

### LMF1.1: Children in households by employment status

#### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator presents information on children (0-to-14-year-olds) by the type of household and employment status of adults in the household in which they live. Data are presented from the child's perspective, in that they look at the proportion of children in a given household type with a given employment status. Information on the employment status of families and households themselves is given in indicators LMF2.2 and LMF2.3. The main types of household and employment statuses generally used are as follows (see the notes to the charts and *data and comparability issues* for variations and exceptions):

- *Children in all households*, which covers children in all types of household regardless of whoever else lives in the household. The possible household employment statuses for all households are:
  - i) *Working: all adults working*, where all adults in the household are in at least part-time employment
  - ii) *Working: at least one adult working, at least one adult not working*, where at least one adult in the household is in at least part-time employment, and at least one adult in the household is not in paid employment
  - iii) *Jobless: all adults not working*, where all adults in the household are not in paid employment.
- *Children in couple households*, which covers children who live in households with one adult couple (married or co-habiting) only. In most cases at least one member of the couple is one of the child's parents, but the adults may also be other relatives (for example, an older sibling or grandparent) or non-relative guardians. Children who live in households with two or more non-coupled adults or multiple couples are classified under 'complex' households. The possible household employment statuses for adults in couple households are:
  - i) *Working: two adults working full-time*, where both adults in the couple are in full-time paid employment
  - ii) *Working: one adult full-time, one adult part-time*, where one partner is in full-time employment and one in part-time employment
  - iii) *Working: one adult full-time, one adult not working*, where one partner is in full-time employment and the other is not in paid employment
  - iv) *Working: other*, which captures all other types of working patterns, including two-earner households where both partners are in part-time employment and single-earner households where one partner is in part-time employment and the other is not in employment, plus any single- or two-earner households where information on either partner's working hours is missing.
  - v) *Jobless: two adults not working*, where both partners are not in paid employment
- *Children in single-parent households*, which covers who live in households with only one adult. In most cases the one adult is one of the child's parents, but may also be another relative (for example, an older sibling or grandparent) or non-relative guardian. There are four possible employment statuses for this type of household:
  - i) *Working: adult working full-time*, where the adult in the household is in full-time employment
  - ii) *Working: adult working part-time*, where the adult in the household is in part-time employment
  - iii) *Working: no information on hours*, where the adult in the household is in paid employment but information on their working hours is missing.
  - iii) *Jobless: adult not working*, where the adult in the household is not in employment

For completeness, children may also live in a 'complex' household, which includes households with two or more non-coupled adults, with a couple and other non-coupled adults, and with multiple couples. Data on children in complex households are not presented in this document but are available in the [accompanying .xls file](#).

Other relevant indicators: 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); Time used for work, care and daily household chores (LMF2.6); and, Child poverty (CO2.2).
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Definitions of 'working' and 'employment' 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 the distinction between part-time and full-time employment generally follows the OECD's common 30-hour definition, with part-time employment defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. (See the notes to the charts and *data and comparability issues* for exceptions and more detail).

To highlight those children most at risk of living in a household where no adult works, this indicator also presents information on the proportion on children in jobless households by the education level of their parents and by migrant background. Data are presented for children in *all* households only, with the measures used as follows:

- *Proportion of children in jobless households by highest level of education attained by any parents in the same household*, that is, the proportion of children that live in a household where no adult is in paid employment by the highest level of educational attainment by any parent who lives in the same household. The education levels of any parents that do not live in the same household as the child are not considered. Levels of education are measured using the standard three-part ordinal variable based on the ISCED 2011 classification system: 'low education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); 'medium education' reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and 'high education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).
- *Proportion of children in jobless households by migrant background*, that is, the proportion of children that live in households where no adult is in paid employment for children who are considered a 'native' of the country of residence and for 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 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.

