



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
INSTITUTE  
FOR  
STATISTICS



TECHNICAL  
COOPERATION  
GROUP



# SDG indicator 4.2.4: Proposed Change in the Methodology

TCG Fifth Meeting  
15-16 November 2018  
Mexico City, Mexico  
**TCG5/REF/3**

## Current definition

SDG Indicator 4.2.4 is currently defined as the “total enrolment in (a) pre-primary education [ISCED 02] and (b) early childhood educational development [ISCED 01] regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of the official age for early childhood education [ISCED 0]”.

The Technical Cooperation Group agreed on this definition during its meeting in Madrid in 2016.

## OECD Proposal

The OECD proposes to amend the current methodology and divide the enrolments in ISCED 01 and ISCED 02 by their respective age groups in the population instead of dividing each level by the official age for ISCED 0. The new indicator would consist of three values: the gross enrolment rate for the whole ISCED 0, the gross enrolment rate for ISCED 01 and the gross enrolment rate for ISCED 02, each calculated using the respective theoretical age groups.

For example, Indicator 4.2.4 for Finland in 2016 would be:

- SDG 4.2.4 - ISCED 0: 71%
- SDG 4.2.4 - ISCED 01: 44%
- SDG 4.2.4 - ISCED 02: 83.4%

This new definition would address three limitations that the OECD has identified in the methodology currently used:

**Limit 1: Restricted scope.** Although the current methodology could provide relevant information when presented as the disaggregation of the total enrolment in ISCED 0, it may be misleading if presented as enrolment in ISCED 01 and enrolment in ISCED 02 separately. The current indicator only provides information on how children enrolled in ISCED 0 are distributed across ISCED 01 and ISCED 02. It does not provide any information on the gross enrolment rate in each of ISCED 01 and ISCED 02.

**Limit 2: Underestimation.** Enrolments in ISCED 01 and ISCED 02 are currently divided by the number of children of ISCED 0 typical age. Except in countries where either ISCED 01 or ISCED 02 is not applicable, or countries where ISCED 0 is an integrated programme, the theoretical age group of ISCED 0 is larger than the theoretical age groups of ISCED 01 and ISCED 02. As a result, the indicator underestimates each of ISCED 01 and ISCED 02 gross enrolment rates.

**Limit 3: Trend data analysis.** The current definition of Indicator 4.2.4 does not allow for trend data analysis. Prior to 2012, the breakdown between ISCED 01 and ISCED 02 is not available and only the gross enrolment rate in ISCED97 level 0 is calculated. The previous definition of ISCED 0 corresponds to the current definition of ISCED 02. As a result, keeping the theoretical age group of ISCED 0 as a reference following 2012 is misleading. For example, it suggests that the gross enrolment rate in ISCED 02 in Israel decreased from over 100% in 2012 to 51% in 2016. With the new methodology proposed, gross enrolment rates in ISCED 0 prior to 2012 are comparable to gross enrolment rates in ISCED 02 after 2012.

In an OECD consultation held after the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OECD INES Working Party, members have unanimously expressed their support for the definition proposed by the OECD.

### **Indicator 4.2.4 - Current definition and OECD proposal (2016)**

Country	Year	Gender	4.2.4 - Current definition			4.2.4 - OECD proposal		
			<i>Early childhood education (ISCED0)</i>	<i>Early childhood educational development (ISCED01)</i>	<i>Pre-primary education (ISCED02)</i>	<i>Early childhood education (ISCED0)</i>	<i>Early childhood educational development (ISCED01)</i>	<i>Pre-primary education (ISCED02)</i>
Australia	2016	T	73.0	30.2	42.8	73.0	40.5	168.6
Austria	2016	T	61.8	10.2	51.7		20.2	104.2
Belgium	2016	T			116.1			116.1
Brazil*	2016	T	63.9	25.0	38.9	63.9	42.2	95.7
Canada	2016	T			23.2			46.2
Chile	2016	T	54.6	11.3	43.3		23.0	126.7
Czech Republic	2016	T			105.2	105.2		105.2
Denmark	2016	T	78.8	27.6	51.3		59.3	95.8
Estonia	2016	T	66.5			66.5		
Finland	2016	T	70.6	14.3	56.3	70.6	44.0	83.4
France*	2016	T			105.1	105.1		105.1
Germany	2016	T	73.3	19.5	53.8		38.7	108.5
Greece	2016	T	34.6	9.4	25.2		14.9	68.4
Hungary	2016	T	69.2	3.2	65.9	69.2	16.8	81.6
Iceland	2016	T	71.2	21.9	49.3		45.5	95.2
Ireland*	2016	T			116.0	116.0		116.0
Israel*	2016	T	79.6	28.6	51.0	79.6	56.3	103.8
Italy	2016	T	51.5		51.5			98.2
Japan	2016	T			86.8	86.8		86.8
Korea	2016	T	89.9	31.0	58.9	89.9	77.9	97.9
Latvia*	2016	T			94.9	94.9		94.9
Lithuania*	2016	T	83.9	14.2	69.7	83.9	71.0	87.2
Luxembourg	2016	T			93.5	93.5		93.5
Mexico	2016	T	36.7	1.8	34.9		3.5	106.1
Netherlands	2016	T			95.1	95.1		95.1
New Zealand	2016	T	63.3	25.3	38.0		43.2	91.5

Country	Year	Gender	4.2.4 - Current definition			4.2.4 - OECD proposal		
			<i>Early childhood education (ISCED0)</i>	<i>Early childhood educational development (ISCED01)</i>	<i>Pre-primary education (ISCED02)</i>	<i>Early childhood education (ISCED0)</i>	<i>Early childhood educational development (ISCED01)</i>	<i>Pre-primary education (ISCED02)</i>
Norway	2016	T	90.0	31.6	58.4	90.0	80.8	95.9
Poland	2016	T			69.3	69.3		69.3
Portugal	2016	T			93.4	93.4		93.4
Russian Fed.	2016	T	81.9	12.2	69.8	81.9	56.9	88.7
Slovak Rep.	2016	T			93.5	93.5		93.5
Slovenia	2016	T	77.5	22.2	55.4	77.5	55.9	91.7
Spain	2016	T	68.1	16.7	51.4		36.3	95.4
Sweden	2016	T	85.3	22.2	63.2	85.3	67.6	94.0
Switzerland	2016	T			104.8	104.8		
Turkey	2016	T	18.2	0.2	18.1	18.2	0.4	30.3
United King.	2016	T	68.8	12.8	56.0	68.8	25.8	110.9
United States*	2016	T			71.9			71.9

\* Population data source is EUROSTAT/DEM instead of UNPD.