

FIVE REASONS WHY THE PHRASE 'INCOMPATIBLE WITH LIFE' IS PREVENTING BEST CARE FOR BABIES AND FAMILIES



Why Every Life Counts

1 IT IS NOT A MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS

Although the phrase 'incompatible with life' has become common currency, it fails to inform parents as to the condition affecting their baby. Research has shown that there is NO condition where a doctor can say with certainty that a child will not live beyond birth. Many children described as 'incompatible with life' go on to have meaningful time with their parents. See their stories here: WWW.EVERYLIFECOUNTS.IE/STORIES



2 IT DEHUMANISES UNBORN BABIES WITH A DISABILITY

These are our most vulnerable babies, and they are alive and kicking even as they are being described as 'incompatible with life'. The reality is that most of these children do live beyond birth, and their lives have value in the same way that every child has value. They should not suffer discrimination because of their disability. In other countries, such as Britain, **90% of children with a disability** are aborted. In Ireland, the opposite is true: **90% of parents do not abort**, however severe the disability. These families need better care and support.



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3

IT IS MISLEADING

Parents need to know the facts relating to the actual condition affecting their baby. Research has shown that **72% of children with anencephaly**, for example, **live beyond birth** with 25% living for up to 5 days. Conditions like **Trisomy 13 and 18** are often described as 'incompatible with life', yet the average life of children affected is between 10 and 14 days respectively, while some go on to live for many years with their families. Parents should also be told that other parents have reported experiencing great joy and love from spending even a short time with their baby.

4

IT PUSHES PARENTS TOWARDS ABORTION

A recent study has found that **two thirds of parents** felt under pressure to abort from doctors after a challenging diagnosis. **93% of the same families** had been told their babies were 'incompatible with life' or that their babies had a 'lethal condition'. Additionally, in Britain, the Bruce Inquiry found that parents felt under pressure to abort where their baby had a disability, and parents felt they did not receive adequate information about other options, including palliative care after birth.

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IT PREVENTS BEST CARE FOR BABIES AND FOR FAMILIES

The phrase prevents clear communication and fills parents with fear. Instead, factual information should be given to parents, and **services like perinatal hospice care**, which gives parents time to surround their baby with love should be more widely available. That means a team, including bereavement counsellors, midwives and photographers, are available to the family. Families find these services can help them heal after the loss of their child. Where intervention after birth is of benefit to baby then that should be made available.

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