



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Doing Better for Children

Dr Simon Chapple
OECD Social Policy Division

A Presentation to the Polish
Parliamentary Social Policy
Committee, 20th January 2010



Outline of the Report by Chapter

- Overview
- Comparing child well-being outcomes
- Public spending for children of different ages
- Policies for the under age 3's
- Effects of sole-parenthood on child outcomes
- Intergenerational inequality
- Policy recommendations to enhance child well-being



Child well-being in Poland compared to selected OECD countries

	Material well-being	Housing & Environment	Educational well-being	Health & safety	Risky behaviours	Quality of school life
Czech Republic	18	24	19	5	23	17
Denmark	2	6	7	4	21	8
France	10	10	23	19	12	22
Germany	16	18	15	9	18	9
Hungary	20	21	12	11	25	7
Netherlands	9	17	4	8	9	3
Poland	28	22	8	14	20	15
Slovak Republic	27	25	24	1	22	25
Sweden	6	3	9	3	1	5
United Kingdom	12	15	22	20	28	4
United States	23	12	25	24	15	14

Notes: 1 is best ranked and 30 is worst-ranked in the OECD. Countries with grey shading are significantly lower than average, white is around the average and blue is significantly above average performance.



Compared to the rest of the OECD, Poland does poorly for children on Material well-being and Housing & Environment

...examine the 5 indicators within these 2 dimensions in more detail...

