

### LMF1.1: Children in households by employment status

#### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator presents information on children (0- to 14-year-olds) by the type of household and employment status of adults in the household in which they live. Data are presented from the child's perspective, in that they look at the proportion of children in a given household type with a given employment status. Information on the employment status of families and households themselves is given in indicators LMF2.2 and LMF2.3. The main types of household and employment statuses generally used are as follows (see the notes to the charts and *data and comparability issues* for variations and exceptions):

- *Children in all households*, which covers children in all types of household regardless of whoever else lives in the household. The possible household employment statuses for all households are:
  - i) *Working: all adults working*, where all adults in the household are in at least part-time employment
  - ii) *Working: at least one adult working, at least one adult not working*, where at least one adult in the household is in at least part-time employment, and at least one adult in the household is not in paid employment
  - iii) *Jobless: all adults not working*, where all adults in the household are not in paid employment.
- *Children in couple households*, which covers children who live in households with one adult couple (married or co-habiting) only. In most cases at least one member of the couple is one of the child's parents, but the adults may also be other relatives (for example, an older sibling or grandparent) or non-relative guardians. Children who live in households with two or more non-coupled adults or multiple couples are classified under 'complex' households. The possible household employment statuses for adults in couple households are:
  - i) *Working: two adults working full-time*, where both adults in the couple are in full-time paid employment
  - ii) *Working: one adult full-time, one adult part-time*, where one partner is in full-time employment and one in part-time employment
  - iii) *Working: one adult full-time, one adult not working*, where one partner is in full-time employment and the other is not in paid employment
  - iv) *Working: other*, which captures all other types of working patterns, including two-earner households where both partners are in part-time employment and single-earner households where one partner is in part-time employment and the other is not in employment, plus any single- or two-earner households where information on either partner's working hours is missing.
  - v) *Jobless: two adults not working*, where both partners are not in paid employment
- *Children in single-parent households*, which covers who live in households with only one adult. In most cases the one adult is one of the child's parents, but may also be another relative (for example, an older sibling or grandparent) or non-relative guardian. There are four possible employment statuses for this type of household:
  - i) *Working: adult working full-time*, where the adult in the household is in full-time employment
  - ii) *Working: adult working part-time*, where the adult in the household is in part-time employment
  - iii) *Working: no information on hours*, where the adult in the household is in paid employment but information on their working hours is missing.
  - iii) *Jobless: adult not working*, where the adult in the household is not in employment

For completeness, children may also live in a 'complex' household, which includes households with two or more non-coupled adults, with a couple and other non-coupled adults, and with multiple couples. Data on children in complex households are not presented in this document but are available in the [accompanying .xls file](#).

Other relevant indicators: Children in families (SF1.2); Living arrangement of children (SF1.3); Maternal employment (LMF1.2), Distribution of working hours among couple- and sole-parent families (LMF2.2 and LMF2.3); Time used for work, care and daily household chores (LMF2.6); and, Child poverty (CO2.2).
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Definitions of ‘working’ and ‘employment’ follow [ILO guidelines](#) – with all people who during a specified reference period were either in paid employment or were self-employed for at least one hour being classified as ‘employed’ – and the distinction between part-time and full-time employment generally follows the OECD’s common 30-hour definition, with part-time employment defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. (See the notes to the charts and *data and comparability issues* for exceptions and more detail).

