



FATHERS' LEAVE, FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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Outline

1. Paper on fathers' leave, fathers' involvement and child development
 - Background information
 - Aim of study and data
 - Results
2. Other OECD work on leave policies



Acknowledgments

- Paper in collaboration with:
 - Jennifer Baxter (Australia);
 - Mette Lausten (Denmark);
 - Wen-Jui Han, RaeHyuck Lee and Jane Waldfogel (United States);
 - Willem Adema (OECD).



BACKGROUND



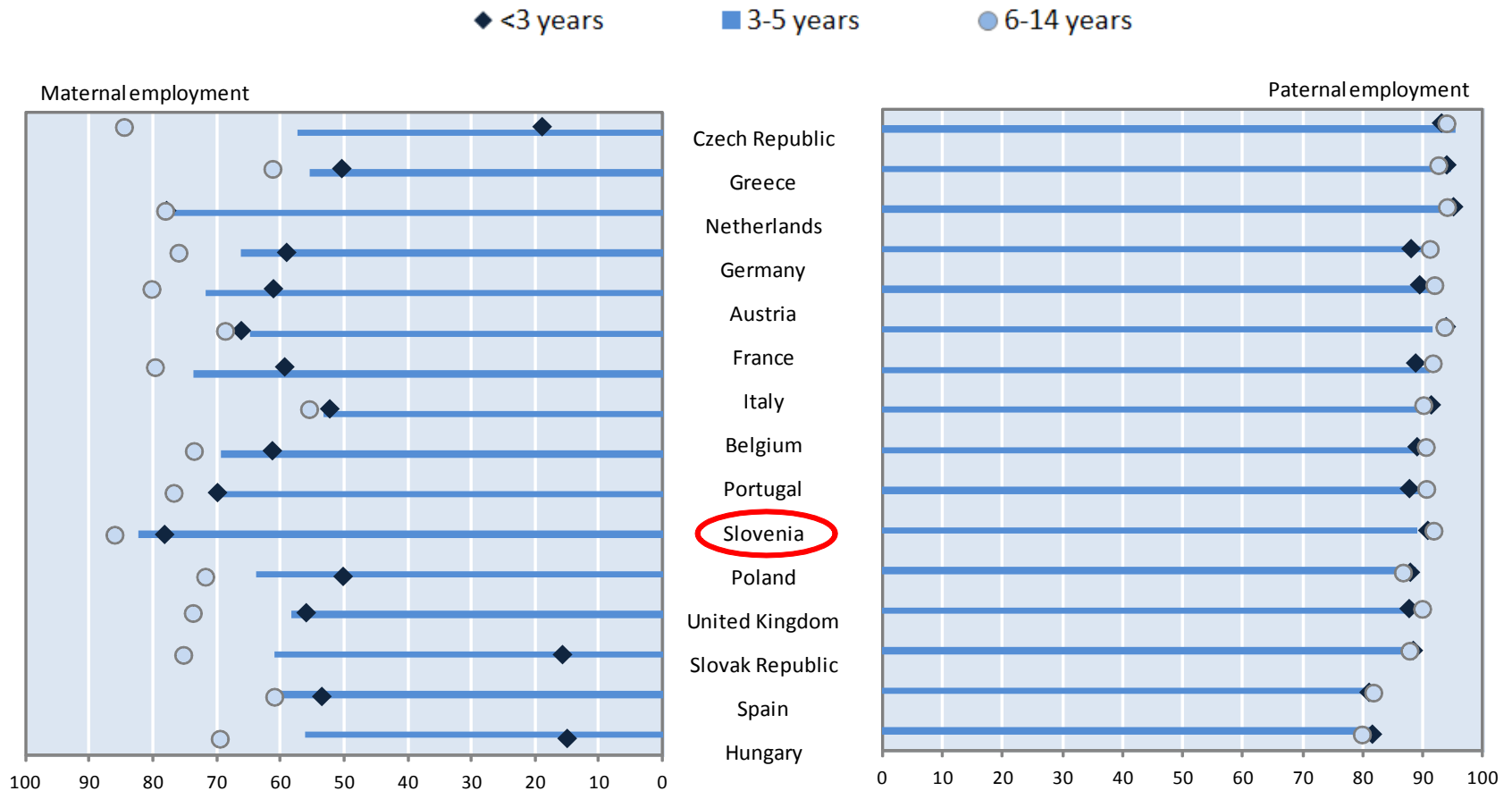
Literature

- Fathers, irrespective of their employment status, spend more time caring for young children than before (O'Brien *et al.*, 2007; United Nations, 2011).
- Paternity leave does influence father's involvement in child-care activities (Brandth and Gislason, 2012; Haas and Hwang, 2008; O'Brien and Moss, 2010; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel, 2007; and, Tanaka and Waldfogel, 2007).
- Fathers' involvement has a positive effect on children's school performance as well as on their behavioural and social emotional wellbeing (Lamb 2010; Sarkadi *et al.*, 2008)



Fathers' employment is not affected by the presence of young children

Maternal and paternal employment rates by age of youngest child, persons aged 15-64, 2009

