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POLICY ISSUES IN RECONCILING WORK AND THE FAMILY

Introduction

The problem of reconciling work and the family is standing high in the political agenda of many countries. In the European Union, a general social consensus exists concerning the need to implement ways of helping families, and specially women, to cope with their employment obligations and the time consuming tasks of caring for the young generations and the elderly and keeping the house running (European Commission, 2005).

This social consensus does not extend itself to the contents of policies themselves and the mix of the three main available resources: services, parental leave and cash transfers (including tax benefits). Some groups have a strong preference for parental leave and money transfers (Leipert and Opielka, 1999), while others focus more on the availability of affordable services, like childcare facilities (Fagnani, 1998; Leira, 2002), for instance. In some cases, these differences are reflected in the programs of political parties running for election.

There are strong and visible reasons for the growing necessity of reconciliation policies and the demographic and social perspectives indicate that this will continue in the future.

All countries round the World have engaged in a process of demographic transition characterized by a sharp increase in life expectancy followed by a decline of fertility. The starting time and the pace of this general process have varied among countries. In some European countries it started as far as the middle of 18th century (United Kingdom, France) or the beginning of 20th century (southern countries) and was ended by the middle of 20th century. In developing countries, the process started later and in many of them the decline of fertility has just begun. Each country has followed a specific path within the general frame but all of them have followed or are expected to follow the same direction and face the same problems in the future. This is important because we believe that the demographic transitions made possible the most important social change of the 20th century: the change in women condition and, in particular, their growing presence in the labor market. This “gender transition” is now in act in most of the developed countries and will, most probably, spread to the whole world. As any other social change process, the gender transition will not be an automatic one and will include historical and cultural specificities of each country but, again, we believe that all countries will follow an evolution of increasing social presence of women, including their access to the labor market.

The gender transition is at the root of changes in the family, once based on the male breadwinner model and now increasingly dominated by the two working parents model (Lewis, 1992 and 2001).

Changes in the family include an increase of union breakup and the rise of other family forms like lone parent families, consensual unions and recomposed families. On the other hand there is a tendency to household size reduction, a consequence of reduced fertility and increasing residential autonomy of relatives, although it has been shown that family ties remain strong in family networks where intense communication and exchange of services are taking place.

The emerging family model differs drastically from the old one, bringing new benefits for people but demanding important social adaptations. Our society was organized, and still is in many ways, around a form of family based on highly differentiated gender roles, and many aspects of our daily life reflect this fact. The dominant worker model was a male worker highly committed to the working place, thanks to a wife at home dealing with the caring of young children and elderly persons and with the basic needs of life. No social provisions were necessary for very young children, whose care fell on the mother at home, nor for the elderly. Even today, time schedules are often still based on the expected availability at all hours of the housewife, in particular school hours.

Reconciling work and the family is thus not a matter of helping families or women but a central issue for society to adapt to the new women situation and family model. For the increasing number of families where there is a working mother, coping with two competing activities means drawing from existing resources, which are mainly of three types: a) facilities by employers, b) public policies and c) family and personal strategies. In most European countries, the role of employers is fairly limited or even non-existent and the few exceptions refer to large companies like banks and hospitals and also large industrial undertakings (European Commission, 2005). It seems difficult to imagine that society will adapt itself to the new situation without involving the employers and, in more general terms, questioning the working model. In fact, one objective of public policy could be to encourage and support employers offering facilities to working mothers and fathers. As for family or personal strategies, they could be considered, in general, as a residual category based on the lack of other resources, as it appears, for instance, in surveys conducted in Spain, a country with a low level of facilities for the caring of children below 3 (Tobio, 2001 and 2005). In this paper we will only deal with resources generated by public policies but it is necessary to bear in mind that they are not the only means for facing the reconciliation problem and also that, in present circumstances, lacks and inadequacies of public policies would put the burden on the family network and on the working mother herself, whose caring capacity, as we shall see, tends to decrease. When the strain between family and work increases, consequences are negative both for employers, women giving up employment, and family and society, women delaying or giving up maternity.