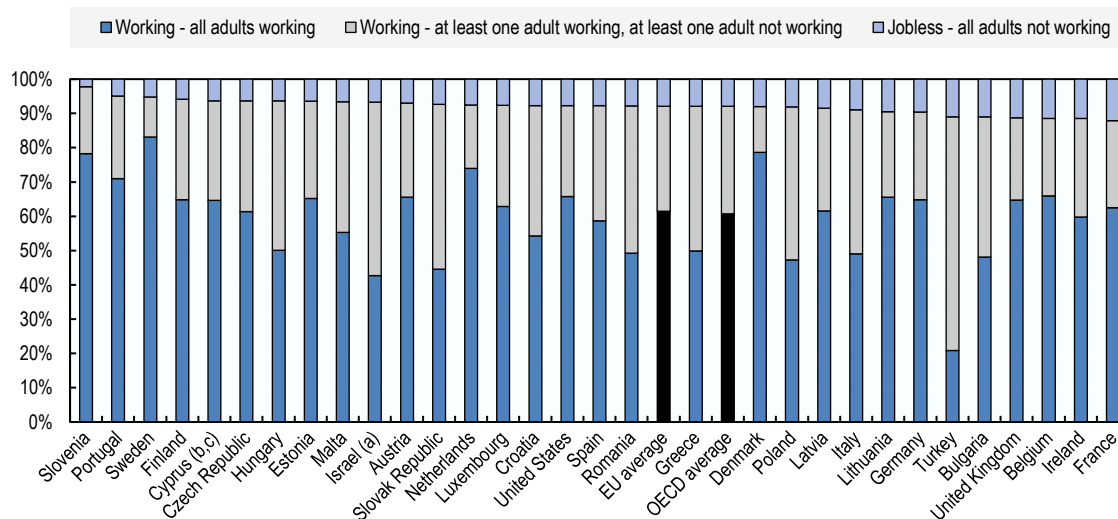
### Key findings

On average across OECD countries, 61% of children live in households where all adults are in work, and around 31% in households where at least one adult works and one adult does not (Chart LMF1.1.A). The remainder – an average of 8% – live in jobless households where no adult is in paid work. Children are most likely to live in jobless households in Belgium, France, Ireland, Turkey and the United Kingdom – in these countries, 11% or more of children live in jobless households. In Slovenia, by contrast, only 2% of children live in jobless households.

Trends in the proportion of children living in jobless households vary across OECD countries (Chart LMF1.1.B). Several countries have seen the share of children living in jobless households increase over the past decade or so, with increases often largest in those OECD countries that were hit hardest by the economic crisis. For example, despite a recent decline, Greece, seen the share of children living in jobless households increase by 5 percentage points since 2008. However, other OECD countries have seen the share of children in jobless households fall outright over the past decade. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the proportion of children living in jobless households has fallen by 6 percentage points since 2008. In Hungary, the share has fallen by almost 9 percentage points over the same period.

**Chart LMF1.1.A. Children by household employment status, 2018**

Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14) in all households by the employment status of adults in the household



Note: Data for Turkey refer to 2013, and for Israel to 2017. For Israel and the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only, and refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment.

a. The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

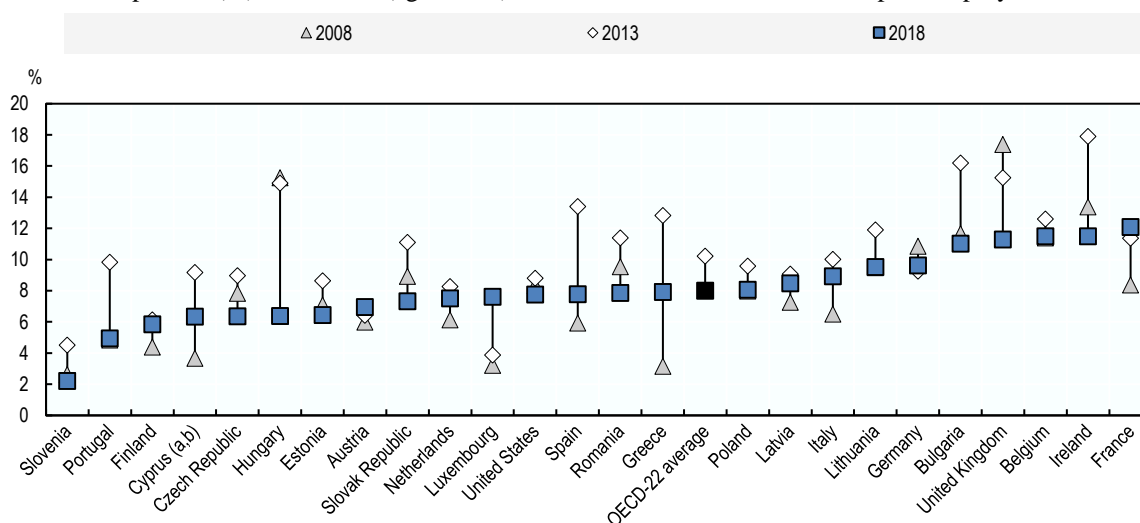
b. Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”;

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

Sources: [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

**Chart LMF1.1.B. Children in jobless households, 2008, 2013 and 2018**

Proportion (%) of children (aged 0-14) in all households with no adult in paid employment



Note: For the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only, and refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment. The OECD-22 average is the unweighted average for OECD countries for which data are available at all three time points.