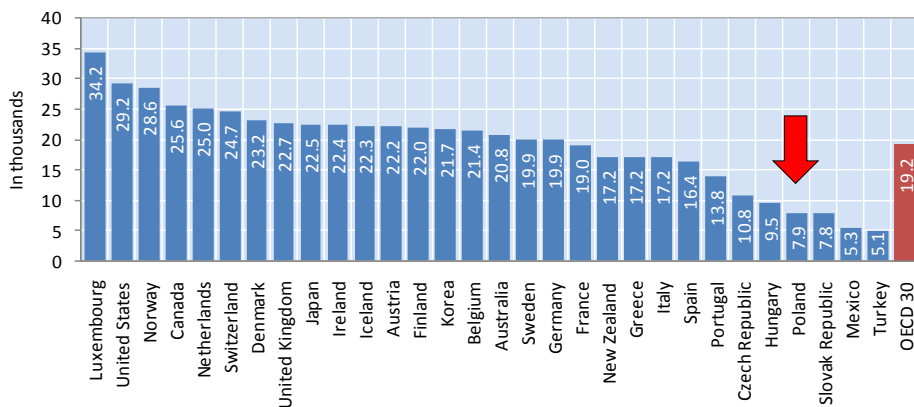


Material well-being dimension

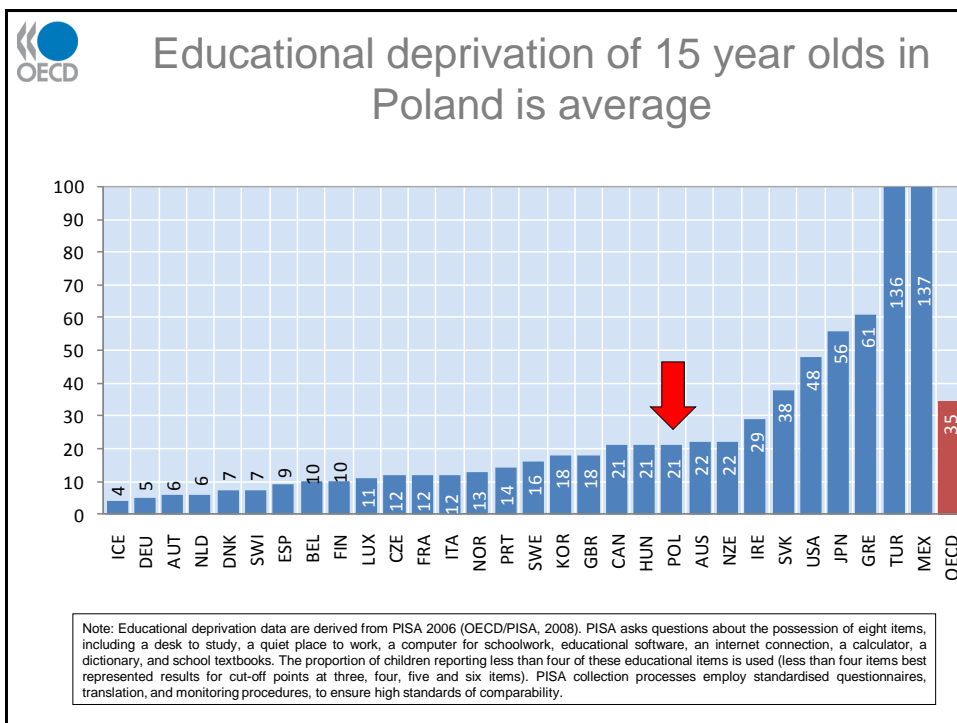
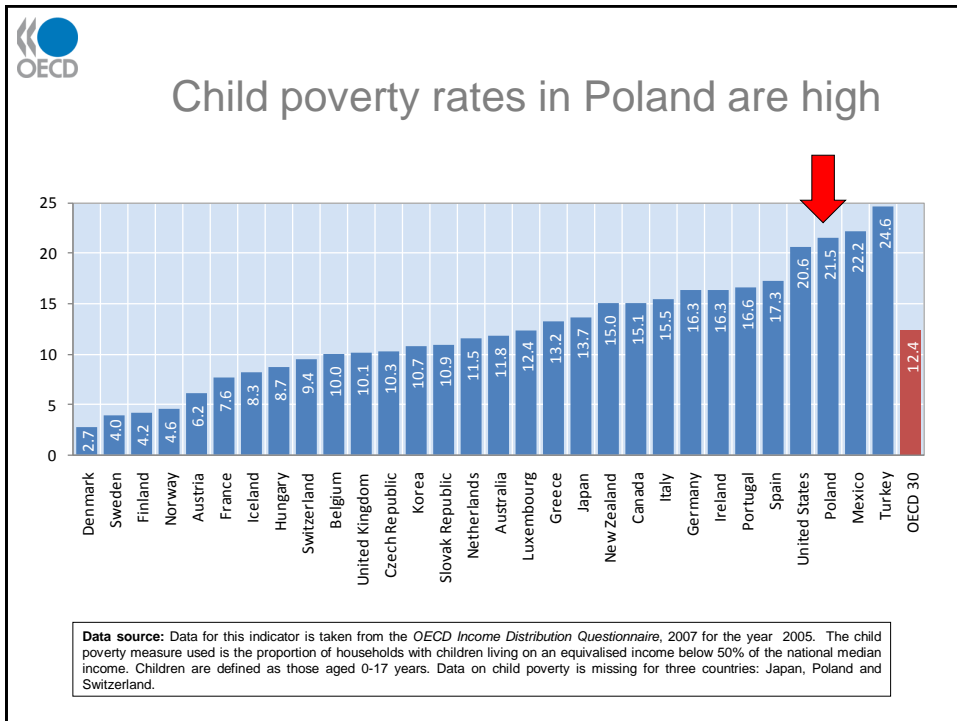
- Three indicators
 - Average child income
 - Child poverty rate
 - Educational deprivation
- Policy levers: tax and benefit system, childcare, Active Labour Market Policies, schools
- How does Poland do?



Average family income in Poland is at the low end of the OECD



Data source: Data for this indicator is taken from the *OECD Income Distribution Questionnaire*, 2007 for the year 2005. The units are US dollars at purchasing power parity exchange rates.



