

SF1.5: Living conditions of children

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents the living conditions (dwelling and neighbourhood) of children related to overcrowding in the dwelling that children live in, the condition of the dwelling, and the area in which the dwelling is based.

Overcrowding is measured in terms of rooms per person in the dwelling, excluding kitchens, bathrooms and corridors. An overcrowded dwelling is defined as one in which there is less than one room per person. The indicator presents (i) the median number of rooms per person in the dwellings of children, (ii) the proportion of children that live in overcrowded dwellings and (iii) how many children aged 15 years have their own bedroom.

The condition of the dwelling refers to state of the dwelling structure and its amenities. The condition of the dwelling is measured based on (i) presence of any structural problems with the dwelling (e.g. leaking roofs) and (ii) whether children have the exclusive use of a shower/bathroom and a flushing toilet.

The quality of the area/neighbourhood in which a dwelling is based also has important implications for the well-being of children living in the dwelling. The condition of the area in which the dwelling is situated is measured based on a subjective perception of whether the household-respondent thinks the dwelling is: (i) too dark; (ii) too noisy; (iii) too polluted; and/or (iv) situated in an area with too much crime, violence or vandalism.

Key findings

A) Overcrowding

On average across the OECD children live in households with just over one room person (Chart SF.1.5.A Panel A). However, the average number of rooms per person varies across countries from a low of 0.5 rooms per person in Mexico to a high of 1.5 rooms per person in Canada.

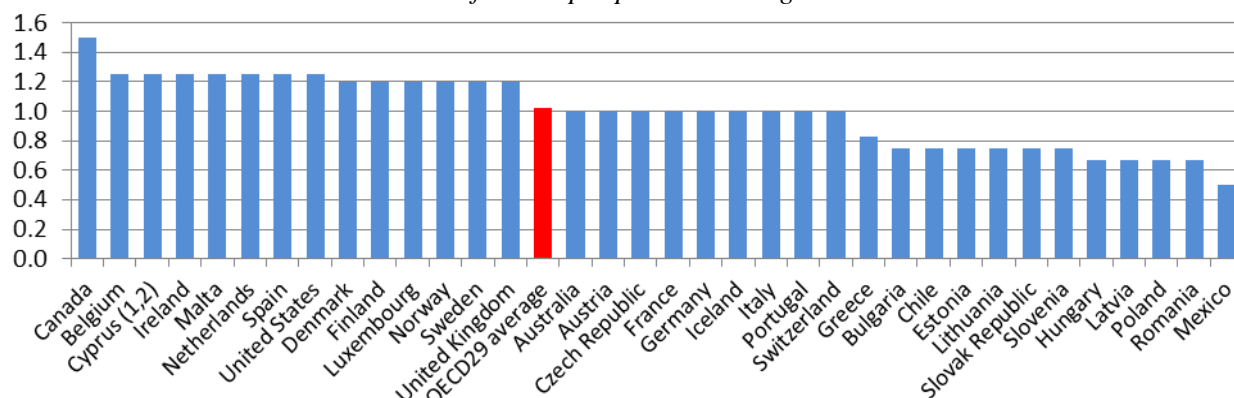
On average across the OECD, around 1 in 3 children live in an overcrowded household (Chart SF.1.5.A Panel B). There is considerable variation across countries: in Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain less than 10% of children live in overcrowded conditions, while the proportion of children living in overcrowded households is high in Hungary, Mexico and Poland, at over 70%.

Across the OECD, most teenagers (aged 15 years) have access to their own bedroom (Chart SF.1.5.A Panel C). On average, 82% of children do not share their bedroom with any other members of the household. At over 90%, the proportion of children aged 15 years with their own bedroom is high in Germany, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries, and low in the Czech Republic, Israel, Italy, the Slovak Republic and Turkey, at less than 60%.

