

## PF1.5 Child Maintenance (Child Support)

### *Definitions and methodology*

This indicator provides an overview of child maintenance systems across OECD and EU member states as well as some OECD accession and G20 countries. Child maintenance systems are diverse and individual systems do not always fit neatly into classification suitable for international comparison. To aid the comparison, some key definitions include:

- **Child maintenance/child support obligations:** require parents who do not live in the same household as their child ('non-resident parent'), usually following parental separation or divorce, to financially provide for the child until they reach the age of majority or another established point in time. All OECD countries have a formal child support system which obliges non-resident parents to provide for their children, although with varying design and characteristics. The terms child maintenance and child support can be used interchangeably.
- **Advance/guaranteed maintenance schemes:** are state-run programmes which either advances or guarantees maintenance payments, fully or partly, to the custodial parent ('resident parent') in cases of non-compliance by the non-resident parent. These terms are frequently used interchangeably; however, the meanings slightly differ. An advance maintenance scheme advances child maintenance to the resident parent and subsequently recovers the amount from the debtor parent. Conversely, eligibility to a guaranteed maintenance scheme is not subject to the possibility of debt recovery, rather the payment is guaranteed to the resident parent even if debt collection is unsuccessful or impossible. For instance, Austria and Switzerland operate advance maintenance schemes, whereas France and Sweden operate guaranteed maintenance schemes.
- **Family maintenance:** encompasses several different types of maintenance aside from child maintenance. Child maintenance is the most common type of family maintenance, followed by spousal maintenance (alimony) which exists to varying degrees across many OECD countries. In Also, family maintenance obligations can be set for adult children towards their parents or grandparents in some countries (e.g. in Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, Czechia, Lithuania and Poland).

Table PF1.5A summarizes key characteristics of child maintenance schemes across the OECD and the EU. It includes private parental agreement provisions, responsibility for formal child maintenance proceedings, rules for determining the level of payment, responsibility for enforcement, different arrangements for children of unmarried parents, age at which support ends, and advance/guaranteed maintenance payments. Table PF1.5C gives an overview of cross-country variations in rules for setting amounts and the benefit rates of advance/guaranteed schemes in recent years.

Table PF1.5D shows trends of single-parenthood and the share of single-parents receiving child maintenance payments in countries with available data. Table PF1.5E gives an overview of annual average child maintenance payments received for 2015, 2018 and 2021, and Table PF1.5F presents received child maintenance as a percentage of household disposable income and total transfer income for the same years. Charts PF1.5A-C shows average child maintenance payments per child, and child maintenance as a percentage of disposable income and transfer income while differentiating between single-parent and re-partnered parent recipients.

### *Key findings*

As shown in Table PF1.5A, the design and implementation of child maintenance regimes varies considerably across the OECD. In the first instance, authorities generally leave it up to parents to agree on child support payments, and only interfere when parents cannot reach an agreement. Therefore, the option to conclude a private parental agreement between parents, instead of entering into formal proceedings with a court or agency, is available in all countries covered. Family mediation to reach a

private agreement is mandatory before entering the formal court-based systems in Chile and Malta, and it is standard practice in Japan. Furthermore, some countries place restrictions on the availability of private agreements. These caveats include; not available for divorcing parents (Bulgaria and Czechia), not available for adult children (Cyprus), and not available for parents on a certain carer benefit (New Zealand). In Australia, opting for a private parental agreement can affect family tax payments.

Additionally, there are cross-country variations on the rules for making a private agreement enforceable in cases of non-compliance. In 15 countries, private agreements are only enforceable if the court approves the agreement, and in Iceland and Finland only if other relevant authorities approve it. If courts find that the agreement is not in the child's best interest, it can order a change in some countries (e.g. Hungary, Slovenia and Switzerland). In other cases, a private agreement becomes enforceable when it is filed with a court, notary public or responsible agency, or when it is concluded in front of a mediator or a responsible agency.

Child maintenance systems where courts order maintenance obligations are categorised as “court-based” and maintenance systems where an agency has the authority to order maintenance obligations are categorised as “agency-based”. Countries where both courts and separate authorities are equally able to order child maintenance are categorised as “hybrid”. As Table PF1.5A shows, the majority of child maintenance systems are “court-based” in the OECD, there is one “hybrid system” (Iceland) and five “agency-based” countries (Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom). Some court-based systems have agencies that are involved in the maintenance setting process but lack the authority to set obligations. For instance, in Croatia the Croatian Social Welfare Institute can represent the child and resident parent in formal maintenance proceedings.

Child maintenance tends to be paid monthly. However, in some countries other frequencies can occur as well as lump-sum payments or payments in kind. In the vast majority of countries, child support orders specify a set amount in the local currency which is adjusted annually after for instance inflation or cost of living increases.

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**Other relevant indicators:** Other relevant indicators: Family size and household composition (SF1.1); Children in families (SF1.2); Further information on the living arrangements of children (SF1.3); Marriage and divorce rate (SF3.1); Family dissolution and children (SF3.2); Patterns of employment and the distribution of working hours for single parents (LMF2.3).

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Table PF1.5.A. Key Characteristics of Child Maintenance Schemes, 2023/2024

Country	Private parental agreement provision	Responsibility for formal child maintenance proceedings, if no private agreement is reached	Rules for determining level of payment	Responsibility for enforcement of payments	Different arrangements for children of unmarried parents	Age at which support ends	Advanced or guaranteed maintenance payments
<b>Argentina</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	21 years (up to 25 years if the child is still in education or training)	No
<b>Australia</b>	Yes, if agreement (but can have implications for family tax benefit)	Agency-based ( <i>Services Australia</i> )	Rules/rigid formula (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Government Services Agency ( <i>Services Australia</i> )	No	18 years (can be extended until end of secondary school)	No
<b>Austria</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Formal guidelines and suggested methods, however with some discretion (with a suggested maximum maintenance amount)	Court and Youth Welfare Office ( <i>Jugendamt</i> )	No	No age limit (until financial independence if the child is unmarried)	Yes, for a maximum of 5 years and subject to ability of debtor to pay (amount corresponding to determined maintenance or based on child's age in three levels)
<b>Belgium</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, legal guidelines outlining calculation criteria	Court and Enforcement Agency ( <i>Service des Créances Alimentaires – SECAL / Dienst Voor Alimentatievorderingen - DAVO</i> )	No	18 years (or until the child has completed education or training)	Yes (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Brazil</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Court	No	18 years (up to 24 years if the child is in education or financially dependent, indefinitely in case of disability)	No
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Yes, if agreement (but only for unmarried parents)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Court	Yes (court proceedings mandatory for divorcing parents)	18 years (up to 20 years if the child is still in secondary school and up to 25 if in training or university)	Yes, if debtor has no income or property (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Canada (Ontario)</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, using federal support tables	Government Maintenance Agency ( <i>Family Responsibility Office</i> )	No	18 years (or until the child becomes independent)	No
<b>Chile</b>	Yes, if agreement (mediation mandatory prior to formal court proceedings)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods (with set minimum and maximum maintenance amounts)	Court	No	21 years (up to 28 years if the child is in education or training or has a disability)	No
<b>Colombia</b>	Yes, if agreement (attempted agreement)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, according to obligated parents' income (with a	Court	No	18 years (up to 25 years if the child is in education or	No

