



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Doing Better for Children and upcoming OECD projects

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Outline of the Report

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



How is the OECD framework different from the UNICEF framework?

- Selects policy amenable indicators
 - Compares all 30 OECD countries
 - Includes housing and environment data
 - No final ranking
 - Is more up-to-date
- but...
- Still too adolescent focussed
 - Not disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, etc.
 - Missing info, e.g.
 - Child protection and neglect/ Mental health
 - Retains the methods (equal weights / causal approach)



Dimensions of child well-being – no country does well across the board

| | Material well-being | Housing and environment | Educational well-being | Health and safety | Risky behaviours | Quality of school life |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Australia ← | 15 | 2 | 6 | 14 | 17 | n.a. |
| Canada | 14 | n.a. | 3 | 23 | 10 | 16 |
| Denmark | 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 21 | 8 |
| France | 10 | 10 | 23 | 20 | 12 | 22 |
| Germany | 16 | 18 | 15 | 9 | 18 | 9 |
| Hungary | 20 | 21 | 12 | 11 | 25 | 7 |
| Ireland | 17 | 5 | 5 | 24 | 19 | 10 |
| New Zealand | 21 | 14 | 13 | 29 | 24 | n.a. |
| Sweden | 6 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| United Kingdom | 12 | 15 | 22 | 21 | 28 | 4 |
| United States | 23 | 12 | 25 | 26 | 15 | 14 |



Some shared methodological considerations

- Cause versus effect approach
 - Do we expect internal reliability?
- Equal Weights (implicit weights in z scores?)
 - Problems of consensus?
- Neither penalise variation
 - Do we value consistency?
- Different numbers of indicators in each dimension



Selection of indicators within dimensions

- Child-centred
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Policy amenable
- Country coverage and up-to-date data
- Conceptually Complementary
 - Rights vs. Development
 - Equity and Efficiency
 - Age coverage



Statistical coverage

| | Age coverage | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|---------|---------------------|-----|---------|-----------------------|-----|---------|
| | Early (0-5 years) | | | Mid (6 to 11 years) | | | Late (12 to 17 years) | | |
| | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant |
| Material well-being | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing and environment | | | | | | | | | |
| Educational well-being | | | | | | | | | |
| Health and safety | | | | | | | | | |
| Risky behaviours | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality of school life | | | | | | | | | |



Statistical coverage

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Statistical coverage

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| | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant |
| Material well-being | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | ✓ | ✓ |
| Housing and environment | ✓ | x | x | ✓ | x | x | ✓ | x | x |
| Educational well-being | | | | | | | x | ✓ | ✓ |
| Health and safety | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | x |
| Risky behaviours | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | x |
| Quality of school life | | | | ✓ | ✓ | x | ✓ | ✓ | x |

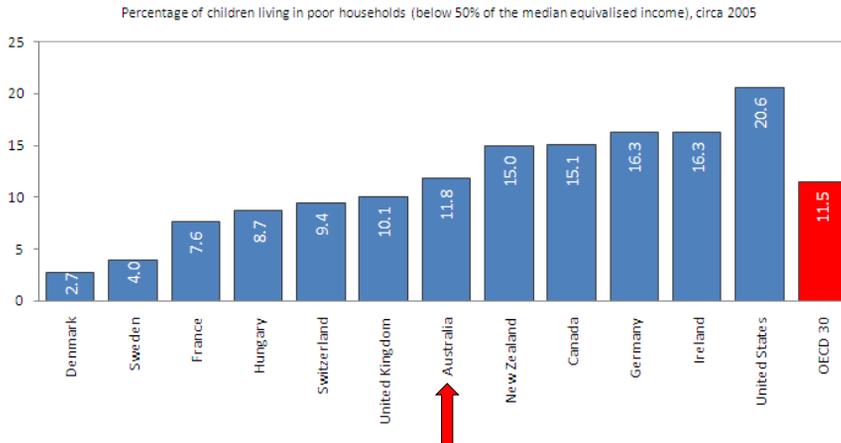
Statistical coverage

| | Age coverage | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|---------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Early (0-5 years) | | | Mid (6 to 11 years) | | | Late (12 to 17 years) | | |
| | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant | Age | Sex | Migrant |
| Material well-being | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Housing and environment | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | ✗ |
| Educational well-being | | | | | | | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Health and safety | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Risky behaviours | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| Quality of school life | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |

