

# GERMANY

## Country Highlights



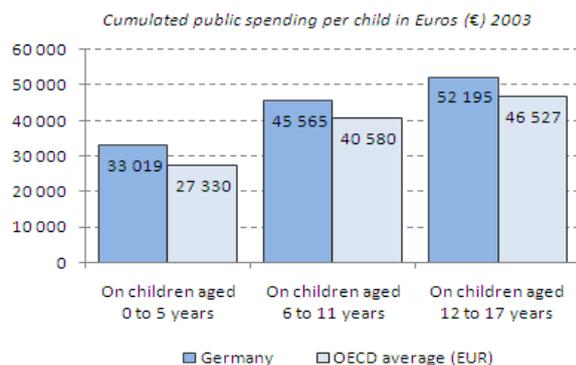
### OECD (2009), *Doing Better for Children*

In their first ever publication on children, the OECD reports that Germany spends big money on children, more than the OECD average for every age group. Does Germany get value for money in its high child spending? Despite high relative spending, the OECD report shows Germany lagging behind many other member countries in a number of important child outcomes.

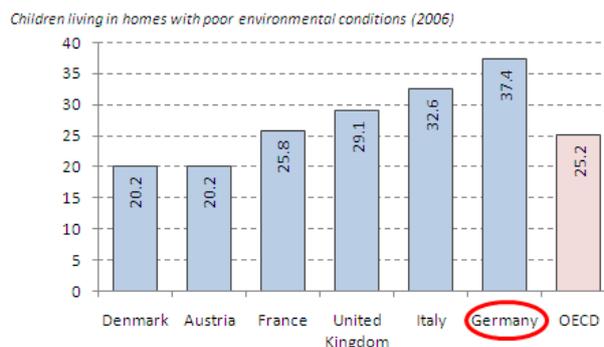
Areas for children where Germany does relatively poorly, and which may need some policy attention include child poverty, local environmental conditions, differences between high and low performing students and child physical activity, bullying, and smoking. Child poverty rates at 16.3% in Germany exceed the OECD average (12.4%). Well over one in three German children live in areas with poor local environmental conditions, compared to only one in four children on average across the OECD. German average educational performance is slightly above the OECD average, but gaps between high and lower performers are worse than OECD averages. Equally, the proportion of German children who get the recommended amount of daily physical activity (17%) is below the OECD average (20.2%). German youth smoking rates (19%) are higher than the OECD average (17%). Lastly, bullying reported by German school pupils is 3% points above the OECD average at around 14%.

Germany, as with other OECD countries, has a considerable spending difference between younger and older children. Spending intelligently on young children is more likely to generate positive changes and, indeed, is likely to be fairer for more disadvantaged children. Based on international evidence, the OECD concludes that Germany should spend more on younger, disadvantaged children. There have been some moves in this direction in Germany in recent years and these are to be encouraged. But much more could be done. Equally, the German government should ensure that current high rates of spending on older children are much more effective in meeting the needs of the disadvantaged amongst them.

Public expenditure on children in Germany increases as they age



Families with children in Germany are more likely to report poor local environmental conditions



It is not all doom and gloom for German children however. Children in Germany grow up in families with incomes very close to the OECD average. Even with average income levels, German families do well to provide their children with the key educational possessions. Only one in 200 children in Germany experience deprivation of basic educational items, the second best in the OECD. Health and safety outcomes are generally solid for German children, with above average breastfeeding initiation and vaccination rates, and lower than average child mortality rates. Rates of youth drunkenness are around average (1 in 5 of 13 to 15 year olds) and teen fertility is below average (less than 1 birth per 100 teenage girls). Finally a relatively high rate of teenage German children also like school, 34.9% compared to the OECD average of 27.2%.