

1. EDUCATION LEVELS AND STUDENT NUMBERS

Who participates in education?

- In most OECD countries, virtually everyone has access to at least 12 years of formal education.
- In more than one-half of OECD countries, 70% of 3-4 year-olds are enrolled in either pre-primary or primary programmes.
- From 1995 to 2006, enrolment rates for 20-29 year-olds increased by 8 percentage points.

Significance

A well-educated population is essential to a country's economic and social development, so societies have a real interest in ensuring that children and adults have access to a wide range of educational opportunities. This indicator examines access to education, and its evolution, from 1995 to 2006. It looks mainly at when children begin their education and how long they remain in schooling. At the other end of the scale, it looks at the number of young people who continue studying once compulsory education has ended.

Findings

At least 90% of students in Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Norway and Spain are enrolled in formal education for at least 14 years. However, in Mexico this figure falls to nine years and in Turkey to six years.

On average, a child is more likely to be enrolled in formal education at age 4 in the EU19 countries than in other OECD countries. In most OECD countries, full enrolment (meaning more than 90% enrolment) begins between the ages of 5 and 6. However, in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, at least 70% of 3-4 year-olds are enrolled in some kind of pre-primary or primary educational programme.

The age at which compulsory education ends ranges from 14 in Korea, Portugal and Turkey, to 18 in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. In all OECD countries, enrolment rates begin to decline after students reach the age of 16. However, in most, the sharpest decline occurs not at the end of compulsory education but at the end of upper secondary education.

On average in OECD countries, 25% of 20-29 year-olds are enrolled in tertiary education; for enrolment in education among 15-19 year-olds, the figure is 82%.

Trends

Enrolment rates for 20-29 year-olds in OECD countries rose by 8 percentage points between 1995 and 2006 (there was a similar increase for 15-19 year-olds, see Chart 2.1 in *Education at a Glance 2008*), and there were increases in all OECD countries except Portugal. Despite predictions of a levelling off, or even falls, in demand for tertiary education in OECD countries as the size of the youth population declines, demand seems to be holding up. In large part, this is because policies to widen access to education are increasing participation sufficiently to make up for any shortfalls.

Definitions

Data for the 2005-06 school year are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics, administered annually by the OECD. Except where otherwise noted, figures are based on head counts and do not distinguish between full-time and part-time study.

In the table, percentages may be in excess of 100% for the following reasons:

- 3-4 year-olds: This category may include children aged under 3.
- 5-14 year-olds: There may be discrepancies between data on population ages and data on enrolments. Non-resident students may travel into the country for their schooling.

Going further

For additional material, notes and a full explanation of sourcing and methodologies, see *Education at a Glance 2008* (Indicator C2).

Areas covered include:

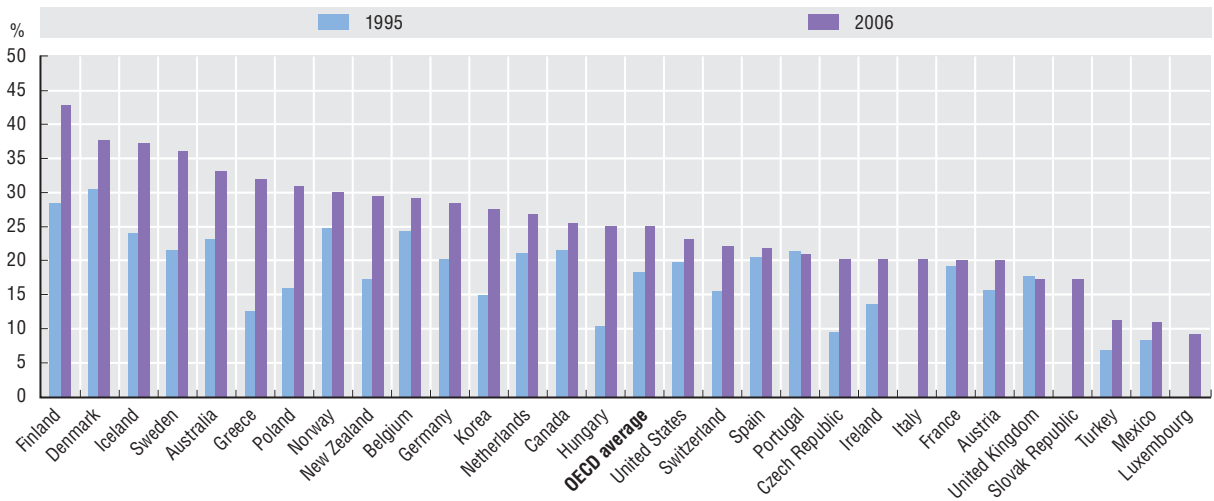
- Enrolment rates of 15-19 year-olds.
- Trends in enrolment rates for 15-19 and 20-29 year-olds.
- Students in secondary and tertiary education by type of institution and mode of study.