Material well-being dimension

- **Three indicators**
 - Average child income
 - Children in poor homes
 - Educational deprivation
- **Convention articles 27.3 and 17**
- **Complementarity**
 - Family income and child deprivation
 - Average income (efficiency) and poverty (equity)
 - Income today and educational investment for tomorrow
- **Policy levers: tax and benefit system, childcare, Active Labour Market Policies, schools**

In the mid 2000s child poverty in Australia were slightly above the OECD average

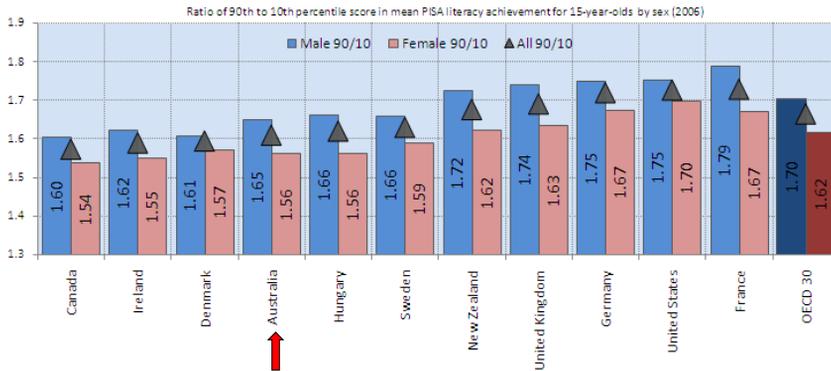


Data source: Data for this indicator is taken from the *OECD Income Distribution Questionnaire, 2007* for the year 2005. The child poverty measure used is the proportion of households with children living on an equivalised income below 50% of the national median income. Children are defined as those aged 0-17 years. Data on child poverty is missing for three countries: Japan, Poland and Switzerland.

Educational well-being

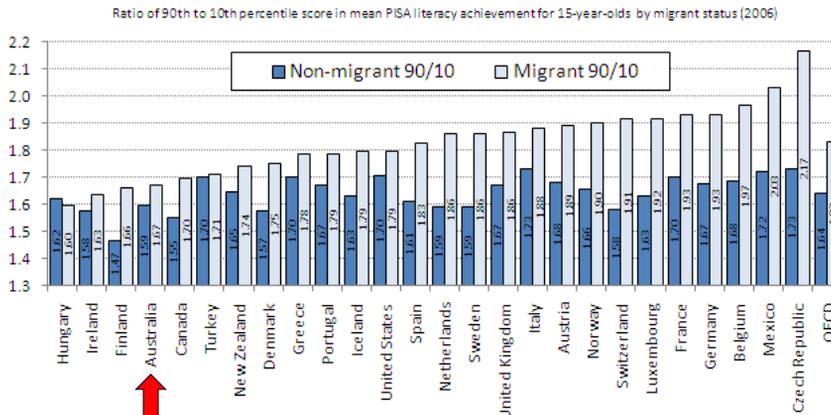
- Youth Inactivity / Educational Inequality / Average mean literacy (PISA)
- Convention articles 18 and 29(a)
- Complementarity
 - Mean RLA (efficiency) 90/10 ratio (equity)
 - Youth activity today and achievement for tomorrow
 - *Adolescent-focused*
- Policy levers: School environments, teaching practices, ALMP, family benefit changes, educational supplements

Educational inequality is lower for girls across all of the OECD



Data source: Data for educational achievement is mathematics, reading and science literacy as measured in the PISA surveys for 2006 (OECD/PISA, 2008). Mean literacy performance, is the average of the three literacy scores. The second is a measure of country inequality in scores, again averaged across the three dimensions. The measure of inequality used is the ratio of the 90th to the 10th percentile. Data is for the 15 year old school population. Reading literacy data was not available for the United States in 2006 results are therefore averages for mathematics and science literacy only.

