

FERTILITY

Together with mortality and migration, fertility is an element of population growth, which reflects both the causes and effects of economic and social developments.

Definition

The total fertility rate in a specific year is the total number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her child-bearing years and give birth to children in agreement with the prevailing age-specific fertility rates.

Comparability

The total fertility rate is generally computed by summing up the age-specific fertility rates defined over a five-year interval. Assuming there are no migration flows and that mortality rates remain unchanged, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman generates broad stability of the population: it is also referred to as the “replacement fertility rate” as it ensures replacement of the woman and her partner with another 0.1 children per woman to counteract infant mortality.

Data are collected every year from national statistical institutes. 2010 refers to 2009 for Canada and Chile and 1970 refers to 1980 for Brazil, Estonia and Israel.

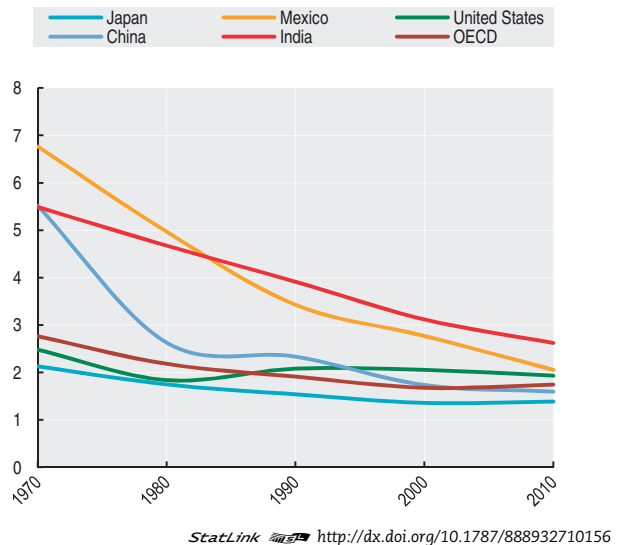
Overview

Total fertility rates in OECD countries have declined dramatically over the past few decades, falling on average from 2.7 in 1970 to 1.7 children per woman of childbearing age in the 2000s. In all OECD countries, fertility rates declined for young women and increased at older ages. A modest recovery in total fertility rates started in the early 2000s, to an average level of 1.7 in 2010. The total fertility rate is below its replacement level of 2.1 in most OECD countries except Israel, Iceland and New Zealand, and in India, South Africa and Indonesia.

The last few years have seen various trends emerge in fertility rates. A drop in fertility rates has occurred, for example in Australia, New Zealand, Spain and the United States, while rates have continued to rise in Iceland, Israel, Sweden, and Switzerland. The increase in fertility stopped in many other countries. The effect of the economic downturn is as yet unknown, but persistent economic uncertainties can impact downward the number of children women may have over their reproductive life.

Trends in total fertility rates

Number of children born to women aged 15 to 49



Sources

- For OECD member countries and Brazil, Russia and South Africa: National statistical offices.
- For China, India and Indonesia: World Bank *World Development indicators*.
- Fertility rates: OECD (2011), *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families*, OECD Publishing.

Statistical publications

- OECD (2011), *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing.

Methodological publications

- d'Addio, A.C. and M.M. d'Ercole (2005), “Trends and Determinants of Fertility Rates: The Role of Policies”, *OECD Social Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 27.

Online databases

- *United Nations World Population Prospects*.

Websites

- OECD Family Database, www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database.
- World Bank – World Development Indicators, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.