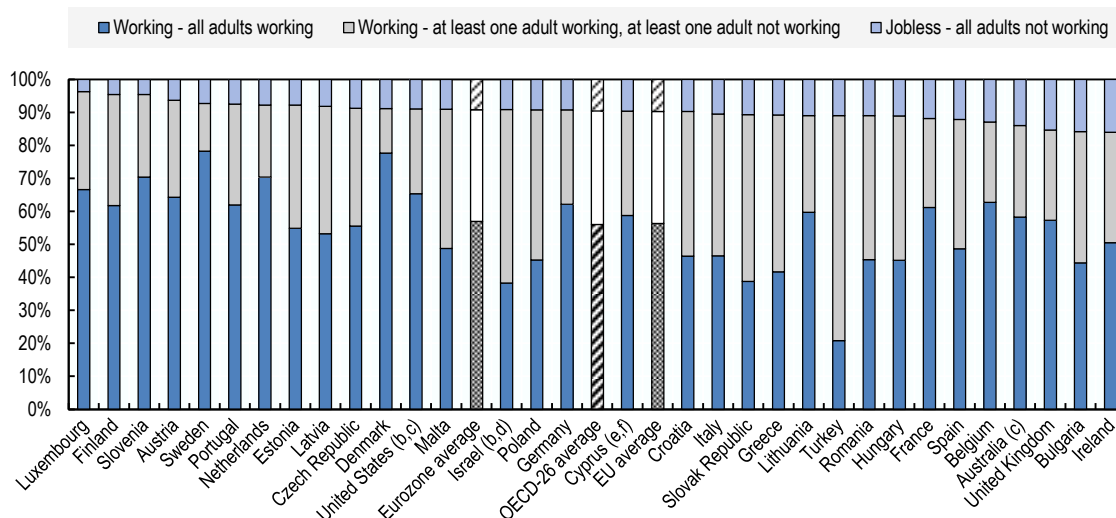
### *Key findings*

On average across OECD countries 56% of children live in households where all adults are in work, and around 34% in households where at least one adult works and one adult does not (Chart LMF1.1.A). The remainder – an average of just less than 10% – live in households where no adult is in paid employment, though this rate does vary considerably across countries. In Finland, Luxembourg and Slovenia, for example, less than 6% of children live in jobless households. By contrast, in Ireland and the United Kingdom around 15-16% of children live in households where no adult is in paid employment.

Trends in the proportion of children living in jobless households vary across OECD countries (Chart LMF1.1.B). Several countries have seen the share of children living in jobless households increase over the past decade or so, with increases largest, unsurprisingly, in those OECD countries that were hit hardest by the economic crisis. In Spain, for example, the proportion of children living in jobless households has increased by over 6 percentage points since 2004, while in Greece it is almost 7 percentage points higher now than it was in 2004. However, some other OECD countries have seen the share of children in jobless households fall. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the proportion of children living in a household where no adult is in paid employment has fallen by almost 2.5 percent since 2004. In the Slovak Republic, the proportion of children in jobless households is close to 3 percentage points lower now than in 2004, though it has risen again slightly in the last few years.

**Chart LMF1.1.A. Children by household employment status, 2014<sup>a</sup>**

Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14<sup>b</sup>) in all households by the employment status of adults<sup>c</sup> in the household



a) Data for Australia refer to 2011, for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012, and for Germany, Israel and Turkey to 2013

b) For Israel and the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17

c) For Australia, data refer to the labour force status of the 'husband or head' and 'wife or partner' of the husband or head of the child's family unit, only. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only. In both cases the labour force status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account. For the United States, data refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment.

