Measuring Child Well-being: Different Cross-national Approaches

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Children's well-being in Early Childhood Education and Care in France and elsewhere

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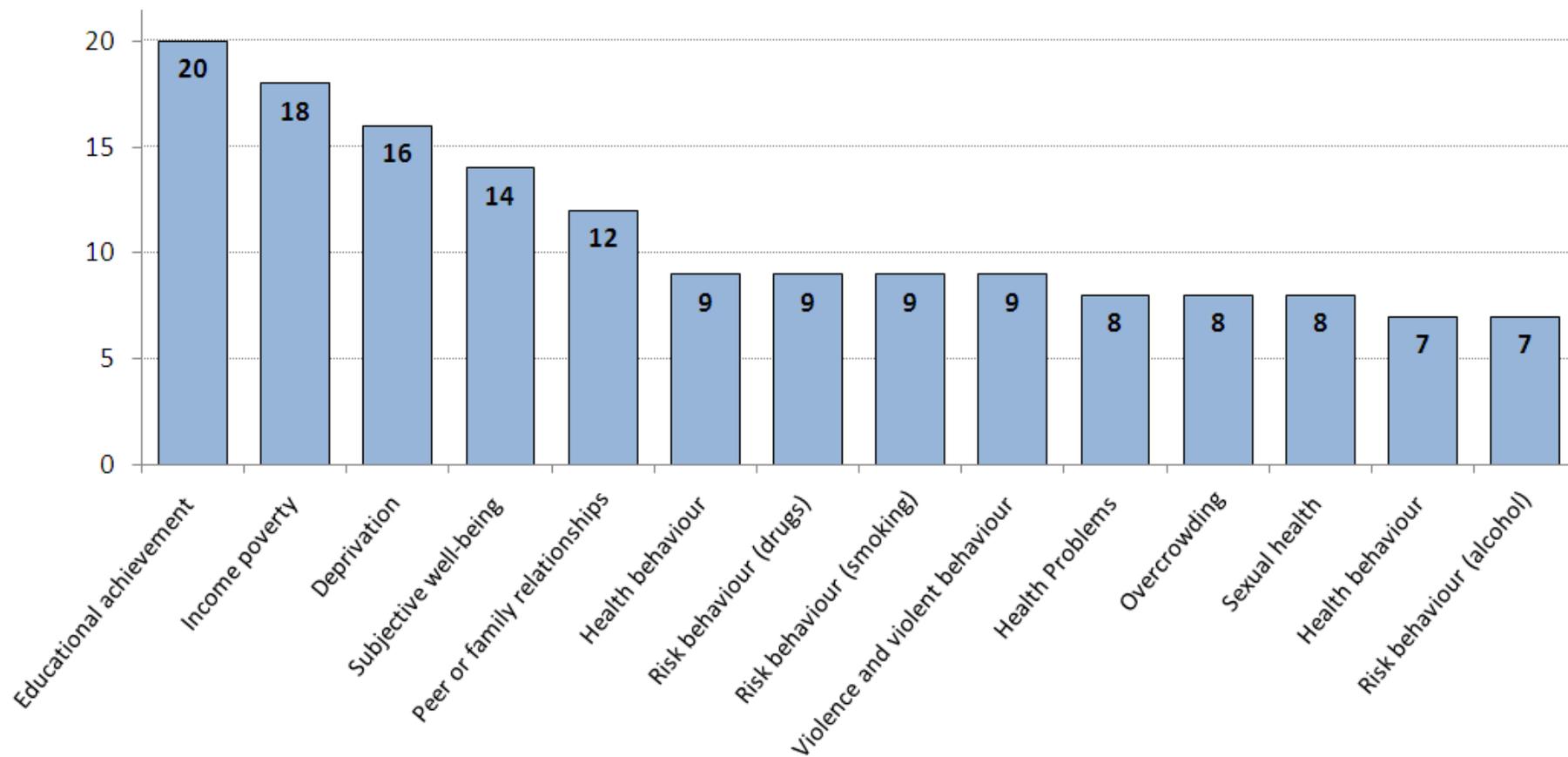
Objectives of the presentation

