

PF4.3: Out-of-school-hours care services

Definitions and methodology

Out-of-School-Hours (OSH) care services provide a range of activities to children before, between (lunch) and after school hours, as well as during school holidays. These services are frequently, but by no means always, based in school facilities or youth centres, and provide care for children who may use the time to do homework and/or engage in recreational activities, while at the same time helping parents to find a better match between school and working hours.

This indicator captures the use of OSH-care services through two main measures:

- *Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by age group*, that is, the proportion of children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a 'usual' or 'typical' week. Data are shown for children aged 6 to 8 and 9 to 11, as well as for the overall 6- to 11-year-old age group.
- *Average hours in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services during a usual week, 6- to 11-year-olds*, that is, the mean average number of hours 6- to 11-year-old children spend in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services during a 'usual' or 'typical' week, among those who spend at least one hour in centre-based out-of-school-hours care.

In both cases 'centre-based out-of-school-hours care services' are generally defined as centre-based services that provide care for school-going children outside of (i.e. before and/or after) school hours. These services may or may not be attached to and/or offered at the same place as the school. Data generally do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services *only* during school holidays or *only* on days when schools are closed, and in principle only include services that have at least some 'care' element (i.e. do not include activities aimed entirely at child leisure, such as music lessons and sports clubs). Exact definitions do however differ slightly for some countries (see the notes to the charts and *comparability and data issues* for more detail).

To highlight any differences in the use of OSH care services across socio-economic groups, this indicator also presents information on the use of OSH care services by income level and the education level of mother:

- *Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by equivalised disposable income tertile*, with 'equivalised disposable income' referring to the disposable (post-tax-and-transfer) income of the household in which the child lives, equivalised using the square root scale to account for the effect of family size on the household's standard of living. The income tertiles are calculated based on the distribution by equivalised disposable income of children aged less than or equal to 12.
- *Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by mother's education level*, with 'mother's education level' measured by whether or not the reported mother of the child has attained tertiary education (highest level of education attained at International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 levels 5-8). The education level of the female household head is used if there is no mother in the household, and then of the father (or male household head) if there is no mother or female head in the household.

Other relevant indicators: LMF1.2: Maternal employment; PF3.2: Enrolment in childcare and pre-school; PF3.4: Childcare support, and PF4.2: Quality of childcare and early education services.

Lastly, as one (among many) measures of ‘quality’ in OSH care services, this indicator also presents information on the presence and specifics of any official guidelines on child-to-staff ratios for OSH care services.