Care needs and caring capacity

As the demographic transition is spreading thru all countries, population ageing becomes a generalized future prospect. In most of the European Union member countries, population ageing

is a present fact that will intensify in the future. In 2008, population 65 years or over represented 17,1% of total population in EU27 member countries and is expected to reach 28,8% in 2050. In the same group of countries, population 80 years and over represented 4,7% of total population in 2008 and could reach 11% in 2050, more than doubling its share. The number of persons over 80 years old, an age group where we find the highest dependency rates, will grow from 21,8 millions in 2008 to 56,6 millions in 2050, according to European Commission population projections (Eurostat, 2008). At the same time, the working age population (15-64 years) will soon start declining, going from the present 333,2 millions to 294,4 millions in 2050. Thus, the old age dependency rate⁷ for EU27 countries is likely to rise from 25,4% to 50,4% in 2050.

Developed countries will soon be facing a drastic deterioration of the balance between elderly caring needs and their caring capacities as an effect of demographic trends and this path is likely to be followed, at varying time in the future by all countries. According to the same population projections, no compensation effect is expected as the young age dependency rate will remain almost constant in the future, slightly growing from 23,3% in 2008 to 24,6% in 2050, in EU27 countries.

Social changes related to the gender transition will have opposing effects in society's capacity to deal with an ageing population. Employment increase allowed by women's entry into the labor market will improve the situation of the pay-as-you-go based public pension systems, at least for the years to come, before women have acquired full rights to pension benefits. On the other hand, women in employment will not be able to assume a growing burden of old age dependents. Old age dependency is one of the main problems that demographically mature countries will have to face in the near future and will progressively reach all existing countries. At present the burden falls on family networks and particularly on women, although, recently, specific public policies are being implemented, aimed at assisting relatives in taking care of their elder parents and at allowing elderly persons to remain at their home for as long as possible. On the other hand, some reconciliation policies include care of elderly dependents among the reasons for benefits, as is, for instance, the case in Spain. We believe, though, that old age dependency must be considered as a specific problem, separated from the childcare problem, for a number of reasons, among which is the increasing residential autonomy of the elder, the fact that persons and families with an old age dependent are different from those with childcare obligations and that there is an extended consensus to accept old age dependency as a society problem which demands public policies and public spending (Martin, 2001). For these reasons, this paper will only deal with child care, for which the relation between public and family obligations is less clear and less shared among the population, while the situation calls for immediate action in almost all countries.

The importance of a sound reconciliation policy is stressed by the fact that in an increasing number of European countries the traditional inverse relationship between women activity rate and

⁷ Calculated by dividing the population aged 65 years over by the working age population (15-64 years old), expressed in per cent.

fertility has become a positive one, i.e. countries with higher fertility rates in the EU are those with the highest female activity rate. This reflects the fact that in countries with sufficient facilities for combining working and child caring, women are able both to stay in the labor market and have children. Low fertility, a problem now in some European countries, could thus be directly related to difficulties in reconciling work and the family, lacking adequate policy measures.

Working for the labor market and caring for children are competing tasks, especially when small children are involved, but not only because working mothers with children of school age are confronted with specific and compelling problems which are less well perceived than those related to the care of very young children. Reconciling work and the family does not consist in responding to a general and abstract problem but in solving a number of specific problems of non-compatibility that working parents have to deal with. The first condition for a suitable policy is to implement measures that address real problems and, before all, the most urgent and difficult to solve by the parents themselves. It is thus necessary to analyze situations where families with two working parents, or lone parent families, are less able to face without some external help. Our research in Spain (Fernández Cordón and Tobío, 1998 and 1999), the results of which can easily be extended to other European countries, has led to identifying four main situations where attending work and child care proves to be particularly difficult: the care of children below 3, the care of children of all ages when ill, coordinating working and school time schedule and dealing with holiday periods (Fernández Cordón and Tobío, 2005).

The first problem faced by working parents is a general one and concerns the care of small children below 3. In a majority of countries the formal school system does not enroll children below 3 or even below 6. The period following the maternal leave (an average of 18 weeks, of which 13 are paid leave, in the OECD countries, according to OECD Database) when the presence of at least one of the parents seems strongly recommended and facilities are scarce or expensive.