- **What indicators and frameworks are used to measures child well-being cross-nationally (OECD etc.)**

- **Which dimensions of children's well-being are taking into account, and why?**

- **Which are not taken into consideration, what can we do to improve the data in France?**

Past comparisons of child well-being

	US Dept. of Commerce (Hobbs and Lippman, 1990)[3]	OECD Family Database (since 2007)[4]	European indices (Bradshaw et al 2007 and 2009)[1]	Unicef Report Cards 7 (2007) and 9 (2010)[1]	CEE CIS index (Richardson et al, 2008)	European Commission Child poverty and Well-being (2008)[2]	Save the children (2008 and 2011)[1]	Doing Better for Children (OECD, 2009)	TARKI (2011)
Health and saftey	7	9	11	13	16	19	2	9	7
Behaviour and risks	4	2	11	7	13	14		4	6
Material well-being and economic security	5	2	5	6	4	17		3	5
Educational Well-being	3	3	5	8	5	7	1	2	2
Housing and the local environment			4	1	3	8		2	
Social, economic and civic participation	5	2	3	1	1	2		1	
Subjective well-being			5	5		3			1
Family forms and care	4			2	6	1			
Personal family and peer relationships			3	3	4	2			
Quality of school life			2	1		6		1	

Commonly used survey indicators

PISA and HBSC surveys have made important contributions

Doing Better for Children

- Overview of child well-being
- Comparing child well-being outcomes
- Public spending for children of different ages
- Policies for the under 3's
- Effects of sole-parenthood on child outcomes
- Intergenerational inequality
- Recommendations to enhance child well-being

Dimensions of child well-being

	Material well-being	Housing and environment	Educational well-being	Health and safety	Risky behaviours	Quality of school life
Belgium	11	11	20	25	13	19
Denmark	2	6	7	4	21	8
Finland	4	7	1	7	26	18
Germany	16	18	15	9	18	9
Iceland	8	4	14	1	8	1
Luxembourg	3	8	17	5	14	23
Netherlands	9	17	4	8	9	3
Norway	1	1	16	17	4	2
Sweden	6	3	9	3	1	5
United Kingdom	12	15	22	21	28	4

Indicator selection criteria

- **Child-centred**
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **Policy amenable**
- **Country coverage and up-to-date data**
- **Conceptually Complementary**
  - Rights vs. Development
  - Equity and Efficiency
  - Age coverage

