

COUNTRY NOTE



Education at a Glance OECD Indicators 2012

SPAIN

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KEY FINDINGS

- Virtually all three-year-olds in Spain are enrolled in school, most of them in public institutions. Spain's expenditure on pre-primary education (for public institutions) amounts to 0.9% of GDP, compared to the OECD average of 0.5% of the combined GDP.
- Some 29% of 25-29 year-olds in Spain are neither employed nor in education (NEET), which is almost nine percentage points above the OECD average.
- In 2010, Spain had the second highest rate of unemployment among adults with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (17.4% compared to the OECD average of 7.6%) and the highest rate of unemployment among those with a tertiary education (10.4% compared to the OECD average of 4.7 %).
- The gender gap in earnings narrows with higher levels of education, and children are likely to attain higher levels of education than their parents did.

In Spain, nearly all three-year-olds are in school...

In a majority of OECD countries, most children begin education before they are five years old. Spain has the second-highest enrolment rate for three-year-olds, at 99%, compared to the OECD average of 66%. It is one of only seven countries in which more than 90% of three-year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education (Table C2.1).

In Spain, the usual starting age for pre-primary education (ISCED 0) is 2 to 3 years old. At the age of six, children enter primary education (ISCED 1). Most pupils in pre-primary education are enrolled in public institutions (64%, compared with the OECD average of 63%). The average number of pre-primary pupils per teaching staff is 13, just under the OECD average of 14 (Table C2.2).

... meanwhile upper-secondary attainment rates are below average, but tertiary attainment rates are around the OECD average.

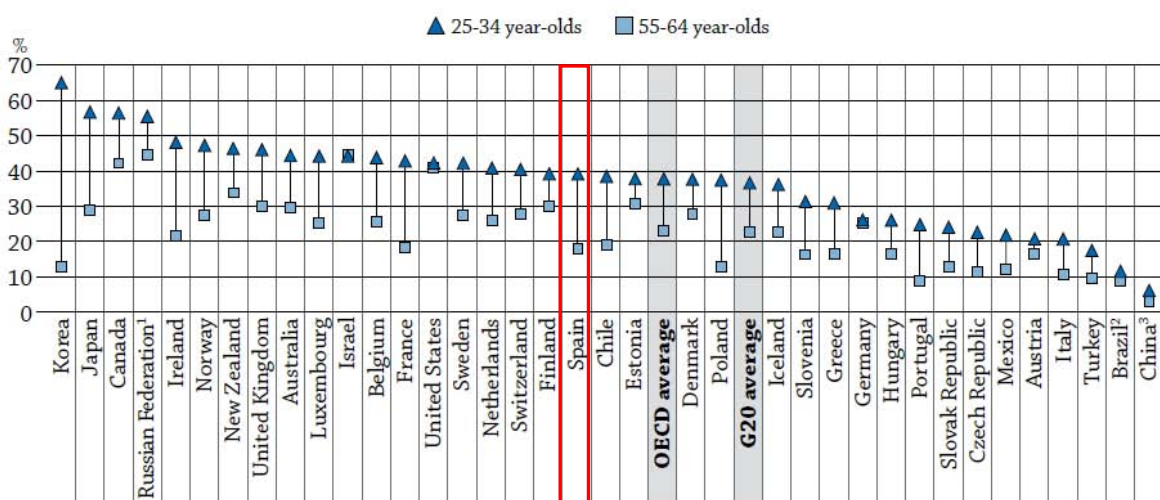
Primary and lower secondary education are compulsory in Spain and therefore have near-universal enrolment rates. However, Spain has one of the lowest attainment rates for secondary education among 25-34 year-olds (65%, compared to the OECD average of 82%; Spain ranks 31st of 36 OECD and non-OECD countries). Although low, these attainment rates are improving across generations: Spain is one of only seven countries where the proportion of 25-34 year-olds with at least an upper secondary education is at least 30 percentage points higher than the proportion of 55-64 year-olds with similar levels of education (Table A1.2a).

