

## SF2: Children in Families

### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator presents data on the proportion of children living in different types of households: the composition of households is considered from perspective of children. *Population and Housing Censuses* are key sources which allow for a comparison of the different household situations in which children younger than 15 live (UN Statistical Division 1997; Eurostat 2004 and 2005). The different households that are considered in Table SF2.1 are:

- *Sole-parent families*: one parent lives with his/her children but without any partner. The household can however include other adults living in the same dwelling (for example, the parents of a sole mother).
- *Couple families*: children live with at least one of their parents and his/her partner in the same dwelling. Non-married cohabiting partners are separately identified, except in some countries (SF9). Other adults can live in with the couple family in the same household.
- Children living in “*institutional households*” concern children living in institutions, as, for example, orphanages or boarding schools.

More recent data on household composition are available from the *European Labour Force Surveys* and the *Surveys on Income and Living Conditions* (Eurostat, 2007), but the data reported in Table SF2.2 refer to classifications of household type that are slightly different from the above:

- *Sole-parent **only** family*: the parent is the only adult living in the household. In contrast to Table SF2.1, Table SF2.2 refers to households where sole parents living with other relatives or adults are not included in this category.
- *Partnered adult households*, when only two married or cohabiting partners share the same dwelling and no other adults are living in the household.
- *Households with two-adults or more*, when sole parents or partnered parents share the dwelling with (an)other adult(s). Young parents living in the home of their parents are included in this category.

The proportion of children living in households with different numbers of children and children under age 6 is also derived from the European Labour Force Statistics (ELFS). The number of children in the household includes adolescents between 15 to 24 year’s old living with their parents who are economically inactive (e.g. students at home).

*Other relevant indicators*: Family size and household composition (SF1); Living arrangements of children (SF3); Share of births outside marriage (SF6); Childlessness (SF7); Marriage and Divorce rates (SF8) and Cohabitation rate and prevalence other forms of partnerships (SF9); and Child poverty (C08).

## Key findings

On average across the OECD, over 80% of children live in couple families (Table SF2.1). In the OECD, this proportion is highest in Italy at over 90% and lowest in Estonia, the UK and the US at around 70-75%. Most of children living in couple families have parents who are married, and the proportion of children living in households with cohabiting partners is highest in Denmark and Estonia, where 20 to 25% of children in couple families have cohabiting parents. At over 20%, the proportion of children living in sole-parent families is well above the OECD average in Canada, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. The proportion of children living in institutions is low at less than 4%, except in Greece and the Slovak Republic.

**Table SF2.1: Distribution of children aged 0-14 by household type, most recent year<sup>1</sup>**

	Proportion of children living in sole-parent families	Proportion of children living in couple families	of which couples with cohabiting partners	Proportion of children living in other type of households
Australia <sup>2</sup>	16.8	81	:	2.6
Austria	15.9	82.8	10.5	1.3
Canada	22.1	77.9	14.1	0
Czech Republic	20.8	78.3	5.2	0.9
Denmark <sup>2</sup>	17.4	81.3	20.93	1.4
Estonia	24	71.9	25.2	3.8
Finland	15.3	83.6	18.1	1.1
France	13.3	85.3	:	1.4
Germany	13.4	86.1	6.6	0.5
Greece	7.4	86.5	1.6	6.1
Hungary	14.4	83	12	2.5
Italy	9.2	90.1	3.5	0.8
Japan <sup>2</sup>	12.3	87.7	..	..
Lithuania	18.3	79	7	2.6
Mexico <sup>2</sup>	12.9		87.1	
Netherlands	10.7	88	9	0.9
New Zealand	21.4	69		..
Poland	15.5	82.6	2.3	1.8
Portugal	9.8	88	9.4	2.2
Romania	10.7	85	10.2	4.2
Slovak Republic	13.9	82.1	3.2	4
Slovenia	15.5	83.3	13.1	0.7
Spain	14.9	82.1	5	3
Sweden	21	78	..	1
Switzerland <sup>2</sup>	15.2		84.7	
United Kingdom	22.9	75.6	15.2	1.5
United States <sup>2</sup>	25.8	70.7	4.1	3.5
<b>OECD-22</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1.8</b>

.. Not available

1 Year: 1999: France; 2000: Estonia, Finland, Latvia; 2001: Austria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom; 2002: Ireland, Poland, Romania, Slovenia; 2005: Switzerland, United States; 2006: Australia, New Zealand; 2007: Denmark except for 3 (2001), Japan, Mexico.

2 Refers to households with children age 0 to 17.

3 From Census 2001

4 Corresponds to the proportion of children living in couple families without any other members.

Sources: For EU countries (except Denmark): Eurostat; UNECE Statistical Division Database 2000 round of Population and Housing census; Australia: Family Characteristics and Transitions Survey, 2006-07; Denmark, Japan: FDB questionnaire; Switzerland: National Statistics, FDB Questionnaire; New Zealand: 2006 Census of Population and dwellings; United States: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

For European countries where both sources (population censuses and the European labour Force Surveys) are available, the proportions of children living in sole-parent only families (Table SF2.2) are generally lower than for sole-parent families in Table SF2.1. In France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, differences are small, while it is large (at 9-10 percentage points) in the Czech Republic, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic and Spain. Part of this difference is because children living with only one parent but with (an)other adult(s) living in the household are identified as member of a two adult or more (non partnered) household in Table SF2.2, while they are counted with sole-parent families in Table SF2.1. Similarly, children living with both their parents and other adults are also part of this 'two adults or more' household category. At about one-third of children under age 15, the proportion of these 'complex' households is particularly high in Poland the Slovak Republic and Turkey.