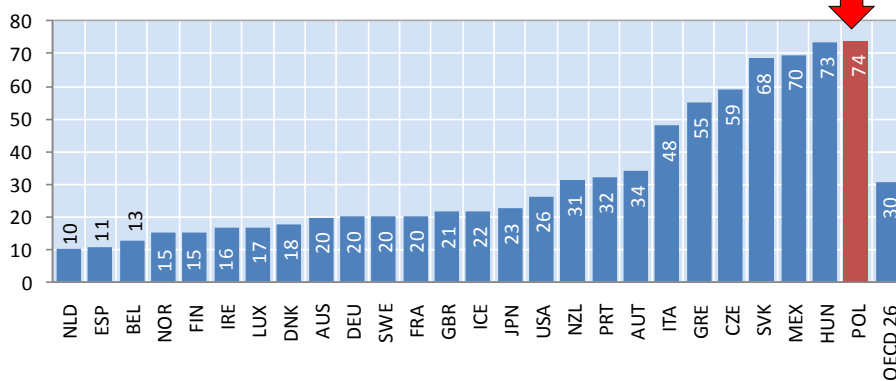


Housing and environment

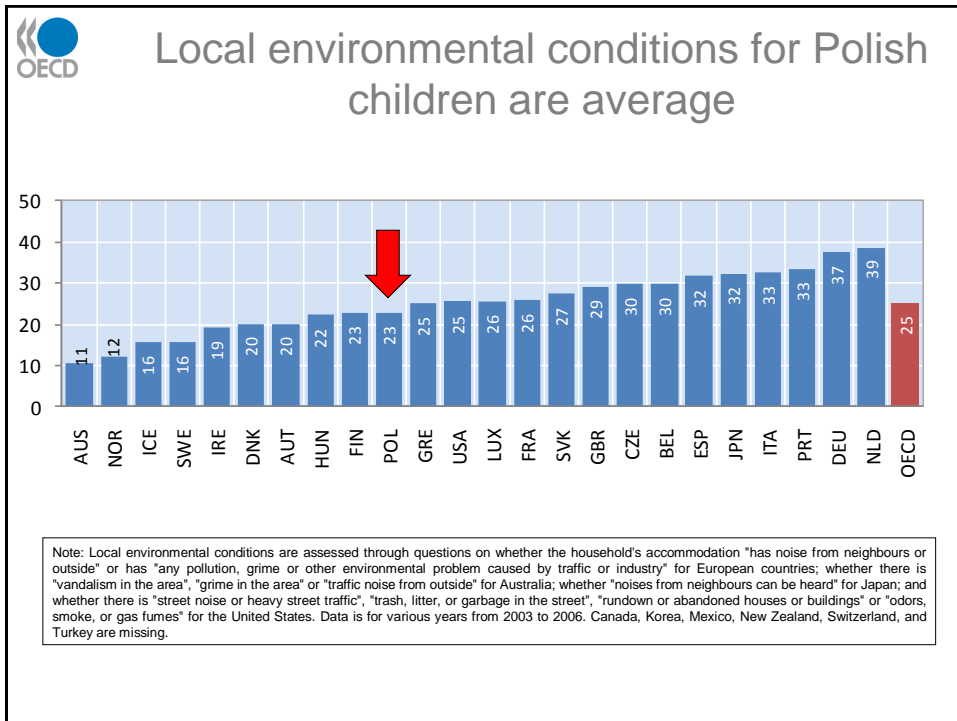
- Two indicators
 - House crowding for children
 - Local environmental conditions
- Policy levers: tax and benefit system, public housing provision, housing subsidies, Active Labour Market Policies
- How does Poland do?




Housing crowding for Polish children is very high



Note: Overcrowding is assessed through questions on "number of rooms available to the household" for European countries from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) conducted in 2006; on the "number of bedrooms" in Australia; on whether the household "cannot afford more than one bedroom" or "cannot afford to have a bedroom separate from eating room" in Japan; and on the "number of rooms with kitchen and without bath" in the United States. Overcrowding is when the number of household members exceeds the number of rooms (i.e. a family of four is considered as living in an overcrowded accommodation when there are only three rooms – excluding kitchen and bath but including a living room). Data is for various years from 2003 to 2006.