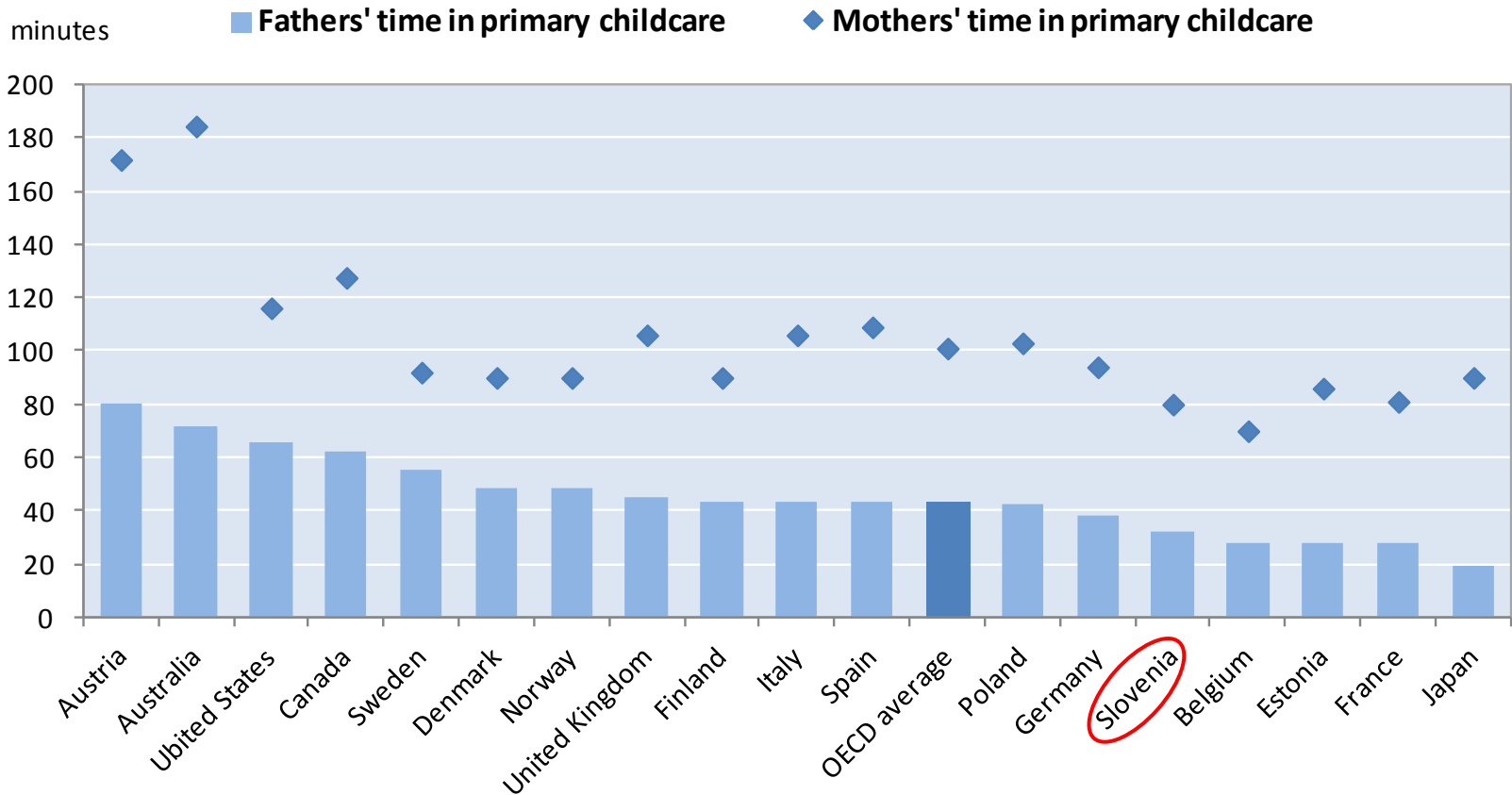


Note: Countries are ranked in ascending order of the percentage of fathers in employment with youngest child aged 3 to 5.



Across all countries, fathers spend less time in childcare than mothers

Primary childcare in minutes per day for parents aged 15-64, by sex, 1998-2010



Note: Countries are ranked in ascending order of the minutes per day fathers spend in primary childcare.

The definition of "parents" is based on resident children.

Source: OECD Family Database www.oecd.org/social/family/database



AIM OF THE STUDY AND DATA



Aims of the study

1. Examine whether taking **leave** around the time of birth is associated with father's **involvement** in childcare-related activities.
2. Investigate whether children with highly **involved** fathers have better cognitive and behavioural **outcomes** than their peers with less involved fathers.



Data

- Birth cohort studies in 4 OECD countries:
 - Australia - *The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)*;
 - Denmark - *Danish Longitudinal Survey of Children (DALSC)*;
 - United Kingdom - *Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)*;
 - United States - *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-B)*.

➤ Sample restrictions:

- 1) fathers in paid work at child's birth; and,
- 2) fathers living with cohort member and cohort member's mother at birth and at the time of data collection of father's activities.



Data

Fathers' childcare-related activities collected around childbirth and/ or when child was between 2 and 3 years old

	Involvement = 1, if
<i>Personal care activities</i>	at least daily
Assist child with eating	at least daily
Change child nappies or help use toilet	at least daily
Get child ready for bed or put child to bed	at least daily
Give child a bath or shower	few times per week
Help child get dressed/ready for the day	at least daily
Looks after child on its own	at least daily
Help child brush her/his teeth	at least daily
<i>Social and educational activities</i>	
Reading to the child	at least three times per week
How often talk to child about school	at least daily
Play with the child	at least daily
Eat an evening meal with child	at least daily