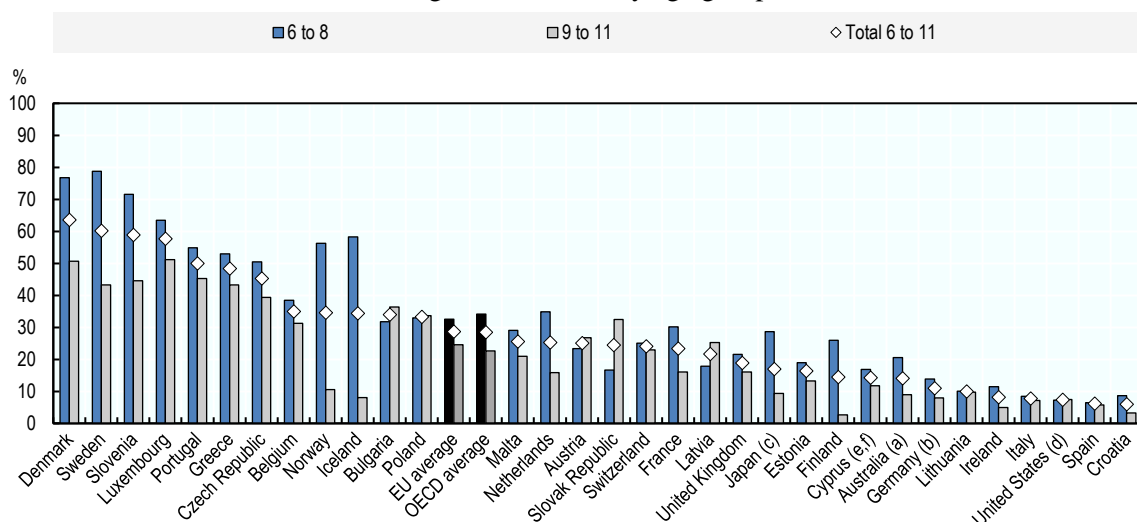
Key findings

The proportion of children in out-of-school-hours care services differs considerably across OECD countries (Chart PF4.3.A). On average across OECD countries with available data, 28% of children aged 6 to 11 participate in centre-based before- and/or after-school OSH care services, but this varies from around 6-8% in Italy, Spain, and the United States to about 60% in Denmark and Sweden. Participation rates are highest in the Nordic countries (especially Denmark and Sweden, but not Finland), some of the southern European OECD countries (especially Greece and Portugal), some eastern European OECD countries (especially Slovenia and the Czech Republic), and also Luxembourg.

Use of out-of-school-hours care tends to be highest among slightly younger school-age children aged 6 to 8 (Chart PF4.3.A). In Denmark and Sweden, 75-80% of children in this age group use centre-based OSH-care services, with rates higher than 50% in several other countries too (Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia). Participation rates for the 9- to 11-year-old age group are usually lower, sometimes considerably so. In Iceland, for example, the participation rate for children aged 9 to 11 is 50 percentage points lower than the rate for children aged 6 to 8. Only five OECD countries (Austria, Latvia, Poland, the Slovak Republic and the United States¹) have higher participation rates among 9- to 11-year-olds than among 6- to 8-year-olds. The gap is largest in the Slovak Republic, where the OSH care participation rate is 16 percentage points higher for 9- to 11-year-olds than for 6- to 8-year-olds.

Chart PF4.3.A. Participation rates in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services

Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by age group, 2016 or latest



Notes: Data for the United States refer to 2011, for Iceland, Switzerland and Malta to 2014, and for Australia to 2017. Data generally reflect the proportion of children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week, cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed. Exact definitions differ across countries. Data for Australia refer to children aged 6 to 12 and the age groups 6 to 8 and 9 to 12, for Japan to children aged 7 to 11 and the age groups 7 to 8 and 9 to 11, and for the United States to children aged 5 to 11 and the age groups 5 to 8 and 9 to 11.
 a. For Australia, data refer to children usually attending regulated 'before and after school care' (care provided for school aged children before school, after school, during school holidays and on 'pupil free days').

¹ In the United States, the comparison is between children aged 9 to 11 and children aged 5 to 8.

b. For Germany, data refer to 'school-going' children (children attending education, including pre-school) who are also enrolled in regulated centre-based services (mainly in the form of Horte, but also in mixed age settings). It does not include any children enrolled in Ganztagsgrundschulen (all-day schools). In 2013/14, 24.2% of primary-school-age children were enrolled in Ganztagsgrundschulen.

c. For Japan, data refer to children using centre-based out-of-school-hour services organised by the municipality and overseen by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, only. Children using services organised by the Ministry of Education or other services not overseen by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare are not included. Eligibility for the services overseen by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is restricted to children with both parents in employment or education (or, in the case of children from single-parent families, to children whose single-parent is in employment or education) and children in other exceptional circumstances (for example, children with an ill or disabled parent), only. Data refer to headcount enrolments, rather than participation during a usual week.

d. For the United States, data refer to children regularly using 'before or after school care programs', with 'regularly' defined as at least once a week during the past month. Data cover children who are living with their mother only.