	mandatory prior to formal court proceedings)		set maximum maintenance amount)			training, or indefinitely in case of disability)	
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (up to 25 years if the child is in education or training or indefinitely in case of disability)	No
<b>Croatia</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and use of support table	Court	No	18 years (up to 26 years if the child is in education or indefinitely if disability)	Yes, if both parents and grandparents do not provide maintenance (flat-rate amount depending on child's age in three levels)
<b>Cyprus</b>	Yes, if agreement (but only for minor children)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (or until the child is financially independent)	No (but non-receipt may make parents eligible for guaranteed minimum income benefit)
<b>Czechia</b>	Yes, if agreement (but only for unmarried parents)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and use of support table	Court	Yes (court proceedings mandatory for divorcing parents)	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient)	Yes, for a maximum of 24 months (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Denmark</b>	Yes, if agreement	Agency-based ( <i>Familjeretshuset</i> )	Rules/rigid formula	Social Security Agency ( <i>Udbetaling Danmark</i> )	No	18 (up to 24 years if the child is still in education)	Yes, flat-rate, supplement paid only if it can be collected from debtor)
<b>Estonia</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Formal guidelines and calculation formula, however with some discretion (with a set minimum maintenance amount)*	Court	No	18 years (up to 21 years if the child still in education or training)	Yes, (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Finland</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by Child Welfare Officer	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Social Security Agency ( <i>Kela / Folkpensionsanstalten - FPA</i> )	No	18 years	Yes, (flat-rate with two levels or supplemental support)
<b>France</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and use of support table	Court and Social Security Agency ( <i>Caisses d'Allocations familiales- CAF or Mutualité sociale Agricole - MSA</i> )	No	No age limit (until the child is financially stable or indefinitely in case of disability)	Yes, if parent does not cohabit or remarry (flat-rate or supplemental support)
<b>Germany</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, using support table (with set minimum maintenance amount in three levels according to child's age)	Court, Youth Welfare Office ( <i>Jugendamt</i> ), Maintenance Advances Office ( <i>Unterhaltsvorschusskasse</i> ) and/or Social Assistance Providers	Yes (unmarried parents can only claim maintenance in case of inability to work due to childcare)	18 years (or until the child finishes higher education or vocational training)	Yes, if parent does not remarry, with additional eligibility criteria for children 12-18 years (flat-rate amount in three levels depending on age of child)
<b>Greece</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (or until the child is financially self-sufficient)	No
<b>Hungary</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, legal guidelines	Court	No	18 years (up to 25 years if the child is still in education)	Yes, for a maximum of 3 years (amount corresponding to

							determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Iceland</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by District Commissioner	Hybrid (Court and District Commissioners)	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and use of reference rates (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	District Commissioner and Social Security Agency ( <i>Tryggingastofnun</i> )	No	18 years (up to 20 years if the child requests an extension for education)	Yes (flat-rate equivalent to the minimum amount)
<b>Indonesia</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Rules/rigid formulas for parents in certain occupations, and mostly discretion with no fixed rules or methods for others	Court (religious or civil)	Yes (claims for child maintenance is only possible if the parents have been married)	21 years (or earlier if the child is married or financially dependent)	No
<b>Ireland</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods (with a set maximum maintenance amount)	Court	No	18 years (up to 23 years if the child is still in full-time education or indefinitely in case of disability)	No
<b>Israel**</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Depending on if personal (religious) law or civil law applies to parents	National Debt Collection Agency ( <i>רשות האכיפה והגבייה</i> )	No	Varies by type of law	Yes, but means-tested (support table used to calculate amount depending on parents' marriage status and number of children)
<b>Italy</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient)	No (no national-level scheme, but some regional-level schemes are operating)***
<b>Japan</b>	Yes, if agreement (court mediation standard for reaching agreement before resorting to court trial)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and use of support table	Court	No	No age limit (stipulated in the court order on a case-by-case basis)	No
<b>Korea</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and support table	Enforcement Agency ( <i>양육비 이행 서버</i> )	No	19 years	Yes, but means-tested for a maximum of 12 months**** (flat-rate amount)
<b>Latvia</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Court	No	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient)	Yes (maximum flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age)
<b>Lithuania</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (up to 24 years in case of continued education or unlimited in case of disability)	Yes (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court and Social Security Agency ( <i>Fonds National de Solidarité</i> )	No	No age limit (until the child's education or training is completed)	Yes, but means-tested (amount corresponding to maintenance determined in court order)
<b>Malta</b>	Yes, if agreement (mediation mandatory)	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	16 years (up until 23 years if the child is still in education)	No

	before entering formal court proceedings)					or training or unlimited if disability)	
<b>Mexico</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Court	No	18 years (up to 21 years if the child is still in education)	No
<b>Netherlands</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and suggested standards	National Debt Collection Agency ( <i>Landelijk Bureau Inning Onderhoudsbijdragen – LBIO</i> )	No	21 years (or longer in case of disability preventing financial independence)	No
<b>New Zealand</b>	Yes, if agreement (not available for parents on certain carer benefits)	Agency-based ( <i>Inland Revenue</i> )	Rules/rigid formula (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Government Services Agency ( <i>Inland Revenue</i> ) and Family Court	No	18 years	No
<b>Norway</b>	Yes, if agreement	Agency-based ( <i>Ny Arbeids- og Velferdsetat - NAV</i> )	Rules/rigid formula	National Tax Administration Authority ( <i>Skatteetaten</i> )	No	18 years (or until the child finishes upper secondary school)	Yes, but means-tested (flat-rate amounts in three levels depending on parental income)
<b>Peru</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (up to 28 years if the child is still in higher education or indefinitely in case of disability)	No
<b>Poland</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court or other competent authority (such as the commune head, mayor, or city president)	No	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient or indefinitely in case of disability)	Yes, but means-tested (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Portugal</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (up to 25 years if the child is still in education)	Yes, but means-tested (amount determined by court)
<b>Romania</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Rigid rules/formula based on parental income, however with some discretion (with set minimum and maximum amounts)	Court	No	18 years (up to 26 years if the child is still in education)	No
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, use of support table (with a set minimum maintenance amount)	Court	No	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient)	Yes (amount corresponding to the maintenance determined in court order)
<b>Slovenia</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	No age limit (up to 26 years or until the child is financially self-sufficient)	Yes (flat-rate amounts in three levels depending on age of child)
<b>Spain</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, use of support tables	Court	No	No age limit (until the child is financially self-sufficient)	Yes, but means-tested for a maximum of 18 months (amount corresponding to determined maintenance with a ceiling)
<b>Sweden</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and standardized methods	National Debt Collection Agency ( <i>Kronofogden</i> )	No	18 years (up to 21 years if the child is still in secondary school)	Yes (flat-rate amount depending on child's age in three levels or supplemental