d) The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

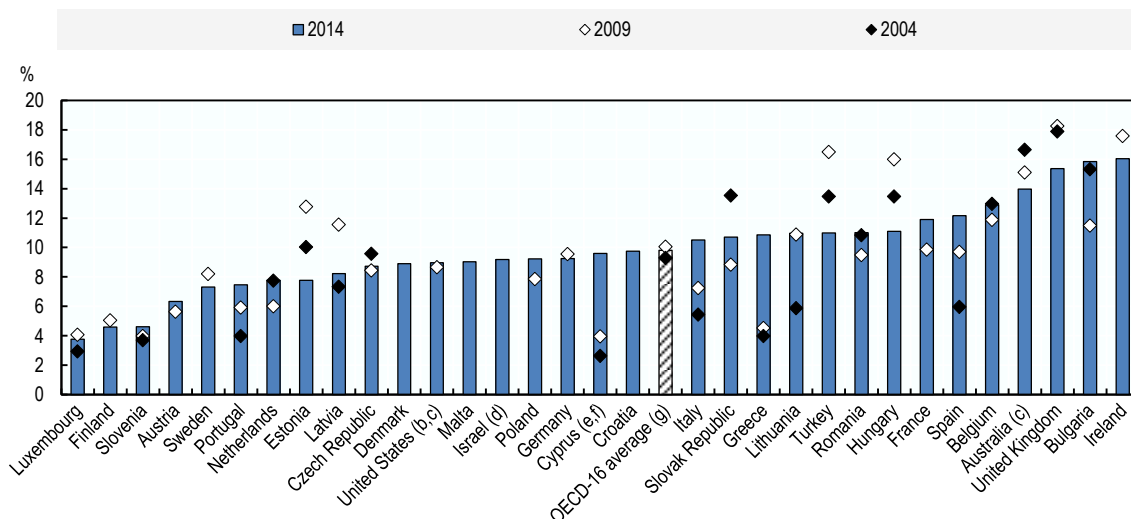
e) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting 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 Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

**Chart LMF1.1.B. Children in jobless households, 2004, 2009 and 2014<sup>a</sup>**

Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14<sup>b</sup>) in all households with no adult in paid employment<sup>c</sup>



a) Data for Australia refer to 2011, for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012, and for Germany, Israel and Turkey to 2013

b) For Israel and the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17

c) For Australia, data refer to the labour force status of the 'husband or head' and 'wife or partner' of the husband or head of the child's family unit, only. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only. In both cases the labour force status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account. For the United States, data refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment.

d) See note d) in Chart LMF1.1.A

e) See note e) in Chart LMF1.1.A

f) See note f) in Chart LMF1.1.A

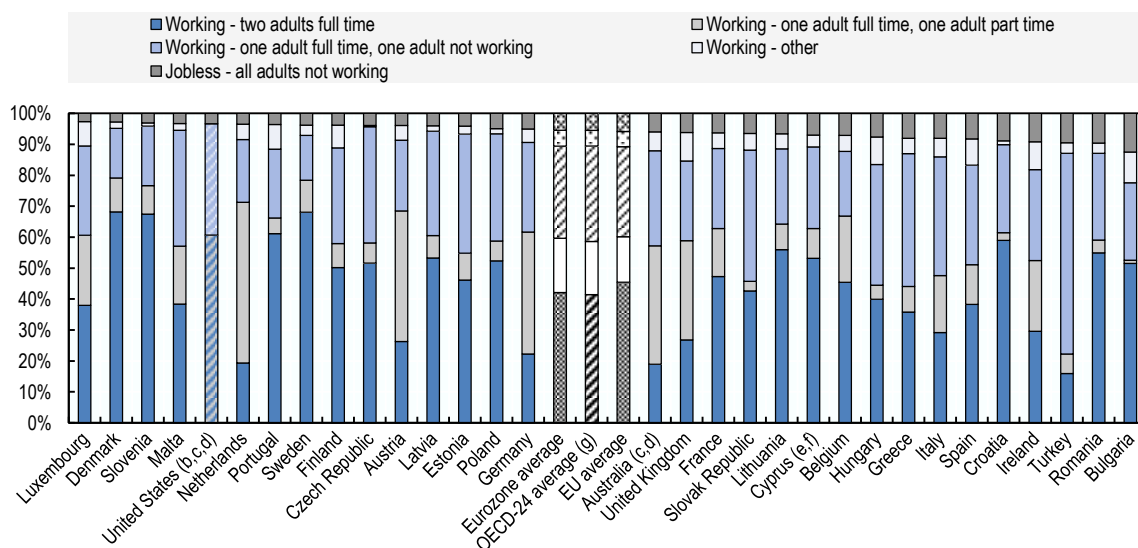
g) Unweighted mean average for the 16 OECD countries for which data are available at all three time points