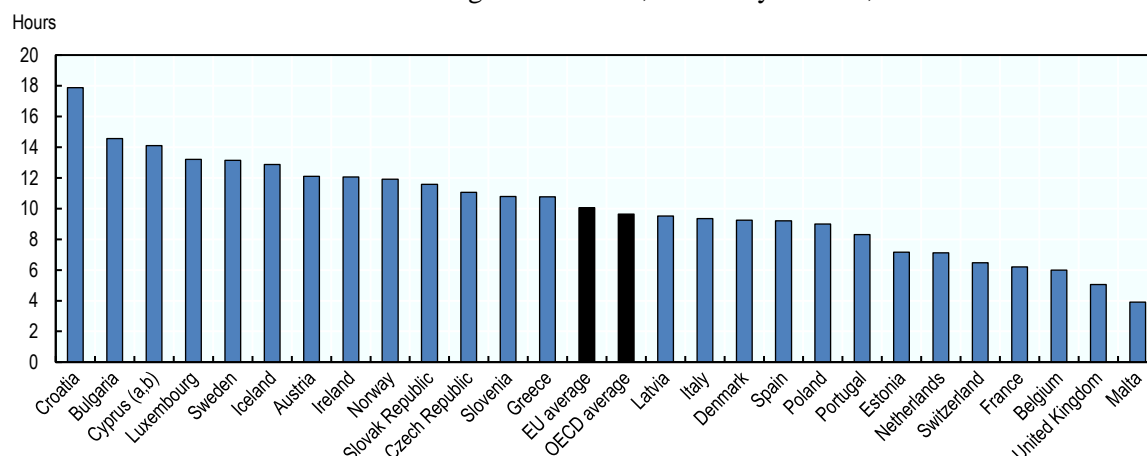
e. Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting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

f. 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 Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics](#); [For European countries, EU SILC \(unless otherwise stated\)](#); [For Germany, OECD Questionnaire and Destatis](#); [For Japan, OECD Questionnaire and Ministry of Health](#); [For the United States, US Census Bureau](#)

Average hours in out-of-school-hours care also vary across countries (Chart PF4.3.B). On average across European OECD countries, children (aged 6 to 11) that use centre-based before- and/or after-school OSH care services use them for an average of just under 10 hours per week. However, in some countries (Belgium, France and the United Kingdom) average hours are very short at only around 5-6 hours per week. In others (Iceland, Luxembourg and Sweden), average hours are much longer at about 13 hours per week.

Chart PF4.3.B. Average hours in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services during a usual week
 Average hours in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services during a usual week among those using at least one hour during a usual week, 6- to 11-year-olds, 2016



Note: Data for Iceland, Switzerland and Malta refer to 2014. Data cover children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week. Data cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed.

a. see note e to Chart PF3.4.A

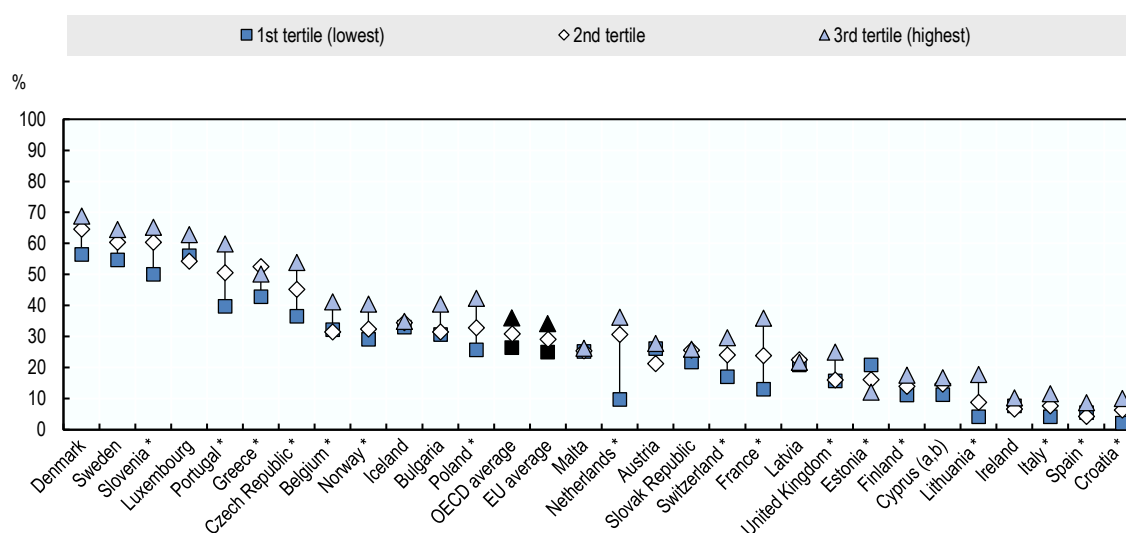
b. see note f to Chart PF3.4.A

Sources: [For all countries, EU SILC](#)

In many OECD countries, children are more likely to use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services when they come from relatively advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (Chart PF4.3.C. and Chart PF4.3.D). For example, in several OECD countries participation rates in OSH care for 6- to 11-year-olds increase with household income (Chart PF4.3.C). This is particularly the case in France, the Netherlands and Portugal, where participation rates for children from high-income backgrounds (36%, 36% and 60%, respectively) are over 20 percentage points higher than those for children from low-income backgrounds (13%, 10% and 40%, respectively). Similarly, in a number of OECD countries, children are also more likely to use OSH care services when their mother holds a university-level qualification (Chart PF4.3.D). Gaps in participation rates between children whose mothers have and have not attained tertiary education are again largest in France and the Netherlands (both 18 percentage points).

