



# The cost of raising children across evolving family structures - New estimates and policy challenges

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The cost of children is a key data relevant to a wide range of policy questions and household decisions. In light of evolving family structures and the growing prevalence of separated parents, this brief examines the cost of children in diverse family settings in European OECD countries. It provides new, country-specific estimates of the costs of children based on household expenditure and self-reported economic wellbeing data among couples and single parents caring for resident and non-resident children.

The brief underlines the real need to better estimate the cost of children across household types and custody arrangements to inform policies to provide children with an adequate standard of living, thereby promoting child well-being and potentially also fertility. Main findings are:

- **Variation in Expenditure-Based Child Costs:** Expenditure-based estimates show that the cost of a first child in couple households ranges from about 10% of the cost of the first adult in Sweden to around 40% in Spain, placing the commonly used modified OECD equivalence scale (30%) near the middle of this range. Economies of scale are evident with additional children, though some exceptions exist – such as in Belgium, where the cost of a second or third child is broadly comparable to that of the first.
- **Higher Costs Revealed by Financial Strain Data:** Estimates based on self-reported financial strain suggest that the perceived cost of children is, on average, 50% higher than expenditure-based estimates. These data highlight hidden financial pressures not captured in direct spending, including reduced earning capacity due to caregiving, lost time that could otherwise be used for income-generating activities, increased housing costs, higher insurance and healthcare expenses, and financial pressures to invest in children's education and extracurricular activities. These broader impacts significantly reshape household finances, even when expenditures specifically labelled as child-related appear limited.
- **Disproportionate Burden on Single-Parent Households:** Whether measured through expenditures or financial strain, the cost of children is consistently higher for single-parent households. Across European OECD countries, and after controlling for household characteristics, self-reported financial strain data suggest that the cost of a child for a single

parent is approximately 60% – twice that of couple households. This disparity reflects greater economic vulnerability among single parents, who are more vulnerable to changes in the cost of living, labour market conditions, or the support benefits they may receive (including from their former partner).

- **Financial Burden of Non-Resident Children:** Non-resident children, such as those in shared custody arrangements impose financial burdens on “non-custodial” households. Across European OECD countries, the cost of a non-resident child is estimated at 22% of the cost of a single adult in two-parent households and 40% in single-parent households. These costs are particularly high in Scandinavian countries, where joint legal custody and child rotation between households are more common.
- **Need for Better Data on Family Living Arrangements:** Changes in family structures, parenting practices, and economic conditions underscore the need for improved statistical data collection. Surveys on households living conditions and budget must better capture data on living standards, consumption choices (including investments in children), and family arrangements beyond the traditional household model. This includes gathering detailed, comparable data on residential arrangements, inter-household transfers and custody arrangements for “non-resident” children. Such improvements are essential for accurately estimating the costs of childrearing and understanding how modern living arrangements impact financial strain. More broadly, enhanced data will support policymaking that reflects how rising living costs affect consumption patterns and fertility decisions across diverse family types.

## Why measuring the cost of raising children matters

The cost of raising children is a key data in determining living standards and poverty of households, as well as for calibrating public transfers to parents with dependent children. In addition, the cost of raising children is crucial for many household decisions, including fertility ones.

Changing demographic and social contexts have a big influence on the composition of households with children and household allocation of resources to raising children. Given the extent of these changes, it is necessary to re-evaluate the influence of family dynamics on the cost of raising children, and the methods used to appraise these costs. Of great importance are declining fertility rates, which have resulted in smaller family sizes, with parents focusing their financial and time investments on fewer children. Growing competition in education and rising income inequality also drives parents to invest more in their children's care and education. At the same time, parenthood has become more contingent on stable employment and income, particularly for prospective mothers (Alderotti et al., 2021<sup>[1]</sup>; OECD, 2024<sup>[2]</sup>), who may choose to delay starting a family (van Wijk and Billari, 2024<sup>[3]</sup>).