<b>Switzerland</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, formal guidelines and standardized methods	Court and Local Debt Collection Offices	No	18 years (or until the child has finished education or training and is financially self-sufficient)	support) Yes, but means-tested (except for in Ticino canton) and subject to ability of debtor to pay (varying rules by canton on amount setting)
<b>Thailand</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	Yes (child maintenance is only obligatory for married parents, unmarried parents can only enter voluntary agreements)	20 years	No
<b>Türkiye</b>	Yes, if agreement is approved by court	Court-based	Mostly discretion, no fixed rules or methods	Court	No	18 years (or until the child completes its education)	No
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Yes, if agreement	Agency-based ( <i>Child Maintenance Service</i> )	Rules/rigid formula	Government Maintenance Agency ( <i>Child Maintenance Service</i> )	No	16 years (up to 20 years if the child is still in full-time education)	No
<b>United States (Wisconsin)</b>	Yes, if agreement	Court-based	Formal guidelines with standardized methods, however with some discretion	Local Child Support Agencies	No	18 years (up to 19 years if the child is still in high school)	No

Notes: \*Due to Estonian child maintenance reform that came into force on 01/01/2022, any agreements or court orders concluded before this date differ from those concluded afterwards. The changes refer mainly to the calculations of the amount due, changing its indexation from minimum wage trends towards affordability of obligations.

\*\*In Israel, either religious or civil divorce and family law can apply to parents in child maintenance cases. The rules differ depending on which law they follow.

\*\*\*Time-limited advanced/guaranteed schemes operated in Italy between 2016-17 and 2020-2022. Several proposals for a permanent scheme have been put forward, however not passed.

\*\*\*\*There are current government plans announced by the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to expand the currently time-limited advance maintenance scheme from 12 months to up to the child turns 18 years.

Source: National governments, National Legislative Frameworks

The rules for determining the level of child maintenance payments vary considerably across countries and systems. The five agency-based systems use formal rules and rigid formulas to calculate the amount based on set criteria. Court-based systems operate with more discretion. Courts consider a combination of different criteria in its determination of child maintenance amounts. Most commonly, the child's age and specific needs as well as the non-resident parent's ability to pay are considered. However, the calculations can include a variety of other considerations as well. These might include the resident parent's income, the child's own potential income, the socio-economic background of the child, the degree of shared care between parents, additional maintenance obligations of the non-resident parent, and other dependent children in the non-resident household. Some countries have legal guidelines outlining what courts should consider, some have other formal guidelines, whereas others have no specific guidelines but rely on court discretion to a larger extent. Nine countries have some form of support tables which courts use to standardise their assessments of child maintenance claims (Canada, Czechia, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Slovak Republic and Spain). Thirteen countries stipulate a minimum maintenance amount of which the child maintenance should not fall below (Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Mexico, New Zealand, Romania and the Slovak Republic). The rules for setting the minimum maintenance amount, and the current rates, can be found for the relevant countries in Table PF1.5B. Five countries set maximum maintenance amounts not to be exceeded (Austria, Chile, Colombia, Ireland and Romania). In fact, Chile, Colombia and Romania set their maximum amounts at 50% of the debtor parent's income,

The procedures for enforcement of non-compliance with child maintenance obligations differ between countries. In 28 countries, the responsibility for enforcement rests solely on the courts. However, enforcement responsibilities can fall on either the court or another government agency in several countries (e.g. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg). Furthermore, in three countries (Israel, the Netherlands and Sweden) the national debt collection agency enforces outstanding payments, in another two (Canada and the United Kingdom) it is the dedicated child maintenance agency, and in another two (Denmark and Finland) it is the social security agency that bears enforcement responsibility. The methods of enforcement vary between systems, with common methods including attachment of earnings orders and the seizure of property or assets. Consistent non-compliance with ordered payments can also lead to criminal proceedings in certain cases, resulting in fines or even imprisonment. Notably, non-payment of child maintenance obligations are referred to as 'economic violence' in law in Chile and Argentina, and in a statement by the Spanish supreme court.

High rates of non-compliance pose a significant threat to the efficiency of child maintenance regimes in many countries (see below for maintenance receipt rates). Governments have implemented various instruments to combat non-compliance. Firstly, aimed at encouraging compliance, some strategies include paying attention to setting child maintenance obligations at a level which is affordable for the non-resident parent by accounting for their ability to pay. Secondly, aimed at discouraging non-compliance, some strategies include the passing on of obligations and the establishment of debtor registers. For instance, grandparents of the child in question can become obligated to pay child maintenance if the non-resident debtor parent defaults on its obligation in several countries (e.g. Austria, Brazil, Czechia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Greece, Italy and Mexico). Additionally, several countries operate national registers of defaulting parents which impose certain restrictions on the debtor parent (e.g. Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Peru). For instance, restrictions may include bans on marrying, leaving the country, running for certain elected positions, applying for bank loans, etc. Similarly, in Latvia a 2015 reform saw child maintenance debtors' names and personal data published on the government website.

For the majority of countries, there are no separate child maintenance arrangements for children of unmarried parents relative to children of married parents. The exceptions include Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Indonesia and Thailand. In Bulgaria and Czechia, private parental agreements are not available for divorcing parents. In Germany, a resident parent who was not married to the child's non-resident parent cannot claim child maintenance unless they provide proof of their inability to work due to childcare commitments. In Indonesia and Thailand, the child maintenance obligation of parents towards their children do not automatically cover children born out of wedlock. Notably, in several countries it is commonplace



for unmarried mothers to be required to formally establish fatherhood in order to claim child maintenance, however, this has not been considered as different arrangements for the purpose of this indicator.

