

Doing Better for Families The Netherlands

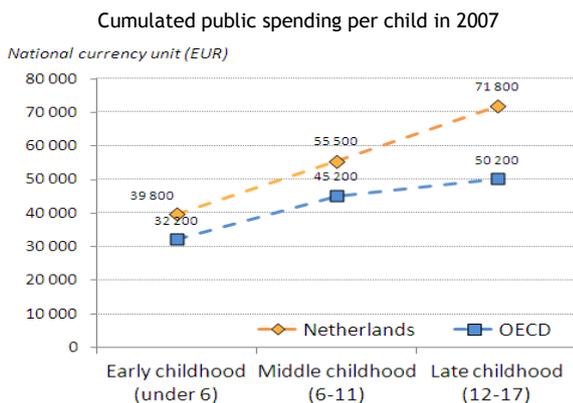
Dutch families are doing well as mums take on dual roles

In the Netherlands family outcomes, and child outcomes, are generally strong. Employment rates, parental education rates, and fertility rates are higher than OECD averages. Child and youth indicators are also good; the Dutch have very low rates of youth unemployment, high reading literacy levels, below average levels of child income poverty, and high levels of life satisfaction in childhood (over 93% of 11-15 year old children report above average life satisfaction).

Many Dutch families share work responsibilities - the female employment rate is well above the OECD average (70.6% compared to 60.4% in the OECD on average), as is the mothers' employment rate - but more often than not women work part-time. In the home, however, Dutch women spend almost 2 hours more per day working than men.

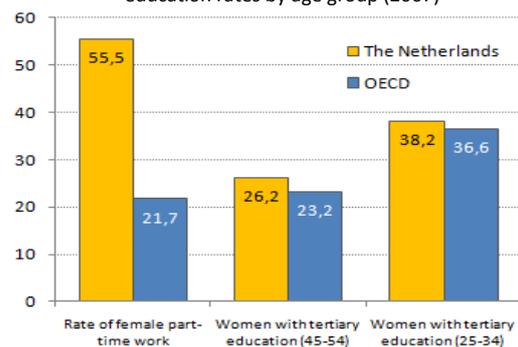
In 2007, the Netherlands spent more on families with children than most other OECD countries (167 000 Euros per child from birth up to the age of 18, compared to an OECD average of just under 128 000 Euros). Tax breaks for families are an important tool for delivering family support in the Netherlands where over 0.9% of GDP is allocated to working families through earned-income tax breaks and tax credits.

The Netherlands spends more per child than most other OECD countries, particularly in the late years



Despite above average educational attainment, Dutch women take on fewer full-time posts than most

Female part-time employment (25-54, 2009) and female tertiary education rates by age group (2007)



In the past two decades, the rise in female employment in the Netherlands has been rapid: in the early 80's the rate was amongst the lowest in the OECD at around 35%, in 2009 it had doubled to over 70%. However, much of the increase in female employment has been on a part-time basis: over 55% of employed women work part-time. Part-time work is particularly common among employed mothers. This can add to the job satisfaction of these workers and free-up time for childcare, but often has negative consequences on career progression and underutilises women's education and skills: young Dutch women are more educated than the OECD average, and more educated than Dutch men. In the Netherlands, a working mother with two grown up children has, on average, earned less than half of the total working-life earnings of otherwise similar female employees.

With more women working part-time, the use of formal childcare facilities is more often on a part-time basis (explaining, in part, the low early years spending in the Netherlands relative to later years spending). Formal childcare services in the Netherlands are more often used by higher income families, Although childcare supports are most generous for low-income families, they can still face weak financial incentives to work when children are very young and participation among low-income (including migrant) families is relatively low unless the setting is mandatory when children go to school. However, school-hours do not facilitate holding full-time jobs which helps explain the popularity of part-time employment among many mothers in the Netherlands.