The dynamics of family formation, dissolution, and living arrangements have also changed significantly in recent decades, making it increasingly challenging to estimate the cost of children in a way that captures the complexity and diversity of family structures observed in advanced economies (Hakovirta et al., 2023<sup>[4]</sup>; Miho and Thévenon, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>). The majority of children across the OECD live with two parents in the same household. In 2023, around 82% of children under 18 lived with two parents, while 17% live with one parent (OECD, 2024a). However, these figures vary widely, from less than 7% of children in Greece and Türkiye living in single-parent households to over 25% in France and the United States. Post-separation family arrangements have also evolved, with a significant number of children in shared custody dividing their time between both parents' residences (Miho and Thévenon, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>; Zilincikova, 2020<sup>[6]</sup>).

## A comparative approach to measuring the cost of raising children

This brief presents an analysis on the cost of raising children by household structure focusing on household expenditures and challenges in making ends meet. This analysis was conducted for European OECD countries with available comparable data, using the *European Household Budget Surveys (EU-HBS)* and the *EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)*. The EU-HBS provides detailed expenditure data that allows to estimate models of consumer demand, while EU-SILC provides self-reported information on financial strain and detailed information on household structure and family living arrangements. Those two surveys provide complementary information on household cost.

This brief examines the cost of raising children amid evolving family structures, particularly where children and parents live in separate households. In such cases, children may be classified as either “resident” or “non-resident,” depending on where they spend the majority of their time. However, standard household surveys typically do not capture information about non-resident children or other non-household members. The 2021 ad hoc module on Living Arrangements of Children in Separated and Blended Families, introduced in the EU-SILC surveys, helps address this gap by providing data on non-resident children. This makes it possible to assess the impact of non-resident children on households’ self-reported financial strain (Box 1). Incorporating this perspective is essential for accurately evaluating disparities in living standards among families with children and their vulnerability to poverty and economic insecurity. It also provides essential insights for the development effective financial support policies – whether through taxation, social benefits, or child support arrangements following family separation.

### Box 1. The 2021 EU-SILC ad-hoc module on Living arrangements and conditions of children in separated and blended families

To offer more detailed demographic data on household configurations, EUROSTAT included an ad-hoc module on non-standard family structures in the 2021 EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, in line with the recommendations of the UNECE Taskforce on Household Statistics. The success of this data collection was mixed. Nevertheless, it still provides some information on separated and blended families to enrich the description of households and family living arrangements at the European level.

The ad-hoc module collected data on children with parents in other households and households with non-resident children. Two variables were collected:

- The number of children who are household members and have a parent living *outside* the household (i.e., non-resident parents).

This variable aims to collect information on the number children who are household members and have a parent who is part of a different household. The variable includes children whose mother is a household member and father is not a household member, children whose father is a household member and mother is not a household member, and children living with one parent and have no contact their other parent. The variable excludes children who are household members and whose two parents live inside the household, children who are household members and are living with one of their parents (either mother or father) and the other parent is deceased, and children living with grandparents, uncles/aunts, or other relatives and do not have either their don’t have the father and mother living in the household or do not know. Note that even though children with a parent in another household may be considered household members in the survey, these children may still live with that parent some of the time.

- The number of children who are not household members and whose parent lives *inside* the household (i.e., non-resident children).

This variable gathers information on the number of children whose parent (one or both) are members of the interviewed household, but the child is not a household member (even if the child may be accommodated by the parent part of the time). The focus of the variable is to define if at least one adult in the household has children who do not live permanently with them, either because: their children spent some days inside the household but mainly reside with another parent in a different household, or their children reside outside of the household.

This classification of resident and non-resident children offered by EUROSTAT has the advantage of making a clear distinction between resident and non-resident children based on household membership. According to the Article 4.3 of Common Concepts Regulation (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2181), children's household membership depends on the amount of time that they spend in each household if they alternate between residences. Only if the child spends an equal amount of time in each residence, the place of usual residence of that child shall be the place of residence of the legal guardian or the parent who receives the child benefits, or the place of residence of the legal guardian or the parent who contributes more towards the child-related costs. If none of the above applies, the usual residence is the household where a child is during the survey interview.

