

SF1.4: Population by age of children and young adults, and youth dependency ratio

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on child and young adult populations through three main measures:

- The *estimated population aged 0-24*, also further disaggregated into the estimated population aged 0-14, and the estimated population aged 15-24.
- The *distribution of children and young adults aged 0-24*, by five-year age groups.
- The *youth dependency ratio*, defined as the number of children and young people (aged 0-19) per one hundred people of working age (aged 20-64), and calculated as: $(\text{number of people aged less than 20}) / (\text{number of people aged 20-64}) * 100$. The youth dependency ratio is used here to capture the number of young persons that are likely to be "dependent" on the support of others for their daily living to the number of those who are generally capable of providing such support. It is presented both for past (1960-2021) and future years (2025-2060), with the data for future years based on the UN Population Division's 'medium fertility variant' population projections.

Data in all cases are taken from the United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2022 database.

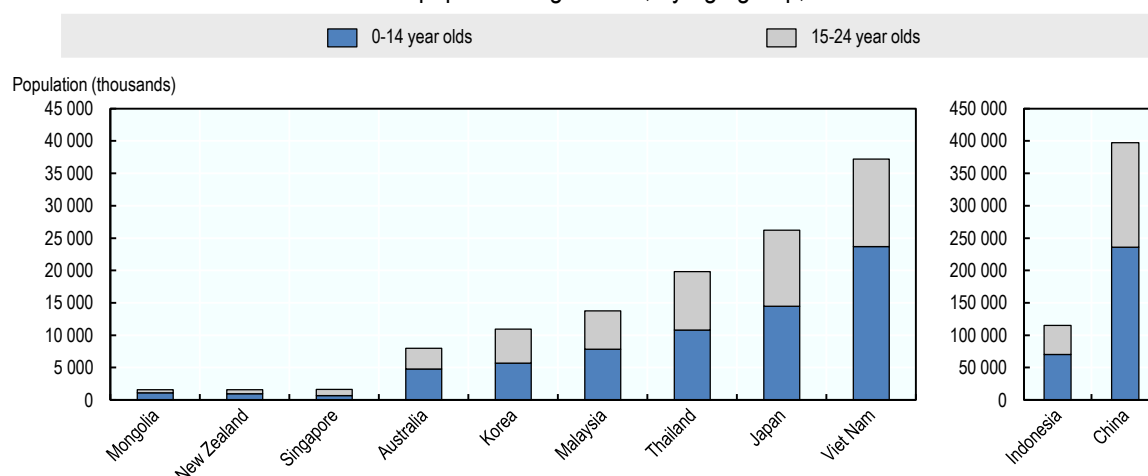
Key findings

Child and young adult populations vary considerably across Asia/Pacific countries, reflecting in large part variations in overall population sizes but also differences in trends and levels of fertility (see Indicator SF2.1). Among the eleven Asia/Pacific countries covered here, Singapore, Mongolia and New Zealand have the fewest children and young adults, at roughly 1.6 million.

In many Asia/Pacific countries, as in many OECD countries, younger child cohorts tend to be slightly smaller than older cohorts. Chart SF1.4.B shows the distribution of the child and young adult population by five-year age group for each Asia/Pacific country, plus also the average for OECD countries. For most covered Asia/Pacific countries, the largest five-year age group is the 20-24 year-old age group. However, in Indonesia, Mongolia and Viet Nam, younger cohorts (0-4 year-olds, and 5-9 year-olds) are actually slightly larger than older cohorts.

Chart SF1.4.A. Child and young adult population, 2023

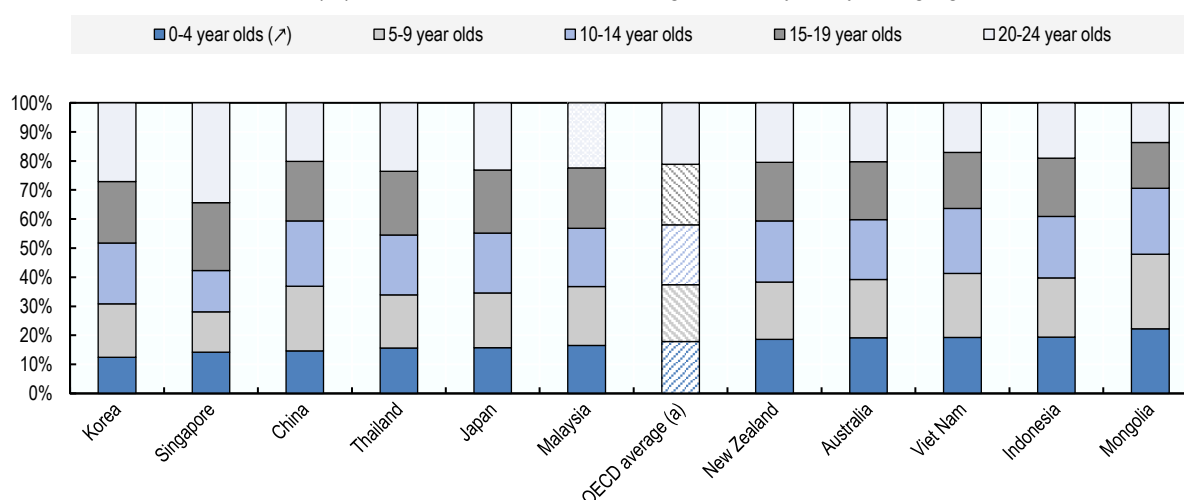
Estimated population aged 0-24, by age group, thousands