In most OECD countries non-migrant students' literacy outcomes are more equal



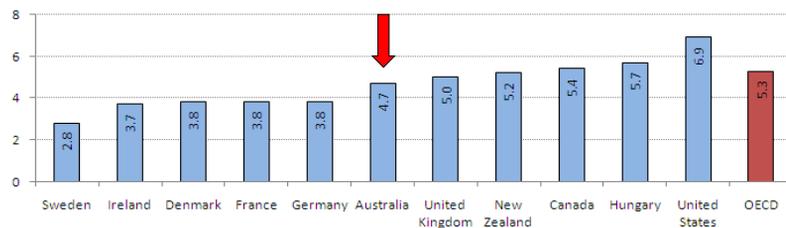
Source: OECD / PISA, 2006

Note: The measure is of country inequality in scores, averaged across the three literacy dimensions. The measure of inequality used is the ratio of the score at the 90th percentile to that at the 10th percentile. Data is for 15-year-old students. Reading literacy data was not available for the United States in 2006 results are therefore averages for mathematics and science literacy only.

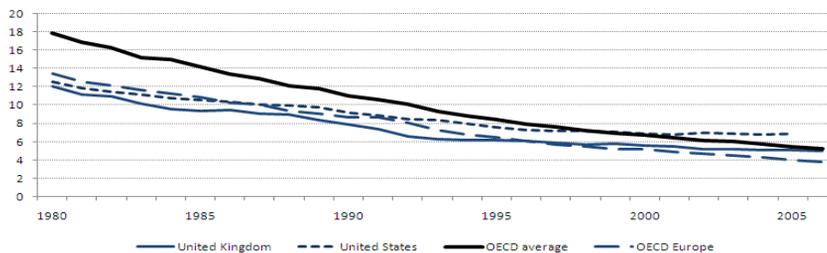
Health and safety

- Infant mortality / Low birth weight / Vaccinations / Physical activity / Mortality / Suicide
- Convention articles 6, 24, 29.1, 31.1.
- Complementarity
 - Mortality and immunisations (covering both efficiency and equity for today and tomorrow)
 - All age groups covered
- Policy levers: medical provision and practices, birth grants, baby packs and prenatal care (cct), childcare provision (cct), environments to play, school sports, safety in the community (e.g. traffic calming)

Rate reductions in infant mortality are moving fastest in European OECD countries

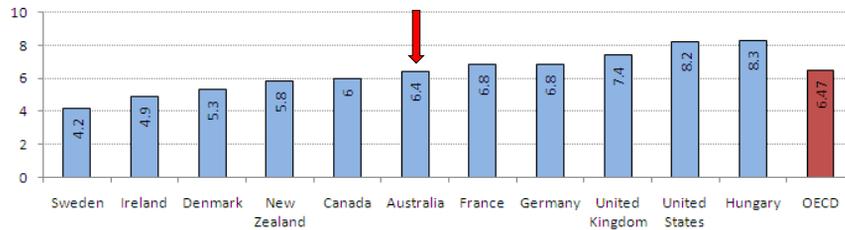


Infant mortality: Deaths per 1 000 live births (2006)
Data source: OECD Health Data 2008 - Version: December 2008



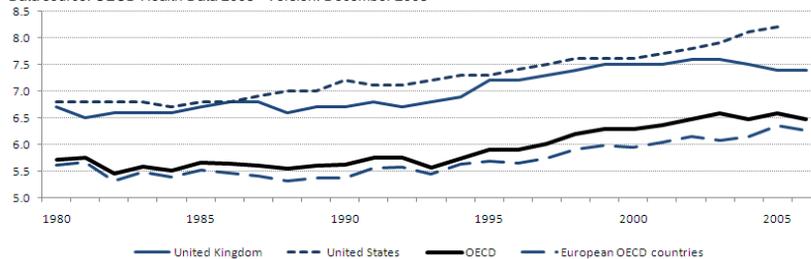
Infant mortality: Deaths per 1 000 live births (1980 to 2006)
Data source: OECD Health Data 2008 - Version: December 2008

Rates of low birth weight babies are increasing in all countries



Low birthweight % of total live births (2006)

Data source: OECD Health Data 2008 - Version: December 2008



Low birthweight % of total live births (1980 to 2006)