Among students who enter a two-year upper secondary general programme, 57% of them complete the programme in the stipulated time period (compared to the OECD average of 77%), and a larger proportion of girls (61%) than boys (53%) did so. With two extra years to complete the programme, the proportion increases to 82%, but this is still largely below the average (92%) of the 25 countries that participated in this study.

Attainment levels for tertiary education (theory-based and technical programmes as well as advanced research programmes) have also increased: 39% of 25-34 year-olds, compared to 18% of 55-64 year-olds, have attained a tertiary education. Indeed, the rate for 25-34 year-olds is slightly above the OECD average (38%), whereas it is below average for 55-64 year-olds (23%). Moreover, 31% of 25-64 year-olds in Spain have attained a tertiary education – the same proportion as the OECD average (Table A1.3a).

Chart A1.1. Population that has attained tertiary education (2010)

Percentage, by age group



1. Year of reference 2002.

2. Year of reference 2009.

3. Year of reference 2000.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education.

Source: OECD, Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012).

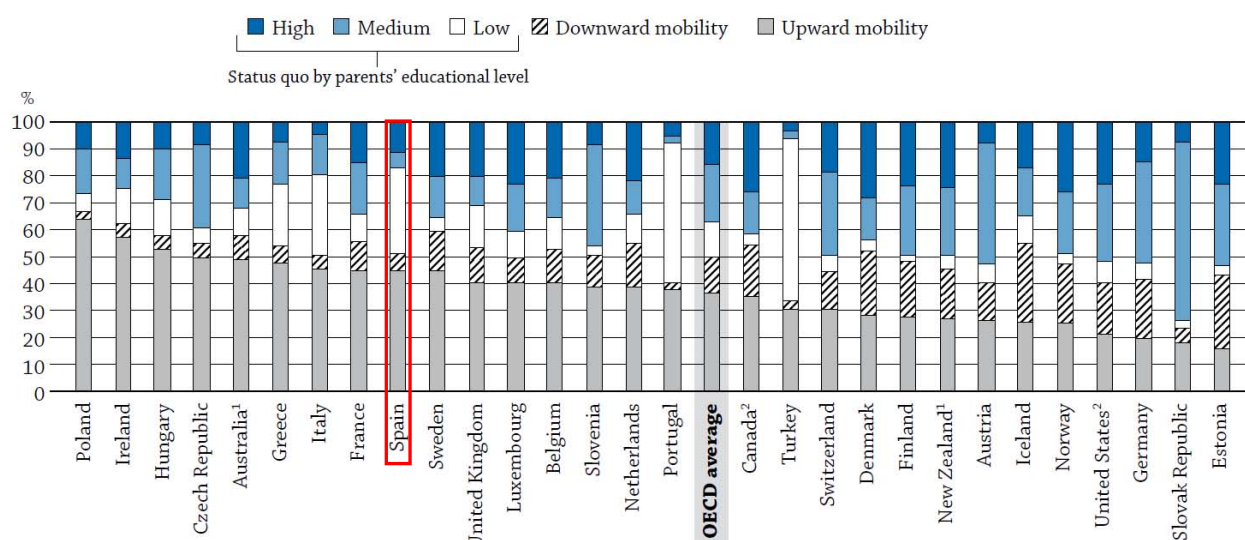
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A large proportion of young people attain a higher level of education than their parents.

Spain is among the top ten countries with the highest levels of upward intergenerational mobility in education. Young people (25-34 year-old non-students) from families with low levels of education (those whose parents did not attain an upper secondary education) enjoy the greatest educational opportunities in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, where at least 25% of this cohort have attained a tertiary degree, and fewer than 30% have not completed an upper secondary education. In Spain, 45% of young people have attained a higher educational level than their parents (compared with 37% for the OECD average) and only 6% have attained a lower educational level than their parents (compared with 13% for the OECD average). This positive intergenerational mobility is even greater for young women in Spain: young women are at least 10 percentage points (50% for young women compared with 40% for young men) more likely than young men to attain a higher educational level than their parents did (Table A6.3).