Sources: [United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024](#)

Chart SF1.4.B. Age distribution of children and young adults, 2023

Distribution (%) of the estimated population aged 0-24 by five year age group



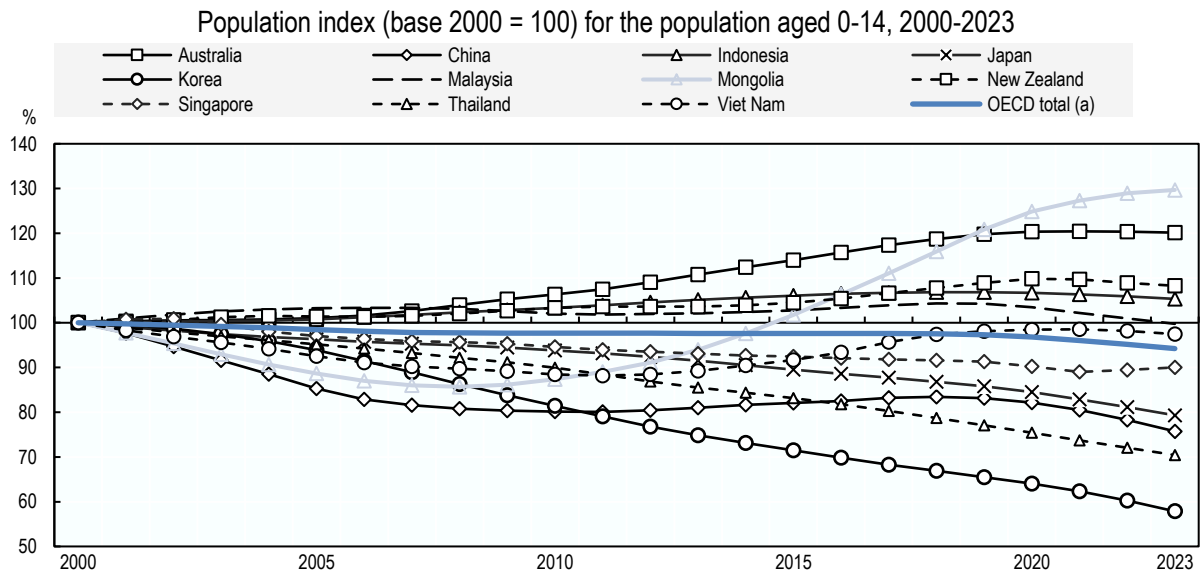
a) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across the 38 OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024](#); OECD average: [OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4](#)

Persistently low fertility (see Indicator SF2.1) means that the child (0-14 year-old) population has been falling in recent years in most of the Asia/Pacific countries included here (Chart SF1.4.C). In China and Japan, the current 0-14 year-old population is around 20% smaller than it was in the year 2000, while in Korea and Thailand the decline is over 30%. This is a magnified version of a trend also seen in many OECD countries, with the OECD total child population declining by about 5.8% since 2000. However, in Australia, Indonesia, Mongolia, and New Zealand the child population has increased slightly in recent years. In Australia and Mongolia, the current child population is almost 20% and 30% larger respectively than it was in 2000.

Youth dependency ratios have also been falling in Asia/Pacific countries in recent years (Chart SF1.4.D). Mongolia has the highest current youth dependency ratio among the covered Asia/Pacific countries (72 children and young people per one hundred people of working age), and Korea the lowest (23 children and young people per one hundred people of working age), but in all covered countries the ratio in 2023 is well below that in 1990. Declines since 1990 are largest in Thailand (41 points), Malaysia (42 points), Mongolia (47 points) and Viet Nam (57 points). In most Asia/Pacific countries, youth dependency ratios are expected to stabilise over the next few decades, and in some (China, Japan, Korea and Singapore) could perhaps even increase slightly from 2040 (Chart SF1.4.E).

