

Frequently Asked Questions on Status of School attendance of Children in age group of 5 – 17 Years

**Child Activity Survey – 2016
Department of Census and Statistics
Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs**

TEL: 011-2147446

FAX: 011-2147447

E-mail: sample.survey@statistics.gov.lk

The Child Activity Survey in 2016

The latest round of Child Activity Survey was conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) in 2016 and the report was published in February 2017. This survey covered the whole country and it collected the data related to children in the age group of 5-17 years in the areas of schooling, working conditions, child labour, health conditions and living conditions. The data collection of this sample survey was done from January 2016 to May 2016.

1. What is the general profile of children in age group 5-17 in Sri Lanka?

Estimated total number of children in the age group of 5-17 years in 2016 is estimated at nearly 4.6 million. Out of them about 2.30 million (50.5 %) are males and 2.26 million (49.5%) are females. When the three different age groups are considered majority of them 2,541,337 or 55.6 % are in age group 5-11 years, about 1,069,478 (23.4 %) are in 12-14 years age group and 960,627 (21 %) are in 15-17 years age group.

2. How many children are currently attending school ?

The data collection period of the survey was from January 2016 to May 2016. The current school attendance status of the children is allied to the survey period. Those who are attending school during survey reference period are considered as “currently attending school” and who are not attending during survey reference period are considered as “currently not attending school. The survey reported that out of an estimated 4,571,442 children in the age group of 5-17 years in Sri Lanka, 4,118,781 (90.1 %) are currently attending school.

3. How many children currently not attending school ? And Why are they not attending ?

The survey reported that 452,661 children are currently not attending school. By “Currently not attending school” does not mean that all of them have stopped schooling. For an example, out of those who are currently not attending school, the majority (52%) are those who are waiting for GCE (O/L) results. Most of them will start schooling once the results are released. Usually new G.C.E (A/L) batches enrol to schools during June_July every year. Then there are about 17.2% who are not willing to continue formal education and some of them may enter to other streams such as vocational training or may enter to the labour force. Another 6.8% of those who are currently not attending school have not yet entered to school since they have not completed school enrolment age (Completion of 5 years) and therefore, currently they are not attending school. The survey reports such reasons for currently not attending school in detail. The following Table 1 summarizes the distribution of children currently not attending school by reason and by age group.

Table 1: Distribution of children not attending school by main reason for not attending and by age group – 2016

| Main reason for currently not attending school | Total | | Age Group | | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | | 5-11 | | 12-14 | | 15-17 | |
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| Total | 452,661 | 100.0 | 54,214 | 100.0 | 17,468 | 100.0 | 380,979 | 100.0 |
| Awaiting for G.C.E. (O/L) results | 236,819 | 52.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 236,819 | 62.2 |
| Not interested in education/Education not considered valuable | 77,730 | 17.2 | 1,351 | 2.5 | 5,240 | 30.0 | 71,139 | 18.7 |
| Too young (not eligible to enter school) | 30,753 | 6.8 | 30,753 | 56.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Disabled | 19,213 | 4.2 | 7,666 | 14.1 | 5,390 | 30.9 | 6,157 | 1.6 |
| Financial difficulties | 14,922 | 3.3 | 1,231 | 2.3 | 2,632 | 15.1 | 11,059 | 2.9 |
| Studying for G.C.E. (O/L) at home | 12,751 | 2.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 12,751 | 3.3 |
| Engage in family support activities (a) | 7,567 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7,567 | 2.0 |
| To get a job training / vocational training | 6,610 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 190 | 1.1 | 6,420 | 1.7 |
| Waiting for a suitable school(b) | 4,913 | 1.1 | 3,648 | 6.7 | 200 | 1.1 | 1,065 | 0.3 |
| Chronic illness | 4,709 | 1.0 | 1,109 | 2.0 | 194 | 1.1 | 3,406 | 0.9 |
| Unsafe in school and its environment (c) | 3,853 | 0.9 | 324 | 0.6 | 602 | 3.4 | 2,927 | 0.8 |
| Other | 32,821 | 7.3 | 8,132 | 15.0 | 3,020 | 17.3 | 21,669 | 5.7 |
| Note: No children were reported for the category of "No school with relevant language near the home" and the category of "school not safe/civil disturbance" | | | | | | | | |
| (a)Engage in family support activities includes children who were " Engaged in an economic activity", "Housekeeping activity "or taking care elderly person or disabled persons | | | | | | | | |
| (b)This includes both "Waiting for a suitable school" and "No school near the home" categories | | | | | | | | |
| (c)Unsafe in school and its environment includes " The way to school is not safe" and "Been abused, hashed or bullied by a teacher or students" | | | | | | | | |

4. Who are the children never attended to school?

Currently not attending children consist with two groups “never attended” and “previously attended”. It was revealed from this survey that out of 452,661 currently not attending children 51,249 children have never attended school during the reference period of the survey due to different reasons. Following Table 2 shows the distribution of children not attending school by age group and for above two groups.

Table 2: Distribution of children not attending school by age group - 2016

| Age Group | No. of children | | | Percentage of children | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | Total currently not attending | Never attended | Previously attended | Total not currently attending | Never attended | Previously attended |
| Sri Lanka | 452,661 | 51,249 | 401,412 | 100.0 | 11.3 | 88.7 |
| Age Group | | | | | | |
| 5 - 11 | 54,214 | 44,619 | 9,595 | 100.0 | 82.3 | 17.7 |
| 12 - 14 | 17,468 | 3,395 | 14,072 | 100.0 | 19.4 | 80.6 |
| 15 - 17 | 380,979 | 3,235 | 377,744 | 100.0 | 0.8 | 99.2 |

5. What the reason is for never attended?

“Never attended” does not mean that all of them will never attend school. Majority of never attended children, about 87% are in age group 5-11. The Following Table 3 show the main reason for never attended school.

Table 3: Distribution of children never attended school by main reason and by age group – 2016

| Main reason for never attended school | Total | | Age Group | | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | | 5-11 | | 12-14 | | 15-17 | |
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| Total | 51,249 | 100.0 | 44,619 | 100.0 | 3,395 | 100.0 | 3,235 | 100.0 |
| Too young (not eligible to enter school) | 30,753 | 60.0 | 30,753 | 68.9 | - | - | - | - |
| Disabled/Chronic illness | 12,923 | 25.2 | 6,916 | 15.5 | 3,318 | 97.7 | 2,689 | 83.1 |
| Waiting for a suitable school | 3,419 | 6.7 | 3,419 | 7.7 | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 4,154 | 8.1 | 3,531 | 7.9 | 77 | 2.3 | 546 | 16.9 |

Note: "Other" group includes all other small categories reported at the survey

Majority of age 5-11 (68.9%) have never attended school as they have not completed school enrolment age by January 2016 but have completed age five during the survey data collection period which is a very general scenario in every year. Also about 7.7% percent of them are waiting for entry into a better school. The survey reported that about 15 % of aged 5-11 have never attended school due to disability or Chronic illness. Among age groups 12-14 and 15-17 majority never attended due to disability or chronic illness. For further information please visit final report of the Child Activity Survey 2016 in DCS website.

The report of Child Activity Survey 2016