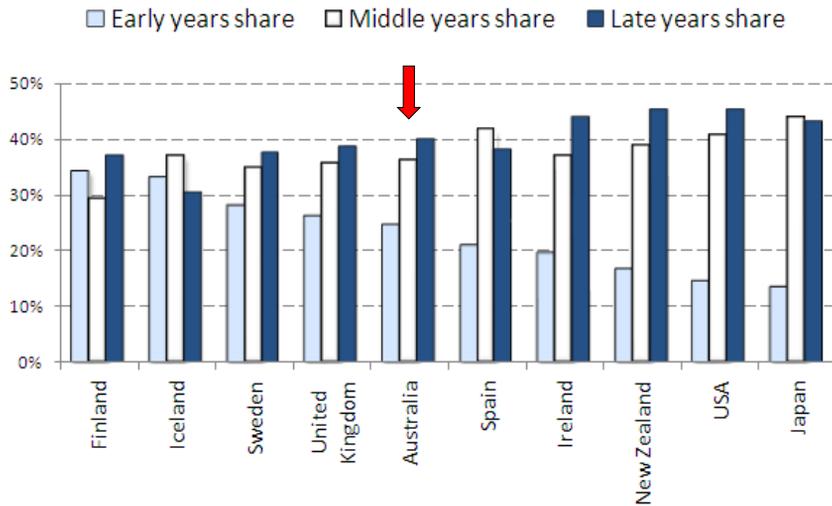
Data source: OECD Health Data 2008 - Version: December 2008

Patterns of public expenditure on children, why and how?

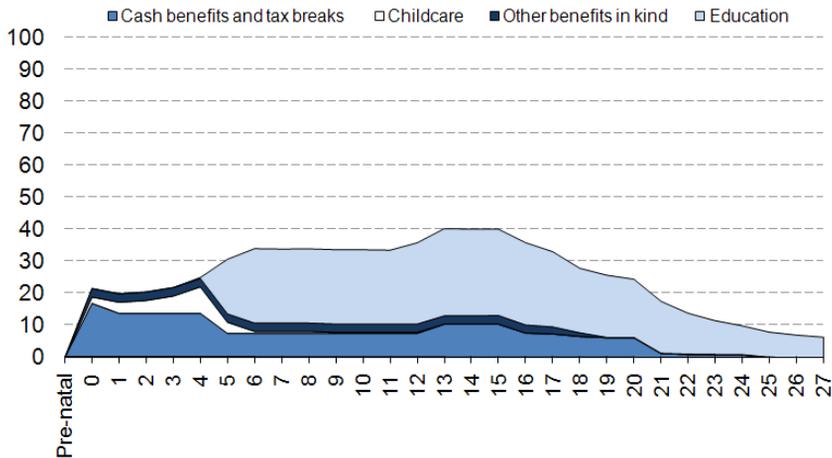
- What is spent on children and when
- Timing matters for child well-being
- Testing a Heckman proposition
- Social expenditure data and education data
- Allotted by types from prenatal to age 27 using benefit rules
 - Cash and tax / In kind / Child care / Education