Chart PF4.3.C. Participation rates in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services by equivalised disposable income tertile

Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by equivalised disposable income tertile, 2016



Note: Data for Iceland, Switzerland and Malta refer to 2014. Data cover children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week. Data cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed. Equivalised disposable income tertiles are calculated using the disposable (post-tax-and-transfer) income of the household in which the child lives – equivalised using the square root scale, to account for the effect of family size on the household's standard of living – and are based on the equivalised disposable incomes of children aged less than or equal to 12. In countries marked with an *, differences in participation rates across groups are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

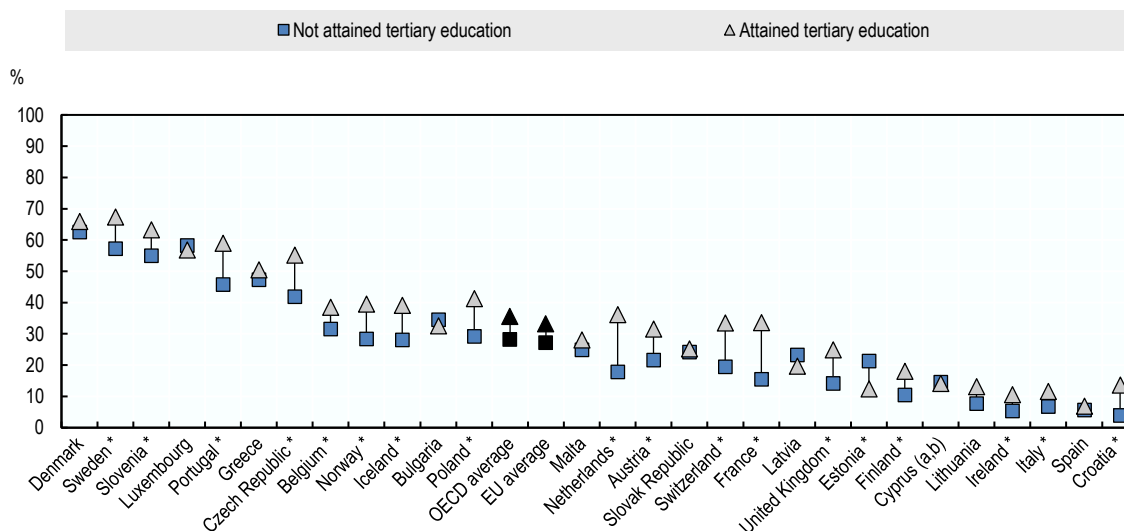
a. see note e to Chart PF3.4.A

b. see note f to Chart PF3.4.A

Source: [For all countries, EU SILC](#)

Chart PF4.3.D. Participation rates in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services by mother's education level

Proportion (%) of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by mother's education level, 2016



Note: Data for Iceland, Switzerland and Malta refer to 2014. Data cover children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week. Data cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed. Mother's education level based on whether or not the reported mother of the child has attained tertiary education (highest level of education attained at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8). The education level of the female household head is used if there is no mother in the household, and then of the father (or male household head) if there is no mother or female head in the household. In countries marked with an *, differences in participation rates across groups are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

a. see note e to Chart PF3.4.A

b. see note f to Chart PF3.4.A

Source: [For all countries, EU SILC](#)

Regulations and guidelines on child-to-staff ratios in out-of-school-hours care services differ considerably across countries (Table PF4.3.A). In some countries, such as the Netherlands, New Zealand, and certain Länder in Germany, guideline child-to-staff ratios are as low as 10:1 (i.e. 10 children per member of staff), whereas in others like Greece and Poland guideline ratios are much higher at 25:1. Some countries (e.g. Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Spain) have no official guidelines or regulations. Generally, child-to-staff ratios for OSH-care services are a little higher than those for services for younger children (PF4.2) – and especially very young children – which helps make OSH care services relatively less expensive.