The analysis of these data shows that children with parents in separate households typically spend the majority of their time in the household where they are considered a member. However, across countries, there are exceptions. For example, in Ireland, the Netherlands, and Portugal, children classified as residents spend on average significantly fewer than 15 nights per month in the EU-SILC household. When interpreting these findings, it is important to note that in these countries, resident children may be considered household members despite spending less than half of their time in that household.

Data from this special 2021 module on living arrangements of children are used to estimate the cost of children who alternate between households, adopting a comparative perspective. The identification relies on self-reported measures of financial strain to estimate the additional income that compensates the gap in perceived economic well-being between childless households and otherwise similar households with resident and non-resident children.

The estimates of the cost of non-resident children are derived through a multi-step procedure. The first step involves constructing a measure of household size that accounts for the presence of non-resident children. This adjusted household size is then incorporated into a regression framework to estimate the structural parameters of an equivalence scale, which reflects the resource needs of a household as a function of its size. The key parameters estimated are the effects of adjusted household size and income on self-reported economic well-being. The cost of raising children is subsequently inferred from the difference between the equivalence scale of a childless household and that of households with either resident or non-resident children (see Rapp and Thévenon (2025<sup>[7]</sup>) for details).

## Economies of scale in parenting: Costs drop with more children, spike for single parents

The analysis begins by examining households with two adults. For these households, the estimated cost of the first child is broadly consistent with the OECD-modified equivalence scale. It should be noted that these estimates do not account for variation in costs by the child's age<sup>1</sup> or for children who reside in the

<sup>1</sup> Additional results show that the cost of raising children tends to vary by age. A common trend across countries is that children and dependent adult children aged 14 to 24 incur expenses at least as high as those of children under 5 (Rapp and Thévenon, 2025<sup>[7]</sup>). In several countries, such as Germany, Ireland, Spain, and the Netherlands, costs rise with age in couple households, while in France, this pattern is observed among single-parent households. These findings suggest that financial challenges are not confined to the early years of raising young children. Instead, they often persist and may intensify as children reach late adolescence and early adulthood.

household only part of the time – an issue further discussed below. On average, unweighted<sup>2</sup> estimates based on expenditure data across countries suggest that the first child increases household needs by 23%. In comparison, estimates using self-reported economic well-being data indicate a significantly higher cost equivalent to 41% of a single adult. Figure 1 shows moderate variation across countries in the cost of the first child. In most cases, expenditure-based estimates fall slightly below the OECD benchmark, except in Estonia, France, and Slovenia (by a small margin), and more notably in Greece and Spain, where the estimated costs are 39% and 40%, respectively. Sweden reports the lowest cost at 10%, based on expenditure data.

In all European OECD countries, except for Spain, the estimated cost of children is higher when using self-reported data on the ability to make ends meet compared to expenditure data. In most countries the difference in estimated cost between the two approaches is small. However, in a few countries, Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Sweden, the difference is relatively large when it comes to the first child. Crucially, in Sweden the low costs of the first child found with expenditure data are not reflected in self-reported economic well-being, which finds relatively high costs.

According to expenditure data, costs are particularly high for single-parent households. For instance, the cost of the first child appears to be much higher in single-adult households than in two-adult households. This holds true for both the expenditure-based approach and results derived from self-reported economic well-being data, with cross-country unweighted averages of 30% and 64%. In Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Poland and Sweden, the estimated cost of a first child is much higher based on self-reported financial strain than on expenditure data. For single parents in these countries, the presence of a child is perceived as placing a greater burden on their ability to meet needs than what is indicated by expenditure-based estimates of child costs.

Higher child costs among single parents are driven by multiple factors. First, two parent households have a greater time budget than single parents, who often have to outsource certain activities, including childcare (Martin and Périvier, 2018<sup>[13]</sup>). Second, economies of scale may be lower for single parents as there are fewer individuals in a household. Third, children in single-parent households tend to be older, which is relevant as older child age is usually associated with higher costs (Bauer et al., 2021<sup>[20]</sup>).