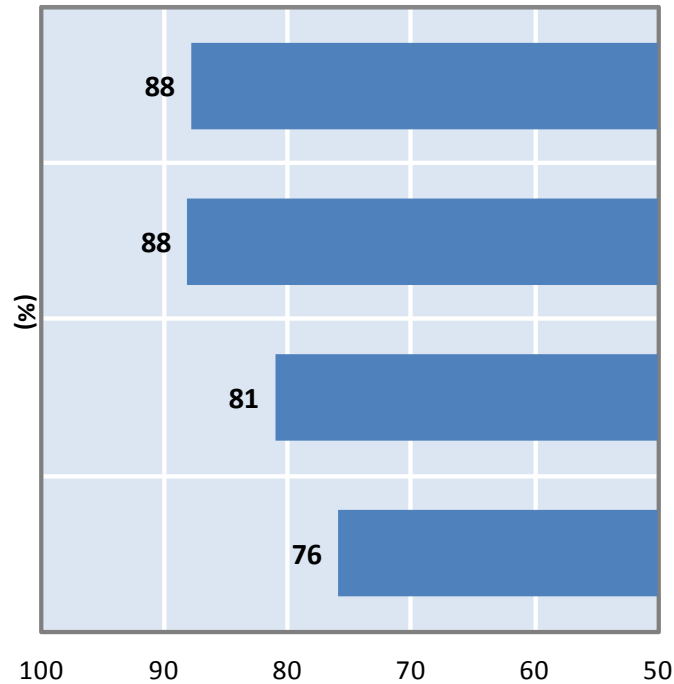


RESULTS

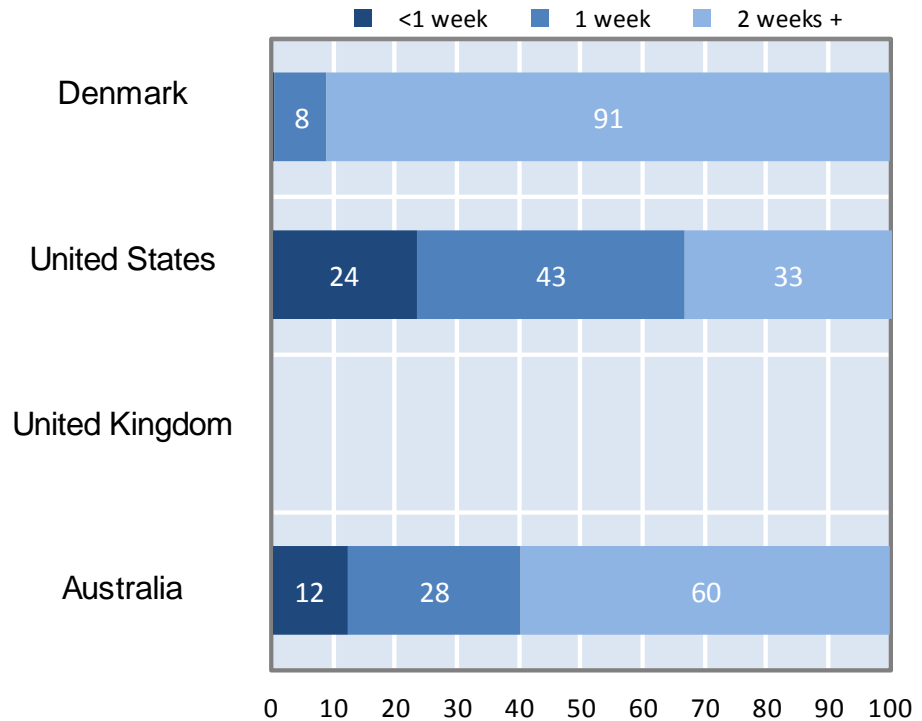


Most fathers took some time off work around childbirth, but the number of days taken varied considerably across countries.

Percentage of 'eligible' fathers taking leave



Length of leave taken