**Table SF2.2: Distribution of children aged 0-14 by household type, 2007 or latest year**

	Proportion of children living in sole-parent families	Proportion of children living in couple families	Proportion of children living in two-adults or more households
<b>Austria</b>	9	71.5	19.4
<b>Belgium</b>	15.7	66.7	15
<b>Bulgaria</b>	6.6	60.1	32.9
<b>Czech Republic</b>	11.6	76.8	11.5
<b>Estonia</b>	17.5	65.5	16.7
<b>France</b>	13.4	79.8	6.7
<b>Germany</b>	13.3	78.2	8.5
<b>Greece</b>	4.1	84.5	11.4
<b>Hungary</b>	8.6	71.7	19.5
<b>Italy</b>	5	84.3	10.6
<b>Japan<sup>1,2</sup></b>	6.2	70.0	23.4
<b>Latvia</b>	14.7	50.4	33.8
<b>Lithuania</b>	11.4	52	36.3
<b>Luxembourg</b>	6.8	84.4	8.7
<b>Malta</b>	5.5	75.3	19.1
<b>Mexico<sup>2</sup></b>	7.5	67.9	24.4
<b>Netherlands</b>	11.4	84.8	3.8
<b>Poland</b>	7.9	58	33.8
<b>Portugal</b>	6	73.6	19.8
<b>Romania</b>	3.1	62.7	33.6
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	4.9	60.8	34.1
<b>Slovenia</b>	5.5	73.2	21.1
<b>Spain</b>	5.8	75.1	18.8
<b>Turkey</b>	4	64.1	31.6
<b>U.K</b>	23.8	65.8	10.2

Source: ELFS, 2007. Japan: the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions of the People on Health and Welfare 2007; Mexico: Encuesta Nacional de Ocupacion y Empleo, 2008.

1 Estimates on the distribution of children across households based on the number of household by type and the average number of children in each type of household.

2 Refers to children age 0 to 17.

Table SF2.3, shows that over 40% of children in all countries live in a household with two children. On average, about 30% of children live in a household with three children, but this proportion varies from around 16% in Spain to 45% in Finland. Children living in one-child-only households are less frequent in Finland, the Netherlands than in other countries, while they constitute more than 30% of all households with children in Portugal and Spain. Between 20 and 30% of children live in a household where the youngest child is below 6 years.

**Table SF2.3: Distribution of children aged 0-14 by type of households with children, 2007**

	Household with 1 child	Household with 2 children	Household with 3 children or more	Household with a child under age 6
<b>Austria</b>	26.1	47.7	26.2	52.3
<b>Belgium</b>	20.3	44.4	35.3	55
<b>Bulgaria</b>	36.9	51.3	11.7	39
<b>Czech Republic</b>	24.7	55.4	19.9	52.4
<b>Estonia</b>	32.4	41.5	26.1	57.5
<b>Finland</b>	16.7	38	45.4	60.8
<b>France</b>	22.3	45.9	31.8	58.5
<b>Germany</b>	27.7	48.2	24.1	51.2
<b>Greece</b>	22.8	55	22.2	48.3
<b>Hungary</b>	24.4	42.1	33.5	51.8
<b>Italy</b>	29.5	53.7	16.8	55
<b>Japan<sup>1</sup></b>	25.9	49.4	24.6	..
<b>Latvia</b>	32.1	41.2	26.7	52.4
<b>Lithuania</b>	28.8	45.4	25.9	49.6
<b>Luxembourg</b>	19.5	45.4	35	50.7
<b>Malta</b>	23.9	47.9	28.1	45.5
<b>Mexico</b>	18.4	34.2	47.4	38.2
<b>Netherlands</b>	17.9	49	33.1	55.6
<b>Poland</b>	24.8	43.2	31.9	50.5
<b>Portugal</b>	35.1	48	16.9	56.2
<b>Romania</b>	29.3	44.1	26.5	49
<b>Slovakia</b>	22.1	46.3	31.6	50
<b>Slovenia</b>	25.2	53	21.9	54.5
<b>Spain</b>	30.3	53.6	16.2	55.2
<b>Turkey</b>	14.9	34.2	50.9	65.5
<b>United Kingdom</b>	21.3	45.3	33.4	55.2
<b>United States<sup>2</sup></b>	20.3	39.6	40.1	..

.. not available

1 Estimates on the distribution of children across households based on the number of household by type and the average number of children in household. Refers to children age 0 to 17.

2 Children under age 18.

Sources: ELFS 2007 except ELFS 2006 for Turkey. United States: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2007 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Japan: the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions of the People on Health and Welfare 2007; Mexico: Conteo de Poblacion y Vivienda, 2005 (INEGI).

### *Comparability and data issues*

As shown in SF1 the quality and comparability of data is affected the existence of children having more than one residence. Double counting may arise as separated parents both declare the child as part of their household and as a result, the proportion of children living in a sole-parent family can be over-estimated (Toulemon, 2008).

*Sources and further reading:* Eurostat (2004) *Documentation of the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Census in the EU, EFTA and Candidate Countries*, Part I, II and III, Population and social conditions 3/2004/F/01, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>. Eurostat (2005), *Household and family characteristics of population. Eurostat Metadata in SDDS format: Summary Methodology*, [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_SDDS/EN/cens\\_nhou\\_sm1.htm](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/cens_nhou_sm1.htm). Eurostat (2007), EU Labour Force Survey database – User Guide, [http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu\\_lfs/index.htm](http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm). UN Statistics Division (1997), *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, United Nations Statistical Division, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/default.htm>. Toulemon, L. (2008), “Two-home family situations of children and adults: observation and consequences for describing family patterns in France”, 35<sup>th</sup> CSEIS Seminar, *New Family Relationships and Living Arrangements-Demands for Change in Social Statistics*.