The concept of economies of scale to household size implies that the cost of every additional child is below the cost associated with the first child. In other words, the average cost of a child falls with each subsequent child. Figure 1 illustrates the analysis on the cost of children as the number of children in the household increases. In terms of the unweighted average, the second child costs less. The expenditure data suggests that the average cost of two children amounts to 20% among two-adult households and 23% among single-parent households. The same holds true for the evidence from data on self-perceived economic well-being (31% and 60%, respectively). However, exceptions exist. For example, in Lithuania and Czechia, there is no evidence of a decline in the cost of children among single-parent households with two children relative to single-parent households with one child only.

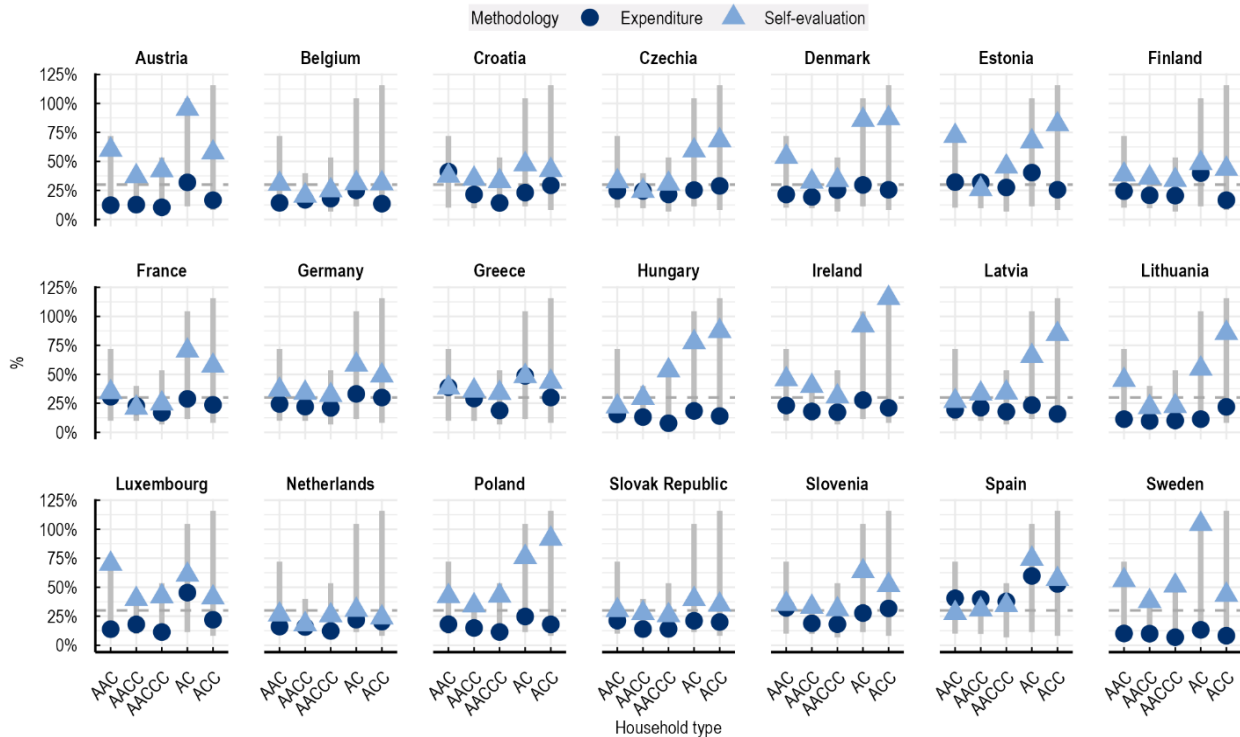
Among two-adult households with three children, there is no clear cross-national pattern to indicate a further decline in the cost of children associated with the third child. While on average the cost of children declines marginally according to expenditure data, no such decline is present in the data on self-perceived economic well-being. This finding is consistent with the standard OECD-modified equivalence scale, that gives all children regardless of the number of siblings the same weight.

<sup>2</sup> Unweighted means that averages are taken across country results, rather than computing the statistic for the pooled set of countries.