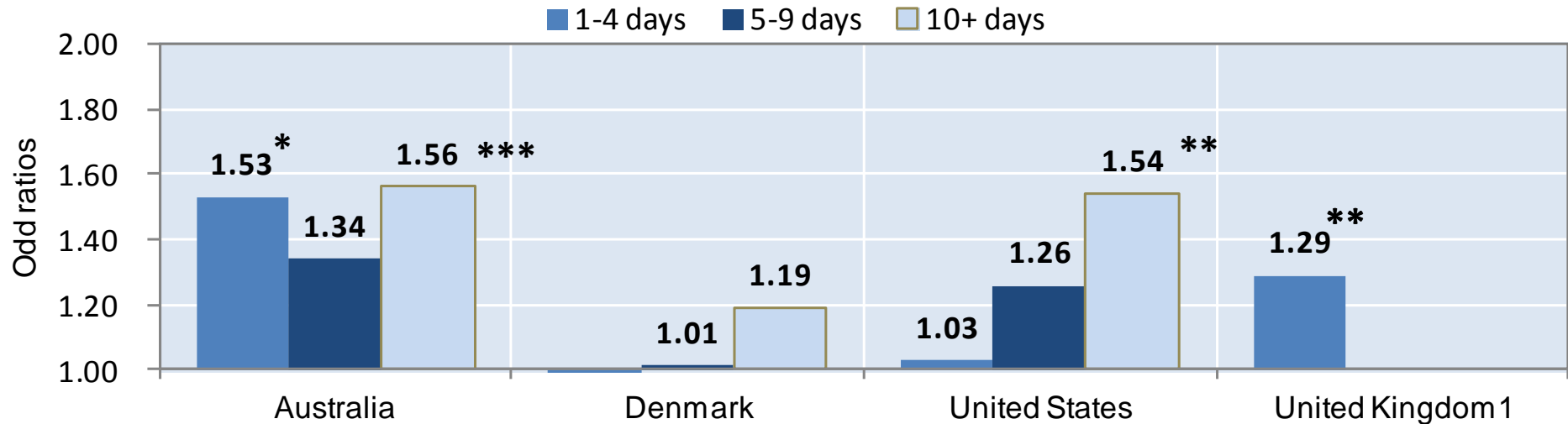
Note: Eligible fathers include: 1) those in paid work at child's birth; and, 2) those living with cohort member and cohort member's mother at birth and at the time of data collection of father's activities. There is no data available on length of leave for the United Kingdom.