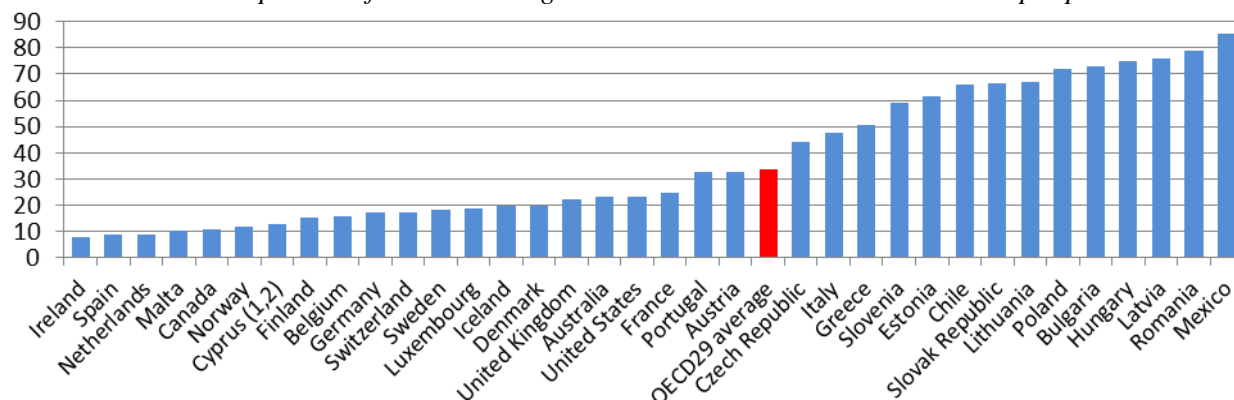
Other relevant indicators: Typology of childcare and early education services (PF4.1), CO1.8 Regular smokers among 15 year olds (CO1.8), Participation in voluntary work (CO4.1), and Substance abuse by young people (CO4.3)

Chart SF1.5.A. Children living in overcrowded households, 2010/2011*

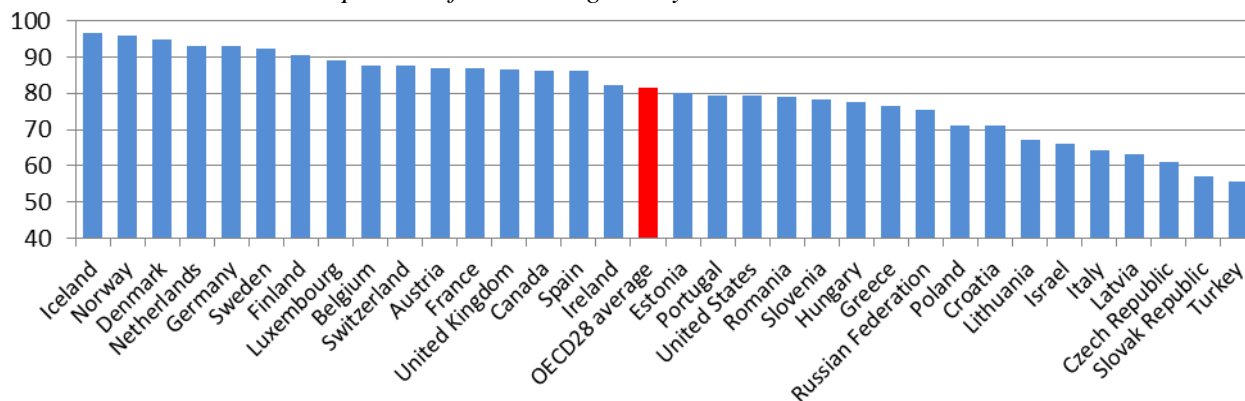
Panel A. Median number of rooms per persons among households with children



Panel B. Proportion of children living in households with less than one room per person



Panel C. Proportion of children aged 15 years who have their own bedroom



* Data for Panel A and B are based on household surveys and refer to 2011; data for Panel C is based on the 7th wave of the survey on Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) and refer to 2010.

1 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".

2. Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: 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.

Source: Panel A and B: EU SILC for European countries; HILDA for Australia; SHS for Canada; CASEN for Chile; ENIGH for Mexico; SHP for Switzerland; PSID for the United States. Panel C: HBSC.