Chart A6.5. Intergenerational mobility in education (2009)

Percentage of 25-34 year-old non-students having an educational attainment higher than their parents, (upward mobility), a lower one (downward mobility) or the same (status quo) and status quo by parents' education level (low, medium, high)



Note: The number of students attending higher education are under-reported for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States compared to the other countries as they only include students who attained ISCED 5A, while the other countries include students who attained ISCED 5A and/or 5B. Therefore, the omission of data on 5B qualifications may understate intergenerational mobility in these countries.

1. Data source from Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL) of 2006.

2. Data source from Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL) of 2003.

Countries are ranked in descending order of upward mobility.

Source: OECD, Table A6.3. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012).

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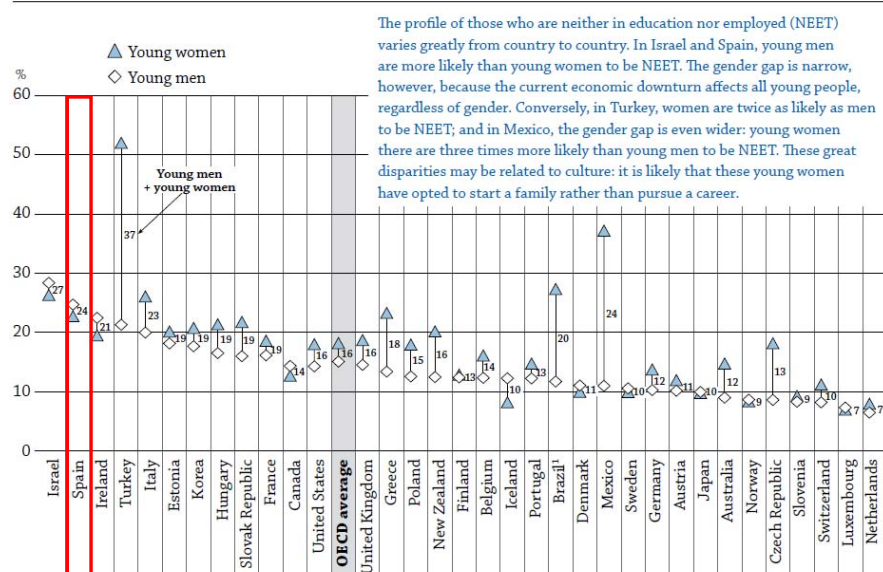
Nevertheless, Spain has one of the highest proportions of young people who are not in employment, education or training...

The population that is neither employed nor in education (NEET) is particularly large in Spain. In 2010, the country's NEET population stood at 23.7% among 15-29 year-olds, compared to the OECD average of 15.8%. The percentage of NEETs in Spain is the second highest among OECD countries, after Israel (27.4%). This proportion grew one percentage point from 2009 and is 2.3 percentage points higher than a previous spike in 1997 (Table C5.4a).

In 2010, the largest proportion of NEETs (28.6%) was found among Spain's 25-29 year-olds. This represents a 2.3 percentage point increase from 2009 and is 8.6 percentage points above the OECD average. Among 20-24 year-olds, the number is similarly high, at 27.4% in 2010 (1.1 percentage points higher than 2009 and 8.9 percentage points higher than the OECD average) (Table C5.4a).

Educational background plays a significant role in determining whether people can find employment. The size of Spain's NEET population is roughly double the OECD average, across all levels of education. Some 29.4% of 25-29 year-olds without a secondary education are NEET, compared to the OECD average of 15.3% for the same group. Among tertiary-educated adults of the same age, 13.3% are NEET, compared with the OECD average of 6.3% (Table C5.3, available on line).

