

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

As family structures change, so do the relative ages of parents. More women and men are waiting until later in life to start a family. They do so for a number of reasons, including planning for greater financial security and emotional maturity, taking more time to find a stable relationship, and committing to their careers before turning their attention to having children. As younger and older parents are also more likely to be in the workforce today, there is a growing need for early childhood education. In addition, there is increasing awareness of the key role that early childhood education plays in the cognitive and emotional development of the young.

Enrolling children in early childhood education can also mitigate social inequalities and promote better student outcomes overall. Many of the inequalities found in education systems are already evident when children enter formal schooling and persist as they progress through the school system. Because inequalities tend to grow when school is not compulsory, earlier entrance into the school system may reduce these inequalities. In addition, pre-primary education helps to prepare children to enter and succeed in formal schooling.

Overview

In most OECD countries, education now begins for most children well before they are 5 years old. Four out of ten 2-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education across OECD countries, as a whole, growing to almost three out of four (74%) for 3-year-olds. The highest enrolment rates of 3-year-olds in early childhood education are found in Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The ratio of children to teaching staff is an indicator of the resources devoted to early childhood education. The child-teacher ratio at the pre-primary level, excluding non-teaching staff (e.g. teachers' aides), ranges from more than 20 children per teacher in Chile, China, France, Indonesia and Mexico, to fewer than 10 in Estonia, Iceland, New Zealand, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Sustained public funding is critical for supporting the growth and quality of early childhood education programmes. Public expenditure on pre-primary education is mainly used to support public institutions, but in some countries it also funds private institutions, to varying degrees. At the pre-primary level, annual expenditure, from both public and private sources, per child for both public and private institutions averages USD 8 008 in OECD countries. However, expenditure varies from USD 4 000 or less in Israel, Latvia and South Africa, to more than USD 10 000 in Australia, Iceland, Luxembourg, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Definition

The *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)* level 0 refers to early childhood programmes that have an intentional education component. ISCED level 0 programmes target children below the age of entry into primary education (ISCED level 1). These programmes aim to develop cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skills necessary for participation and well-being in school and society.

Thanks to the new ISCED classification, level 0 covers now early childhood education for all ages, including very young children. Programmes are sub-classified into two categories, depending on the level of complexity of the educational content: early childhood educational development (code 01) and pre-primary education (code 02). Early childhood educational development programmes (code 01) are generally designed for children younger than 3. They were introduced as a new category in ISCED-2011 and were not covered by ISCED-97. Pre-primary education (code 02) corresponds exactly to level 0 in ISCED-97.

Comparability

There are many different early education systems and structures within OECD countries. Consequently, there is also a range of different approaches to identifying the boundary between early childhood education and childcare. These differences should be taken into account when drawing conclusions from international comparisons.

Sources

- OECD (2015), *Education at a Glance*, OECD Publishing.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2013), *PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful (Volume IV): Resources, Policies and Practices*, PISA, OECD Publishing.
- OECD (2011), *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD Publishing.

Methodological publications

- OECD/Eurostat/UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015), *ISCED 2011 Operational Manual: Guidelines for Classifying National Education Programmes and Related Qualifications*, OECD Publishing.

Online databases

- OECD Education Statistics.

Websites

- OECD Education at a Glance (supplementary material), www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.



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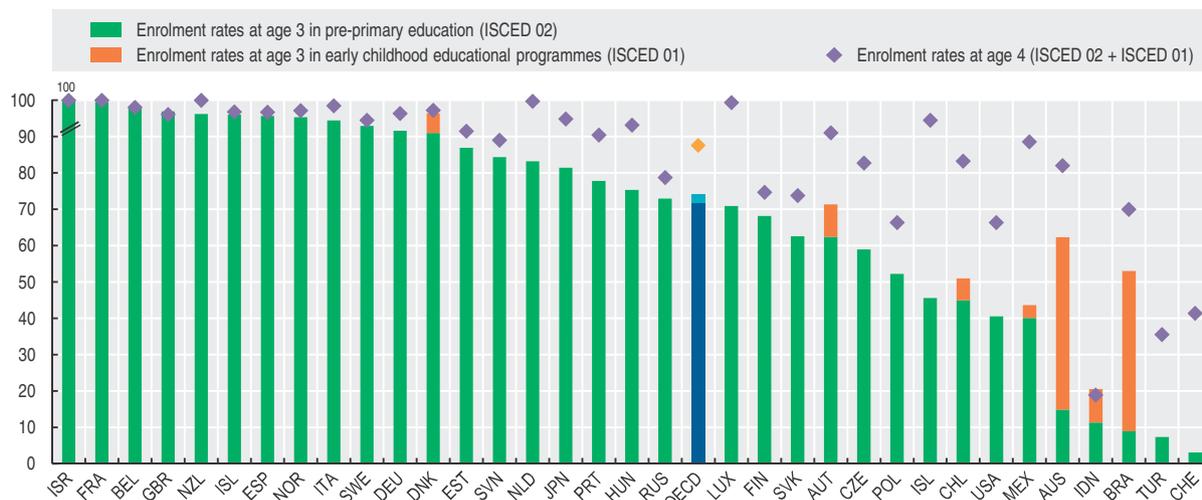
Early childhood educational development programmes and pre-primary education