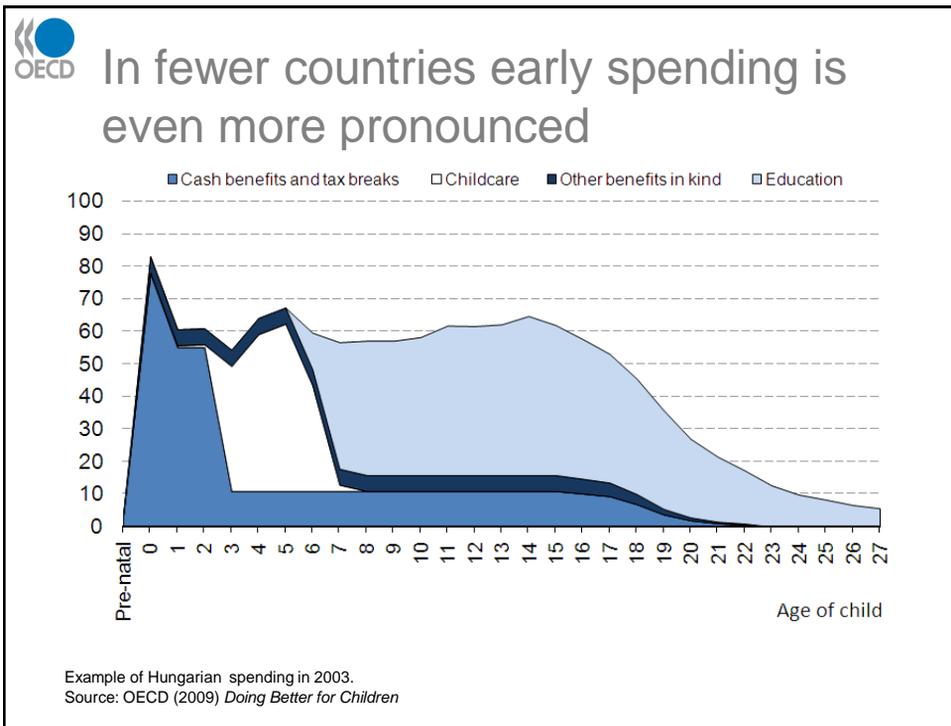
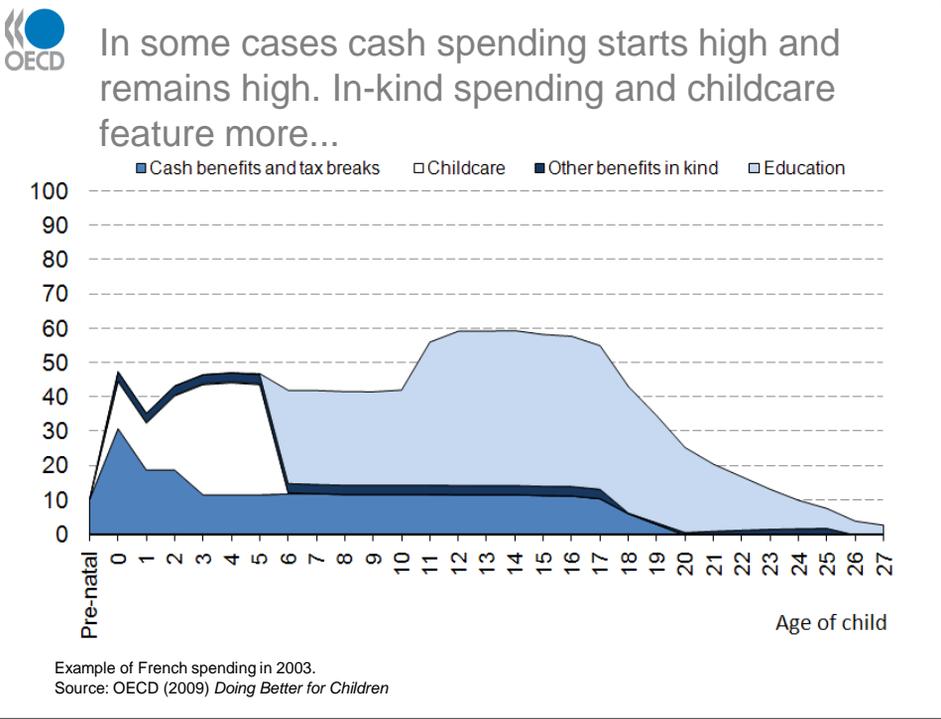
Countries in the OECD tend to prioritise spending on older children



The most common pattern is an inverted U shape, with education spending dominating



Example of Australian spending in 2003.
Source: OECD (2009) *Doing Better for Children*