Working mothers consider their children illness as one of the most important drawback for work and care compatibility⁸. Current non-serious child illness often appears suddenly and thus puts the parents in a situation of stress, obliged to find external care without notice or compelled to stay at home. The situation is particularly difficult for parents with small children or working full time. In some countries (like Spain and other southern countries of Europe) grandparents play a prominent role in coping with the situation but it is quite usual that the mother, alternating in some cases with the father, would stay at home and miss a few hours, a whole day or more of her outside work.

Another difficult problem for working parents is the inconsistency between working and school hours which affects a considerable number of working mothers and fathers either in the morning, at the time of entering school, or in the afternoon. The task of taking the children to school, usually assumed by the mother when she is available, or the father, may rest on the grandparents,

⁸ These are consistent results from various surveys in Spain which may be considered applicable to other similar countries.

when they are available, or to a paid person. In some cases, children below 12 go to school and back by themselves.

School holidays are another type of inconsistency between school and work time schedule, because they are more frequent and extend for longer periods than work holidays. In Spain, grandparents are the most usual resource in this situation, either by sending the children to the grandparents or having them coming to stay with their grandchildren. When grandparents are not available, the most common solution is for each parent to take a different holiday period, thus preventing the family to spend their vacation together.

Varying views on policies for reconciling work and the family in Europe

There are three main instruments for a direct policy aiming at reconciling work and the family: parental leave, public services and monetary allowances to cover care expenses. Each of these instruments is related to different conceptions of the work and family relation, conveys differences in the objectives assigned to public policies and have different impacts for gender equity.

Parental leave

Parental leave can be considered as a modification of the normally accepted priority of production over the reproduction process, traditionally left to the family. It is a means of revising the asymmetrical relationship between the sphere of employment and the family and stresses the social importance of giving birth and caring for children. Parental leave, when opposed to monetary allowances, implies the acceptance of a generalized participation in the production process, both of men and women, inasmuch as it protects the right to return to the job and the related rights (social security, unemployment benefits, etc.) and, in some countries and circumstances, may be paid. In countries where parental leaves are not paid (except for the 16 weeks maternity leave), only the right to return to the job is guaranteed. The economic cost and the time dedicated to childcare (as well as other dependents) fall on the family, which in fact means on women. By protecting the continuity of women's participation in the labor force and putting the burden of care on the family, the State is thus asking for an extra contribution which, in some countries, is distributed among the family network, especially among grandparents. It is a situation that cannot be maintained indefinitely.

We can find five types of parental leave in the European countries:

Maternity leave

It is one of the most homogeneous measures in Europe, due to the existence of an EU directive, which imposes a minimum level to all member countries. Its aim is to support the mother and the child immediately before and after the deliverance. All countries have at least 14 paid weeks and many of them allow two or three more weeks (16 in Spain, 18 in France and Denmark and 28 in Estonia). While these are paid weeks the "rate of allowance" (defined by OECD in relation to full-time equivalent payment) does not equal 100% in all countries (it is 38% in Ireland and 76% in Italy, for instance). Outside the EU, some OECD countries show very low levels of maternity leave

(a total of 12 weeks, none of them paid, in the US, 6 in New Zealand, 8.4 in Japan), showing the impact of the EU policy in the matter (OECD, 2007).

Parental childcare leave

This type of leave is intended for the care of small children at home by the mother or the father. While all countries in the EU provide some parental leave, diversity among countries is higher than for maternity leave: 14 weeks in Ireland, 15 in Greece or the Netherlands, approximately 160 weeks in Finland, France, Germany, Hungary and Spain, and 214 weeks in the Czech Republic. But the most significant difference is whether the leave is paid or not. They are paid at 100% in, for instance, Finland, France and Hungary, at least during one year (Jaumotte, 2003:62-3) while they are non-paid in other countries, like Spain, where only some of the benefits carried by the job are protected and only for part of the period. We find two common features throughout the countries: the right to return to the job after the period of leave and the explicit provision that the leave may be taken by either the mother or the father. Despite this explicit possibility, aimed at reinforcing gender equity, the fact is that leave is taken by an overwhelming majority of women (Moss and Deven, 2000, Annex 1). Only in Sweden there is a significant proportion of men using parental leave but far from the proportion of women.

