

AUSTRALIA

Country Highlights

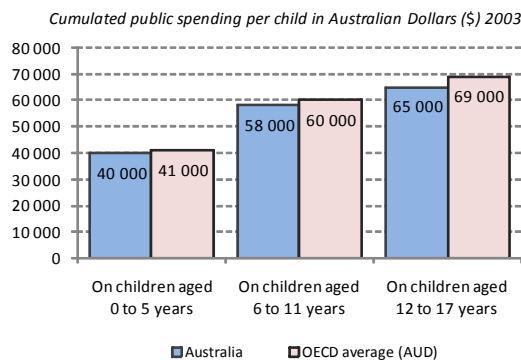


OECD (2009), *Doing Better for Children*

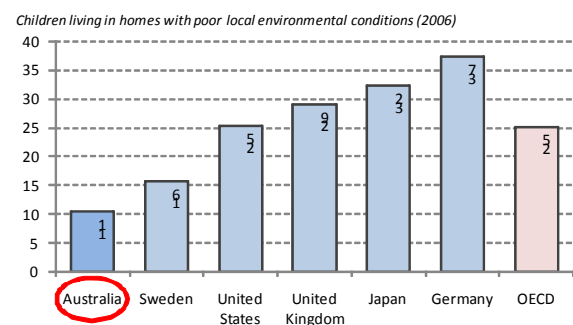
Australian child policies are getting solid value for money, according to the OECD's first report on child well-being. Australian child spending is just below the OECD average. However, Australia does well for children in terms of good outcomes in both housing and environment and educational well-being. Notwithstanding these successes, more could be done for Australia's children in terms of both material and health outcomes.

As is common across the OECD, Australia spends considerably more on older than on younger children. For every Australian dollar spent on a child under 6, around \$1.50 is spent on a child aged 6 to 17. Like the rest of the OECD, Australia could benefit from spending relatively more on young, disadvantaged children.

Australia spends over a \$1.50 on older children for every \$1 spent on young children



Australian families with children report the lowest levels of poor environmental conditions in the OECD



Reflecting patterns of spending, material conditions for Australian children are solid rather than spectacular. Family incomes and child poverty rates are around the OECD average. However the number of Australian children who lack a key set of educational possessions is slightly above the middle of the OECD.

Australia does well in terms of housing and the local environment in which children grow up. One in five Australian children lives in crowded conditions compared to just under one in three on average across the OECD. And only one in ten Australian children endures poor local environmental conditions, compared to one in four on average across the OECD.

Australian children also do well at school. Average educational performance in Australia compares well to other countries (6th best in the OECD). Moreover, the gap between the high and low performing children is smaller than in most OECD countries (the 6th best in the OECD).

Health and risk outcomes for Australian children, like material conditions, are very much in the middle of the OECD.