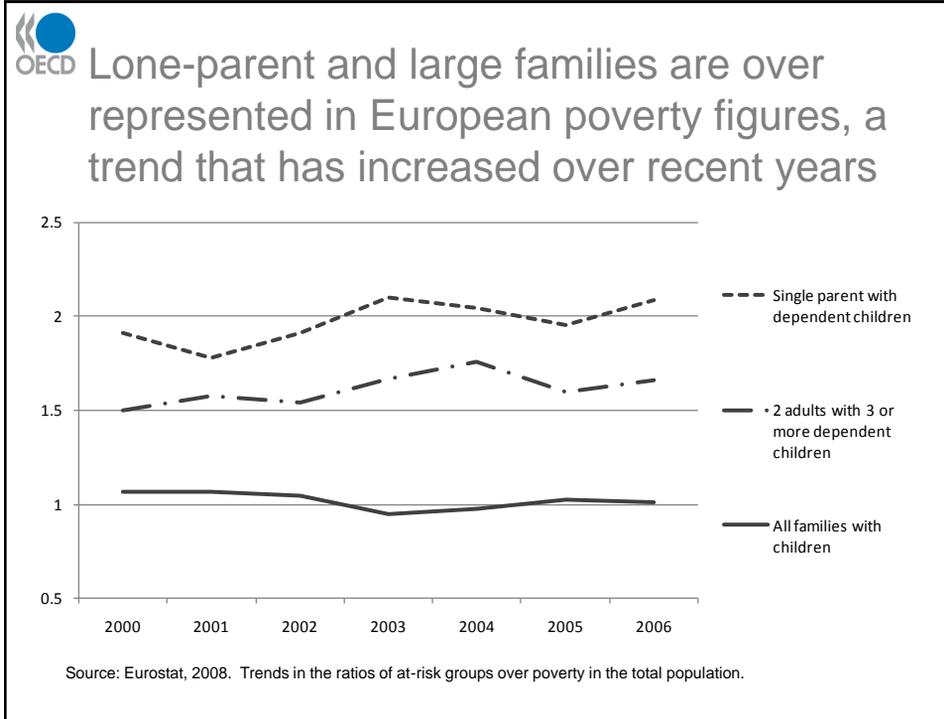
Possible future analysis

- Include health data
- Include state level spending
- At-risk group profiles
- Profile at full take-up
- Compare spending changes over time
- Model the 1990 cohort



Age spending profiles: some considerations

- Average spending by age, but what about differences by
 - Family type
 - Family size
 - Income
- Only public spending, not private
- Take-up, and variation in take-up
- Cross-section assumes temporal stability

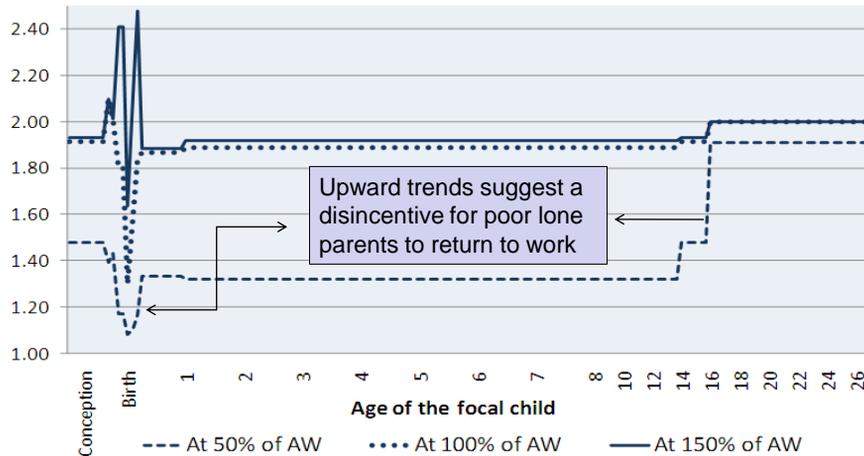


 An exploration of cash transfers by family type in the United Kingdom

- Impact on family income by family types and ages of children
- Compare national approaches in eight OECD countries
- Child polices have been added to TAXBEN
 - Maternity / paternity benefits / parental leave / birth grants
- Linked with other benefits
- Children are born into the model when siblings are 2, 7 and 12 years old



In the UK help is given to single parents that are poor...