Paternity leave

Leave directed to fathers only (on the basis of “use it or lose it”) arises from the fact that allowing both parents to benefit from parental leave does mean that fathers will actively be engaged in childcare. Nordic countries have started in the nineties to offer this kind of leave, paid at 100%, which encountered a great success among fathers with proportion from 60% to 80% of fathers taken it, even when the proportion of men using the optional parental leave was below 5% (Leira, 2002; European Commission 2005). Other countries, like France and the UK and more recently Spain, have established a two weeks paid paternity leave.

Reduction of time worked

This type of leave has been regulated by an EU directive on part-time work and in countries with a high proportion of part-time jobs. In some countries, like the UK, the right to apply for part-time work is recognized to all workers. In Germany there is an effective right for the worker after six months in firms of more than 15 employees. In the Netherlands, a country with the highest rate of female part-time work, there is a right to adjust the working hours to the needs of the employee, under certain conditions. In Sweden all employees have a right to reduce their working time which adds to the possibility of taken parental leave on part-time basis (Murray, 2004).

Leave for urgent family matters

After the EU directive on parental leave, many European countries have enforced the possibility of leave to attend exceptional family circumstances related to the care of children. This type of leave existed already in Sweden, where full-paid leave was possible for exceptional events related to the care of children below 12, covering not only illness but also regular medical

surveillance or school meetings, up to 120 days per year. On the contrary, in the UK, regulation provides only a “reasonable amount of time during working periods” of unpaid leave to attend exceptional events concerning the employee’s children. Germany or the Netherlands provide 10 full-paid days of leave per year for urgent family matters (Fernández Cordón and Tobío, 2005).

Childcare services

Childcare services for children of pre-school age may alternatively be considered as a need for parents both engaged in the labor market or a right of children to adequate care. Enrolment rates of children under six varies considerably for early education services, aimed at children 3-5 years, and childcare services for children aged 0-2 years. OECD average is 74% for early education and 22,6% for childcare. There are also important differences among countries and not a clear correlation between enrolment rates in each type of services, which could show a certain preference for family childcare at youngest ages. Early education (3-5) tends to be included in the general school system, the focus being on education rather than care, with a reference goal of 100% enrolment, a situation attained in countries like France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, while others are close (New Zealand, Denmark, Hungary, Sweden, for instance (OECD, 2007; Data Annex 2). only, Nordic countries show high enrolment rates in childcare services with Denmark and Iceland around 60% and Norway and Sweden around 40%. Some countries show high or very high enrolment rates in early education services and a very small one in childcare services, like Italy (100% and 6,3% respectively) or Spain (almost 100% and 21%, respectively). On the contrary, a country like the U.S. show more balanced enrolment rates at a rather low level for early education services evidencing, in this case, more a lack of resources than a strong preference for family care. The figures in Data Annex 2 evidence that care of small children (under 3) relies heavily on the family which is why working mothers perceive their care is one the most difficult situation they have to face. Pre-school services may be public-funded or private and, if public, they may be directly run by a public administration or by private bodies. The public-private mix varies also considerably among countries.

Cash allowances for childcare

Cash allowances have played a growing role as a way of supporting reconciliation of work and the family, since the nineties and have given rise to an important social and political debate. The rationale for this type of public action is twofold. First, it allows parents to freely choice the care modality given to their children and, second, it can be taken as a form of housewife remuneration and evidence a preference for child care by the mother. In certain cases, like in France for instance, this type of measure (called “Allocation Parentale d’Education”) implies that the woman remains out of the labor market during the duration of the allowance (Fagnani, 1998). Cash allowances may also be seen as a way of supporting the offering of private childcare services with public funds. Another controversial issue is that cash allowances do not guarantee that the effective use of the money received will really benefit the child (see Data Annex 3 for the situation of OECD countries, OECD, 2007).