Chart C5.1. Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither in education nor employed (2010)



1. Year of reference 2009.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of young men who are neither in education nor employed.

Source: OECD, Tables C5.4a, C5.4b and C5.4c (available on line). See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012).

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among 25-29 year-olds, employment rates fell from 72% to 60% during the same period, a 17% drop (Table C5.4a).

The transition from education to work is closely related to general economic activity. In 1997, 34% of 15-29 year-olds in Spain had a job and were no longer in education (Table C5.4a). This rate has risen over the years, from 40% in 2000 to 48% in 2007, then began to fall in 2010 to 36%, close to the OECD average of 37%. Worsening conditions in the labour market between 2007 and 2010 had more severe effects on younger workers than older workers. Among 15-19 year-olds, the proportion of those who were not in education and employed fell from 11% in 2007 to 5% in 2010, a 60% plunge, while among 25-29 year-olds, employment rates fell from 72% to 60% during the same period, a 17% drop (Table C5.4a).

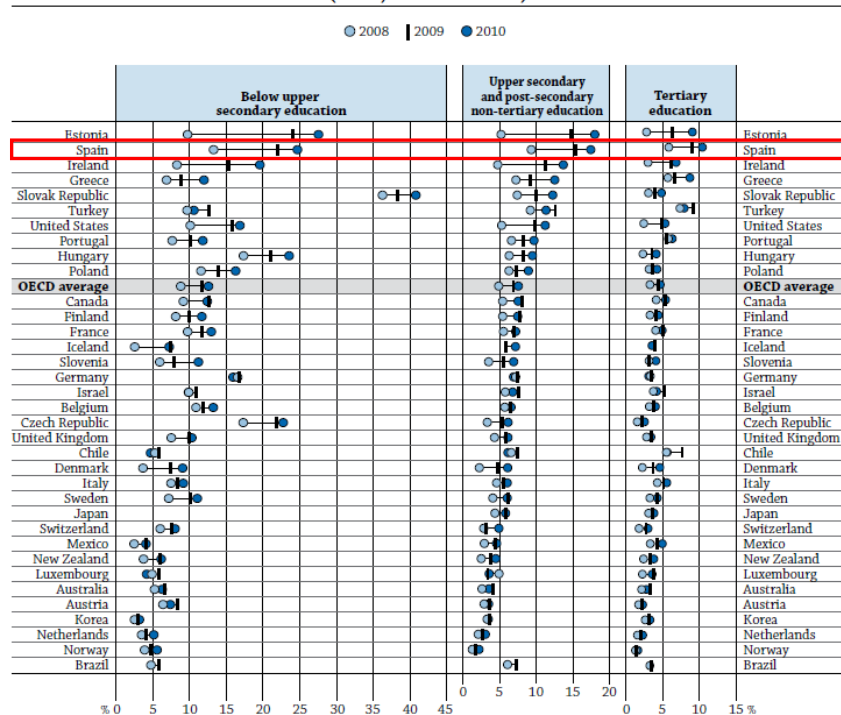
... and unemployment rates at every level of education are some of the highest among OECD countries.

During times of high unemployment, people often stay longer in or return to education; and in some countries, movements in unemployment rates are mirrored in changes in enrolment rates. For example, Spain, along with Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Sweden and Turkey all reported high unemployment and increasing enrolment rates among 20-29 year-olds between 2009 and 2010 (Table C1.2 and Table C1.8, available on line).

In Spain, 24.7% of people with no more than a lower secondary education were unemployed in 2010 – well above the OECD average of 12.5% (Table A7.4a). During the global recession, adults with less education were particularly hard hit in Spain. Unemployment rates among those with no more than a lower secondary education rose from 9.0% in 2007 to 24.7% in 2010, while during the same period the unemployment rate for those with a tertiary education rose from 4.8% to 10.4% (Table A7.4a).