Total fertility rates

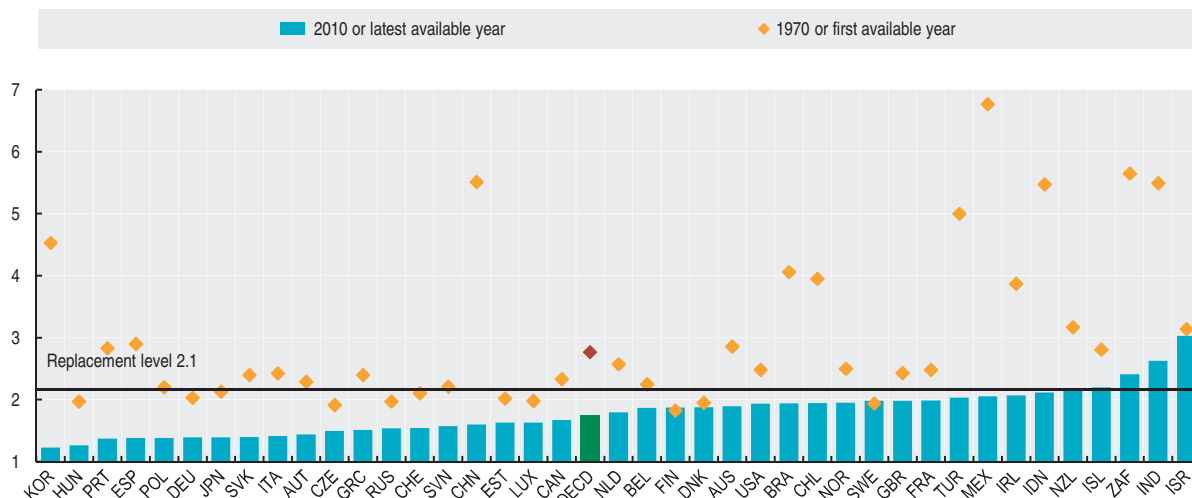
Number of children born to women aged 15 to 49