Doing Better for Families

- Trends in child and family indicators
- Child spending and tax / benefit analysis
- Fertility trends and drivers
- Barriers to parental employment
- Promoting child development and well-being
- Polices for sole parents and their children
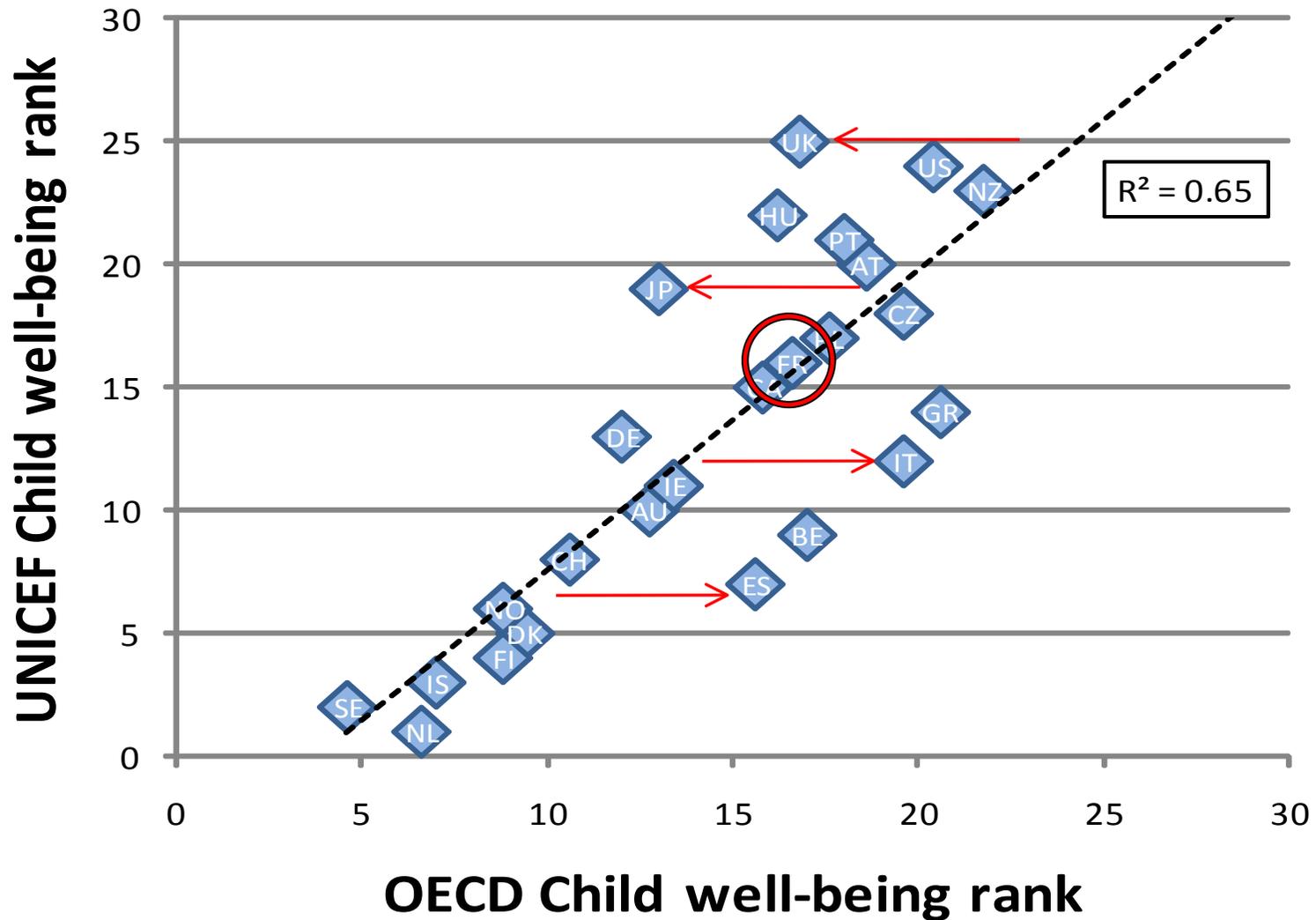- Child maltreatment: causes and consequences

How OECD and UNICEF frameworks differ

- Selects policy amenable indicators
- Compares all 30 OECD countries
- Includes housing and environment data
- No final ranking
- More up-to-date

but...

- Still too adolescent focussed
- Not disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, etc.
- Missing info, e.g.
  - Child protection and neglect/ Mental health
- Retains the methods (equal weights / causal approach)