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Figure 1.4. **Enrolment rates of 20-29 year-olds (1995, 2006)**

This figure shows the increase – or otherwise – in the percentage of 20-29 year-olds enrolled in full-time and part-time education.



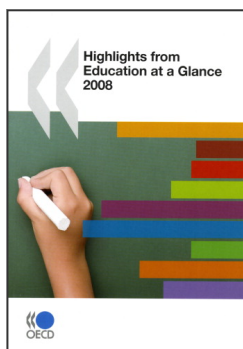
Source: OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance 2008*, Table C2.2, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/402156412821>.

Table 1.2. **Enrolment rates by age, 2006**

This table shows the percentage of people in each age group enrolled in full-time and part-time education.

OECD countries	Percentage of age group in education					
	3 to 4	5 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 and over
Australia	41.7	99.6	82.7	33.2	13.8	5.9
Austria	67.9	98.1	82.0	20.0	3.3	0.3
Belgium	125.4	99.4	95.5	29.2	8.7	3.7
Canada	m	m	80.2	26.0	5.6	1.7
Czech Republic	79.5	99.9	89.9	20.2	4.2	0.3
Denmark	93.6	97.4	83.1	37.8	7.9	1.5
Finland	44.0	95.1	87.9	42.9	13.8	3.2
France	112.1	101.0	85.9	20.1	2.6	n
Germany	96.8	98.8	88.6	28.5	2.5	0.1
Greece	27.9	98.1	92.8	32.0	1.1	n
Hungary	82.2	100.3	87.5	24.9	6.0	0.6
Iceland	94.2	98.8	84.6	37.2	12.5	3.4
Ireland	23.6	101.2	87.8	20.2	5.8	0.1
Italy	104.9	100.7	81.5	20.2	3.4	0.1
Japan	83.4	100.7	m	m	m	m
Korea	24.4	94.9	85.9	27.6	2.1	0.5
Luxembourg	80.7	96.2	73.5	9.2	0.8	0.1
Mexico	53.1	100.9	48.8	10.9	3.5	0.6
Netherlands	37.3	99.6	88.7	26.9	2.7	0.7
New Zealand	90.8	101.0	74.4	29.4	12.3	5.4
Norway	89.3	98.8	86.3	30.0	6.9	1.6
Poland	37.3	94.5	92.6	31.0	4.4	m
Portugal	71.8	103.8	73.0	20.9	3.5	0.5
Slovak Republic	74.8	96.8	84.8	17.3	3.3	0.5
Spain	122.8	101.0	80.2	21.8	3.8	1.1
Sweden	84.2	98.8	87.8	36.1	13.2	3.0
Switzerland	26.2	100.3	83.5	22.1	3.7	0.4
Turkey	4.6	82.9	45.2	11.3	1.6	0.2
United Kingdom	90.1	100.7	69.7	17.3	5.8	1.8
United States	48.4	98.0	78.4	23.1	5.4	1.4
OECD average	69.4	98.5	81.5	25.1	5.7	1.4

Source: OECD (2008), *Education at a Glance 2008*, Table C2.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/402156412821>.



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