**Figure 1. Child costs vary across countries, between two-parent and single-parent households and depend on the number of children**

Child costs based on expenditure data and self-reported economic well-being as a share of cost of a single adult across countries and household types



Note: The Figure refers to the cost of children relative to the cost of the first single adult for different households with a given number of adults (couples AA or singles A) and dependent children C (from one to three). For example, AAC refers to a couple household with one child. Children are defined as household members between the age of 0 and 15 years, as well as other household members under the age of 25 who are in education – provided they are neither the reference person nor their spouse. All other household members are considered as adults. The dashed line refers to the cost of children according to the modified OECD-scale. For example, in Austria, the cost of a child in a household with two adults is 12% of the cost of the first adult according to the expenditure data, but 60% according to the self-reported data on economic well-being. According to the OECD modified scale, the cost is 30%. Income and expenditure are adjusted for the consumer price index in prices of the most recent year of the survey wave and purchasing power parities of the same year. Households where the reference person is above 60 years are dropped from the analysis, as well as households with zero or negative income. In the EU-HBS data, observations with negative expenditure in any COICOP division and households where expenditure in all divisions does not add up to the total expenditure (due to differences in definitions in the original surveys across countries) are removed. In Greek EU-HBS data, the number of students in the age bracket between 16 and 24 years is imputed based on the distribution of students among 15- to 29-year-olds in previous EU-HBS waves. Estimates are obtained from expenditure data and self-reported economic well-being data. No weights used to distinguish between different types of household members. Estimates are obtained by pooling across waves to obtain sufficiently large samples and controlling for wave fixed effects.

Source: European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2021 and European Union Household Budget Surveys (EU-HBS) for 2010, 2015 and 2020.

## Household economic well-being and the hidden costs of non-resident children

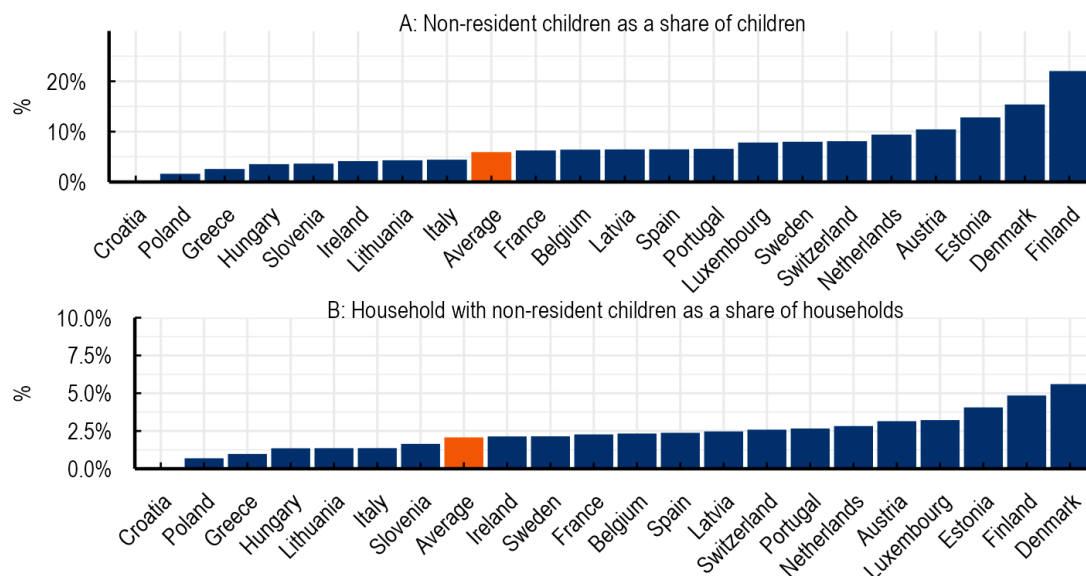
Distinguishing between children based on their type of attachment to a given household allows a more detailed exploration of the impact of family living arrangements on child-rearing. This analysis is made possible by self-reported well-being data from the 2021 EU-SILC module, which includes detailed information on family living arrangements that is not available in the expenditure data (Box 1).

The ad-hoc module reveals that a significant share of all children<sup>3</sup> alternate between two households (detailed definitions are given in the Box below). On average across European OECD countries, approximately 7%<sup>4</sup> of the total child population are considered non-resident (Figure 2). However, in some European OECD countries the share of non-resident children is much higher. For example, in Finland, more than 20% of children are non-resident, while in Croatia, only a small fraction of children spend most of their time in another household.

