

CX2.1: Children in jobless households and with long-term unemployed parents

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on children (0-14 years of age) in jobless households and with long-term unemployed parents through two main measures:

- i. *Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14) in jobless household*, that is, the proportion of all children (0-14) who live in households where no adult is in paid employment. This generally covers all adults in the household regardless of their exact relationship with the child, but for Australia and the United States data refer to the status of the child's parents only.
- ii. *Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14) who live in a household with at least one 'long-term' unemployed parent*, where 'long-term' unemployed is defined as a period of unemployment lasting for 12 months or longer. Only parents who live in the same household as the child are considered.

Definitions of 'employed' and 'unemployed' follow [ILO guidelines](#), with all people who during a specified reference period were either in paid employment or were self-employed for at least one hour being classified as 'employed', and all people who during the reference period were not in paid employment but were available for paid employment and had been actively seeking paid employment classified as 'unemployed'.

To highlight those children most at risk of living in a jobless household or with a long-term unemployed parent, this indicator presents information both for all children and for children grouped along several demographic and socio-economic markers:

- a. *By child age*, with children grouped into three age groups: 0-4 year olds, 5-9 year olds and 10-14 year olds
- b. *By household type*, with children grouped into those in 'couple' households, those in 'sole-parent' households, and those in 'complex' households. Couple households are defined as households with one adult couple (married or co-habiting) only, while sole-parent households are those that contain one adult only. 'Complex' households cover all other types of household, including those with two or more non-coupled adults or with multiple couples.
- c. *By the educational attainment of parents*, with children grouped according to the highest level of education attained by any parent that lives in the same household as the child. Levels of educational attainment are measured using the standard three-part ordinal variable based on the ISCED 97 classification system: 'low education', corresponding to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 97 levels 0-2 (pre-primary, primary or lower secondary education); 'moderate education', corresponding to highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 97 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and 'high education', corresponding to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 97 levels 5-6 (first and second stage of tertiary education).
- d. *By migrant background*, with children grouped into those who have a 'native' background and those who have a 'migrant' background. Migrant background is measured here according to the country of birth of both the child and of any parents living in the same household as the child. Children are classified as 'native' if both they and at least one parent (who lives in the same household) were born in the country of residence. Children who were born outside of

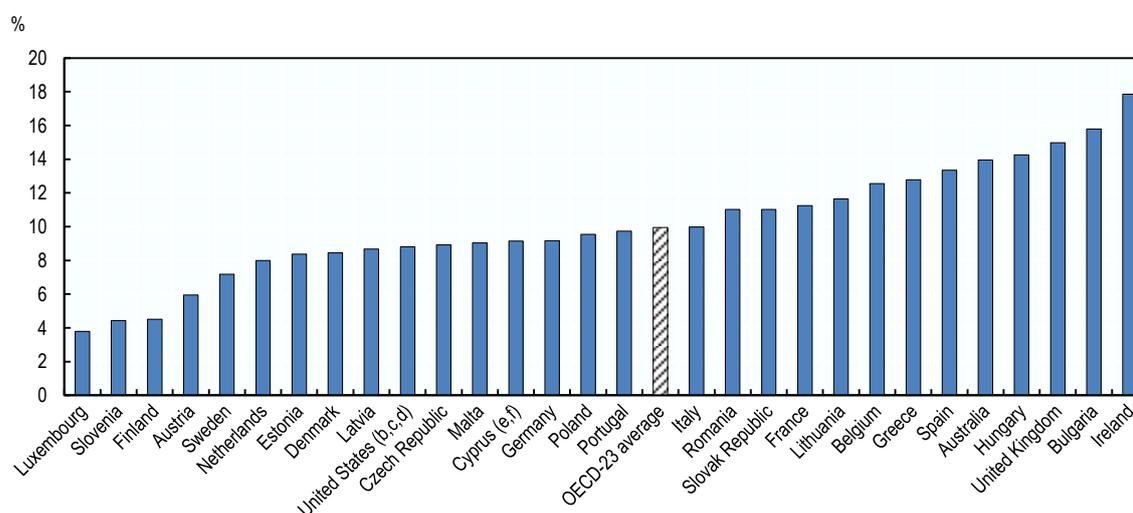
Other relevant indicators: *OECD Family Database*: Children in households by employment status (LMF1.1); Children in families (SF1.2); Living arrangement of children (SF1.3); Maternal employment (LMF1.2), Distribution of working hours among couple- and sole-parent families (LMF2.2 and LMF2.3); and, Child poverty (CO2.2)

the country of residence and children who were born in the country of residence but with two parents born outside of the country of residence are classified as having a 'migrant' background.

