

Too Little Too Late: An assessment of public spending on children by age in 84 countries ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Abstract

This report is a first attempt to inform the development of comprehensive and integrated child policy portfolios globally, by mapping and reviewing how much public money is spent on children, how it is spent across different sectors, and if in the life course it is spent evenly across all countries with usable data. The report builds on previous work that was limited to high-income countries (OECD, 2009, 2011, 2023). Given the overwhelming evidence of the importance of early childhood development, this report focuses in particular on the patterns of expenditure choices on these earliest years. The purpose of this work is to assess how systems work for the average child with the aim of informing policymakers and stakeholders about adequacy, balance and coherence in the public policy portfolio for children.

Underinvestment in children – in good times or bad – is a slow-burning and fundamental crisis for development, and needs to be addressed with as equal urgency as conflict, COVID-19 and climate breakdown. Coordinated and corrective action is needed from development stakeholders and in domestic child policies now, if countries are to meet their obligations to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and make good on the promises of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Region: International ^[3]

Tags: child poverty ^[4]

social policy ^[5]

COVID-19 ^[6]

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