**Table PF1.5.B. Minimum Maintenance Amounts**

Minimum amounts of child maintenance, 2024

Country	Rules for setting minimum amount	Minimum maintenance amount (per month)	Year	PPP adjusted USD
Australia	Minimum maintenance is set at a flat-rate	AUD 519 (per year)	2024	USD 371 (per year)
Brazil	Minimum maintenance is equal to 30% of the minimum wage, however exceptionally the rate can be set at a lower amount	BRL 423.60	2024	USD 169
Bulgaria	Minimum maintenance is equal to 25% of the national minimum wage	BGN 233,25	2024	USD 292
Chile	Minimum maintenance is equal to 40% of the minimum wage in cases of a single child, and 30% each if there are two or more children	CLP 200.000 CLP 300.000	2024	USD 457 USD 685
Croatia	Minimum amounts are set as percentages of the average net monthly salary of employed persons in the previous year, split in three levels depending on the child's age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17% (0-6 year old)</li> <li>• 20% (7-12 year old)</li> <li>• 22% (13-18 year old)</li> </ul>	EUR 195 (0-6 year old) EUR 230 (6-12 year old) EUR 253 (13-18 year old)	2024	USD 488 USD 575 USD 632
Estonia	Minimum maintenance is equivalent to the base amount, and annually adjusted after changes in the consumer price index	EUR 200	2024	USD 333
Germany	Minimum maintenance amounts are set in three levels depending on the child's age, and adjusted annually	TBC	2024	TBC
Iceland	Minimum maintenance is equivalent to the Social Insurance Administration's child pension	ISK 46147	2024	USD 325
Latvia	Minimum maintenance amounts are set as percentages of the minimum wage in two levels according to the child's age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25% (0-7 year old)</li> <li>- 30% (7-18 year old)</li> </ul>	EUR 175 EUR 210	2024	USD 350 USD 420
Mexico	Minimum maintenance is set as a percentage of the debtor parent's income	15% of parental income	2024	-
New Zealand	Minimum maintenance is set at a flat-rate.	NZD 1150 (per year)	2024	USD 767 (per year)
Romania	Minimum maintenance is set as a percentage of the debtor parent's income. If parent does not have an income, the minimum amount will be set in relation to the net minimum wage	25% of parental income	2024	-
Slovak Republic	Minimum maintenance is equal to 30% of the subsistence minimum rate for a dependent minor child, which is annually adjusted	EUR 37.53	2024	USD 75

Note: Calculations are done based on OECD PPP adjustment rates for Q4 of 2023. The final adjusted rates are rounded up to the closest USD.  
Source: See Table PF1.5A.

Non-resident parents' obligation to provide child maintenance ends when the child is 18 years old in a majority of countries. However, the age limit is 16 in Malta and the United Kingdom; 19 in Korea; 20 in Thailand; and, 21 in Argentina, Chile, Indonesia and the Netherlands). Eleven countries do not specify an age limit at all. Out of these, eight countries stipulate that the child maintenance obligation will persist until the child is financially self-sufficient (Austria, Czechia, France, Italy, Latvia, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Spain). However, the vast majority of the above age limits are flexible, including special provisions for extensions, for instance if the child is still in education or training or if it is disabled. Only four countries (Finland, Korea, New Zealand and Thailand) operate a strict age limit without possibility for extension.

Notably, the age limits for parents' child maintenance obligations often differ from the age eligibility for advanced/guaranteed maintenance schemes.

### ***Payment rates in Advance and Guaranteed schemes***

Out of the 48 countries included, 25 countries have an advance/guaranteed maintenance scheme (Table 1.5C). However, the cross-country design and eligibility vary significantly. In terms of eligibility, the advanced/guaranteed payment is means-tested in 8 countries (Korea, Israel, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland) and conditional to the parent remaining unmarried (Germany and France) and non-cohabitating (France) in others. Furthermore, the payment is subject to the possibility of debt recovery in three countries (Austria, Denmark and Switzerland for anything above the standard rate), and the duration of support is time-limited in five countries (Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Korea and Spain). Usually, the advanced/guaranteed payment is only available for families after initial enforcement proceedings have failed.

In terms of the amount of advanced/guaranteed payment, there are large varieties across countries as outlined in table PF1.5B. The two most common approaches include setting a flat-rate/standard amount (with for instance variations depending on the child's age or the parent's income) or to guarantee the amount set out in the maintenance order/agreement up to a certain ceiling. The majority of countries advance/guarantee the amount determined in the maintenance order/agreement, up to a maximum amount. Only two countries advance/guarantee the same amount as set out in the court order without a cap (Luxembourg and the Slovak Republic). The standard/flat-rate amounts are in some cases linked to other national rates and adjusted accordingly, for example to the statutory minimum wage (Hungary), to the minimum maintenance rate (Croatia), or to social assistance rates (Lithuania). Elsewhere, rates are regularly adjusted after for example inflation or consumer price indices, whereas amounts appear not to be regularly adjusted in some (Belgium, Czechia and Korea), and have not been adjusted since the creation of the scheme in others (Poland and Spain). Table PF1.5C provides detail on the varying rules for determining the amount of payment in advanced/guaranteed maintenance schemes.

In some countries with advance/guaranteed payment schemes, this payment can function as a supplement to fully paid child maintenance if the ordered or agreed amount is lower than the set advanced/guaranteed amount (e.g. Denmark, Finland, France and Sweden. if it can be recovered). In this case, child maintenance functions as a 'top-up' when the ordered/agreed payment is low as related to the limited capacity of the non-resident parent to financially provide for the child. Similarly, it can function as a general family allowance in cases where there is no non-resident parent. For instance, resident parents in Sweden are eligible for the guaranteed payment in cases of adoption by single parents, pregnancy through assisted reproduction, and if fatherhood is not established.

### Table PF1.5.C. Benefit Rates in Advance/Guaranteed Maintenance Schemes

Rules for setting advance/guaranteed maintenance rates and ratest (rates refer to 2024 if not otherwise specified).

Country	Rules for setting advanced/guaranteed amount	Amount per child per month	Year	PPP adjusted USD *
<b>Austria</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age (referred to as maximum or 'reference rates' for the age groups)	EUR 279 (0-6 year old) EUR 399 (6-14 year old) EUR 518 (14+ year old) EUR 796.06 (maximum)	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 399 USD 570 USD 740 USD 1137 (maximum)
<b>Belgium</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	EUR 175 (maximum)	2024	USD 250
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	BGN 100 (maximum)	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 125
<b>Croatia</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on the child's age (amounts equivalent to the statutory minimum maintenance)	EUR 195 (0-6 year old) EUR 230 (6-12 year old) EUR 253 (13-18 year old)	From April 2024	USD 488 USD 575 USD 632
<b>Czechia</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	CZK 3000 (maximum)	Maximum amount set out in 2020 act	USD 238 (maximum)
<b>Denmark</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount equivalent to the 'normal support' rate	DKK 1548	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 250
<b>Estonia</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	EUR 200 (maximum)	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 333
<b>Finland</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount (but not higher than ordered/agreed amount)	EUR 196.02	2024	USD 245
<b>France</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in two levels	EUR 195.86 (if raising your own child alone) EUR 261.06 (if raising a child deprived of parents)	April 2024-March 2025	USD 280 USD 373
<b>Germany</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age (but not higher than ordered/agreed amount)	EUR 230 (0-5 year old) EUR 301 (6-11 year old) EUR 395 (12-17 year old)	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 329 USD 430 USD 564
<b>Hungary</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling (maximum advance set as 30% of the minimum wage)	HUF 80040 (maximum)	2024	USD 451
<b>Iceland</b>	Equivalent to the minimum maintenance amount	ISK 46147	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 325
<b>Israel</b>	Equivalent to the ordered/agreed amount, with a ceiling (depending on parent income, age, number of children, and marriage status)	NIS 1961-4990	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2024	USD 545-1386
<b>Korea</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount	KRW 200.000	2024	USD 250
<b>Latvia</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age (but not higher than ordered/agreed amount)	EUR 107.5 (0-7 year old) EUR 129 (7-18 year old) EUR 129 (18-21 year old)	2024 (no change from 2023)	USD 215 USD 258 USD 258
<b>Lithuania</b>	Equivalent to the ordered/agreed amount, with a ceiling (maximum advance is set at 1.8 times the amount of basic social benefit)	EUR 99 (maximum)	2024	USD 198 (maximum)
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Equivalent to court-ordered amount	Depends on court-ordered amount	-	-
<b>Norway</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on parental income	NOK 1970 or NOK 2460 (child under or over 11 year old) NOK 1480 NOK 990	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of July 2024	USD 277 or 346 USD 208 USD 139
<b>Poland**</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	PLN 500 (maximum)	2024 (no change since establishment in 2008)	USD 263
<b>Portugal</b>	Amount determined by court	Depends on court determination	-	-
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	Equivalent to court-ordered amount	Depends on court-ordered amount	-	-
<b>Slovenia</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age	EUR 93.73 (0-6 year old) EUR 103.09 (6-14 year old) EUR 121.83 (14+ year old)	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of February 2024	USD 156 USD 172 USD 203
<b>Spain</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling	EUR 100 (maximum)	2024 (no change since establishment in 2007)	USD 167
<b>Sweden</b>	Standard/flat-rate amount in three levels depending on child's age	SEK 1673 (0-7 year old) SEK 1823 (7-14 year old) SEK 2223 (15+ year old)	2024	USD 195 USD 212 USD 258
<b>Switzerland</b>	Equivalent to the amount agreed/ordered, with a ceiling (variations by canton)	Varies by canton	-	-