Key findings

On average across the OECD around 10% of children live in jobless households (Chart CX2.1.A), but rates do differ considerably between countries. In three OECD countries (Finland, Luxembourg and Slovenia) less than 5% of children live in a household where no adult is in paid employment, with the rate particularly low – at about 3.8% – in Luxembourg. In six other OECD countries (Australia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom), by contrast, at least 13% of children live in jobless households. In Ireland, almost one-in-five children live in a household where no adult is in paid employment.

Chart CX2.1.A Children in jobless households, 2013^a
 Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14^b) in households with no adult in paid employment



a) Data for Australia and Malta refer to 2011, and for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012

b) For the U.S., data refer to children aged between 0-17

c) For Australia and the U.S., data refer to the child's parents only

d) For the U.S., data refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment

e) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue";

f) Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Sources: [for Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [for European countries, EU-LFS](#); [for the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

In some OECD countries the likelihood that a child lives in a jobless household varies with the child's age, but the direction of the association is inconsistent between countries (Table CX2.1.A). For example, in five OECD countries (Italy, Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg and Poland) older children (10 to 14 year olds) are more likely than very young (0-4 year old) children to live in a household where no adult is in paid employment. In eight other OECD countries (the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), by contrast, very young children (0 to 4 year olds) are more likely than their older counterparts to live in jobless households. In the Czech Republic, the proportion of children aged 0-4 who live in a jobless household is almost 4.5 percentage points higher than the proportion of children aged 10-14.

Table CX2.1.A Children in jobless households by age, household type, parents' education and migratory background, 2013^a
 Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14^b) in households with no adult in paid employment, by age group, household type, parents' education and migratory background

