

Child poverty

RISING unemployment will lead to increased child poverty unless the Government invests in tackling the problem, which affects almost 300,000 young people, says the End Child Poverty Coalition.

The coalition, which includes organisations such as Barnardos, the Children's Rights Alliance and Focus Ireland, has said it is determined to keep the issue on the agenda and is looking for strong commitments from the Government.

The coalition, which is due to meet the joint committee on social and family affairs tomorrow, said an increase in basic social welfare payments for families, access to quality, affordable and flexible early childhood care and education, increased medical card eligibility and homes and support for families in low-paid work were essential steps.

A spokesperson for the coalition said it was imperative the Government invests now to prevent even more children from slipping into poverty.

"We want greater priority given to this. The impact of living in poverty has life-long implications. We want to ensure the right decisions are made now," she said.

Latest figures from 2007 show 76,000 children live in poverty with a further 205,000 living in households at risk of poverty. But the coalition points out that these figures were compiled in a more favourable economic context.

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