Criteria for choice

Reconciling work and the family refers only to the general objective of rendering compatible the pursuit of labor force participation of women and men and attendance of care and other family obligations, which are time consuming. We have seen that this general objective should be disaggregated into ways of coping with specific situations that are perceived by parents as particularly difficult to deal with. On the other hand, we are faced with a choice of policy instruments which help in the reconciliation but can have very different effects on certain key aspects of social life. The idea is to examine each of the available policy measure in relation with their suitability and efficiency and also in relation with their effects on three important topics: children welfare, social equality and gender equity. By introducing children welfare as criteria one can give priority to policy instruments that guarantees and allows the verification that children are adequately cared and that available resources are actually directed to children needs, Measures aimed at reconciliation may have a major impact on social redistribution but they could also have a negative impact if policy is based on instruments not accessible to all or if there is a social bias in the access. Special care should be taken with the effects of reconciliation measures on gender equity. Policy measures should be expected to increase gender equity inside the family and at the work place. Those instruments that may slow down or even reverse existing trends of reduction of labor exclusion or discrimination in the case of women or family involvement, in the case of men, should be considered less adequate than others increasing gender equity.

A model of policy choice results of the combination of the above five criteria applied to three main instruments, bearing in mind the solution of the most important problems for reconciliation of work and the family (Fernández Cordón and Tobío, 2005)

- a) Suitability: to what extent does this policy instrument help solving the problem?
- b) Efficiency: to what extent is there an optimum use of economic resources? This criterion has two related dimensions: comparing, in terms of cost-benefits, of each type of instrument in response to each type of problem and using a unique instrument for each detected situation, thus avoiding duplicities
- c) Children welfare: does the measure reach really the children as ultimate objective?
- d) Social equality: to what extent the measure contributes to redistributing resources or at least avoids inequalities?
- e) Gender equity: does the measure enhance equality between men and women in the work place and in the family?

Results are summarized in the following tables 1.1. to 1.4 and a proposal for a set of measures which fulfill these criteria are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 1**1.- Care of small children under 3 years. Instruments and criteria**

INSTRUMENTS	SUITABILITY OF THE MEASURE	ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY	EFFECTS		
			GENDER EQUITY	SOCIAL EQUALITY	CHILDREN WELFARE
PARENTAL LEAVE	HIGH	HIGH	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
CHILDCARE SERVICES	HIGH	HIGH	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
CASH ALLOWANCES	NOT ASCERTAINABLE	NOT ASCERTAINABLE	VARIABLE	VARIABLE	NOT ASCERTAINABLE

2.- Coordinating school and work time schedules. Instruments and criteria

INSTRUMENTS	SUITABILITY OF THE MEASURE	ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY	EFFECTS		
			GENDER EQUITY	SOCIAL EQUALITY	CHILDREN WELFARE
PARENTAL LEAVE	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
CHILDCARE SERVICES	HIGH	HIGH	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
CASH ALLOWANCES	MEDIUM	LOW	VARIABLE	VARIABLE	VARIABLE

3.- Care of children when ill. Instruments and criteria

INSTRUMENTS	SUITABILITY OF THE MEASURE	ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY	EFFECTS		
			GENDER EQUITY	SOCIAL EQUALITY	CHILDREN WELFARE
PARENTAL LEAVE	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
CHILDCARE SERVICES	LOW	LOW	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	MEDIUM
CASH ALLOWANCES	LOW	LOW	VARIABLE	VARIABLE	NOT ASCERTAINABLE

4.- Care of children during school holydays. Instruments and criteria

INSTRUMENTS	SUITABILITY OF THE MEASURE	ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY	EFFECTS		
			GENDER EQUITY	SOCIAL EQUALITY	CHILDREN WELFARE
PARENTAL LEAVE	HIGH	LOW	NEGATIVE	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
CHILDCARE SERVICES	HIGH	HIGH	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
CASH ALLOWANCES	NOT ASCERTAINABLE	NOT ASCERTAINABLE	VARIABLE	VARIABLE	NOT ASCERTAINABLE

Table 2

A proposal for a coherent policy aimed at reconciling work and the family.