	Total	Age group			Household type			Parents' highest level of education			Migratory background	
		0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	Couple household	Sole-parent household	Complex household	Low education	Moderate education	High education	Native background	Migrant background
Luxembourg	3.79	2.18	3.42	5.27	2.07	16.62	5.72	11.37	3.65	2.12	2.69	4.67
Slovenia	4.44	4.22	5.04	4.05	2.73	26.30	6.09	38.80	4.90	1.57	4.18	7.62
Finland	4.51	6.06	4.11	3.30	3.78	33.80	1.89	33.44	5.30	2.38	3.46	25.02
Austria	5.96	5.46	6.38	6.02	3.54	28.42	3.87	25.79	4.99	1.93	3.86	12.67
Sweden	7.18	8.47	7.31	5.59	3.73	23.49	4.41	36.00	6.50	3.34	3.60	23.49
Netherlands	7.99	7.84	8.16	7.96	3.88	39.36	6.70	27.26	10.37	1.83	4.96	26.20
Estonia	8.37	9.20	7.54	8.31	4.46	23.21	9.03	31.96	11.39	3.51	8.34	9.38
Denmark	8.45	9.55	7.59	8.31	2.77	21.88	6.06	21.16	7.15	5.23	6.22	26.21
Latvia	8.68	9.30	8.03	8.71	4.67	27.71	7.72	28.73	10.41	2.69	8.56	13.99
United States (b,c,d)	8.81	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	8.92	11.13	8.59	6.66	3.82	41.07	8.74	48.67	9.67	2.01	8.92	9.25
Malta	9.04	9.20	7.65	10.16	4.41	65.38	7.61	15.51	2.14	0.92	9.01	13.23
Cyprus (e,f)	9.15	8.41	8.10	10.88	6.24	42.73	6.45	25.38	12.10	5.20	6.40	19.61
Germany	9.17	10.84	9.35	7.50	4.87	35.82	4.17	33.57	8.51	2.44	..	..
Poland	9.55	9.01	9.53	10.16	5.50	39.61	10.66	38.86	11.73	2.46	9.51	20.57
Portugal	9.73	9.27	10.49	9.44	5.87	31.13	12.71	16.15	6.49	2.80	8.82	19.82
OECD average	9.95	10.10	9.73	9.56	5.80	33.84	11.18	33.58	10.04	3.23	8.54	18.16
Italy	9.99	9.11	9.63	11.24	7.66	28.01	16.48	21.17	7.59	2.44	9.67	11.78
Romania	11.02	11.58	10.40	11.20	10.22	30.62	10.59	23.17	8.82	2.00	..	..
Slovak Republic	11.03	12.77	10.24	9.93	6.59	34.55	14.73	53.12	9.57	1.65	..	..
France	11.26	12.26	11.35	10.17	6.07	35.90	17.70	36.73	11.98	3.46	9.18	24.52
Lithuania	11.64	10.95	11.06	12.81	5.00	33.30	12.35	43.09	16.17	3.16	11.45	27.71
Belgium	12.56	12.89	12.54	12.21	6.95	41.60	13.07	36.68	11.98	3.22	8.85	26.63
Greece	12.79	10.92	12.60	14.36	10.12	39.22	21.76	25.08	13.94	6.04	11.24	24.42
Spain	13.35	12.90	13.23	13.96	9.45	33.30	23.60	28.55	13.66	5.01	11.46	26.14
Australia	13.96	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hungary	14.26	15.46	13.52	13.86	10.74	39.77	16.33	47.47	10.61	2.99	14.35	9.35
United Kingdom	14.98	16.67	14.80	13.25	5.96	41.73	12.83	39.55	17.07	4.55	14.21	18.63
Bulgaria	15.80	16.68	16.18	14.86	12.15	38.07	16.40	52.11	8.81	2.37	..	..
Ireland	17.86	15.86	18.88	19.12	11.27	55.85	18.24	53.83	23.86	6.96	16.31	23.72

Note: values in bold represent statistically significant differences across groups at $p < 0.05$

a) Data for Australia and Malta refer to 2011, and for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012

b) For the U.S., data refer to children aged between 0-17

c) For Australia and the U.S., data refer to the child's parents only

d) For the U.S., data refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment

e) See note e) to Chart CX2.1.A

f) See note f) to Chart CX2.1.A

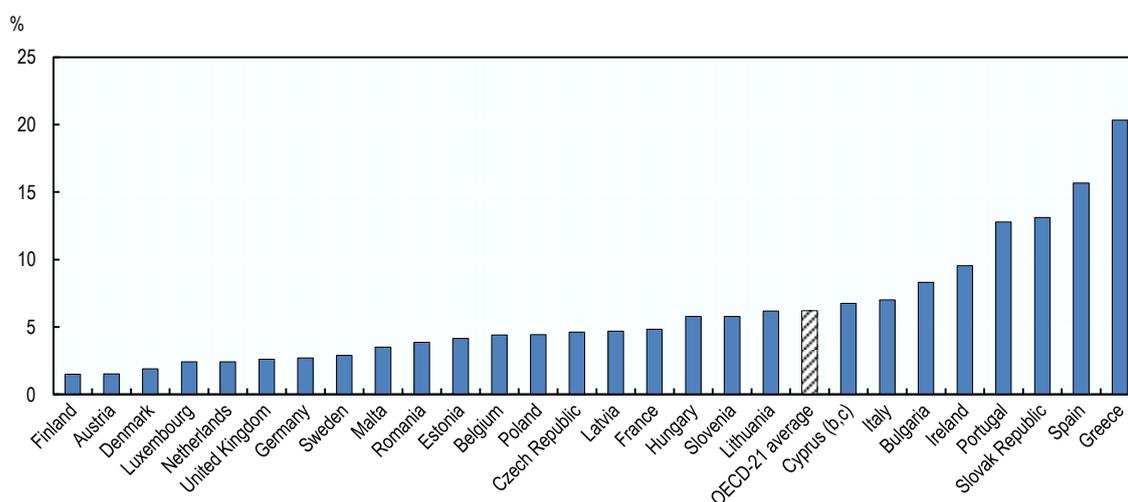
Sources: [for Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [for European countries, EU-LFS](#); [for the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