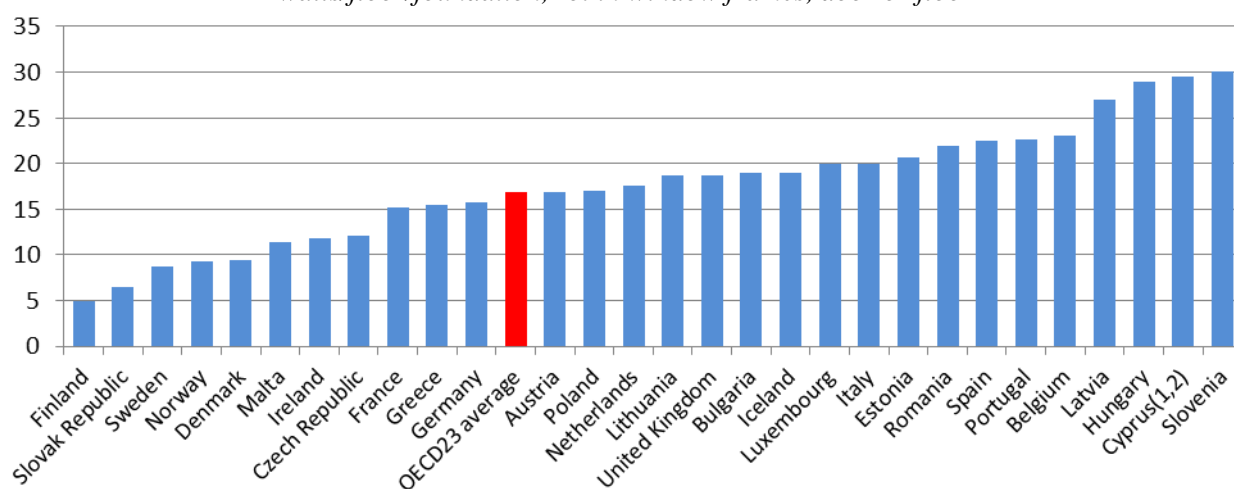
B) Condition of household dwellings

On average across the OECD, around 1 in 6 children live in dwellings with some form of structural issue (Chart 1.5.B Panel A). The proportion of children living in such a property is less than 10% in Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Slovak republic and Sweden and greater than 20% in Italy, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

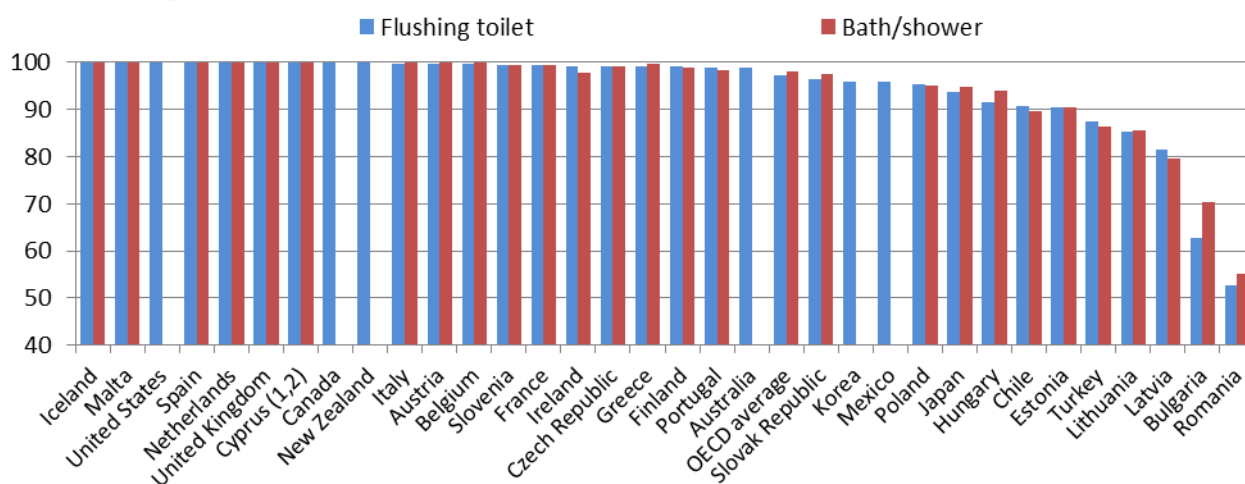
Among OECD countries for which data are available, there is near universal availability of a bath or shower and a flushing toilet for children in a household (Chart 1.5.B Panel B), with Chile, Estonia, Hungary, Japan and Turkey being the only two OECD countries where less than 95% of children have access to a bath or shower and a flushing toilet.