TYPE OF MEASURE	OBJECTIVE	FEATURES
CHILDCARE SERVICES		
Public creches	Daily care of children under 3 years	To all families with two working parents and loneparent families
Early opening and late closing of schools with activities for children	Coordination of working hours and school hours for working parents	Services offered by school centers
Centers combining leisure and educational activities	Coordination of working hours and school hours for working parents and receiving children during school holydays	Services offered by a variety of agents: schools, municipalities, NGOs, etc.
PARENTAL LEAVE		
Maternity leave	Mother and child recovery after deliverance	Based on regulation by corresponding EU directive
Childcare parental leave	Direct care of children by mother or father	Base don regulation by correspondig EU directive. Aiming progressively at full remuneration
Paternity leave	Direct care of children by father	A máximum of two months, paid and “take it or lose it”
Parental leave for illness of children	Care of children under 12 when ill	Maximum of 6-12 days per year, full paid
Flexibility of work time schedule	Allow parents a better coordination between work and family obligations	To be agreed between employees and employers
CASH ALLOWANCES		
Direct cash allowance for working mothers	Helping families to cope with economic burden of children	Limited to cases where no public creche is available and to mothers not in parental leave

Conclusion

Reconciling work and the family is a problem associated with gender transition and the emergence of a new standard for families now including two working parents (or a lone working parent). It is now a fact in European countries that in a huge majority of families with young children, both parents are present in the labor market. Compared to the widespread of this new family model, one may say that reconciliation policies are not only scarce but often confusing and lacking efficiency. It would seem useful, at this moment, to design a coherent policy, by clarifying and optimizing the available policy instruments. For this it is necessary to establish clear objectives and selection criteria.

The suitability and economic efficiency of the projected policy measures are almost preliminary conditions for their enforcement. But, as the different policy instruments have varying effects on fundamental issues of social life it is worth analyzing, in each case, their impact in children welfare, in social equality and in gender equity. In the matter of reconciliation some forms of political action may lead to a hidden and not necessary wanted, return to the previous model of gender differentiation. Not only for equity reasons would it be necessary to avoid such actions but also for the benefit of social and economic productivity which call for encouraging employment of the now highly qualified women in developed countries and increasingly in all other countries. A side consequence could also be that only non-qualified women would be affected, a clear social inequality.

The debate opposing the provision of direct services vs cash allowances for parents to buy these services is undoubtedly connected to the general spread of neo-liberal economic thought in recent years. The apparent freedom given to parents by cash allowances, allowing them to seek for market solutions, might not fulfill a criterion of economic efficiency and furthermore does not guarantee that all the money will go to the child, especially in low income families. The now developing financial and economic crisis may well change the way of considering this debate.

We have seen that some policy instruments are better adapted than others to specific problems that parents have to solve and that among those equally suitable some are preferable for their impact on social equality or gender equity. But none of them represents by itself a self-sufficient way of solving all problems. It seems that the best policy response to the problem of reconciling work and the family is a combination of different instruments. It is only desirable that such combination be the result of sound social and economic analysis.

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DATA ANNEX 1

	Women in maternity or parental leave	Men in parental leave
Slovenia	87,2	1,4
Czech Rep	82,3	0,0
Austria	79,6	0,3
Slovakia	78,2	0,2
Finland	75,9	4,2
Hungary	72,1	0,0
Bulgaria	70,1	0,5
Germany	64,7	0,8
Latvia	60,6	0,0
Romania	53,0	6,2
Luxembourg	45,8	1,7
Poland	41,4	0,1
Lituan ia	40,7	1,0
Italy	39,0	0,2
France	35,5	1,1
Spain	27,5	0,1
Portugal	27,3	0,7
Estonia	27,2	0,0
Cyprus	27,0	0,0
Netherlands	24,0	0,0
Belgium	21,7	1,1
Greece	19,6	0,0
M alta	2,9	0,0
United-Kingdom	0,6	0,7

Source: OECD Family database and OECD Education database.