The likelihood of a child living in a jobless household differs considerably across socio-economic groups (Table CX2.1.A). Children who live in sole-parent households, for example, are in all OECD countries more likely to live in jobless households than children who live in couple households. Similarly, children who live with parents who have at most low levels of educational attainment are, across all OECD countries, at significantly greater risk of living in a jobless household than children who live with at least one parent with a high level of educational attainment. In many OECD countries, children with a ‘migrant’ background are also more likely to find themselves in a jobless household than their counterparts with a ‘native’ background.

Similar to the proportion of children in jobless households, the share of children who live with at least one long-term unemployed parent differs considerably across OECD countries (Chart CX2.1.B). The proportion of children with a long-term unemployed parent is negligible in Austria, Finland and Denmark, and low in most other OECD countries. However, in Portugal and the Slovak Republic around 13% of children live with at least one long-term unemployed parent, while in Spain this is just below 16%. In Greece, more than 20% of children live in a household where at least one parent has been unemployed for 12 months or more.

Chart CX2.1.B Children with long-term unemployed parents, 2013^a

Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14^b) who live in a household with at least one long-term (12 months or more) unemployed parent



a) Data for Malta refer to 2011, and for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012

b) See note e) to Chart CX2.1.A

c) See note f) to Chart CX2.1.A

Sources: [for all countries, EU-LFS](#)

In several (12) OECD countries, the likelihood of a child living with at least one long-term unemployed parent increases as the child becomes older (Table CX2.1.B). In Hungary, for example, only around 3.4% of children aged 0-4 live in a household where at least one parent has been unemployed for 12 months or more, compared to 7.1% of children aged 10-14. In the Slovak Republic, rates vary from 9.4% for children aged 0-4 to 15.2% for those aged 10-14. However, in many cases this is likely a reflection of the fact that mothers (more than fathers) are less likely to participate in the labour market when children are very young and, as a result, are less likely to find themselves looking for work but ‘unemployed’.

Table CX2.1.B Children with long-term unemployed parents by age, household type, parents' education and migratory background, 2013^a
 Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14^b) who live in a household with at least one long-term (12 months or more) unemployed parent, by age group, household type, parents' education and migratory background