Indicator choice can explain different results

UNICEF aggregation method

Shared methodological considerations

- **Cause versus effect approach**
  - Do we expect internal reliability?
- **Equal Weights (implicit weights in z scores?)**
  - Problems of consensus?
- **Neither penalise variation**
  - Do we value consistency?
- **Different numbers of indicators in each dimension**
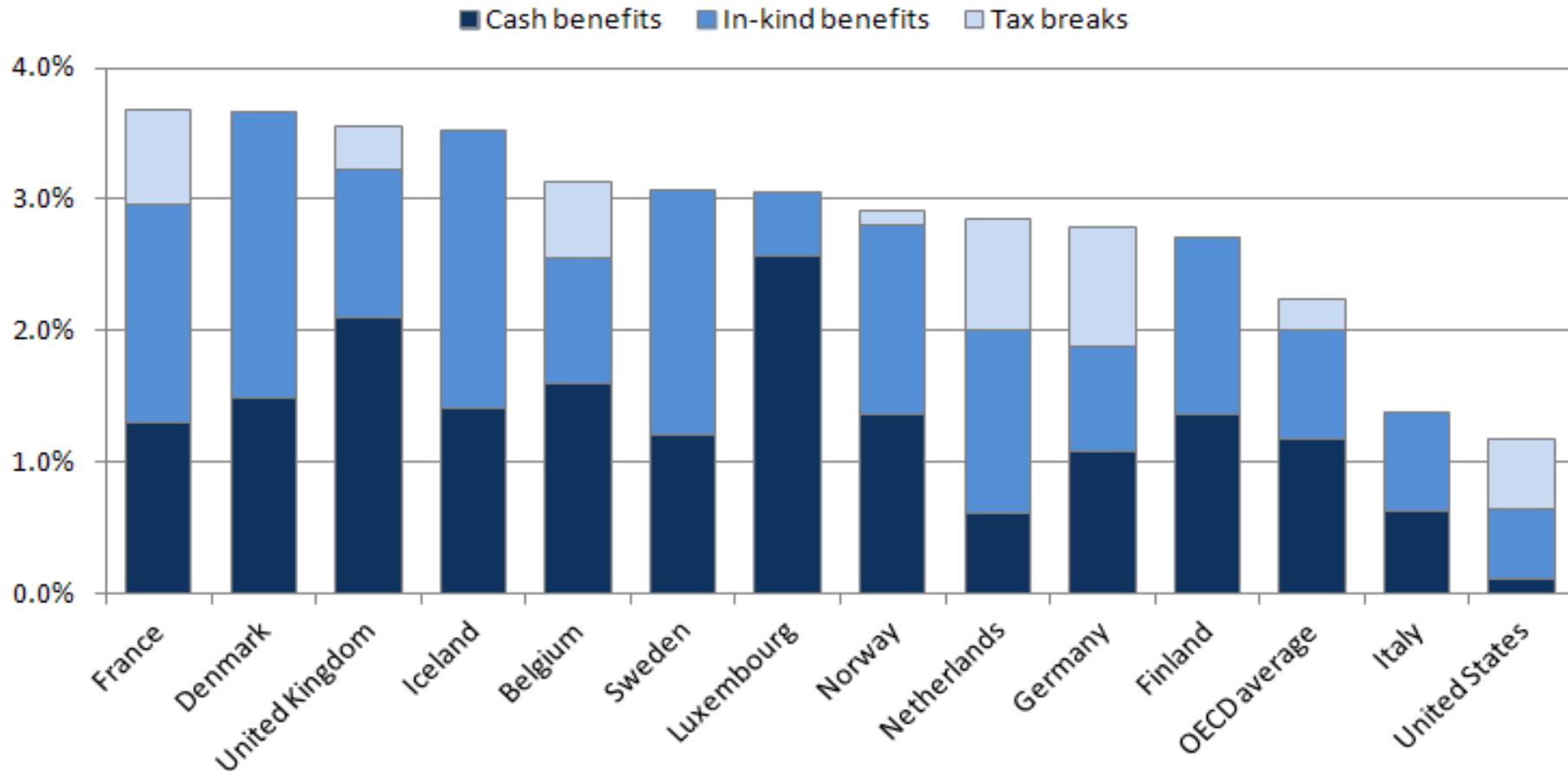- **To composite or not to composite**

Statistical coverage

	Age coverage								
	Early (0-5 years)			Mid (6 to 11 years)			Late (12 to 17 years)		
	Age	Sex	Migrant	Age	Sex	Migrant	Age	Sex	Migrant
Material well-being	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Housing and environment	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Educational well-being							✗	✓	✓
Health and safety	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Risky behaviours							✓	✓	✗
Quality of school life				✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗

All well and good, but...

- In most cases these indices are blunt tools without info on...

- How spending and policy contribute to well-being...

- How behaviours, contexts and time use contribute...

- ... and what it means when we interact the inputs and contexts...

The policy mix varies across countries...

