ESN Autumn Seminar 2011
Investing in Children
Investir dans les enfants

14 et 15 novembre 2011, Paris
14-15 November 2011, Paris
Comparaison du bien-être des enfants dans les pays de l'UE
Dominic Richardson
OCDE

Comparing child-wellbeing in EU countries
Dominic Richardson
OECD
Child well-being in EU countries

Dominic Richardson
OECD ELS/SPD

ESN Autumn Seminar: Investing in Children: Early Years Services and Child Protection
Paris, 14th and 15th November, 2011
Child well-being messages

- Children are at a higher risk of poverty than the total population
- Child well-being outcomes are evolving in different directions
- Despite strong economies pre-crisis, no real progress has been made in poverty reduction, and mixed well-being gains
- The knowledge base / indicators and indices can be improved on
In all but 7 European countries, children are at a higher risk of poverty

At risk of poverty rate (cut-off point: 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers), 2009

Source: EUROSTAT, June 2011
Redistribution and poverty reduction

Only the Norwegian social security system reduces child poverty risks more than population poverty risks

Reduction in the at risk of poverty rate (cut-off point: 60% of median equiv. inc.) after social transfers, 2009

Source: EUROSTAT, June 2011
The nature of both welfare and work, and their interaction, can lead to contradictory messages along similar measures. 

Intersections of Europe 2020 Poverty Target Indicators by age (0 to 17 years), 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At risk of poverty, severely materially deprived and living in a household with low work intensity</th>
<th>Not at risk of poverty, but severely materially deprived and not living in a household with low work intensity</th>
<th>Not at risk of poverty, not severely materially deprived, but living in a household with low work intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>(0.6 to 1.1%)</td>
<td>(0.9 to 1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bottom 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>(3.1 to 7.1%)</td>
<td>(3.5 to 6.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT, June 2011
Some issues with income poverty...

- ... or problems with a policy-friendly indicator
- Mis- or under-reporting
  - Earned income and benefits
- Arbitrary thresholds, equivalisation
  - By age / disability
- Missing populations (homeless families)
- Cash as a ‘catch-all’ for families and children
- Might not represent societal progress
# Child well-being: statistical coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material well-being</th>
<th>Housing and environment</th>
<th>Educational well-being</th>
<th>Health and safety</th>
<th>Risky behaviours</th>
<th>Quality of school life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early (0-5 years)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid (6 to 11 years)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late (12 to 17 years)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imperfect indices: some problems

- Too adolescent focussed and not disaggregated by age / sex / ethnicity, etc.
- Missing info (mental health, neglect)
- Cause vs. Effect approach
  - Expectation of internal reliability
- Equal weights (problems of consensus)
- Penalising variations (valuing consistency)
- Unbalanced dimensions
The majority of indicators for children and youth in the OECD and EU regions are material indicators.

Child data by domains of well-being and by measurement type.
• 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-focussed
• Policy levers: School environments, teaching practices, ALMP, family benefit changes, educational supplements
Differences in student performance on the PISA Reading Literacy scale between 2000 and 2009

Health and safety

- Infant mortality / Low birth weight / Vaccinations / Physical activity / Mortality / Suicide
- Convention articles 6, 24, 29.1, 31.1.
- Complementarities
  - 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)
Converging infant mortality outcomes

Over a generation, child mortality rates have more than halved

Rates and trends in infant mortality in European countries since the 1980s

Source: OECD Health data, 2010 – version October 2010
Family contexts and child well-being

- Out-of-school factors explain the bulk of variation in achievement
- Parental education and wealth are generally strong predictors
- Parenting behaviour matters (reading, breastfeeding) – time matters...
- Poor nutrition, job loss, stress during pregnancy has long term development effects
- For adolescents, low wealth is linked to poorer health and obesity, lower life satisfaction, and lower fruit consumption
Early education and parenting

Source: OECD (2011), Doing Better for Families
Some lessons for:

• Child indicator work
  – More age-related outcomes / interventions
  – More equality indicators / trends
  – More family contexts and relationships
  – Depreciating and evolving indicators

• Frontline local services
  – Few service quality indicators (early years)
  – Absence of data on at-risk children / out-of-home care
  – Local variations (inc in delivery) not captured well
Some relevant links

www.oecd.org/els/social

www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure

www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database

www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing

www.wikichild.org