Fathers taking leave are more likely to help child go to bed

Odd ratios of fathers' leave-taking on fathers' involvement

Reference group: fathers who did not take leave



Note: 1) In the United Kingdom, no data available on duration of leave. Figure here represents the odds of fathers taking parental or paternity leave.
* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$.



Fathers' involvement at age 2-3 was associated with some positive cognitive measures.

Regression estimates for cognitive scores (omitted category: paternal involvement low)

	<i>Cognitive scores</i>	Fathers' involvement			
		Medium		High	
		<i>coefficient</i>	<i>std error</i>	<i>coefficient</i>	<i>std error</i>
Australia	Age 2-3: vocabulary	0.12	[0.47]	0.20	[0.48]
	Age 2-3: grammar markers	0.08	[0.42]	0.54	[0.48]
	Age 4-5: vocabulary	0.57	[0.50]	-0.27	[0.52]
	Age 4-5: who am i	0.25	[0.48]	1.03*	[0.50]
United Kingdom	Age 2-3: BAS	0.31	[0.25]	1.37**	[0.30]
	Age 2-3: Bracken	0.60*	[0.25]	1.79**	[0.32]
	Age 4-5: vocabulary	0.45+	[0.26]	1.33**	[0.33]
	Age 4-5: picture	0.70*	[0.28]	1.29**	[0.33]
United States	Age 2: BSF-R	1.30*	[0.50]	0.64	[0.49]
	Age 4: reading	0.14	[0.43]	-0.55	[0.44]
	Age 4: language	-0.35	[0.54]	-1.09*	[0.55]
	Age 4: vocabulary	1.08+	[0.57]	0.72	[0.59]
	Age 4: communications	0.92+	[0.53]	0.74	[0.56]
	Age 4: mathematics	0.45	[0.57]	-0.21	[0.50]
	Age 5-6: reading	0.41	[0.62]	0.08	[0.51]
	Age 5-6: language	1.67**	[0.62]	0.27	[0.78]
Age 5-6: mathematics	0.48	[0.61]	-0.80+	[0.47]	

Notes: + p<.10; * p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001; standard errors in brackets.



Conclusions

- Fathers who take leave, especially two weeks or more, are more likely to carry out childcare related activities when children are young.
- Children with highly involved fathers tend to perform better in cognitive test scores, albeit, positive association was small.
- The kind of involvement matters.
- The study adds evidence about the importance of providing policies for fathers. However, parental leave policies need to be well-designed to be attractive to men.



RECENT OECD WORK ON LEAVE POLICIES



Recent OECD work on leave policies

1. Paper on the effect of changes in parental-leave entitlements and employment outcomes, by Olivier Thevenon.
 - Three employment outcomes: 1) female and male employment rates; 2) hours worked; and 3) gender earning gaps for full-time workers.
 - Data 30 OECD countries, period between 1970 and 2010.
2. OCED Family Database
 - New indicator: Trends in parental leave policies since 1970
 - Updated indicator: Key characteristics of parental leave systems



THANK YOU !

HVALA !

More information

- Maria.HUERTA@oecd.org
- www.oecd.org/els/social
- OECD Family Database
www.oecd.org/social/family/database
- OECD (2011), Doing Better for Families
www.oecd.org/social/family/doingbetter
- OECD (2009), Doing Better for Children
www.oecd.org/els/social/childwellbeing