Chart SF1.4.C. Trends in the child population

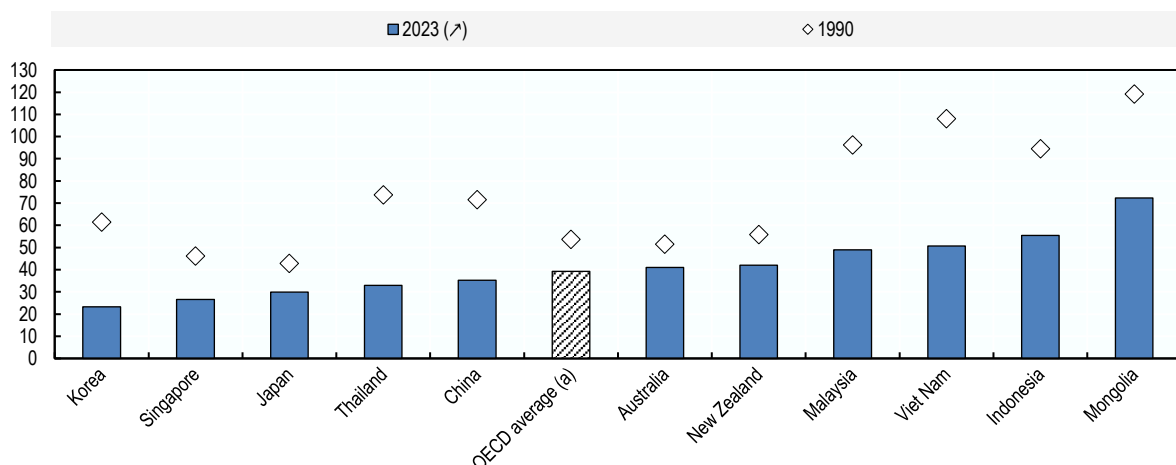


a) The OECD total refers to the total across the 38 OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024](#); OECD total: [OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4](#)

Chart SF1.4.D. Youth dependency ratio, 1990 and 2023

Estimated number of children and young people (aged 0-19) per one hundred people of working age (aged 20-64)

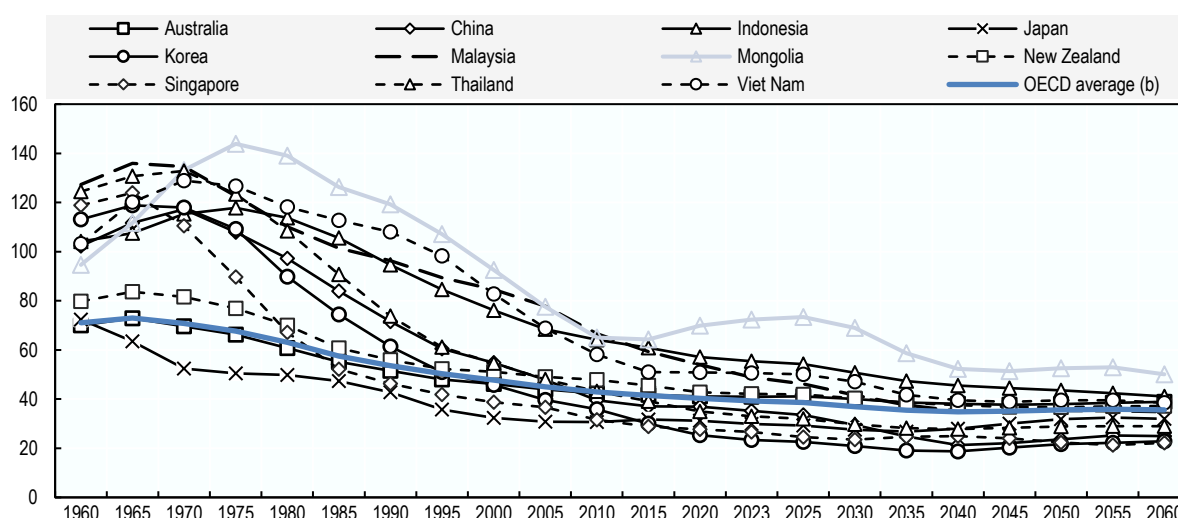


a) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across the 38 OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024](#); OECD average: [OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4](#)

Chart SF1.4.E. Estimated (1960-2023) and projected (2025-2060) youth dependency ratios

Estimated and projected number of children and young people (aged 0-19)
per one hundred people of working age (aged 20-64)



a) Data for the years 2025-2060 are based on the UN Population Division's 'medium fertility variant' population projections. See the United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects webpage (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>) for more information on the methods and assumptions used to produce these projections.

b) The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across the 38 OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: [United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024](#); OECD average: [OECD Family Database Indicator SF1.4](#)

Comparability and data issues

All data presented in this indicator are taken from the United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects 2024 database. To ensure comparability, the United Nations Population Division employs (as far as is possible) a single, consistent, and internationally accepted method for its estimates for all countries. Detailed information on the methods and assumptions used by the United Nations Population Division when producing both its estimates of past populations and its projections of future populations can be found on the United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects webpage (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>) and in [United Nations \(2024\) World Population Prospects 2024: Methodology of the United Nations population estimates and projections](#).

Sources and further reading: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024), *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results*. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024), *World Population Prospects 2024: Methodology of the United Nations population estimates and projections*.