DATA ANNEX 2

PF11.1: Enrolment rates of children under six in childcare and early education services, 2003/04

	3 - 5 years	0 - 2 years
France	101,9	28
Italy	100,3	6,3
Belgium	99,6	33,6
Spain	98,6	20,7
Iceland	94,7	58,7
New Zealand	92,7	32,1
Denmark	89,7	61,7
Hungary	86,9	6,91
Sweden	86,6	39,5
Japan	86,4	15,2
Czech Republic	85,3	3
Norway	85,1	43,7
United Kingdom	80,5	25,8
Germany	80,3	9
Portugal	77,9	23,5
Austria	74,0	6,6
Slovak Republic	72,4	17,7
Luxembourg	72,3	14
Australia	71,5	29
Netherlands	70,2	29,5
Ireland	68,2	15
Mexico	64,9	3
United States	62,0	35,5
Korea	60,9	19,5
Greece	46,8	7
Finland	46,1	22,4
Switzerland	44,8	
Poland	36,2	2
Turkey	10,5	
Canada	m	19
<i>OECD Average</i>	<i>74,0</i>	<i>22,6</i>

Source: OECD Family database and OECD Education database.

DATA ANNEX 3

Table PF3.1 Family Cash Benefits¹, 2007

Country	Maximum benefit for one child aged 3-12		Benefit amount per additional child varies with ²		Upper age limit for children (student)	Income-tested	Observations
	US\$	% of AW	Age of child	Number of children			
Australia	3.613	8	+/-	+ from 4th	20 (24)	Family earned income.	Family tax benefit (FTB) part A to help families with cost of raising children. Can be paid as a benefit or as a tax allowance. FTB part B to provide extra help for families with one main income. Family based payment which can be paid as a benefit or as a tax allowance.
	2.901	6	-	0	15 (18)	Earned income of secondary earner in a couple.	
Austria	2.150	4	+	+	19 (27)	No	For low income families there is an extra supplement for each additional child from the 3rd.
Belgium	836	2	0	0	17 (24)	No	Non-wastable tax credit. For unemployed, family benefits are increased as from 7th month of unemployment.
	1.739	3	+/-	+/-			
Canada	1.194	3	0	+ from 3rd	17	Family taxable income.	Canada child tax benefit (non-wastable tax credit).
	1.851	5	0	-		Family taxable income.	National Child Benefit (NCB) supplement for low income families.
Cyprus ^{3,4}	274	2	0	0	17 (23)	No	--
	417	3	+	0	14 (25)	Family income relative to minimum living standard.	Three income levels used to define level of benefit: increased, basic or reduced.
Denmark	2.306	4	-	0	17	No	--
Estonia	474	3	0	+ from 3rd	15 (18)	No	--
Finland	1.643	3	0	+	16	No	Fixed rate of increase for each additional child.
France	979	2	+	+	20	No	Family allowance: zero benefit for first child. For 2 children (under age 11) the amount per child would be USD 979 (2% of AW).
Germany	2.530	4	0	+ from 4th	18 (25)	No	<i>Kindergeld</i> is a non-wastable tax credit in the form of a monthly tax refund (deducted from Social Assistance if no tax liability).
	2.300	4	--	--	--	Yes	<i>Supplementary child allowance (Kinderzuschlag)</i> is paid to parents to prevent them from having to apply for unemployment benefit II/social welfare benefits only because of the maintenance of their children.
Greece	135	0	0	+/-	17 (21)	No	Employment condition: 50 days of work prior to the claim. In addition, the employer usually grants 5% of gross earnings to each worker for each child. The employer benefits are taxable.
Hungary	765	7	0	+	18 (23)	No	After 1st July of 2006, the family support system has changed: the amounts of the family allowance are almost doubled, the regular child protection support dissolved into the family allowance.
Iceland	3.153	5	-	+	17	Basic allowance is reduced by a percentage of income above limit. Supplement is not means tested.	Basic allowance has an income limit of USD 44 496 for a couple. Reduction is 2, 5 and 7% for 1, 2 and 3 children respectively. There is a supplement for children aged under 7.
Ireland	2.628	6	0	+ from 3rd	15 (18)	No	--
Italy ⁵	1.495	5	0	+	17	Household taxable income.	Benefit is paid by employers and is only granted if at least 70% of household taxable income is employment income (or earnings replacement benefits including unemployment benefits and employment pension). Benefits are reduced in proportion to days not worked.