So much for outcomes for Polish children...now let us turn to consideration of the policy side, starting with social spending on children



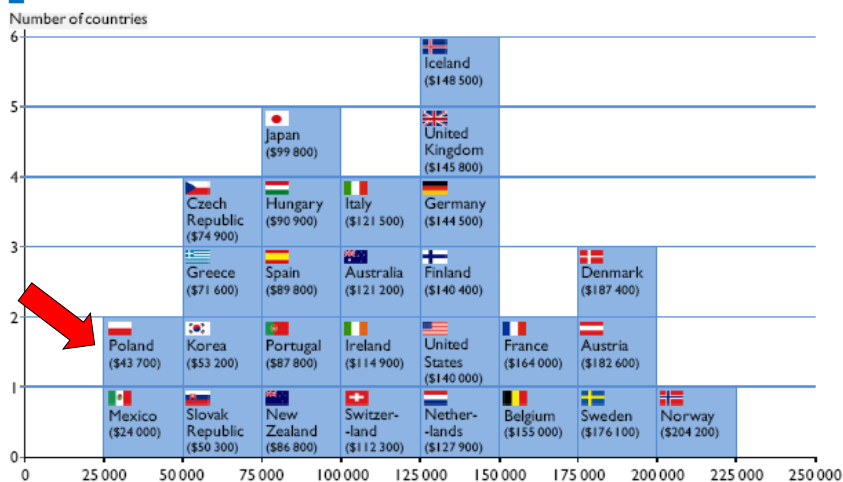
Patterns of public expenditure on children, why and how?

- What is spent on children and at what age
- Timing matters for child well-being
- Early child development trajectories are more malleable than later ones (James Heckman)
- Therefore spend early....

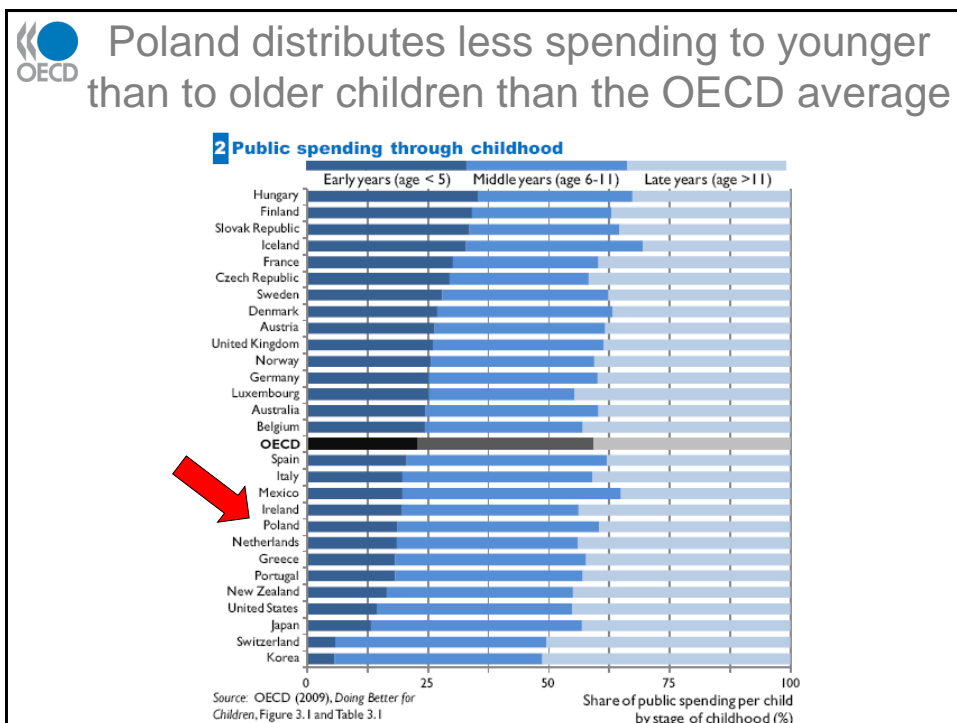
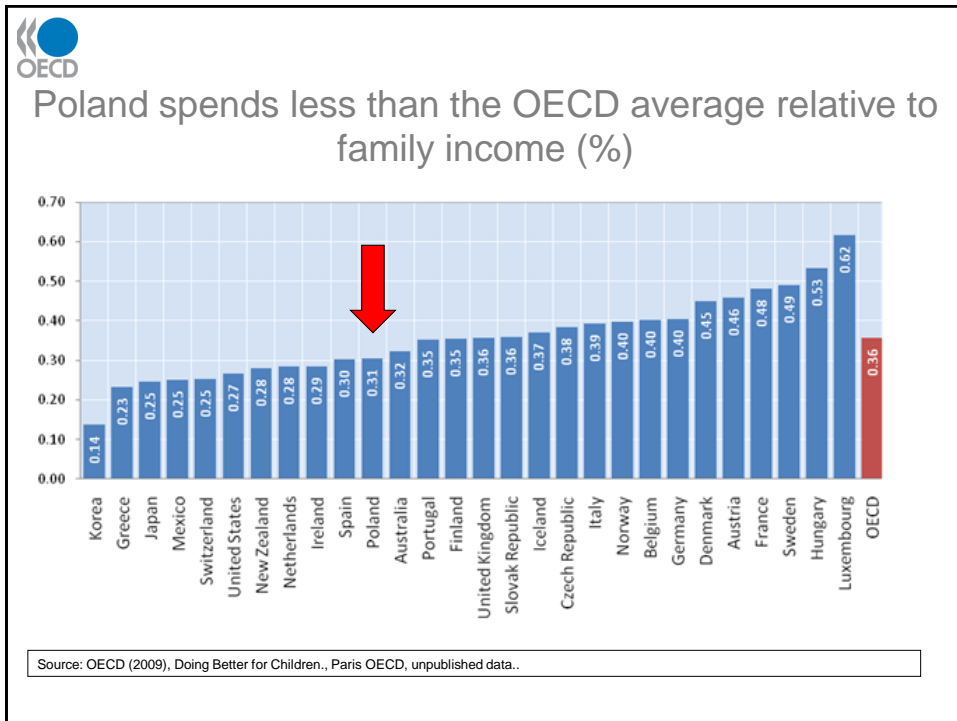