Though unemployment rates in Spain decrease with higher levels of education, Spain's unemployment levels are higher than those in most other OECD countries. In 2010, some 24.7% of Spanish 25-64 year-olds without an upper secondary education were unemployed (the OECD average was 12.5%) – the third highest rate of unemployment for that level of education among all OECD countries. Among OECD countries, Spain had the second highest rate of unemployment among adults with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (17.4% compared with the OECD average of 7.6%) and had the highest rate of unemployment among those with a tertiary education (10.4% compared with the OECD average of 4.7%) (Table A7.4a).

Chart A7.2. Unemployment rates of 25-64 year-olds, by educational attainment level (2008, 2009 and 2010)



Countries are ranked in descending order of 2010 unemployment rate for individuals with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
Source: OECD, Table A7.4a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eaag2012/).

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The rewards for investing in education are generally larger for young women than young men...

The direct costs of education for a person investing in an upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education are usually negligible; the main investment cost is foregone earnings. In an intra-gender comparison, in contrast to most other countries, women in Spain enjoy better financial returns on their upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education than men. On average across OECD countries, a woman who attains that level of education can expect a net gain of USD 67 000 over her working life compared to USD 90 000 for men. In Spain, the net gain for women is USD 109 000 compared to USD 77 000 for men (Table A9.1).

Among members of their respective gender, the rewards for investing in tertiary education are also higher for women than for men. On average across OECD countries, a woman investing in tertiary education can expect a net gain of USD 110 000, while a man can expect a net gain of almost USD 162 000. In Spain, the net gain for a woman is USD 139 000 (i.e. above the OECD average per woman) while a man can expect a net gain of USD 103 000 (i.e. below the OECD average per man) (Table A9.3).

... and the gender gap in earnings narrows with increasing levels of education.

In most countries, more education does little to narrow the gender gap in earnings. Spain is an exception, as it is one of only five countries where the earnings of tertiary-educated women amount to 75% or more of men's average annual earnings. In Spain, comparing women and men with similar educational attainments, a woman earns 62% of the earnings of a man who has not attained an upper secondary education, 69% of the earnings of a man with an upper secondary education, and 83% of the earnings of a tertiary-educated man (Table A8.3b).

Considering all levels of education combined, women in Spain earn 89% of what men earn (compared with the OECD average of 72%) – the highest rate among OECD countries. Across OECD countries, the difference in full-time earnings between 25-64 year-old men and women is the smallest among those with an upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education and largest among those with a tertiary education (Table A8.3a).

During the first years of the global recession, Spain did not reduce its expenditure on education.

Expenditure per primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary student by educational institution increased in every country with available data, and by an average of 36% (33% in Spain) between 2000 and 2009, a period of relatively stable student enrolment in most countries. Expenditure on tertiary education during the same period increased by 39% in Spain, compared with the OECD average of 15%. The increase was driven mainly by an absolute increase in expenditure rather than a relative increase due to lower enrolment (Tables B1.5a and B1.5b).

Similar levels of expenditure among countries can mask a variety of contrasting policy choices. This helps to explain why there is no simple relationship between overall spending on education and the level of student performance. For example, at the upper secondary level of education, Germany and Spain have similar salary costs of teachers per student, both higher than the average. However, in Germany, this is mainly the result of higher-than-average teachers' salaries, whereas in Spain, a combination of factors drives these costs: higher teachers' salaries (+ USD 783) than the OECD average, close-to-OECD-average annual instruction time for students (+ USD 320), and above-average teaching time for teachers (- USD 150). However, these effects are mitigated by significantly smaller classes (+ USD 1 153) than the OECD average (Chart B7.2a and Table B7.4). In the end, the salary cost of teachers per student in Spain is USD 2 105 higher than the OECD average.

Teachers in Spain are better paid than workers in other fields with comparable education.

In 2009, the relative statutory salaries for public school teachers in Spain with 15 years of experience at each level of education, compared to the salaries of other professionals with comparable education, were some of the highest among OECD countries, and at least 20% higher than the salaries of comparably educated workers in other fields (Table D3.1).