Only a small number of households report that an adult member has at least one child living in another household. On average, across European countries approximately 2.3% of households report that one household adult member has at least one child in another household (Figure 2). There are significant variations across countries. For example, the share is twice the average in Denmark (5.6%), but close to 0% in Croatia.

**Figure 2. Prevalence of non-resident children**

The prevalence of non-resident children varies substantially across countries



Note: The figure describes the prevalence of children with alternating residence who are classified as non-residence in the EU-SILC ad-hoc module. Panel A refers to the number of non-resident children as a share of the total number of children. Panel B refers to the share of households where at least one person reports to be the parent of a non-resident child. Non-resident children are children aged 17 and younger who usually live with another parent, or separated from both parents (living with grandparents, for example). The term does not include children who are away at the time of the interview for educational reasons or health, and it does not include deceased children. The total child population in Panel A are household members between the age of 0 and 15 years, as well as other household members under the age of 18 who are in education – provided they are neither the reference person nor their spouse. Note that this definition is different to the one used throughout the rest of this paper – to match better the data available on non-resident children (who are only covered by the survey if they are younger than 18). Germany and the Czech Republic are excluded due to large proportions of missing values. In Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal, the number of non-resident children may be underestimated, as a large share of resident children spend less than half of their time in the survey household even though they are classified as resident children. The data needs to be interpreted carefully, as the number of non-resident children reported in the survey is below the number of children who have parents in other households.

Source: European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for 2021, ad-hoc module.

<sup>3</sup> For the descriptive analysis in this paragraph, we drop children who are 18 or older from the sample, including these children would deflate the proportion of non-resident children.

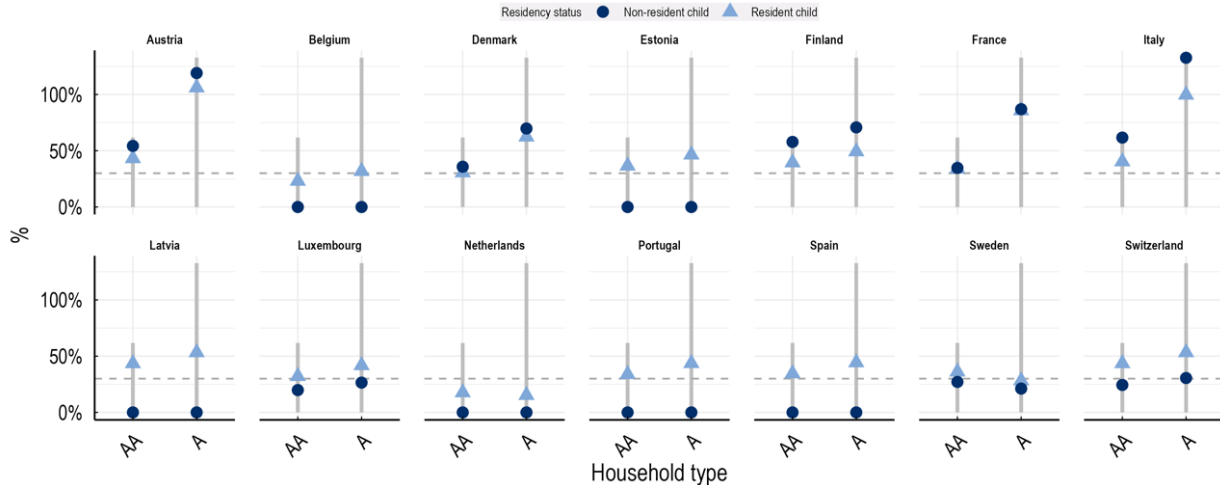
<sup>4</sup> This average is unweighted. In weighted terms (by population size), the average is one percentage point below this estimate.