Notes: \*Calculations are done based on OECD PPP adjustment rates for Q4 of 2023. The final adjusted rates are rounded up to the closest USD. \*\*A current Polish regulation developed by the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is being considered which could double the current advanced/guaranteed maintenance rate of PLN 500 to PLN 1000.

Source: See table PF1.5A.

### ***The prevalence of Child Maintenance payments.***

The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) contains information on the size of maintenance payments and Tables PF1.5D and PF1.5E present estimates for 21 countries for which this information is available for at least one year between 2015 and 2021. A single-parent household is identified in the data as a household head who does not have a partner and who is living with at least one child under 18 years old. Thus, this indicator does not include maintenance recipients who do not have underaged children. The estimates on the value of maintenance payments in Table PF1.5D may cover two types of payments: child maintenance and spousal maintenance (alimony). The data only concern child maintenance received from the non-resident parent does not account for any advance/guaranteed maintenance paid by the state. National currencies were converted to USUSD using OECD PPPs to account for cross-national differences in purchasing power.

Table PF1.5D shows trends in the prevalence of single-parent households and the share of these families that receive child maintenance. Family dissolution and single-parent households are becoming increasingly common across countries (see SF1.2, SF3.1 and SF3.2), highlighting the increased importance of child maintenance. In the majority of the countries with available data, the share of single-parent households has increased steadily since 1995. For instance, in Belgium, France, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands and Norway the share almost doubled in the period 1995-2021, and almost quadrupled in Slovenia over the 1995-2015 period. On average for the countries for which information is available, the share of single-parent households rose from 13.2% in 1995 to 20.1% in 2018. Among these, the share of single-parent households in 2018 were the highest in Colombia, Lithuania and Chile at over 30%, and lowest in Korea, Luxembourg and Israel at around 10%. The share of single parents who report having received child maintenance also shows great cross-country variation. On average for the countries for which information is available for 2018, 26.4% of single parents reported receiving child maintenance. The share of receipt was the highest in Austria, the Slovak Republic and Sweden at around 50%, and it was the lowest in Colombia, Luxembourg and Romania ranging between 5-10%. The LIS data on child maintenance ideally only captures regular transfers, and therefore does not include non-regular child maintenance receipt.

**Table PF1.5.D. Trends of Single-Parents and Single-Parents Receiving Child Maintenance Payments**

Percentage of single-parents out of families with children, and percentage of single-parents who report receiving child maintenance in 2015, 2018, and 2021.

Country	Percentage of Single-Parents				Percentage of Single-Parents Receiving Child Maintenance		
	1995	2015	2018	2021	2015	2018	2021
Australia	17.7	22.1	21.6	n/a	44.4	40.0	n/a
Austria	13.1	17.2	18.6	16.8	60.0	55.0	48.6
Belgium	12.2	22.3	22.9	24.3	32.4	30.0	24.8
Brazil	n/a	24.2	24.2	26.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Canada	18.8	23.3	22.3	n/a	27.3	25.4	n/a
Chile	17.8	29.7	31.0	n/a	39.6	38.6	n/a
Colombia	n/a	35.0	35.1	37.0	5.9	4.8	4.2
Czechia	19.3	17.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Denmark	20.5	23.7	23.3	23.3	17.6	18.3	16.3
Estonia	n/a	17.8	n/a	n/a	27.4	n/a	n/a
Finland	10.9	10.1	n/a	n/a	34.3	n/a	n/a
France	12.4	21.3	22.7	22.7	26.9	23.9	22.4
Germany	10.4	20.6	17.1	20.5	32.1	27.5	29.9
Greece	6.1	9.5	n/a	n/a	23.0	n/a	n/a
Hungary	15	20.1	n/a	n/a	32.0	n/a	n/a
Ireland	10	20.9	19.2	15.0	20.5	17.1	18.2
Israel	11.1	11.0	11.0	11.5	33.4	32.9	40.4
Italy	6.5	14.5	16.5	11.6	13.6	19.2	11.1
Japan	n/a	7.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Korea	n/a	14.6	9.1	9.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lithuania	n/a	26.7	31.0	28.2	25.5	23.3	26.6
Luxembourg	11.6	13.4	10.3	14.8	36.5	5.2	32.9
Mexico	13.7	20.9	22.7	26.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Netherlands	8.7	14.4	13.7	17.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Norway	10.6	24.1	23.4	22.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Peru	n/a	20.7	22.5	27.1	28.6	29.6	34.5
Poland	11.9	14.2	13.2	13.3	36.7	39.0	41.4
Romania	13.3	18.6	17.2	14.7	11.8	8.5	17.6
Slovak Republic	12.3	15.3	17.9	n/a	46.5	46.8	n/a
Slovenia	8.4	32.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Spain	8.6	15.6	16.9	n/a	27.2	23.9	n/a
Sweden	12.6	14.1	15.5	15.8	29.2	50.2	34.4
Switzerland	12.7	11.2	12.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
United Kingdom	24.2	28.2	26.7	25.5	30.6	29.5	33.2
United States	26	26.5	24.8	25.2	23.9	21.1	18.8

Note: Single-parent households are identified as households where there is at least one child under 18 and the household head does not report having a partner. Data for the first column is around 1995, for the second column around 2015, for the third around 2018 and for the last around 2021. The exact year of data collection of each country is the following one: Australia: 1995, 2014, 2018; Chile: 1994, 2015, 2017; Czechia: 1996, 2016; Estonia: 2016; Finland: 1995, 2016; France: 1996, 2015, 2018, 2020; Germany: 1995, 2015, 2018, 2020; Greece: 1995, 2016; Hungary: 1994, 2015; Israel: 1997, 2015, 2018, 2021; Italy: 1995, 2014, 2016, 2020; Japan: 2013; Korea: 2014, 2018, 2021; Lithuania: 2015, 2018, 2020; Mexico: 1994, 2014, 2018, 2022; the Netherlands: 1993, 2015, 2018, 2021; Norway: 1995, 2016, 2019, 2021; Poland: 1995, 2015, 2018, 2020; Slovak Republic: 1996, 2015, 2018; Slovenia: 1997, 2015; Switzerland: 1992, 2015, 2018. For the remaining countries, the years used are 1995, 2015, 2018, 2021.