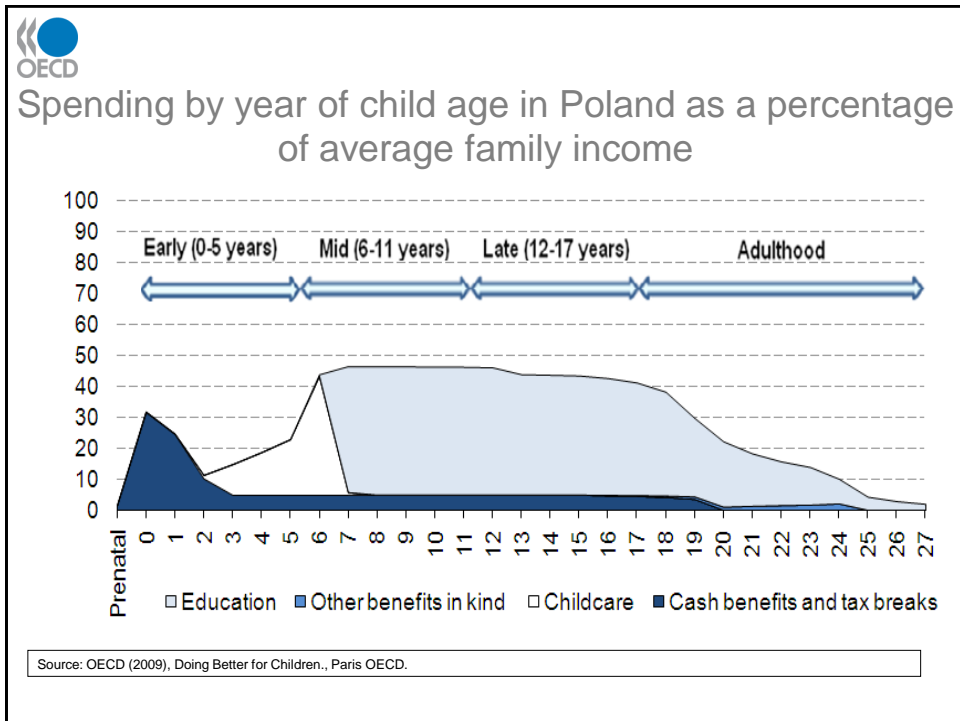
Poland spends little on children: Cumulative public spending over a child's life