Chart SF1.5.B. Condition of household dwellings, 2011

Panel A. Proportion of children living in a household with one of: leaking roof, damp walls/floor/foundation, rot in window frames, door or floor



Panel B. Proportion of children living in households with exclusive use of bath/shower and flushing toilet



1. and 2. see notes (1) and (2) for Chart SF1.5.A

Source: EU SILC and OECD Better Life Index

C) Quality of the neighbourhood

Table PF1.5.A presents indicators on the quality of the neighbourhood in which a household with children is situated, based on the subjective perception of the households' main adult respondent on whether there is too little light, too much noise, too much pollution and a problem with crime, violence or vandalism in the area.

On average, across the OECD, the most prevalent issue for households with children seems to be related to noise, with 17% of children living in neighbourhoods with too much noise. On average 13% of children live in households in an area with too much pollution, 13% live in an area with too much crime and just 6% live in an area with too little light.

Too little light appears to be a particular problem in Hungary, Slovenia and the United Kingdom affecting more than 1 in 10 children. More than 20% of the households with children in Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom live in a neighbourhood with too much noise. The proportion of children living in neighbourhoods with too much pollution is high in Germany, Greece and the Slovak Republic at more than 20%, and the proportion of children living in neighbourhoods with too much crime is high in Greece and the United Kingdom at more than 20%.

Table PF1.5.A. Quality of neighborhoods in which dwellings are situated, 2011

The proportion of children living in neighborhoods with the following issues

	Too little light	Too much noise	Too much pollution	Too much crime
Austria	7	20	8	12
Belgium	9	19	15	18
Bulgaria	11	15	21	30
Cyprus (1,2)	5	27	22	13
Czech Republic	4	15	18	15
Denmark	4	17	8	14
Estonia	4	11	13	19
Finland	4	12	7	8
France	8	19	12	16
Germany	4	25	21	12
Greece	5	25	29	22
Hungary	11	12	11	12
Iceland	2	11	10	3
Ireland	3	10	5	11
Italy	7	22	16	13
Latvia	12	16	28	25
Lithuania	8	14	13	5
Luxembourg	5	15	12	10
Malta	7	24	39	11
Netherlands	2	21	12	18
Norway	4	10	8	6
Poland	8	16	10	7
Portugal	7	24	15	12
Romania	10	31	21	16
Slovak Republic	3	18	21	9
Slovenia	11	14	16	8
Spain	5	19	11	14
Sweden	7	11	7	8
United Kingdom	10	21	12	26
OECD23 ave	6	17	13	13

1. and 2. see notes (1) and (2) for Chart SF1.5.A
 Source: EU SILC

Comparability and data issues

The indicators on overcrowding are based on two different types of sources: number of rooms per person is based on data from household surveys; access to own bedroom by children aged 15 years is based on data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey. As such the measures may not be directly comparable.

The indicators on the quality of neighbourhoods are based on a subjective perception of the head of household. As such the responses are likely to be relative to the individual's experiences and may not reflect issues with actual levels of light, noise, pollution and crime across countries.

Sources and further reading: European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/eu_silc; Health Behaviour in School-aged Children <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/Life-stages/child-and-adolescent-health/publications/2012/social-determinants-of-health-and-well-being-among-young-people.-health-behaviour-in-school-aged-children-hbsc-study>