Ratio of two-parent to sole-parent net income over the child life cycle, 2003



Child well-being: Conception to kindergarten

- Focuses on early intervention for equity and efficiency
 - Prenatal / birth / post natal
- Evidence of the variation in policies across the OECD
 - Pre-birth child allowance
 - Birth grants and baby packs
 - Conditional cash transfers
 - Immunisation bonus / Health checks
 - Cascading services
- *Where do social policies stop being labour market policies and start being child health or well-being policies?*



Prenatal medical and social interventions

- Life cycle – risk profile approach
- Staffing / stays / health checks
- Maternal leave policies
- Nutritional programs for pregnant mothers
- The positive effect of maternal health booklet

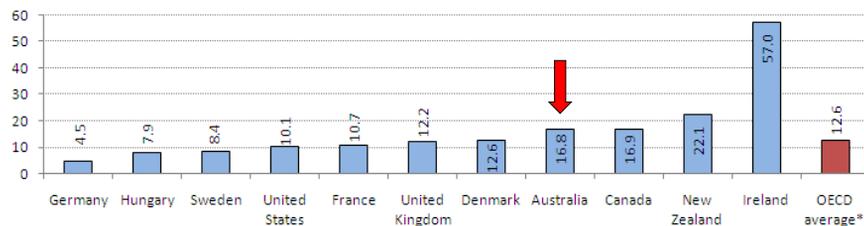


Preparations for childbirth vary greatly across OECD countries



Recommended pre-natal care schedule, number of visits (most recent data)

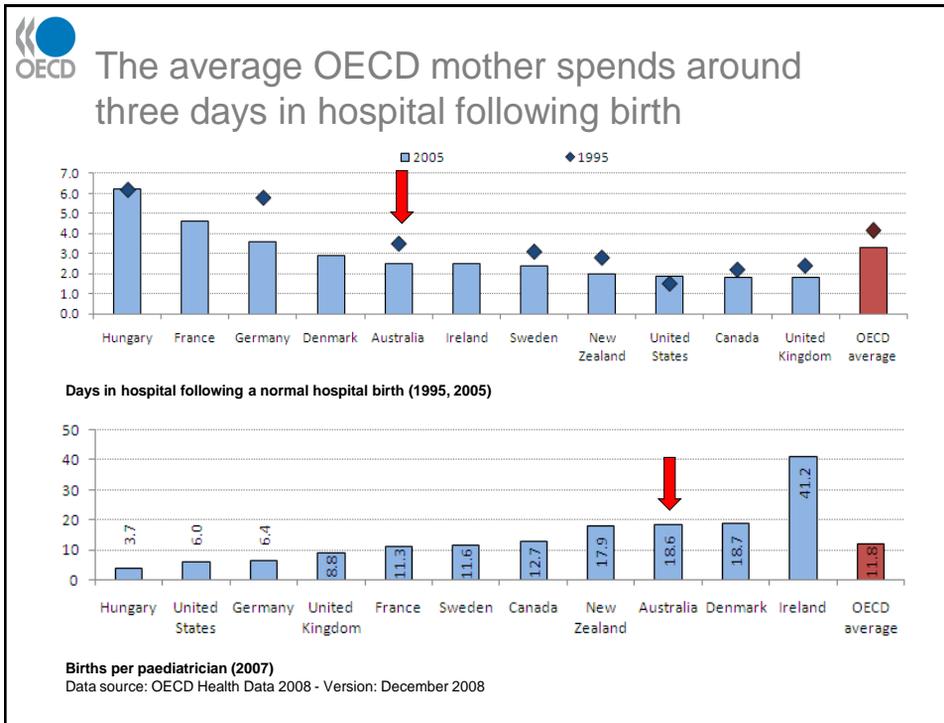
Data source: OECD Child Well-being report (forthcoming)



Births to obstetrician ratio (around 2005)

Data source: OECD Health Data 2008 - Version: December 2008

* Average excludes available data for Mexico (where the births per obstetrician ratio is 180).