1 Public spending on children in OECD countries



Source: OECD data: see OECD (2009),
Doing Better for Children
Note: Luxembourg (not illustrated): \$380 000





OECD

So less is spent on *young* Polish children...now consider the policy side during these early years (under 6 years)



Policies from conception to kindergarten to support children

- Three stages
 - Prenatal
 - Birth
 - Post-natal up to compulsory school
- Considerable variation in policies across the OECD
- Evidence for the variation in policies is weak
- Much more work needed at a country level in evaluating whether these policies work for children



Pre-natal policies

- Universal pre-natal checkups. Typically too many universal checks/scans, lack of evidence-based content
- Pre-natal benefits (e.g. start child benefits at some point during pregnancy – as in France and the United Kingdom)
- Pre-natal maternal nutrition vouchers (United Kingdom, USA). Some evidence these are positive for birth weight
- Pre-natal maternal leave allocation (may be compulsory - Germany - non-compulsory - NZL, low in Poland)
- Pre-natal maternal health booklets (e.g. Germany, France, Japan)
- Public health advice (e.g. anti-smoking and drinking campaigns for pregnant women)

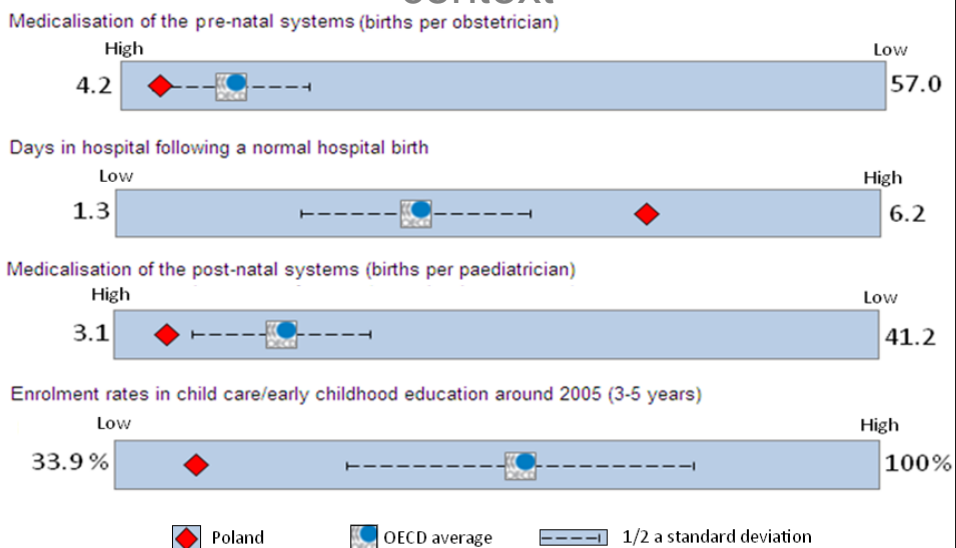


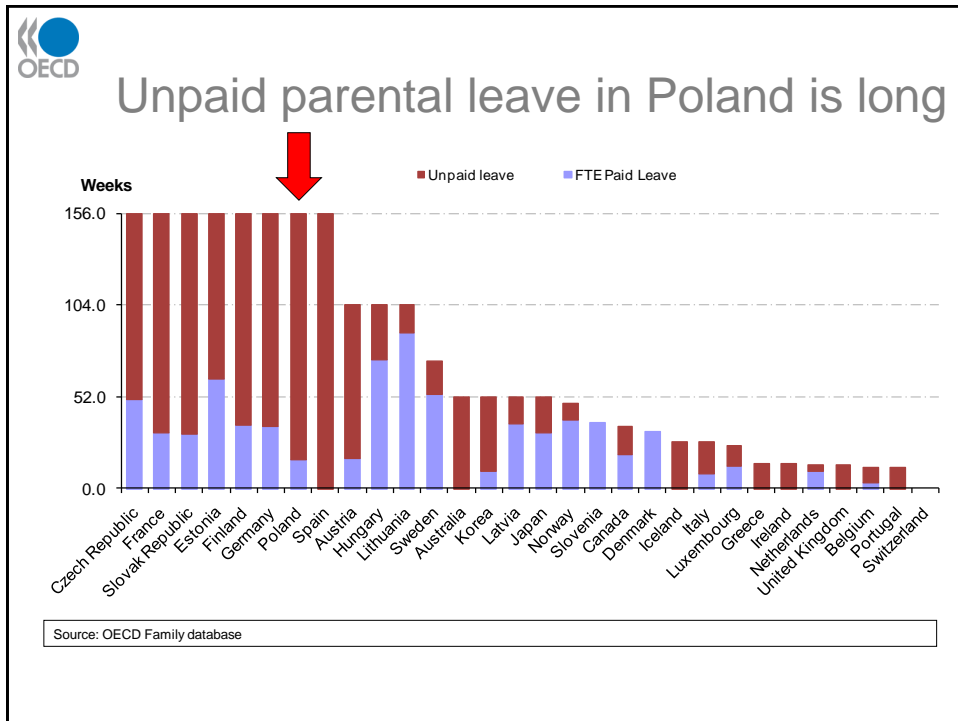
Post-natal period

- Universal well-child checks
 - Universal or a cascading services intensifying according to risk
 - Home visits (NZL, UK, Denmark) vs. centre-based follow-up (Sweden, France)
- Child vaccination programme
- Post-natal maternal, paternal and parental leave (little evidence child outcomes respond to changes in leave duration)
- Child benefits, which are typically neutral to the age of the child or increase with age
- Child health booklets (e.g. France, New Zealand)
- Transition to early childhood education



The Polish early childhood system in context





OECD

Policy Recommendations I: System design

- Support present *and* future well-being of children across all domains of well-being
- Develop policy to support child well-being as a *system*, with a coherent approach to the *child life cycle* and to the *risks* faced
- *Monitor* child well-being to identify improvements and areas needing policy attention