Table PF4.3.A. Guidelines on child-to-staff ratios in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for school-age children, 2016^a

Australia	Each jurisdiction has its own specific guidelines.	Luxembourg	11:1
Austria	Each federal state has its own specific guidelines.	Netherlands	10:1
Canada (b)	Each jurisdiction has its own specific guidelines, and these vary from 10:1 in some to 15:1 in others.	New Zealand	10:1 on site, 8:1 off-site
Czech Republic	No official guidelines/regulations, though the maximum group size in after-school centres is 30 children.	Norway	No official guidelines/regulations.
Denmark	No official guidelines/regulations.	Poland	25:1 (with lower ratios for groups with children with disabilities, depending on the disability)
Estonia	No official guidelines/regulations.	Spain	No official guidelines/regulations.
France	14:1, for children aged six or older (10:1 for children under age 6)	Sweden	No official guidelines/regulations.
Germany	Each Länder has its own specific guidelines, and these vary from 10:1 in some to 22:1 in others (qualified staff only).	Switzerland	Each canton has its own specific guidelines, and these vary considerably, from 8:1 in some to 25:1 in others.
Greece	25:1	United States	Varies by state and type of care provider, from 6:1 to 25:1
Hungary	No official guidelines/regulations. In 2012/13, the average child-to-staff ratio was 27:1.	Bulgaria	22:1
Iceland	Each municipality has its own guidelines	Croatia	No official guidelines/regulations.
Ireland	No official guidelines/regulations.	Cyprus	25:1
Japan	Groups with less than 20 children should have at least 1 member of staff, and groups of between 20 and 40 children should have at least two members of staff. The maximum group size is 40.	Lithuania	No official guidelines/regulations.
Korea	Each service has its own guidelines	Malta	No official guidelines/regulations.
Latvia	No official guidelines/regulations.	Romania	No official guidelines/regulations.

Note: Data for Australia, Denmark, Iceland, Korea, Sweden and the United States refer to the situation in 2012, and for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Romania to the situation in 2011. For Canada, information refers to a child aged 60 months. Information does not cover Québec.

Source: OECD questionnaire to national authorities (June 2016); for Australia, Denmark, Iceland, Korea, Sweden and the United States, OECD questionnaire to national authorities (September 2012); for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Romania; Plantenga and Remery (2013), *Childcare services for school age children: A comparative review of 33 countries*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Comparability and data issues

Data on participation in OSH care services are taken from a range of sources. Data for all EU countries (plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) other than Germany come from the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC) survey. Data for Australia and the United States come from their respective national statistical authorities, with the data originally collected using household surveys, while data for Germany and Japan come from national correspondents who themselves collect the data from national authorities. In the latter two cases, data are based on administrative records rather than survey data.

The use of different sources and types of source for different countries may affect cross-national comparisons. First, definitions vary slightly across countries. For example, for Australia, Japan and the United States, age groups differ from those used for the remaining countries. For Australia data refer to

children aged 6 to 12 and the age groups 6 to 8 and 9 to 12, for Japan data refer to children aged 7 to 11 and the age groups 7 to 8 and 9 to 11, and for the United States to children aged 5 to 11 and the age groups 5 to 8 and 9 to 11. To the extent that participation differs with age in these countries, this may lead to the under- or over-estimation of participation relative to other countries. Second, while some sources (for example, those used for Germany and Japan) are based on administrative data and therefore count the actual numbers of children enrolled in facilities, others (such as the data for Australia and the United States, and all countries that use information from EU SILC) are based on surveys and may as a result be affected by sample size and sample selection issues. Lastly, coverage sometimes differs too. For Japan, data cover children using centre-based out-of-school-hour services that are organised by the municipality and overseen by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, only. Any children using services not overseen by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (for example, services organised by the Ministry of Education) are not included, which is likely to lead to the underestimation of participation relative to other countries.

Further reading: OECD Babies and Bosses (various issues); OECD (2011) Doing Better for Families; Plantenga, J. and Remery, C. (2013) Childcare services for school age children, Publications Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.