Public social spending as % of GDP , 2007

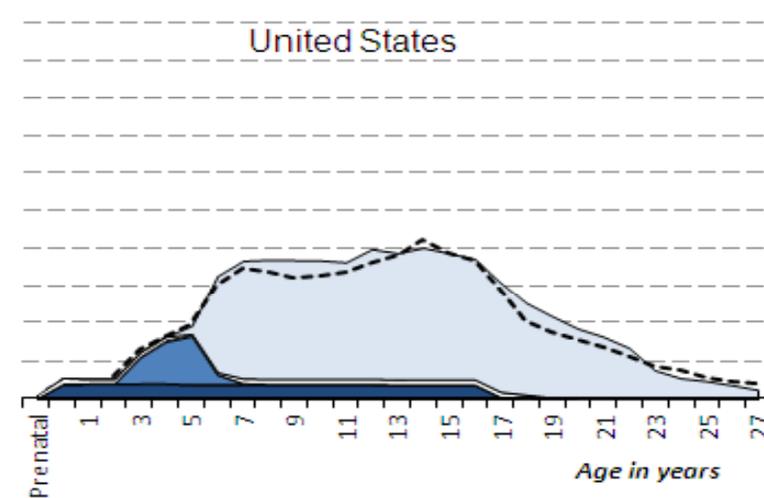Data on tax breaks towards families are not available for Chile, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Israel and Slovenia.
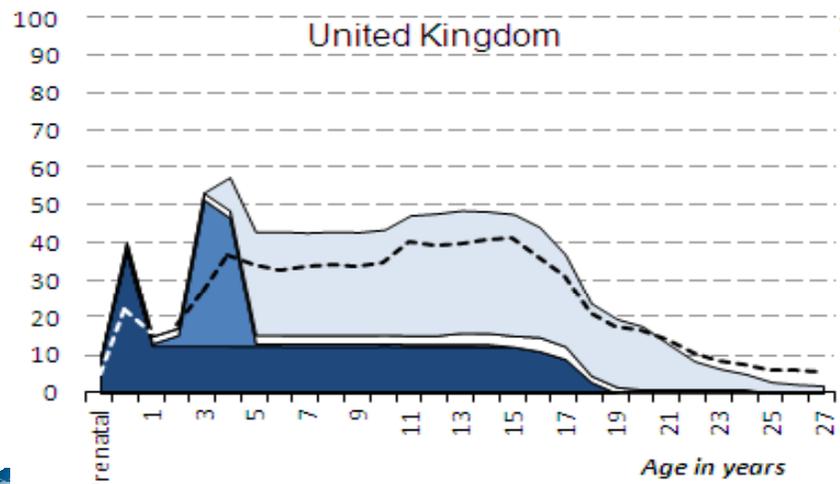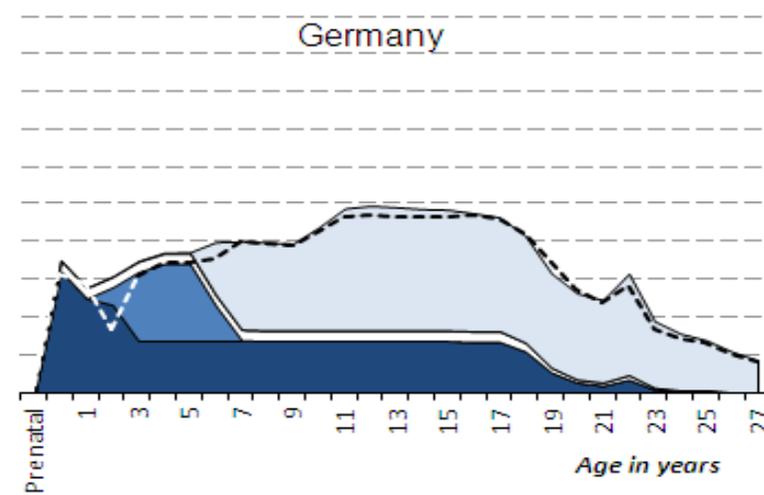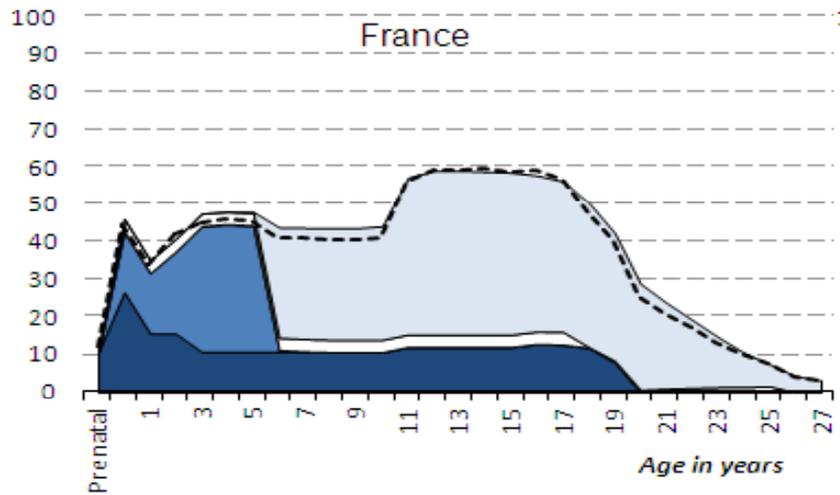
Patterns of public spending on children