Notes: 1) Family benefits including non-wastable tax credits. All benefit amounts are shown on an annualised basis. "--" indicates that no information is available or not applicable. In general family benefits are not taxable unless otherwise indicated.

2) "+": increases, "-": decreases, "0": remains the same, "+/-": increases or decreases (some countries give higher rates to the youngest and oldest age groups).

3) 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".

4) 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.

5) Benefit amount for the first child is calculated as the difference in benefit between a 3-member and a 2-member household.

6) Benefit amount for a household with no declared income. Benefit amount as 6% (1 child percentage) of household income limit LM 10 270.

Source: OECD Tax-Benefit Models

Table PF3.1 Family Cash Benefits¹, 2007 (cont.)

Country	Maximum benefit for one child aged 3-12		Benefit amount per additional child varies with ¹		Upper age limit for children (student)	Income-tested	Observations
	US\$	% of AW	Age of child	Number of children			
Japan	510	1	+/-	+ from 3rd	12	Gross income less employment income tax deduction.	Amount per child doubles as from 3rd child.
Korea	-	--	--	--	--	--	--
Latvia	433	2	0	+	15 (19)	No	For families with at least 3 children the age limit is 18 or less than 24 if in education. Higher rates for children less than 3.
Lithuania	331	3	-	+ from 3rd	12 (23)	No	
Luxembourg	3.846	6	+	+	17 (26)	No	Maximum amount by age is reached at age 12.
Malta ²	844	9	0	+	15 (20)	Household income minus social security contributions	The allowance paid is calculated on a percentage on the difference between household income limit, USD 32 306 (154% of AW), and the income declared. The percentage increases with number of children.
Netherlands	1.488	3	+	0	17	No	Under the previous system (which still applies for children born before 1 January 1995) the amount per child increased with the number of children.
New Zealand	3.133	10	+	-	18	Family earned income.	Family Support Tax Credit (includes Child Tax Credit available for families not receiving benefits).
Norway	1.987	3	0	0	17	No	--
Poland	278	2	+	0	17 (20)	Gross income per household member relative to net income per capita.	Supplementary benefits available
Portugal	536	2	+/-	-	16 (24)	Income relative to minimum wage.	Higher benefits for children aged under 1. Benefits also vary relative to family income (six levels). Regarding first income level households, benefit amount is doubled in September for schooling expenses for children between 6 and 16.
Slovak Republic	1.898	3	0	0	15 (25)	No	The child allowance is provided at a uniform amount.
Slovenia	263	8	0	+	17 (25)	Gross family income	Child benefit is defined as percentage from the average monthly wage of all employees (A-O, ISIC Rev. 3.1).
Spain	398	1	0	0	17	Gross family income.	Benefit is means-tested on a one-to-one basis on gross family income exceeding USD 12 770 (43% of AW) per year (increasing with 15 per cent for every dependent child from the second).
Sweden	1.865	4	0	+	16 (20)	No	--
Switzerland (Zurich)	1.950	3	+	0	15 (24)	No	Amounts are fixed at the level of the cantons and paid by the employer. Benefits are taxable but not subject to social contributions.
Turkey	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	1.883	3	0	-	15 (18)	No	Fixed rate from 2nd child.
	1.090	3	0	+		Gross family income.	Families with children can claim Child Tax Credit if their income is no more than USD 116 410. The tax credit is "non-wastable". Higher rates are paid for disabled children.
United States(5) (Michigan)	1.056	3	0	+	--	Yes	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): benefit is not based on number of children but on family size at the time of application; it does not increase thereafter. The benefit amounts and durations vary by State.