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Australia	2.86	1.89	1.90	1.76	1.76	1.75	1.76	1.79	1.82	1.92	1.96	1.90	1.89
Austria	2.29	1.65	1.46	1.36	1.39	1.38	1.42	1.41	1.41	1.38	1.41	1.39	1.44
Belgium	2.25	1.68	1.62	1.67	1.65	1.67	1.72	1.76	1.80	1.82	1.85	1.86	1.87
Canada	2.33	1.68	1.71	1.49	1.50	1.53	1.53	1.54	1.59	1.66	1.68	1.67	..
Chile	3.95	2.72	2.59	2.05	1.94	1.89	1.85	1.84	1.83	1.88	1.92	1.94	..
Czech Republic	1.91	2.10	1.89	1.14	1.17	1.18	1.23	1.28	1.33	1.44	1.50	1.49	1.49
Denmark	1.95	1.55	1.67	1.77	1.72	1.76	1.78	1.80	1.85	1.85	1.89	1.84	1.88
Estonia	..	2.02	2.05	1.39	1.37	1.37	1.47	1.50	1.55	1.63	1.65	1.62	1.63
Finland	1.83	1.63	1.79	1.73	1.72	1.76	1.80	1.80	1.84	1.83	1.85	1.86	1.87
France	2.48	1.95	1.78	1.87	1.86	1.87	1.90	1.92	1.98	1.96	1.99	1.99	1.99
Germany	2.03	1.56	1.45	1.38	1.34	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.33	1.37	1.38	1.36	1.39
Greece	2.40	2.23	1.40	1.26	1.27	1.28	1.30	1.33	1.40	1.41	1.51	1.52	1.51
Hungary	1.97	1.92	1.84	1.33	1.31	1.28	1.28	1.32	1.35	1.32	1.35	1.33	1.26
Iceland	2.81	2.48	2.31	2.08	1.93	1.99	2.03	2.05	2.07	2.09	2.14	2.22	2.20
Ireland	3.87	3.23	2.12	1.90	1.98	1.98	1.95	1.88	1.90	2.03	2.10	2.07	2.07
Israel	..	3.14	3.02	2.95	2.89	2.95	2.90	2.84	2.88	2.90	2.96	2.96	3.03
Italy	2.43	1.68	1.36	1.26	1.27	1.29	1.33	1.32	1.35	1.37	1.42	1.41	1.41
Japan	2.13	1.75	1.54	1.36	1.32	1.29	1.29	1.26	1.32	1.34	1.37	1.37	1.39
Korea	4.53	2.82	1.57	1.47	1.17	1.18	1.15	1.08	1.12	1.25	1.19	1.15	1.23
Luxembourg	1.98	1.50	1.62	1.78	1.63	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.64	1.61	1.60	1.59	1.63
Mexico	6.77	4.97	3.43	2.77	2.46	2.34	2.25	2.20	2.17	2.13	2.10	2.08	2.05
Netherlands	2.57	1.60	1.62	1.72	1.73	1.75	1.73	1.71	1.72	1.72	1.77	1.79	1.80
New Zealand	3.17	2.03	2.18	1.98	1.89	1.93	1.98	1.97	2.01	2.17	2.18	2.12	2.15
Norway	2.50	1.72	1.93	1.85	1.75	1.80	1.83	1.84	1.90	1.90	1.96	1.98	1.95
Poland	2.20	2.28	1.99	1.37	1.25	1.22	1.23	1.24	1.27	1.31	1.39	1.40	1.38
Portugal	2.83	2.18	1.56	1.56	1.47	1.44	1.40	1.41	1.36	1.33	1.37	1.32	1.37
Slovak Republic	2.40	2.31	2.09	1.29	1.19	1.20	1.24	1.25	1.24	1.25	1.32	1.41	1.40
Slovenia	2.21	2.11	1.46	1.26	1.21	1.20	1.25	1.26	1.31	1.31	1.53	1.53	1.57
Spain	2.90	2.22	1.36	1.23	1.26	1.31	1.32	1.34	1.38	1.39	1.46	1.39	1.38
Sweden	1.94	1.68	2.14	1.55	1.65	1.72	1.75	1.77	1.85	1.88	1.91	1.94	1.98
Switzerland	2.10	1.55	1.59	1.50	1.39	1.39	1.42	1.42	1.44	1.46	1.48	1.50	1.54
Turkey	5.00	4.63	3.07	2.27	2.17	2.09	2.11	2.12	2.12	2.15	2.15	2.07	2.03
United Kingdom	2.43	1.90	1.83	1.64	1.64	1.71	1.77	1.79	1.84	1.90	1.96	1.94	1.98
United States	2.48	1.84	2.08	2.06	2.01	2.04	2.05	2.05	2.10	2.12	2.08	2.00	1.93
EU 27	2.42	1.99	1.79	1.48	1.44	1.46	1.48	1.48	1.51	1.53	1.59	1.59	1.58
OECD	2.76	2.18	1.91	1.68	1.63	1.63	1.65	1.65	1.68	1.71	1.75	1.74	1.74
Brazil	..	4.06	2.79	2.39	2.27	2.20	2.13	2.06	1.99	1.95	1.89	1.94	..
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India	5.49	4.68	3.92	3.12	2.99	2.93	2.88	2.83	2.79	2.74	2.70	2.66	2.63
Indonesia	5.47	4.43	3.12	2.45	2.39	2.35	2.32	2.28	2.25	2.21	2.18	2.15	2.12
Russian Federation	1.97	1.90	1.89	1.20	1.29	1.32	1.34	1.29	1.30	1.41	1.49	1.54	..
South Africa	5.65	4.56	3.32	2.90	2.86	2.81	2.75	2.69	2.64	2.58	2.52	2.47	2.41

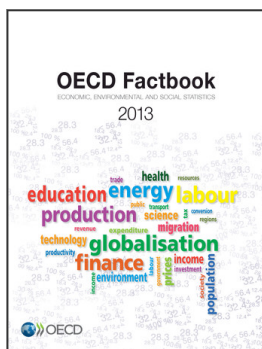
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Total fertility rates

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