Across OECD countries, lower secondary teachers entering the profession with the minimum qualification earn an average of USD 29 801 per year. Spain is at the upper end of this salary distribution (USD 41 518). For teachers at the top of the salary scale who have the maximum qualifications, salaries average USD 51 872 in OECD countries. Such a teacher in Spain earns an average of USD 62 642 – not one of the highest salaries among OECD countries, but above the OECD average (Table D3.1 and Table D3.4, available on line).

Student-teacher ratios in Spain are lower than the OECD average at every level of education. At the secondary school level, the ratio ranges from 30 students per full-time equivalent teacher in Mexico to fewer than 11 students per teacher in eight countries, including Spain. On average among OECD countries, there are about 14 students per teacher at the secondary level (Table D2.2).

There is no set rule regarding how teaching time is distributed throughout the year. In Spain, for example, primary school teachers must teach 880 hours per year, about 100 hours more than the OECD average. However, those teaching hours are spread over fewer days of instruction than the OECD average because

primary school teachers in Spain teach an average of five hours per day, compared to the OECD average of 4.2 hours. By contrast, primary school teachers in Korea must complete a very large number of days of instruction – more than five days a week, on average – but their average teaching time per day is only 3.7 hours (Tables D4.1 and D4.2).

In Spain, decisions about lower secondary education are mostly taken at the central or state level.

In 16 of 36 countries, authority over the creation and closure of schools is in the hands of local authorities, but Spain is one of the 14 countries where this decision is taken in at the state or central level. In contrast, in most countries decisions about the creation or abolition of a grade level are taken at the state or central level (21 of 35 countries with available data). Only in Germany and Spain is this decision taken at the sub-regional or regional level (Table D6.9, available on line).

In 18 of 36 countries, more than 50% of decisions about personnel management, including decisions about hiring and dismissing staff and setting salary schedules and conditions of work, are taken at the school or local level. In Spain and ten other countries, most of these decisions are taken at the state or central level (Table D6.2a and Chart D6.3).

In 21 of 36 countries, local or school leaders are responsible for hiring and dismissing principals. In contrast, in Germany, Greece, Italy, Korea, Spain and Turkey, sub-regional administrators are responsible for these decisions within a framework established by the state or central government (Table D6.8, available on line).

Entrance examinations are used to determine access to tertiary education.

Entrance examinations are not administered by upper secondary schools and are typically used to determine, or help to determine, access to tertiary-type A and B programmes. Of the 32 countries with university entrance examinations, Spain is one of the ten where these examinations are compulsory for all students who wish to participate in tertiary education for most fields of study (Table D7.3a).

In Spain, these entrance examinations are devised and graded at the state level (i.e. Comunidad Autónoma). In addition to entrance examinations, other factors, criteria or special circumstances are used by tertiary institutions to determine access to their programmes. These other factors include grade point average from secondary schools (21 countries), previous work experience (14 countries), applicant letter or written rationale (11 countries), and past service or volunteer work (10 countries). Family background factors, such as ethnicity of the applicant (6 countries) or family income (8 countries), are also used. In Spain, only the grade point average from secondary school is used in addition to the entrance examination (Table D7.4a).

Spain has no national or standardised examinations for primary and lower secondary students. Only three countries reported having national examinations at the primary school level; and 14 of 35 countries reported having national examinations at the lower secondary level. In addition, countries were asked about the prevalence of other (non-national) standardised examination that are administered in multiple schools: four countries reported having such examinations at the primary level, and five countries at the lower secondary level (Tables D7.1 b and c, and Tables D7.2 b and c).