Source: OECD estimations from Luxembourg Income Study data.

Table PF1.5E shows the value of cash payments among families who received child maintenance from non-resident parents and Table PF1.5F shows received child maintenance as a percentage of the

household's disposable income and total transfers. These tables include recipient single parents but also recipient parents who have re-partnered. They include information on the average amount of annual cash transfers per household; the average amount of annual cash transfers per child (to account for family size); the share cash payments represent in the household's disposable income; and the share maintenance payments represent in total cash transfers, public and private, received by the household. Country and year data with small sample sizes have been excluded (e.g. Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Romania).

The average yearly payment of child maintenance varies greatly between countries, as can be seen in table PF1.5E. On average for the countries for which information is available for 2018, recipient households reported receiving USD 4814 per year, and USD 3231 annually per child. Germany, Austria and Israel are found in the top with average annual payments of around USD 5000 per child, whereas Sweden, Denmark and Peru are found in the bottom with annual average payments ranging USD 1500-1800 per child. In the majority of countries where data is available, there is a visible difference in average amounts received when differentiating between households with a single-parent and households with a re-partnered parent (see Chart PF1.5A). Single parents consistently report receiving higher amounts than re-partnered parents within the same country.

### Table PF1.5.E. Child Maintenance Average Payments

Average annual payments received (USD PPP adjusted) for all recipient parents in 2015, 2018, 2021

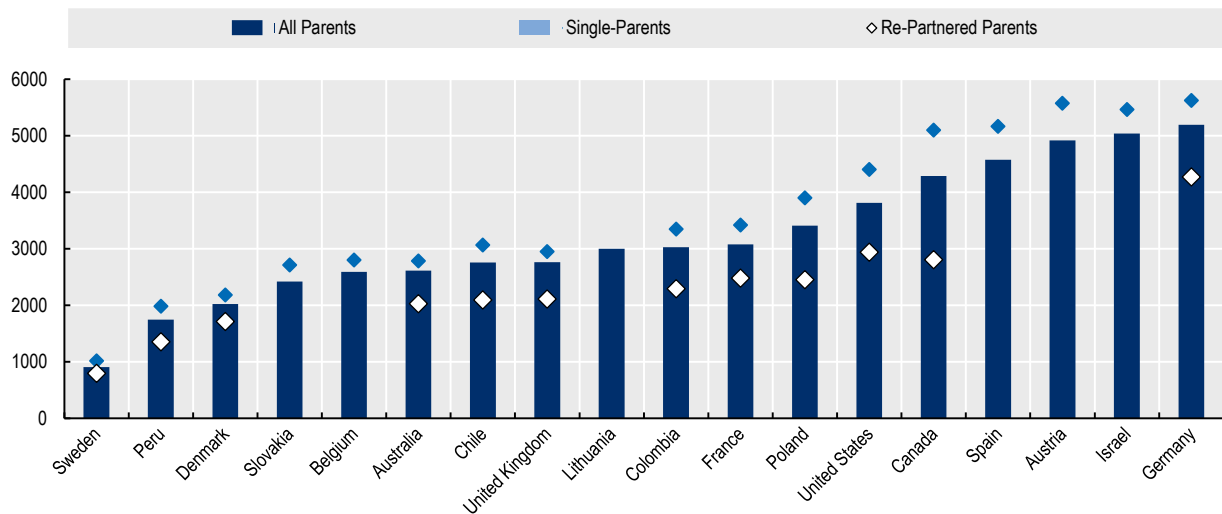
Country	Average Payment (per household) USD PPP Adjusted			Average Payment (per child) USD PPP Adjusted		
	2015	2018	2021	2015	2018	2021
Australia	3866	4247	n/a	2330	2612	n/a
Austria	6205	6770	8512	4345	4917	6258
Belgium	3772	3608	4137	2658	2592	2833
Canada	6270	6555	n/a	4033	4289	n/a
Chile	3554	4118	n/a	2365	2758	n/a
Colombia	4033	4525	4523	2704	3028	3101
Denmark	2481	2732	3161	1814	2022	2350
Estonia	4096	n/a	n/a	2732	n/a	n/a
Finland	1892	n/a	n/a	1892	n/a	n/a
France	4196	4336	5067	2953	3079	3636
Germany	6748	8154	8724	4581	5193	5937
Greece	6425	n/a	n/a	5009	n/a	n/a
Israel	8186	8296	9018	4951	5036	4983
Lithuania	n/a	4334	5213	n/a	3003	3534
Peru	2793	2771	2907	1779	1749	1854
Poland	4463	5000	5630	3078	3411	3899
Slovak Republic	2932	3000	n/a	2313	2418	n/a
Spain	5402	6080	n/a	4112	4575	n/a
Sweden	2325	1492	2517	1490	907	1720
United Kingdom	3841	4464	5877	2493	2765	3854
United States	5722	6161	6498	3616	3812	4091

Note: The reported figures include private transfers between parents and does therefore not include advanced/guaranteed maintenance payments from the state. The calculations are done based on OECD PPP adjustment rates for the years used, except for Peru for which World Bank PPP adjustment rates were used. The final PPP adjusted rates are rounded up to the closest USD .

Source: OECD estimations based on Luxembourg Income Study data.

### Chart PF1.5.A. Average Child Maintenance Payments per Child.

Average child maintenance payments per child for all parents, single-parents, and re-partnered parents in 2018



Note: The sub-group sample of re-partnered parents for Austria, Belgium, Israel, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic and Spain was too small to derive meaningful results from and have therefore been excluded, as well as the single parent sample for Lithuania.

Source: OECD estimations based on Luxembourg Income Study data.