Figure 3 shows the cost of raising resident and non-resident children based on self-reported economic well-being as a share of cost of a single adult across countries and household types. Non-resident children are defined as those who spend the majority of their time outside the household living with another household. However, some children classified as non-resident may spend a non-trivial amount of time in the household, potentially incurring costs for the household. Assessing the impact of children who alternate between households involves computing weights for non-resident children to test whether their presence affects self-reported economic well-being of household members and include them in the adjusted household size according to their weight.

Figure 3 distinguishes between two-adult households and single-parent households. In addition, the cost of children is broken down by the type of attachment to the household that different children have. The data on self-reported financial strain from EU-SILC reveals that in many countries, the cost of non-resident children is non-negligible. The unweighted average of the cost of non-resident children across countries is 22% in two-adult households and 40% in households with one adult. Therefore, the average cost of non-resident children is half that of the cost of resident children. However, significant variations exist between individual countries. Non-resident children have a statistically significant impact on self-reported economic well-being in ten countries, which include the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden and Austria, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. In contrast, non-resident children do not have a significant impact on self-reported economic well-being in any of the Baltic countries. The picture is mixed in the Mediterranean economies. Costs are significant in Italy, but inconsequential in Spain.

**Figure 3. Comparing the Well-Being Cost of Resident and Non-Resident Children**

Child costs based on self-reported economic well-being as a share of cost of a single adult across countries and household types



Note: Figure refers to the cost of children relative to the cost of the first single adult for two and one-adult households (AA and A). Children are defined as household members between the age of 0 and 15 years, as well as other household members under the age of 25 who are in education – provided they are neither the reference person nor their spouse. All other household members are considered as adults. Non-resident children include children aged 17 and younger who usually live with another parent, or separated from both parents (living with grandparents, for example). The term does not include children who are away at the time of the interview for educational reasons or health, and it does not include deceased children. Germany and Czechia are excluded due to large proportions of missing values. In the Netherlands, the number of non-resident children may be underestimated, as a large share of resident children spend less than half of their time in the survey household even though they are classified as resident children. Countries with less than 30 observations in one of the groups are dropped. The data needs to be interpreted carefully, as the number of non-resident children reported in the survey is below the number of children who have parents in other households. The dashed line refers to the cost of children according to the modified OECD-scale. Income is adjusted for purchasing power parities. Households where the reference person is above 60 years are dropped from the analysis, as well as households with zero or negative income.

Source: European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) for 2021, ad-hoc module.



In all countries where the cost of non-resident children is positive, the cost of non-resident children is close to the cost of resident children. However, the difference in the cost associated with a non-resident versus a resident child is not statistically significant. This finding reflects that many non-resident children may be in shared custody arrangements, meaning they reside partly in the household and alternate between different households. As a result, costs such as those for accommodation, food, energy, transportation, toys, and other goods are duplicated and incurred by both households. Interestingly, non-resident children are as costly as resident children in Scandinavian countries and France, where joint physical custody of children after separation is most common (Hakovirta, Meyer and Haapanen, 2024<sup>[6]</sup>), as well as in Belgium and Italy, where the prevalence of joint custody is increasing (Nieuwenhuis, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>).

## Key takeaways for policies

The costs of raising children, measured as the share of household income dedicated to child-related expenses, plays a crucial role in shaping children's material well-being, as well as health, socio-emotional, and academic outcomes. These costs depend on the goods and services households can afford to support their children's learning, play, and overall development. On top of this cost, the financial strain of making ends meet significantly influence household decisions regarding having or expanding a family (OECD, 2024<sup>[2]</sup>). To effectively address the financial pressures associated with raising children, countries may need to consider the costs obtained with self-reported financial strain data. These costs are often higher than the implicit costs estimated using standard equivalence scales – such as the modified OECD scale or the square root scale – commonly used to assess living standards and poverty across household types. They point to higher needs of support, especially for large and single-parent families.

A range of measures can help reduce the cost of raising children and alleviate financial pressure on families. OECD's previous research points to policies that support parental employment, especially for mothers, who are more likely than fathers to reduce or interrupt their careers after having children. They include:

- Paid parental leave schemes: These allow parents to care for children while maintaining labour attachment and receive income. Adequate income replacement rates reduce household poverty risks and promote a more equal distribution of “leave time” between parents.
- Formal childcare services: These services support parents in balancing work and family life, during the years prior to mandatory schooling. However, especially for children under three, participation rates for low-income households are lower compared to higher-income households. Ensuring affordable, high-quality childcare is essential for low-income households to balance work and family needs.