KEY FACTS

Indicator	Spain	OECD average	Spain rank*
Educational Access and Output			
Enrolment rates			
3-year-olds (in early childhood education)	99%	66%	2 of 36 countries
4-year-olds (in early childhood and primary education)	99%	81%	3 of 38 countries
5-14 year-olds (all levels)	99%	96%	16 of 39 countries
Percentage of population that has attained pre-primary or primary levels of education only			
25-64 year-olds	19%	m	11 of 37 countries
Percentage of population that has attained at least upper secondary education			
25-64 year-olds	53%	74%	31 of 40 countries
25-34 year-olds	65%	82%	31 of 36 countries
55-64 year-olds	32%	62%	31 of 36 countries
Percentage of population that has attained tertiary education			
25-64 year-olds	31%	31%	21 of 41 countries
25-34 year-olds	39%	38%	19 of 37 countries
55-64 year-olds	18%	23%	23 of 37 countries
Entry rates into tertiary education			
Vocational programmes (Tertiary-type B)	26%	17%	13 of 33 countries
University programmes (Tertiary-type A)	52%	62%	23 of 36 countries
Graduation rates			
Percentage of today's young people expected to complete upper secondary education in their lifetime	80%	84%	20 of 27 countries
Percentage of today's young people expected to complete university education (tertiary-type A) in their lifetime	30%	39%	24 of 28 countries
Economic and Labour Market Outcomes			
Unemployment rate of 25-64 year-olds			
Below upper secondary	24.7%	12.5%	3 of 33 countries
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	17.4%	7.6%	2 of 34 countries
Tertiary	10.4%	4.7%	1 of 34 countries
Average earnings premium for 25-64 year-olds with tertiary education (compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100)			
Men and women	141	155	24 of 32 countries
Men	133	160	30 of 32 countries
Women	159	157	16 of 32 countries
Average earnings penalty for 25-64 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education (compared to people with upper secondary education; upper secondary = 100)			
Men and women	78	77	16 of 32 countries
Men	79	78	14 of 32 countries
Women	71	74	21 of 32 countries
Percentage of people not in employment, education or training			
15-29 year-olds (2005 data)	17.2%	15.0%	9 of 32 countries
15-29 year-olds (2010 data)	23.7%	15.8%	4 of 32 countries

Indicator	Spain	OECD average	Spain rank*
Financial Investment in Education			
Annual expenditure per student (in equivalent USD, using PPPs)			
Pre-primary education	6 946	6 670	12 of 34 countries
Primary education	7 446	7 719	17 of 35 countries
Secondary education	10 111	9 312	12 of 37 countries
Tertiary education	13 614	13 728	18 of 37 countries
Total public and private expenditure on education			
As a percentage of GDP	5.6%	6.2%	26 of 37 countries
Total public expenditure on education			
As a percentage of total public expenditure	10.8%	13.0%	25 of 32 countries
Share of private expenditure on educational institutions			
Primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	7.1%	8.8%	18 of 32 countries
Tertiary education	20.9%	30%	17 of 31 countries
All levels of education	12.9%	16%	17 of 30 countries
Schools and Teachers			
Ratio of students to teaching staff			
Pre-primary education	13.0	14.4	19 of 32 countries
Primary education	13.2	15.8	26 of 36 countries
Secondary education	9.9	13.8	32 of 38 countries
Number of hours of compulsory instruction time per year			
7-8 year-olds	875	774 hours	10 of 33 countries
9-11 year-olds	875	821 hours	11 of 34 countries
12-14 year-olds	1 050	899 hours	3 of 34 countries
Number of hours of teaching time per year (for teachers in public institutions)			
Primary education	880	782 hours	7 of 35 countries
Lower secondary education	713	704 hours	13 of 34 countries
Upper secondary education	693	658 hours	14 of 35 countries
Ratio of teachers' salaries to earnings for full-time, full-year adult workers with tertiary education			
Primary school teachers	1.21	0.82	2 of 27 countries
Lower secondary school teachers	1.35	0.85	1 of 27 countries
Upper secondary school teachers	1.38	0.90	1 of 27 countries

* Countries are ranked in descending order of values.

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