds and doctors in Lithuania as compared with 1995 contracted (doctors by 7 per cent and hospital beds by 26 per cent). At the end of 2003, per 10000 population fell 40 doctors and 87 hospital beds. Per 10000 children under 14 years there were 2 paediatricians and 28 beds in hospitals. The decline in the number of paediatricians was stipulated by the fact that part of paediatricians changed their qualification and turned into general practitioners (family doctors), while the number of beds for children contracted owing to decreasing birth rate and shorter length of stay in a hospital. The

number of obstetrics beds has also decreased because of the significant decrease in the number of births, obstetrics departments were closed in small districts.

The network of health care institutions in districts has been spread evenly, thus changes in the number of doctors is mainly conditioned by the number of population in a certain district. Whereas patients are entitled to the right of choosing an institution, which will render them health care services as well as a treating doctor, part of the population applies for treatment to institutions of neighbouring districts. In addition to that biggest cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda) host large specialised or general purpose university hospitals, which in case of need render services to all population of Lithuania, thus bed indicators of such county hospitals are the highest.

Children's vaccination rates are similar in all districts of the country and the deviation from the country's average is insignificant (94 per cent in 2003).

Some useful information could be found on the website of Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania: www.socmin.lt

The National Action Plan against poverty and social exclusion of Republic of Lithuania 2004-2006

Republic of Lithuania National action plan for employment 2004.
<http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?2030354743>

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