a. See note a. in Chart LMF1.1.A

b. See note b. in Chart LMF1.1.A

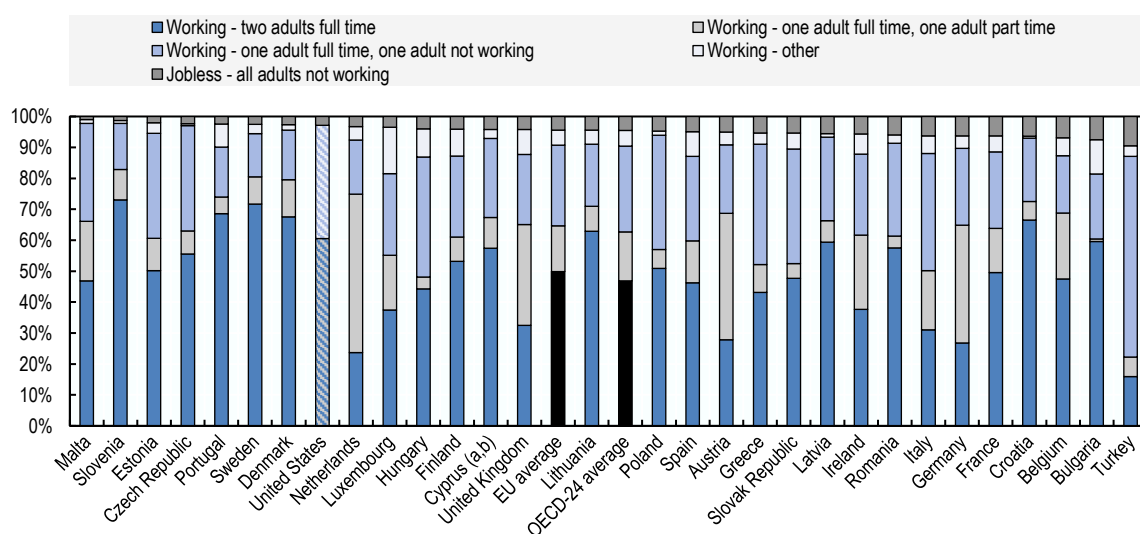
c. See note c. in Chart LMF1.1.A

Sources: [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Children in couple households are less likely than others to live in jobless households (Chart LMF1.1.C). On average across OECD countries around 47% of children in couple households live in households where both adults work full-time, rising to as many as two-thirds or more of children in several countries (Denmark, Portugal Slovenia and Sweden). Another 16% on average live in 'one-and-a-half-earner' couple households, where one adult works full-time and one works part-time. In all but two OECD countries (Hungary and Turkey), a majority of children live in households that are at least 'one-and-a-half earner'. On average, only around 5% of children in couple households also live in households that are jobless. Among OECD countries, the share of children in couple households that also live in jobless households is highest in Turkey at 10%.

### Chart LMF1.1.C. Children in couple households by household employment status, 2018

Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14) in one-couple households by the employment status of adults in the household



Note: Data for Turkey refer to 2013. For the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only, and refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment. Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. In some countries (those for which information comes from the EU-LFS) it is possible for individuals to report that they do not have usual set hours in their main job. Where this is the case, the individual's actual hours worked in their main job during the survey reference week are used in place of their usual weekly working hours. For the United States, no distinction between part-time and full-time work. 'Working - other' refers to working households with employment patterns not covered by the other categories. This includes two-earner one-couple households where both adults work part-time, single-earner one-couple households where one adult works part-time and one adult does not work, and single-earner and two-earner one-couple households where information on either partner's working hours is missing. The OECD-24 average excludes the United States.

a. See note a. in Chart LMF1.1.A

b. See note b. in Chart LMF1.1.A

Sources: [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Children in single-parent households are more likely to live in jobless households (Chart LMF1.1.D). On average across OECD countries, 30% of children in single-parent households also live in jobless households, rising to about 41-42% in Ireland and Luxembourg, and 63% in Turkey. However, the remaining 70% of children in single-parent households live in households where the parent is employed at least part-time. In the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, over half of children in single-parent households live in a household with the parent works part-time. In the remaining countries, children in single-parent households are more likely to live in a household where the parent works full-time. In fact, in well over half of OECD countries with available data, more than half of *all* children in single-parent households live in households where the adult works full-time, with this proportion rising as high as 74% in Slovenia and 77% in Sweden.