Sources: [For Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Children living in couple households are likely to live in a household where at least one adult is in work (Chart LMF1.1.C). On average across OECD countries around 41% of children in couple households live in households where both adults work full-time – with this category covering more than two-thirds of children in three OECD countries (Denmark, Slovenia and Sweden) – while another 17% on average live in ‘one-and-a-half-earner’ couple households, with one adult working full-time and one working part-time. Indeed, in all but five OECD countries (Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Slovak Republic and Turkey) a majority of children live in households that are at least ‘one-and-a-half earner’. On average, only around 5% of children in couple households also live in households that are jobless. Among OECD countries, the share of children in couple households also living in a jobless household is highest, at 9.5%, in Turkey.

**Chart LMF1.1.C. Children in couple households by household employment status, 2014<sup>a</sup>**

Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14<sup>b</sup>) in one-couple households by the employment status of adults<sup>c</sup> in the household



a) Data for Australia refer to 2011, for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012, and for Germany and Turkey to 2013

b) For the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17

c) Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. In some countries (those for which information comes from the EU-LFS) it is possible for individuals to report that they do not have usual set hours in their main job. Where this is the case, the individual's actual hours worked in their main job during the survey reference week are used in place of their usual weekly working hours. For Australia, part-time employees are defined as those who usually work less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week, and full-time employees as those who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week. For the United States, no distinction between part-time and full-time work. 'Working - other' refers to working households with employment patterns not covered by the other categories. This includes two-earner one-couple households where both adults work part-time, single-earner one-couple households where one adult works part-time and one adult does not work, and single-earner and two-earner one-couple households where information on either partner's working hours is missing.

d) For Australia, data refer to the labour force status of the 'husband or head' and 'wife or partner' of the husband or head of the child's family unit, only. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only. In both cases the labour force status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account. For the United States, 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) in Chart LMF1.1.A

f) See note f) in Chart LMF1.1.A

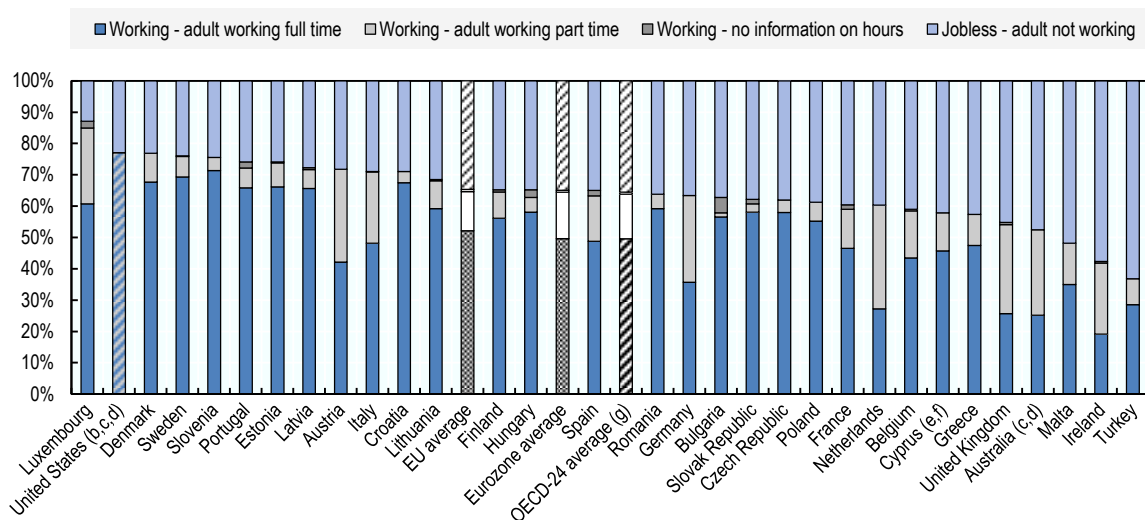
g) The OECD-24 average excludes the United States