	Age group				Household type			Parents' highest level of education			Migratory background	
	Total	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	Couple household	Sole-parent household	Complex household	Low education	Moderate education	High education	Native background	Migrant background
Finland	1.51	1.29	1.68	1.55	1.44	3.78	1.39	6.11	1.79	1.08	1.31	5.25
Austria	1.52	1.19	1.85	1.51	1.41	2.95	1.20	6.25	1.28	0.61	0.96	3.31
Denmark	1.90	1.84	2.16	1.69	1.87	2.20	0.71	3.71	2.20	1.54	1.36	6.22
Luxembourg	2.42	1.44	3.50	2.16	2.58	0.30	3.95	4.19	1.89	2.42	1.65	3.03
Netherlands	2.42	1.95	2.29	2.97	2.20	3.42	4.16	4.03	2.92	1.70	1.96	5.17
United Kingdom	2.62	2.02	3.06	2.82	2.35	3.09	3.32	4.99	3.58	1.12	2.43	3.50
Germany	2.71	2.26	3.02	2.82	2.19	5.35	3.09	7.63	3.01	0.82	..	..
Sweden	2.89	3.71	2.59	2.33	2.82	2.64	5.57	8.23	3.03	2.03	2.01	6.92
Malta	3.50	3.24	3.27	3.89	3.26	2.40	4.80	5.65	1.72	1.06	..	..
Romania	3.86	3.67	4.16	3.73	3.70	2.53	4.23	4.18	4.05	3.28	..	..
Estonia	4.16	3.64	4.58	4.31	3.99	4.79	4.22	3.33	7.74	2.44	4.13	4.84
Belgium	4.42	4.64	4.82	3.77	3.77	8.83	2.84	10.45	5.10	2.42	2.63	11.24
Poland	4.42	3.32	4.94	5.07	4.02	5.06	5.08	10.46	5.78	2.11	4.42	4.81
Czech Republic	4.62	2.21	7.14	4.73	3.70	8.24	7.19	21.04	5.39	0.94	4.58	5.96
Latvia	4.69	3.92	4.81	5.51	4.43	5.27	4.92	10.94	8.95	2.81	4.70	4.36
France	4.83	5.18	4.97	4.35	4.30	6.06	8.32	10.49	5.14	3.04	4.08	9.65
Hungary	5.77	3.37	6.70	7.14	5.75	4.07	6.49	11.95	6.41	2.05	5.80	4.61
Slovenia	5.78	5.71	6.46	5.10	5.27	10.19	7.21	17.79	7.75	3.39	5.43	10.32
Lithuania	6.17	3.82	6.92	7.70	6.54	4.13	6.93	10.33	10.10	2.43	6.24	1.02
OECD average	6.21	5.48	6.78	6.37	5.80	6.11	8.14	13.21	7.08	3.46	5.44	9.57
Cyprus (b,c)	6.74	7.17	5.86	7.14	6.29	9.06	7.60	11.37	8.82	4.91	6.05	9.37
Italy	7.01	6.37	7.39	7.25	6.65	5.11	10.59	11.49	6.61	2.97	6.46	10.08
Bulgaria	8.32	8.44	8.74	7.89	9.17	5.51	7.59	15.87	7.98	5.14	..	..
Ireland	9.55	9.00	10.05	9.65	10.07	6.35	9.81	17.34	13.28	5.84	8.72	12.69
Portugal	12.77	12.20	12.86	13.19	12.47	9.20	15.75	16.81	12.48	7.99	12.45	16.40
Slovak Republic	13.12	9.39	15.11	15.17	10.96	6.10	18.92	48.22	13.02	3.89	..	..
Spain	15.68	16.03	16.14	14.82	14.57	13.80	22.30	26.48	17.08	9.84	13.93	27.50
Greece	20.34	18.33	20.98	21.28	19.37	16.79	28.83	26.45	23.19	14.50	19.01	30.41

Note: values in bold represent statistically significant differences across groups at $p < 0.05$.

a) Data for Malta refer to 2011, and for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012

b) See note e) to Chart CX2.1.A

c) See note f) to Chart CX2.1.A

Sources: [for all countries, EU-LFS](#)

In most OECD countries, the chances of a child living with a long-term unemployed parent tends to differ across socio-economic groups (Table CX2.1.B). For example, in all but one OECD country (Luxembourg), children are significantly more likely to have at least one long-term unemployed parent when they live in a household with parents who have at most low levels of educational attainment. Similarly, in several OECD countries the likelihood of a child living with a long-term unemployed parent increases significantly when the child has a 'migrant' rather than a 'native' background. Differences across household types are more inconsistent across countries, and are generally less clear. In large part, this likely reflects the complications introduced when comparing across households types with different numbers of adult members.

Comparability and data issues

Data for this indicator come from national labour force surveys or from national sources that are themselves based on labour force surveys. Labour force surveys are well established sources of labour market data and comparability issues relating to concepts around and definitions of employment are relatively few. They are not, however, designed specifically to provide information on employment and/or unemployment by family or parenthood status. As a result, classifications of 'parents' may not always match conventional or traditional conceptions of parenthood – for example, individuals are only counted as 'parents' if they live in the same household as the child in question – while relatively small sample sizes for certain subgroups may affect the reliability of certain results and subsequent comparisons.

Sources and further reading: OECD (2015), *OECD Employment Outlook 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/empl_outlook-2015-en; OECD (2015), *How's Life? 2015: Measuring Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/how_life-2015-en