- **What is spent on children and when**
- **Timing matters for child well-being**
- **Testing a Heckman proposition**

- **Social expenditure data and education data**
- **Allotted by types from prenatal to age 27 using benefit rules**
    - **Cash and tax / In kind / Child care / Education**

OECD

Spending patterns changed little since '03

Legend: Cash benefits · Childcare · In-kind benefits · Education · 2003 profile

France · Germany · United Kingdom · United States

Limitations of the age spending analysis

- **Average spending by age, but what about differences by:**
  - Family type
  - Family size
  - Income

- **Only public spending, not private**

- **Health spending and take-up has been tested (though not variation in take-up)**

- **Does not address the how!**

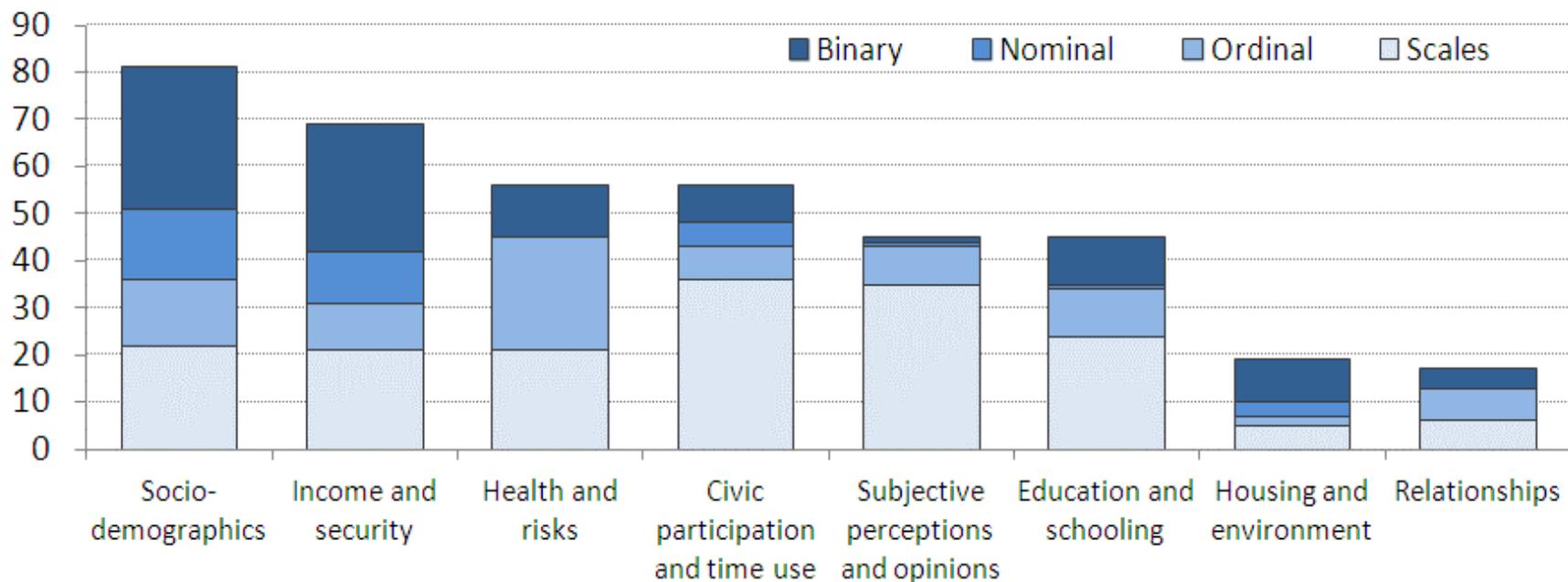# Evaluating international child surveys

- **6 child surveys and 3 household surveys**
  - Education (PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA), health (HBSC), risk behaviours (ESPAD) and civic participation (ICCS)

- **Systematic review involving data providers**

- **Forms of bias in the survey results**

- **Provide recommendation for use and improvement**

- **Identify available data and gaps**

Taking stock of available data

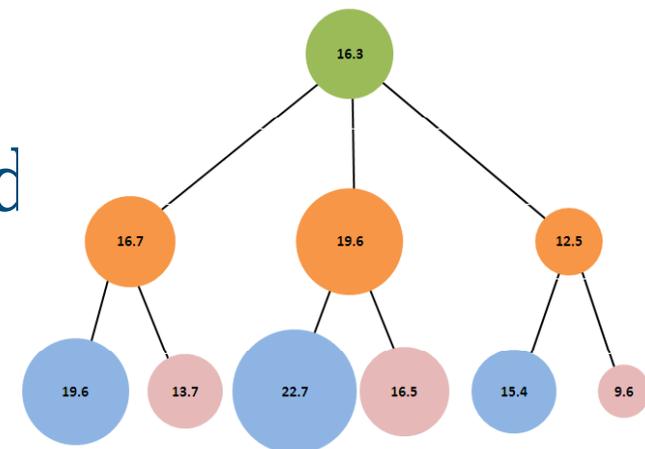The majority indicators for children and youth in the OECD and EU regions are material indicators

Child data by domains of well-being and by measurement type

Number of questionnaire items

Child Well-being module

- ## Three comparative sections
  - Child policies (spending and structures)
  - Contextual indicators (family and community)