Sources: [For Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Children in single-parent households are more likely to live in jobless households (Chart LMF1.1.D). On average across OECD countries around 36% of children in single-parent households live in a jobless household, with the proportion as high as around 58% in Ireland and 63% in Turkey. However, the

remaining two-thirds of children in single-parent households live in households where the single adult is in at least part-time employment. In Australia, Ireland, the United Kingdom and particularly the Netherlands, over half of those children in working single-parent households live in households where the adult works only part-time. In the remaining OECD countries, most children in working single-parent households live in households where the adult is in full-time employment. In fact, in 12 OECD countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Sweden) over half of all children in *all* single-parent households live in households where the adult works full-time, with this proportion rising as high as 69% in Sweden and 71% in Slovenia.

**Chart LMF1.1.D. Children in sole-parent households by household employment status, 2014<sup>a</sup>**  
 Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14<sup>b</sup>) in sole-parent households by the employment status of the adult<sup>c</sup> in the household



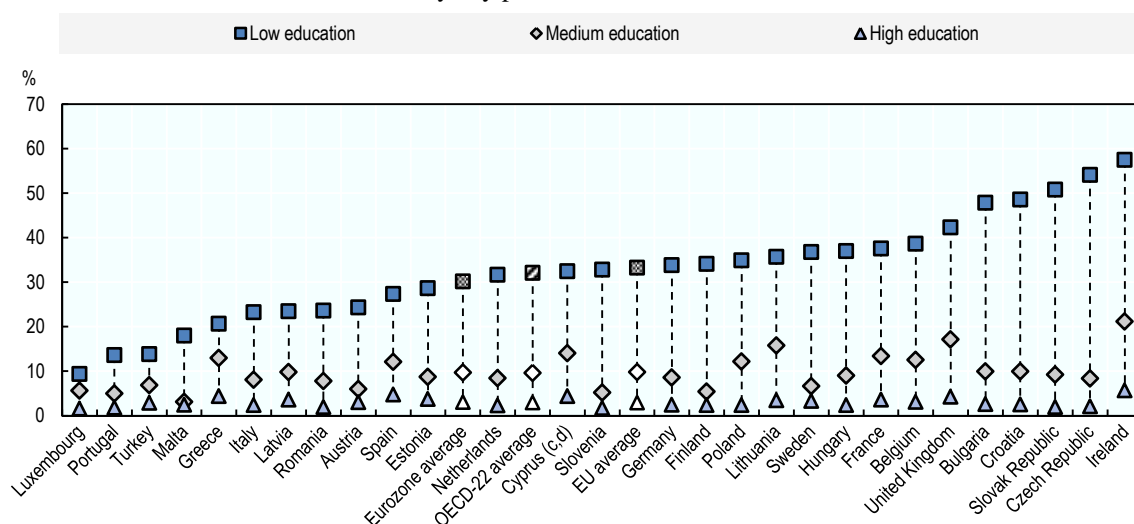
a) Data for Australia refer to 2011, for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012, and for Germany and Turkey to 2013  
 b) For the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17  
 c) Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. In some countries (those for which information comes from the EU-LFS) it is possible for individuals to report that they do not have usual set hours in their main job. Where this is the case, the individual's actual hours worked in their main job during the survey reference week are used in place of their usual weekly working hours. For Australia, part-time employees are defined as those who usually work less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week, and full-time employees as those who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week. For the United States, no distinction between part-time and full-time work.  
 d) For Australia, data refer to the labour force status of the 'husband or head' of the child's family unit, only. For the United States, data refer to the labour force status of the child's parent only. In both cases the labour force status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account. For the United States, data refer to whether or not the child's parent is active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment.  
 e) See note e) in Chart LMF1.1.A  
 f) See note f) in Chart LMF1.1.A  
 g) The OECD-24 average excludes the United States  
 Sources: [For Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Children are generally far more likely to live in a jobless household if their parents have only low levels of educational attainment (Chart LMF1.1.E). On average across OECD countries around 32% of children who live with parents that have at most low levels of educational attainment also live in households that are jobless, compared to less than 10% of children who live with parents with at most moderate educational attainment, and 3% of children who live in a household where at least one parent has a high level of educational attainment. This pattern holds true across all OECD countries with available data, although the extent to which children with less educated parents are disproportionately more likely to live in jobless households does vary. In Luxembourg, for example, around 9% of children who live with parents that have at most low levels of educational attainment also live in jobless households. This is higher than the rates for children who live with parents with at most moderate (5.6%) and high (1.6%) levels of educational attainment, but the differences are only small. By contrast, in Ireland and the Czech