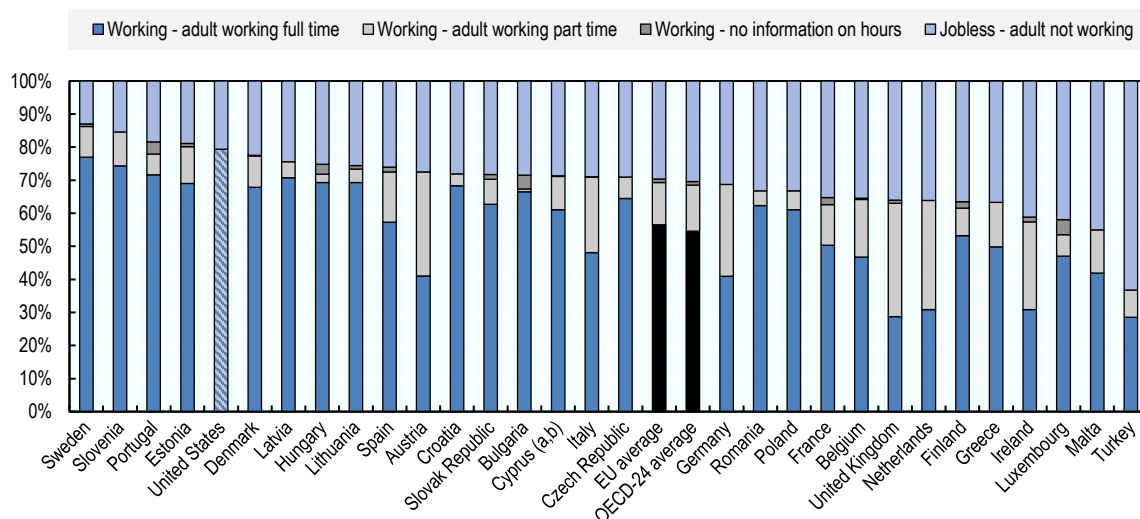
#### Comparability and data issues

Data for most of the countries used in this indicator come from the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS). The EU LFS applies a threefold categorisation of household types to allow for consistent classification across the many possible household situations in which children may live, but these specific household types may not always match conventional or traditional conceptions of family forms. For example and as noted in *definitions and methodology*, children are classified as living in a couple households only if there is only *one* adult couple in the household, and in a single-parent household only if there is *one* adult in the household. Children that live in households with more than one couple or with a single parent but also with other adults are considered to live in 'complex' households. To the extent that children live with parents but also with other adults, this may lead to an underestimation of children living

in couple or single-parent households. This is particularly likely to be the case in those countries (such as those in Southern Europe) where living with extended family is common.

**Chart LMF1.1.D. Children in single-parent households by household employment status, 2018**

Distribution (%) of children (aged 0-14) in single-parent households by the employment status of the adult in the household



Note: Data for Turkey refer to 2013. For the United States, data refer to children aged 0-17. For the United States, data cover children living with at least one parent and refer to the labour force status of the child's parent(s) only, and refer to whether or not the child's parents are active in the labour force, as opposed to in employment. Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job, and full-time employment as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more per week in the main job. In some countries (those for which information comes from the EU-LFS) it is possible for individuals to report that they do not have usual set hours in their main job. Where this is the case, the individual's actual hours worked in their main job during the survey reference week are used in place of their usual weekly working hours. For the United States, no distinction between part-time and full-time work. The OECD-24 average excludes the United States.

a. See note a. in Chart LMF1.1.A

b. See note b. in Chart LMF1.1.A

Sources: [For European countries, EU-LFS](#); [For Turkey, Turkish Household Labour Force Survey](#); [For the United States, U.S. Census Bureau](#)

Data for the United States come from their own household survey and use slightly different definitions to the EU LFS. Data cover children living with at least one parent, only. The data used for children in 'couple households' refer to children 'living with both parents' (married or not married) only, while the data for children in 'single-parent households' refer to children living with one parent only ('living with mother only' or 'living with father only'). The information on the employment status of adults in the household refers only to the labour force status of the child's parent(s). The household itself may or may not contain other adults, but the employment status of any other adults in the household is not taken into account in the data on household employment status.

As noted in *definitions and methodology*, the definitions of 'working' and 'employment' generally follow [ILO guidelines](#) and the distinction between part-time and full-time work generally follows the OECD's common 30-hour definition, but there are a couple of exceptions. For the United States, data refer to whether or not the child's parents are *active* in the labour market – as opposed to in paid employment – and therefore include those who would otherwise be classified as unemployed, and also make no distinction between part-time and full-time work.

Lastly, as discussed in indicator [LMF1.2](#), cross-national comparisons of employment in households with children may be affected by differences in the treatment of individuals on maternity, paternity or parental leave. It is difficult to isolate the impact of differences in the treatment of persons on leave on parental employment rates, but it is possible that different treatments could influence cross-national variations in employment patterns among and working hours for parents with very young children.

Sources and further reading: EU Labour Force Survey database, User Guide, [http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu\\_lfs/index.htm](http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm); UNICEF (2011), *An overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Innocenti Research Report. OECD (2011) *Doing Better for Families* <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/doingbetterforfamilies.htm>; OECD (2015) *How's Life? 2015: Measuring Well-being*, OECD, Paris.