The redistribution achieved through the tax and benefit system is another policy lever to impact on disposable income, helping lower-income households to manage the cost of raising children, regardless of their labour market situation. In general, income redistribution varies based on household composition, including the number and age of children, the civil status of the parents, and family living arrangements, particularly in cases of family separation (Miho and Thévenon, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>).

The findings summarised in this policy insights have several implications for the use of child cost estimates in designing income support policies. Typically, in countries where there is evidence of economies of scale as family size increases, tax and benefit systems that provide sharply increasing support for larger families may inadvertently overcompensate high-income households with two or more children. At the same time, the elevated impact of children on single parents' self-reported ability to make ends meet underscores the financial challenges they face. A key part of this challenge stems from labour market disparities: in 2021, 27% of single parents in Europe were unemployed, and 10% worked part-time, compared to fewer than 4% of couples with children who were jobless. Ensuring that financial incentives for returning to work or to increase working hours are sufficiently strong, along with expanding access to affordable childcare, could

help provide single parents with a more stable income and ease financial strain. Adequate income support remains also essential, particularly for single parents who are not working or employed in low-paid or insecure jobs that fail to sufficiently ease financial pressure (Aerts, Marx and Parolin, 2022<sup>[12]</sup>; Nieuwenhuis, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). The appropriate mix of social protection measures and labour market policies to support single-parent households may vary across countries and warrants further research.

Finally addressing weaknesses in child support systems could help alleviate the financial struggles faced by single parents, as unpaid child support remains a significant issue (Miho and Thévenon, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>). Although many countries have measures to enforce payments or provide public support when the non-custodial parent cannot pay, these processes are often slow and uncertain, leaving single parents in financial distress (OECD, 2025<sup>[7]</sup>). In some countries, child maintenance payments are reduced when non-custodial parents return to work or are deducted from minimum income support. Moreover, in some countries, there is no child support guarantee program to ensure maintenance payments when the non-custodial parent defaults.

In cases of joint or alternating custody following separation, households may struggle to maintain a standard of living that adequately covers the costs associated with raising children, for either resident or non-resident children. To better support these families, financial assistance programmes – such as family benefits, housing support, and social assistance – could reflect the realities of shared custody, where children do not reside full-time in one home. A 2024 review of 13 OECD countries found that most benefit systems overlook shared residence arrangements and do not provide entitlements for “non-resident” children under their payment rules (Hakovirta, Meyer and Haapanen, 2024<sup>[3]</sup>). Norway is a notable exception, incorporating such entitlements into a broad spectrum of benefits.

Last but not least, to inform public policy, it is crucial that statistics on poverty and household living standards reflect the realities of diverse family and residential arrangements linked to family life. This analysis highlights the value of such detailed information in understanding the impact of children on household expenditure and self-reported well-being, particularly for specific sub-groups, such as single parents. To ensure continued exploration of the impact of family living arrangement on household living standards and child cost, it is essential that surveys on income, living conditions, and household budgets systematically include information on family and residential arrangements that extend beyond the boundaries of the household. This includes shared residency and spending on non-resident children, going beyond child maintenance payments. Extending this information to all non-resident family members would make statistics on living standards more aligned with the realities of family life.

To this end, and to facilitate international comparisons, statistics on non-resident household members – including harmonised data on children – are needed. However, the criteria used by countries in the EU SILC 2021 module appear to mix information on physical custody (time spent in households) and legal custody in varying ways. Including information on living arrangements in household budget surveys, as well as data on expenditures for non-resident children, would help improve understanding of how living arrangements influence the cost of children as measured by expenditure.

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## Resources

OECD Child Well-being Data Portal: <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/oecd-child-well-being-data-portal.html>  
OECD Child Well-being Dashboard <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/dashboards/oecd-child-well-being-dashboard.html>

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## OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE)

[www.oecd.org/wise](http://www.oecd.org/wise)

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