  - Child well-being outcome indicators

- ## Country specific sections
  - Governance issues, policy changes, yet incomparable information
  - National specific data

- ## All data will be quality tested

Format of the comparative section

	Indicators by age		
	Early childhood (0-5)	Middle childhood (6-11)	Late childhood (12-17)
Indicators by policy process — Inputs - spending and policies	Availability of paid parental leave (OECD Family Database, MISSOC and others)	Public spending on primary education (OECD Education database)	Policies for youth (OECD Jobs for Youth, Doing Better for Families)
Contexts - delivery, family and environment	Parental and community involvement (OECD ETP ECEC network)	Labour force participation by household type in middle childhood (Labour Force Surveys)	Migrant children / Disabled children / Sole parent families (children aged 12-17) (Household Panel Surveys / HBSC / PISA)
Outcomes - Education, Social, Economic etc.	Low birth weight (OECD Health Database) / Breastfeeding rates (OECD Family Database)	Physical activity (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study)	Child poverty rate in late childhood (Household Panel Surveys) / Educational Acheivement (PISA)

Some lessons for indicator work

- Age related outcomes indicators
- More equality indicators
- Spending patterns, on who and how?
- Age related interventions
- More family contexts and relationships
- Evolving and interacting indicators
- Develop trends analysis
- Depreciation at different rates (lags)

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.oecd.org/els/social/family/doingbetter