- Spend on children as if it were an *investment portfolio*. Subject the portfolio to a *continuous* iterative evaluation, reallocation and further evaluation to ensure child well-being is actually improved through time
- Set child well-being policy targets



Policy Recommendations II: Resourcing

- Spend more
 - pre-natally & early in the child life cycle
 - On those at high risk of poor well-being, especially early on
- Ensure that later investments (mostly education) complement earlier investments in at-risk children
- Spend less on:
 - Highly medicalised, universal policies surrounding child birth
 - Programmes captured by advantaged children, especially post-compulsory school



Policy Recommendations III: Things to try

- Pre-natal interventions (fewer universal visits, more targeting to mothers at-risk, look for evidence-based content)
- Coordinating breast-feeding with paid parental leave
- Home visiting and early childhood education interventions for at-risk children
- Methods of targeting resources to the most disadvantaged children
- Conditional cash transfers for children
- Experimental and non-experimental policy evaluation options



While the quality of children's lives in Poland is not always good, is this compensated for by high numbers of children?
 No...aspects of the Polish child/family system are not working as well as they might



Polish fertility is relatively low and not rebounding in recent years

	Total fertility rate, 2008		Change in total fertility rate, 2000-2008
Poland (24th lowest)	1.39	Poland (21st lowest)	0.02
Average OECD-30	1.71	Average OECD-30	0.06
High: New Zealand	2.18	High: Sweden	0.36
Low: Korea	1.19	Low: Mexico	-0.67

Source: OECD Family database. Replacement fertility=2.1 children per woman.



Where next for OECD child and family work? Doing Better for Families (2011)

This publication will consider:

- Family benefit packages and how they are changing
- Removing barriers to family formation (encouraging fertility)
- Removing barriers to reconciling work & family life
- Promoting child development and well-being
- Family dissolution and public policy
- Vulnerable families and vulnerable children



Some relevant details

www.oecd.org/els/childwellbeing

Consultation document password: cwbparis

www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure

www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database

Simon.Chapple@oecd.org

+33 145 24 85 45