and Slovak Republics over 50% of children who live with parents with at most low levels of educational attainment also live in a household that is jobless. In all three cases this is over 45 percentage points higher than the equivalent for children who live in households where at least one parent has a high level of educational attainment.

**Chart LMF1.1.E. Children in jobless households by education level of parents, 2014<sup>a</sup>**

Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14) in households with no adult in paid employment, by highest level of education attained<sup>b</sup> by any parents in the same household



a) Data for Finland and Sweden to 2012, and for Germany and Turkey to 2013

b) Parental education is measured as the highest level of education attained by any adults living in the same household as the child that are recorded as the child's parent. It excludes any parents that are not living in the same household as the child. Educational attainment is measured on a three-part ordinal variable (low education, medium education and high education), with distinctions between the three levels corresponding to the usual ISCED classification system: 'low education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); 'medium education' reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and 'high education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).

c) See note e) in Chart LMF1.1.A

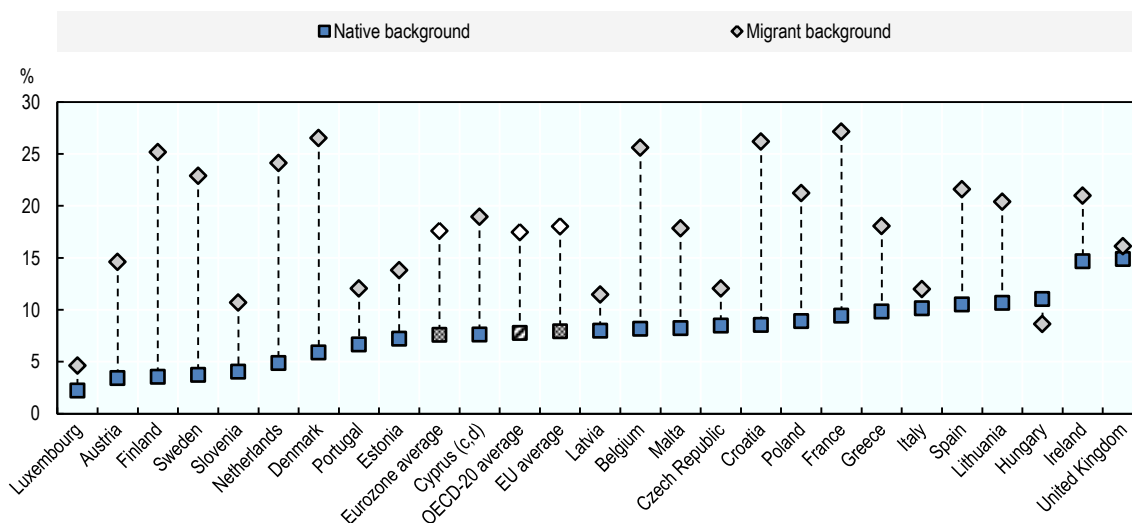
d) See note f) in Chart LMF1.1.A

Sources: [For European countries, EU-LFS; For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#)