| Pre-primary share of total early childhood enrolment | 2013 | | | | 2012 | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| | Early childhood educational development | | Pre-primary education | | Share of public expenditure | | | Annual expenditure by educational institutions for all services, USD per student | | | |
| | Pupils/contact staff ratio | Pupils/teaching staff ratio | Pupils/contact staff ratio | Pupils/teaching staff ratio | Early childhood educational development | Pre-primary | All early childhood education | Early childhood educational development | Pre-primary | All early childhood education | |
| ISCED 02/ (ISCED 01 + ISCED 02) | ISCED 01 | ISCED 01 | ISCED 02 | ISCED 02 | ISCED 01 | ISCED 02 | ISCED 01 + ISCED 02 | ISCED 01 | ISCED 02 | ISCED 01 + ISCED 02 | |
| Australia | 42 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4 | 47 | 21 | 10 054 | 10 298 | 10 146 |
| Austria | 87 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 69 | 87 | 84 | 9 434 | 7 716 | 7 954 |
| Belgium | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 | .. | 96 | .. | .. | 6 975 | .. |
| Chile | 80 | 9 | 13 | 19 | 27 | .. | .. | 82 | .. | .. | 4 599 |
| Czech Republic | 100 | .. | .. | 14 | 14 | .. | 92 | 92 | .. | 4 447 | 4 447 |
| Denmark | 63 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 81 | .. | .. | 10 911 |
| Estonia | .. | .. | .. | .. | 9 | .. | .. | 99 | .. | .. | 2 193 |
| Finland | 79 | .. | .. | .. | 10 | 90 | 89 | 89 | 17 860 | 9 998 | 11 559 |
| France | 100 | .. | .. | 15 | 22 | .. | 93 | 93 | .. | 6 969 | 6 969 |
| Germany | 77 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 70 | 79 | 76 | 13 720 | 8 568 | 9 744 |
| Greece | .. | .. | .. | 12 | 12 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Hungary | .. | .. | .. | 11 | 11 | .. | 92 | .. | .. | 4 539 | .. |
| Iceland | 69 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 88 | 85 | 86 | 12 969 | 10 250 | 11 096 |
| Israel | 76 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 85 | .. | .. | 3 416 | .. |
| Italy | .. | .. | .. | 14 | 14 | .. | 91 | 91 | .. | 7 892 | 7 892 |
| Japan | 100 | .. | .. | 14 | 15 | .. | 44 | 44 | .. | 5 872 | 5 872 |
| Korea | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 62 | .. | .. | 5 674 | .. |
| Luxembourg | 100 | .. | .. | 11 | 11 | .. | 99 | .. | .. | 19 719 | .. |
| Mexico | 95 | 26 | 83 | 25 | 25 | .. | .. | 83 | .. | .. | 2 445 |
| Netherlands | 100 | .. | .. | 14 | 16 | .. | 87 | 87 | .. | 8 176 | 8 176 |
| New Zealand | 62 | .. | 4 | .. | 8 | 72 | 87 | 80 | 12 656 | 9 670 | 10 726 |
| Norway | 64 | .. | .. | 5 | 11 | 86 | 86 | 86 | 15 604 | 9 050 | 11 383 |
| Poland | 100 | .. | .. | .. | 16 | .. | 76 | 76 | .. | 6 505 | 6 505 |
| Portugal | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 | .. | 61 | .. | .. | 5 713 | .. |
| Slovak Republic | 100 | .. | .. | 13 | 13 | .. | 83 | 83 | .. | 4 694 | 4 694 |
| Slovenia | 70 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 75 | 79 | 78 | 11 665 | 7 472 | 8 726 |
| Spain | 77 | .. | 9 | .. | 15 | 62 | 73 | 70 | 7 924 | 6 182 | 6 588 |
| Sweden | 73 | .. | 5 | 6 | 6 | .. | .. | .. | 14 180 | 12 212 | 12 752 |
| Switzerland | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5 457 | 5 457 |
| Turkey | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| United Kingdom | 83 | .. | .. | .. | 10 | 64 | 63 | 63 | 9 495 | 10 699 | 10 548 |
| United States | .. | .. | .. | 10 | 12 | .. | 75 | .. | .. | 10 042 | .. |
| OECD | 81 | 9 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 68 | 80 | 78 | 12 324 | 8 008 | 7 886 |
| Brazil | 64 | 8 | 13 | 15 | 17 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 939 |
| China | 100 | .. | .. | 17 | 22 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Indonesia | 61 | .. | 20 | 19 | 21 | .. | 88 | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Russian Federation | 84 | .. | .. | 4 | 10 | .. | .. | 89 | .. | .. | 4 887 |
| South Africa | 100 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 806 | 806 |

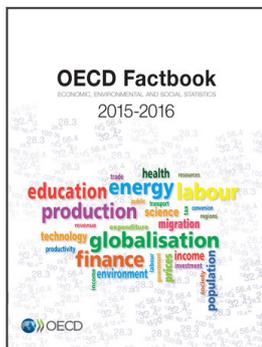
1 2 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933336044>

Enrolment rates at age 3 and 4 in early childhood education

2013



1 2 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933334855>



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