### Table PF1.5.F Child Maintenance Payments as a % of Disposable Income and Transfer Income

Child maintenance as a percentage of household disposable income and total cash transfers in 2015, 2018, 2021

Country	Percentage of Disposable Income			Percentage of Transfer Income		
	2015	2018	2021	2015	2018	2021
Australia	8.4	9.7	n/a	24.2	28.5	n/a
Austria	13.9	14.2	13.3	39.6	41.5	42.7
Belgium	8.6	7.7	6.5	28.6	26.8	27
Canada	12.1	11.4	n/a	37.6	34.2	n/a
Chile	25.2	25.6	n/a	68.8	71.2	n/a
Colombia	25.3	25	28.6	69.2	69.4	67.9
Denmark	7.4	7	6.6	25.4	26.1	26.4
Estonia	13.7	n/a	n/a	41.4	n/a	n/a
Finland	7.6	n/a	n/a	25.4	n/a	n/a
France	10.2	9.7	9.3	40.5	39.6	37.9
Germany	16.7	16.3	15.4	44.3	44.6	42.4
Greece	38.7	n/a	n/a	67.7	n/a	n/a
Israel	21.7	20.5	22.6	71.7	73.5	67.3
Lithuania	n/a	16.2	13.2	n/a	42.9	34.8
Peru	22.4	22.4	26.6	65.9	66	62
Poland	22.6	17.3	17.4	57.9	42.2	37.1
Slovak Republic	11.8	11.3	n/a	41	43.4	n/a
Spain	21.4	20.4	n/a	62.4	71.8	n/a
Sweden	4.8	3	5	34.6	23.6	24.7
United Kingdom	9.7	10.3	11.2	25.9	30.3	32.1
United States	12.1	10.9	8.8	42.6	36.3	23.9

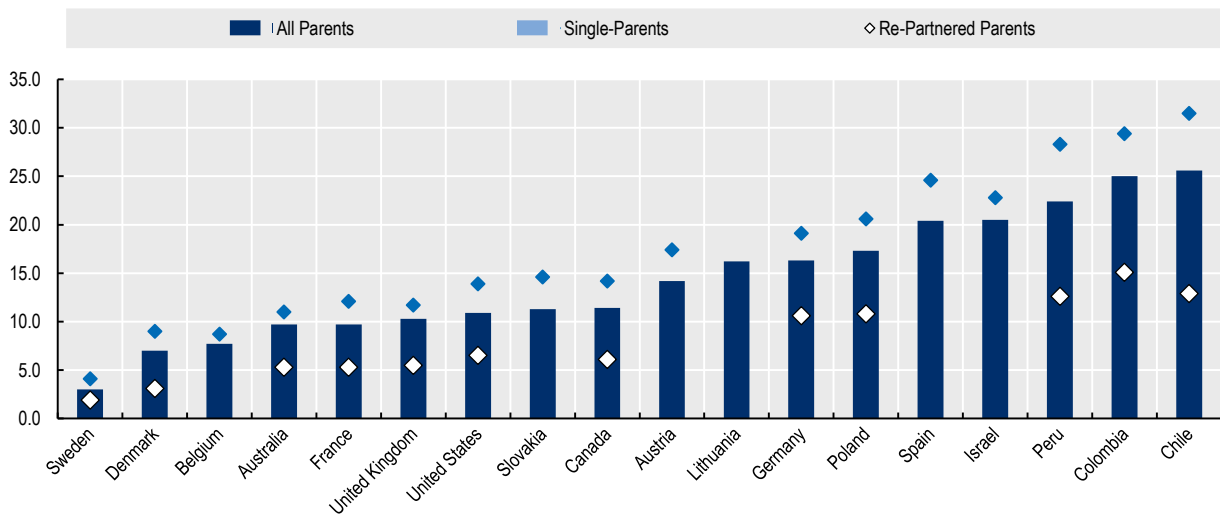
Note: Transfer income includes all cash transfers received by the household (public and private).

Source: OECD estimations based on Luxembourg Income Study data.

The importance of child maintenance in terms of its percentage of the household disposable income or transfer income varies significantly across countries. On average for the countries for which information is available for 2018, child maintenance equalled 14.4% of the household's disposable income and 45.1% of the household's total transfer income. However, the cross-country differences are stark. Child maintenance as a percentage of disposable income ranges from 3% in Sweden to 25.6% in Chile. Similarly, child maintenance as a percentage of total transfers ranges from 23.6% in Sweden to 73.5% in Israel. Charts PF1.5B and PF1.5C show the share child maintenance represents in household disposable income is different between single-parent recipients and re-partnered recipients.

### Chart PF1.5.B. Child Maintenance Payments as a Percentage of Disposable Income

Child maintenance payments as a percentage of household disposable income for all parents, single-parents and re-partnered parents in 2018



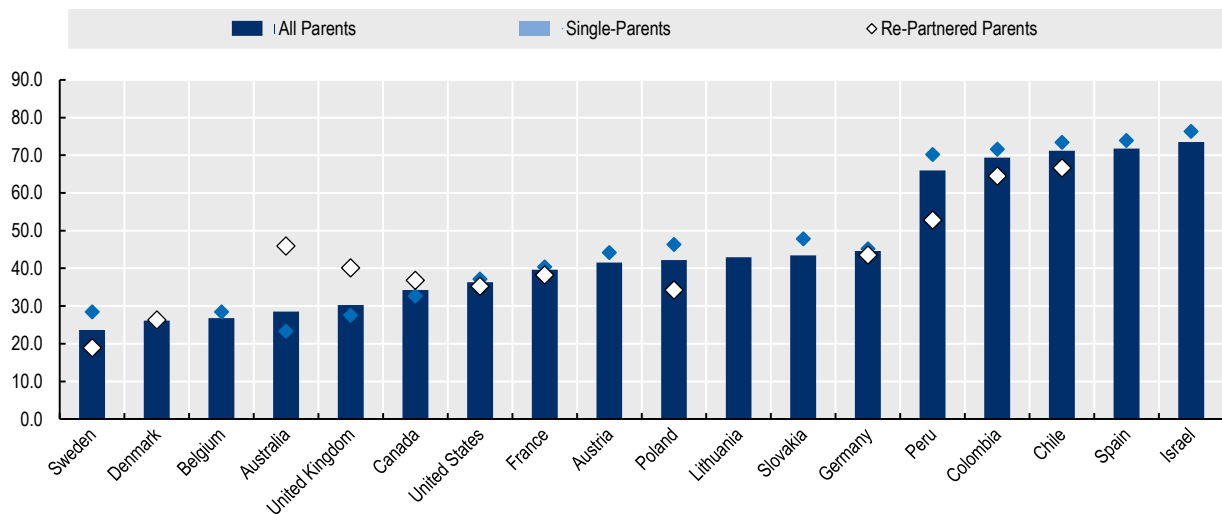
Note: The sub-group sample of re-partnered parents for Austria, Belgium, Israel, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic and Spain was too small to derive meaningful results from and have therefore been excluded, as well as the single-parent sample for Lithuania.

Source: OECD estimations based on Luxembourg Income Study data.



### Chart PF1.5.C. Child Maintenance Payments as a Percentage of Transfer Income

Child maintenance payments as a percentage of household total transfer income for all parents, single-parents and re-partnered parents in 2018



Note: The sub-group sample of re-partnered parents for Austria, Belgium, Israel, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic and Spain was too small to derive meaningful results from and have therefore been excluded, as well as the single-parent sample for Lithuania.

