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Institute for Statistics

SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

METADATA

Target 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.2.5 Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks

Definition

Number of years of pre-primary education to which children are legally entitled that are either free from tuition fees or compulsory or both.

Most countries have legislation specifying the ages and the level of education (typically pre-primary or primary education) at which children should start school. Such legislation usually also specifies either the number of years of education that are guaranteed or the age at which young people may leave education or, in some cases, both.

The number of years of pre-primary education to which children are legally entitled should ideally be the number of grades of pre-primary education which children are expected to have completed before entering primary education.

Purpose

To measure government commitment to guaranteeing the right to education to children and young people.

Calculation method

Record the number of grades of pre-primary education that are guaranteed. If using ages rather than grades, subtract the lower age from the official entrance age to primary school. If the result is 0 or negative, there are no years of pre-primary education which are guaranteed.

YF_{02} = number of years of free pre-primary education (ISCED level 02)

YC_{02} = number of years of compulsory pre-primary education (ISCED level 02)

Interpretation

The existence of national legislation guaranteeing the right to education at given ages and/or grades demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. The greater the number of years of pre-primary education that are guaranteed, the more likely children will be well-prepared for entry to primary education at the appropriate time.

Type of data source

Administrative data.

Disaggregation

None.

Data required

Number of grades of pre-primary education which are (a) free from tuition fees and/or (b) compulsory according to national legislation. If the number of grades is not specified, the age range in which education is (a) free and/or (b) compulsory may be used instead. Data on the structure (entrance age and duration) of each level of education are also required.

Data sources

National legislation and formal education standards and norms on access to schooling and, in particular, the legal entitlement or obligation to attend school; and administrative data from ministries of education on the structure of the education system.

Quality assurance

The UIS maintains the global database used to produce this indicator. The indicator should be based on actual information on free and compulsory education by age and grade from official national legislation documents or education Acts.

Limitations and comments

The existence of national legislation does not guarantee that countries ensure that it is implemented effectively and that parents are indeed ensuring their children benefit from the provision available.