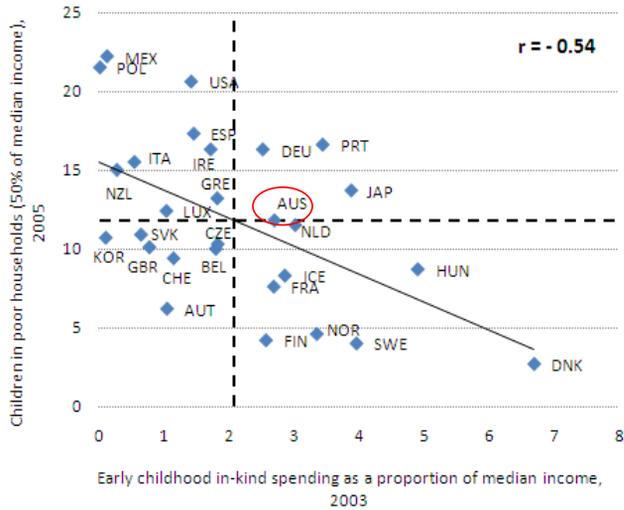


 Associations between policy effort and CWB indicators

- Age-related spending
 - By age group (early, middle and late)
 - By type (cash, in-kind, education and childcare)
- Policy structures
 - Child benefits (means, lone, ages and size)
 - Birth grants, maternity and parental leave
 - Tax breaks and child support payments



Early spending is associated with lower poverty rates...



Policy choices may also have an impact on outcomes

| | Main child benefit is age related (under 18) 2003 | | Main child benefit is family size related (under 18) 2003 | | Main child benefit payment has a lone parent supplement, 2003 | | Main child benefits payment is means-tested, 2003 | |
|---------------------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|
| | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Material well-being | 16.6 | 13.5 | 18.6 | 13.4 | 16.3 | 12.9 | 9.9 | 19.8 |
| Housing environment | 13.6 | 13.4 | 18.0 | 11.5 | 14.8 | 11.4 | 9.9 | 17.7 |

| | Maternity pay is paid to unemployed or uninsured, 2003 | | Childcare payment or supplement exists, 2003 | | Tax breaks for families with children, 2003 | | Advance on maintenance payments, 2003 | |
|---------------------|--|-----|--|------|---|------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| Material well-being | 17.8 | 8.0 | 15.6 | 14.8 | 9.3 | 16.8 | 20.5 | 9.1 |
| Housing environment | 15.8 | 7.1 | 15.3 | 12.7 | 7.6 | 15.7 | 16.8 | 9.7 |



Policy Recommendations I: System design

- Support the present *and* future well-being of children across a *range* of 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* children face.
- *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 process of evaluation, reallocation and further evaluation to ensure child well-being is actually improved
- Set child well-being targets, unless these create strong perverse incentives.



Policy Recommendations II: Resourcing

- “*Frontload*” spending early in the child life cycle. Spend relatively more on:
 - Prenatal policies / Early childhood
- “*Risk-load*” spending. Spend relatively more on:
 - Children at high risk of poor well-being especially early on
 - Ensure that later investments in high risk children complement earlier investments
- Spend relatively less on:
 - Highly medicalised, universal policies surrounding child birth
 - Programmes captured by advantaged children, especially on children past the age of compulsory education



Policy Recommendations III: Things to experiment with

- Prenatal interventions
- Coordinating breast-feeding with paid parental leave
- Home visiting and early childhood education interventions
- Methods of targeting resources to the most disadvantaged children
- Conditional cash transfers for children
- Experimental and non-experimental policy evaluation options



Things to consider for the future

- Stronger life cycle/developmental focus in choice of indicators
- In-utero measures
- More rigorous approach to the question of “ability for policy to have an influence”
- Issues of methods of aggregation and prioritisation of child outcomes



Where next for child and family research at the OECD?

- **Doing better for families**
 - Extend and refine the social expenditure analysis
 - Look at evidence for the well-being aspects for children from ECEC
 - Review schooling systems and interaction with out-of-school care
 - Policies for disadvantaged teens
 - Policies for institutionalised children –review the literature on their adult outcomes



Where next for child and family research at the OECD?

- **Child well-being database proposal**
 - Including outcomes sensitive to age groups
 - Including measures of efforts (system and spending)
 - Include contextual variables

 - Refine ECEC measurements
 - Consideration of national specific measures



Where next for child and family research at the OECD?

- **Review of cross-national surveys of children**
 - to recommend best practice
 - Identify gaps in the data
 - Identify gaps in child coverage
 - Encourage harmonisation
 - Make better use of available data
 - Reassure policy makers



Some relevant links

- www.oecd.org/els/social
- www.oecd.org/els/social/indicators/SAG
- www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure
- www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database
- www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality

THANK YOU!