The likelihood of living in a jobless household also tends to increase when children have a migrant background (Chart LMF1.1.F). On average across OECD countries, almost 18% of children who have a migrant background also live in a household that is jobless. For children with a 'native' background, this is just under 8%. This pattern can be seen across all OECD countries with the exception of Hungary, but the extent of the gap does vary. In Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, for example, children with a migrant background are only slightly more likely to live in a jobless household than children with a 'native' background. In Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands, by contrast, having a migrant background leads to an increase of around 20 percentage points or more in the likelihood of a child living in a jobless household.

**Chart LMF1.1.F. Children in jobless households by migrant background, 2014<sup>a</sup>**

Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14) in households with no adult in paid employment, by migrant background<sup>b</sup>



a) Data for Denmark, Finland and Sweden to 2012

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

c) See note e) in Chart LMF1.1.A

d) See note f) in Chart LMF1.1.A

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

### Comparability and data issues

Data for most of the countries used in this indicator come from the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS). The EU LFS applies a threefold categorisation of household types to allow for consistent classification across the many possible household situations in which children may live, but these specific household types may not always match conventional or traditional conceptions of family forms. For example and as noted in *definitions and methodology*, children are classified as living in a couple households only if there is only *one* adult couple in the household, and in a single-parent household only if there is *one* adult in the household. Children that live in households with more than one couple or with a single parent but also with other adults are considered to live in 'complex' households. To the extent that children live with parents but also with other adults, this may lead to an underestimation of children living in couple or single-parent households. This is particularly likely to be the case in those countries (such as those in Southern Europe) where living with extended family is common.

Data for Australia and the United States come from their own national labour force surveys and use slightly different definitions to the EU LFS. For Australia, the data used for children in 'couple households' refer to children living in 'couple families' – that is, in a family unit with two adults who are in a registered or de facto marriage and who are usually resident in the same household – and the data on children in 'single-parent households' refer to children living in 'lone parent families' – that is, in a family unit with an adult who has no spouse or partner usually present in the household and with whom they share a parent-child relationship. The data on the employment status of adults in the household refer to the 'husband or head' and 'wife or partner' of the husband or head of the child's family unit, only. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent, only. The data used for children in 'couple households' refer to children 'living with both parents' (married or not married) only, while the data for children in 'single-parent households' refer to children living with one parent only ('living with mother only' or 'living with father only'). The information on the employment status of adults in the household refers only to the labour force status of the child's parent(s). In both cases (Australia and the

United States) the household itself may or may not contain other adults, but the employment status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account in the data on household employment status.

As noted in *definitions and methodology*, the definitions of ‘working’ and ‘employment’ generally follow [ILO guidelines](#) and the distinction between part-time and full-time work generally follows the OECD’s common 30-hour definition, but there are a couple of exceptions. For Australia, part-time employees are defined as those who usually work less than 35 hours a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week, and full-time employees as those who usually work 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week. For the United States, data refer to whether or not the child’s parents are *active* in the labour market – as opposed to in paid employment – and therefore include those who would otherwise be classified as unemployed, and also make no distinction between part-time and full-time work.

Lastly, as discussed in indicator [LMF1.2](#), cross-national comparisons of employment in households with children may be affected by differences in the treatment of individuals on maternity, paternity or parental leave. It is difficult to isolate the impact of differences in the treatment of persons on leave on parental employment rates, but it is possible that different treatments could influence cross-national variations in employment patterns among and working hours for parents with very young children.

Sources and further reading: 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); UNICEF (2011), *An overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Innocenti Research Report. OECD (2011) *Doing Better for Families* <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/doingbetterforfamilies.htm>; OECD (2015) *How’s Life? 2015: Measuring Well-being*, OECD, Paris.