Source: OECD estimations based on Luxembourg Income Study data.

### Challenges and areas for further research

#### Poverty reduction

Poverty reduction, and reduction of child poverty in particular, is one of the main objectives of child maintenance schemes. However, many current child maintenance schemes do not effectively reduce poverty for a variety of reasons. Importantly, high rates of non-compliance with set obligations are widespread, weakening poverty reduction efforts. For instance, Skinner et al, (2007) found that if single-parent families actually received all child maintenance they were due, child poverty rates among these families would be halved. The establishment of advanced/guaranteed schemes are designed to tackle the problem of non-compliance by ensuring consistency of payments even if the non-resident parent defaults. However, as is seen above, not every family is eligible for consistent advanced/guaranteed payments and the rates are not always at the same level as the average maintenance payments seen in Table PF1.5D. Furthermore, the actual uptake of advanced/guaranteed maintenance by eligible families is not known.

Finnström (2023) shows that economic inability, conflictual relationships between parents, regular contact between liable parents and children, the complexity of child maintenance regulations and interpretations regarding definitions of income are all factors that contribute to liable parents not fully complying with maintenance obligations.

Furthermore, the potential interaction of child maintenance payments with other means-tested benefits further hinders child support from preventing or reducing poverty. States may view child maintenance payments as either complementary to, or as a substitute for, social assistance payments which affects its poverty reduction outcomes. For instance, if the received child maintenance counts towards the parent's income in the calculation of social assistance benefits (e.g. Finland, Germany and the Netherlands) then it may negatively affect the family's eligibility for other social benefits. In that case, the state can 'claw back' some of the child maintenance by reducing other social assistance payments. Conversely, if child maintenance does not count towards the parent's income for social assistance calculations (e.g. Australia, Ireland and the United Kingdom) then its receipts does not reduce other benefit payments. The relation

between child maintenance and social assistance is an under-researched area which would benefit from further studies on the interactions between these types of schemes.

The relationship between child maintenance systems and child poverty and gender equality objectives is another area in need of further research. Child maintenance payments can form a disincentive to work (more hours) for the resident parent, often the mother. In particular, in countries where child maintenance payment rates are generally high (see Table PF1.5D) and form a significant part of the resident parent's disposable income (see Table PF1.5E), parental incentives to work may be weak. And while high child maintenance payments reduce short-term child poverty risks, long-term employment participation is key to poverty reduction in the long-term.

Also, there is a lack of data and research on the experiences of recipient families after payments have stopped. For instance, the transition away from child maintenance receipt when reaching the national age limits is an under-researched area.

### *Complex families and shared custody*

Traditional approaches to family formation and custody arrangements are rapidly changing across countries. Child maintenance systems are largely designed to accommodate for traditional post-separation family arrangements where there is a single parent (mother) who takes sole custody of the joint children, while the non-resident parent (father) pays child maintenance for their upkeep. These are built on assumptions of no re-partnering, no new children, no stepchildren, and no shared custody arrangements. However, an increasing number of families divert from this norm, leading to a range of challenges for child maintenance schemes.

There are currently large variations between countries in how *shared custody arrangements* are accounted for in child maintenance payments (if at all). It is challenging to determine what should constitute the threshold for shared custody distinguishing it from visitation rights, what the subsequent reduction in the payment level should be if custody is shared, and whether the payment should be annulled or not if custody is shared equally between parents. Importantly, accounting for shared custody arrangements on a granular level in child maintenance payments may lead parents to act according to their own interests rather than the child's. For instance, a parent may advocate for one night more or one night less of custody to either reduce or increase the payment level. Additionally, countries may not want to automatically cancel the obligation to pay child maintenance when custody is shared equally if the aim is to equalise the lower income of the resident parent relative to the non-resident parent (e.g. in Canada, France and the United Kingdom).

There are large variations across countries in how *complex families* are accounted for in child maintenance payments (if at all). It is challenging to determine how to account for the existence of new cohabiting partners, new children and/or stepchildren in the households of both the resident and non-resident parent for setting child maintenance obligations. Since child maintenance in most countries is determined based on the child's needs and the non-resident parent's ability to pay, the varying approaches to include complex family ties in with the calculation of a household's expenses and resources impact the determination of parental ability differently. For instance, new partners influence the household income either as an expense or as a resource, with some countries accounting for this whereas others do not. Similarly, depending on if the parent's potential additional child maintenance obligations or associated costs of resident children are accounted for or not, it has varying implications for the determination of payment levels. For instance, with increasing levels of multi-partner fertility it is increasingly common for non-resident parents to pay child maintenance to children living in separate households. This leads to a policy trade-off between principles of equality between children, affordability of the non-resident parent and protection of the first child's standard of living (see e.g. Meyer et al, 2011).

As a result, in the context of growing rates of shared custody and complex family formation, it is increasingly difficult to determine child maintenance payments which are simultaneously fair for the three main actors: the child(ren), the non-resident parent and the resident parent.

### **Comparability and data issues:**

Table PF1.5A is based on previous academic work (see e.g. Skinner et al, 2007) and research of current national child support policies.

Tables PF1.5C, PF1.5D and PF1.5E were constructed using data from Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), a data archive that collects detailed information on income and its components from a large number of countries (<http://www.lisproject.org>). The LIS collates standardised information across different points in time, thereby facilitating cross-country comparisons of historical trends. However, the information in the LIS on child support payments does not: i) separately identify child maintenance and alimony (money for living expenses paid to the spouse above the money given for child support); ii) identify whether child support payments are made due to a private parental agreement or by court/agency order; and iii) separately identify advanced/guaranteed child maintenance paid by the state; iv) separately identify widowed and non-widowed single-parent families.

In this indicator, single-parent households have been defined as households with at least one child under the age of 18 where the head declares not having a partner. This implies that the single-parent is not necessarily the only adult in the household, and thus the status of single-parent is derived from reporting to not have a partner rather than being the household's sole adult. This is so that households where the single parent have other adults living with them (for instance their own adult children) are still included for the analysis if they are in receipt of child maintenance.

Although covered by the LIS, Brazil, Czechia, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Korea, Norway, Slovenia, and Switzerland are not included in Tables PF1.5E and PF1.5F as these countries did not report information on child support for the relevant years. The analysis for Tables PF1.5E and PF1.5F is based on a subset of LIS data identifying parents who report having received child maintenance in the relevant year. This group was further split into two groups: single-parents and re-partnered parents. However, for several countries the subsamples of re-partnered parents receiving support was too small to derive meaningful results and was therefore excluded from Chart PF1.5A and PF1.5C (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Israel, Spain, UK). For the Canada and the United States, Table PF1.5A outlines the child support systems based on one state/province (Wisconsin and Ontario) since there is no unified national-level system. However, for the subsequent tables (PF1.5D-F) the estimations are made based on national-level LIS data.

#### **Sources and further reading:**

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