Purpose

1. This paper was prepared to provide the EAG with information about international approaches to defining and measuring child poverty and frameworks for addressing child poverty issues. It is to be read primarily in conjunction with Working Paper 1: Defining and Measuring Child Poverty, and Developing Child Poverty-Related Indicators, Working Paper 5: Setting Child Poverty Reduction Targets and Working Paper 6: Legislative mechanisms to reduce child poverty.

2. This paper has informed the direction and recommendations of the EAG’s Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Issues and Options Paper for Consultation. These are preliminary findings, and a final report will be published in December 2012. The findings in this paper do not necessarily represent the individual views of all EAG members.

3. The EAG wish to acknowledge the members of the Secretariat for their work on this paper.

Introduction

4. This Working Paper provides a brief overview of international child poverty frameworks, measurements and reports. It does not try to provide an exhaustive account and is largely drawn on an analysis of a group of seven countries and recent comparative reports by UNICEF and the OECD. As noted above, the purpose of this analysis is to provide some international context on child poverty approaches and outcomes in countries similar to New Zealand, comparative child poverty rates and policy settings, the various approaches to defining and measuring poverty and the observations of international agencies.

International approaches to defining and measuring child poverty

5. There is no uniform approach across the different countries, international institutions and non-government organisations for defining, identifying or measuring poverty. This reflects the variety of instruments, and thus contexts and objectives, within which the various definitions of child poverty currently rest.
6. Despite this, the various approaches to defining child poverty can be loosely organized into three categories:
   - Monetary
   - Multi-dimensional
   - Socio-political/human rights.

**Monetary approaches**
7. Monetary approaches which measure household income are the most commonly utilised methods of defining, measuring and identifying poverty. The two OECD indicators of child poverty exemplify this approach:
   - *OECD child poverty rate* - the share of all children living in households with equivalised disposable income of less than 50 percent of the median for the total population.
   - *OECD poverty rate of households with children* – the share of the population in households with children with an equivalised income of less than 50 percent of the median.

8. However, thresholds differ between international organisations. For example, the European Union uses a 60 percent median measure. Such settings have obvious implications for measuring the degree of child poverty within a specific jurisdiction. For example, using the OECD measure, New Zealand’s 2009 child poverty rate was around 12 percent, equivalent to Australia’s. However, if the EU measure is applied, New Zealand’s child poverty rate jumps to around 20 percent.

9. The advantage of using income levels is that they can be measured and tracked along a linear continuum. They also provide perhaps the most fundamental measurement available and provide a clear illustration of the distribution of economic wealth within a population group. Hence, the primary focus of the UK Child Poverty Act 2010 is the setting of income targets that the Secretary of State must report against and meet, such as the ‘relative low income target’, the ‘absolute low income target’ and ‘combined low income targets’ vested under ss3-5 of the Act.

10. In countries such as Canada, where there is no official or legal definition of poverty, income levels also form the basis of measuring the numbers of persons who are officially deemed poor, or “living in straitened circumstances”, to use the Canadian terminology.
11. Canada uses three measurements to assess the numbers of those ‘living in straightened circumstances’:

- **Low Income Cut-off (LICO)**, which measures income adequacy proportional to average household spending on food, clothing and shelter.
- **Low Income Measure (LIM)** which measures income adequacy median household income.
- **Market Basket Measure (MBM)** which measures income adequacy against the cost of essential goods and services.

12. Canadian commentators have surmised that due to a lack of adjustment to the LICO cost-of-living threshold over time, reported poverty rates in Canada appear to be too low. In order to provide an accurate picture of actual socio-economic conditions, measurements of income adequacy need to be adjusted to reflect fluctuations in consumption levels, levels of income and costs of goods and services. For example, a rise in food prices against the background of stagnant income levels will necessitate an adjustment in the level of the income poverty threshold.

**Multi-dimensional approaches**

13. The monetary approach has been criticised for narrowing poverty reduction strategies towards purely focusing on raising individual’s income levels, with little consideration to other relevant aspects, such as household structure, availability and access to social services, physical environments and social infrastructure. It has also been described as a misleading approach when comparing the poverty levels of different countries, as it is indicative only of comparative inequalities across lower income cohorts and fails to compare or reflect actual living and social conditions.

14. Accordingly, international organisations and development agencies increasingly prefer to use a multi-dimensional approach to define and measure child poverty.

15. A multi-dimensional approach recognises that poverty is a multi-faceted problem that requires comprehensive strategies across a range of sectors. This is reflected in the approach of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in the compilation of their periodic Report Cards comparing child poverty and well-being in rich countries. The UNICEF Report Cards measure child poverty and well-being indicators against six ‘dimensions’:

- material well-being (includes a measurement of ‘relative income poverty’ which is the same as the OECD’s child poverty rate)
- health and safety
- educational well-being
- family and peer relationships
- behaviours and risks
The multi-dimensional approach was also used by the OECD in their comprehensive 2009 report *Doing Better for Children*, which compared and reflected upon child poverty and well-being policies across the OECD nations. Like UNICEF, the OECD framed the report across six (similar) dimensions:

- material well-being
- housing and environment
- education
- health and safety
- risk behaviours
- quality of school life.

Governments also use multi-dimensional approaches when developing anti-poverty strategies or policy. A notable recent example is the UK Government’s national child poverty strategy *A New Approach to Child Poverty*, the first national strategy required to be implemented for the period 2011-2014 pursuant to the Child Poverty Act 2010.

In order to fulfil its purpose to achieve the income targets set by the Child Poverty Act 2010, *A New Approach to Child Poverty* focuses on the dimensions of unemployment, debt, family life, education and health.

This type of approach enables a much broader picture to be drawn of the circumstances of children in poverty. This in turn allows for deeper analysis and identification of themes, trends and consequential outcomes that occur within and across the various sectors.

Secondly, it also provides a more accurate picture of the actual, day-to-day experiences of these children and the social and family environments in which they live.

Thirdly, these factors enable the development of comprehensive, cross-sector policies of application along the child’s life cycle which are more likely to result in an enduring social benefit. This OECD has recommended this type of approach:

“Since children have the longest life expectancy of any group, child policy needs a stronger future focus than any other population group. This includes a clear, simple and comprehensive strategy... The approach could start by mapping the existing national system in a child life cycle and risk context. It could then consider, in an evidence-based manner, discrete and specific policy changes, which aim to develop the system as a coherent set of complementary and mutually reinforcing policies.”
Socio-political/human rights approaches

22. The third approach is to define and measure child poverty against the context of human rights standards and socio-political objectives. A statement defining child poverty in socio-political or human rights terms provides an anti-poverty strategy with a clear mission statement or moral purpose, underneath which a multi-dimensional strategy and technical measures can operate.

23. There are several examples of such definitions across different organisations and institutions. UNICEF’s ‘working definition’ of child poverty provides a good example:

“Children living in poverty are those who experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources to survive develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.”

24. Nations that have developed anti-poverty strategies, such as the UK and Ireland, also provide examples of socio-political definitions of poverty under the auspices of these strategies:

“People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society” (Ireland).

“Poverty is about more than income; it is about a lack of opportunity, aspiration and stability.” (UK).

25. Changes over time in the political landscape invariably influence the policy discourse and terminology that follows. An example of this was the inclusion of ‘social mobility’ by the UK Coalition government as a key plank of its child poverty strategy. This required the rebranding of the UK Child Poverty Commission to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission.

26. Child poverty can also be defined and measured against human rights standards set out in international human rights treaties such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).

27. This is the approach taken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which defines child poverty as the denial of children’s socio-economic rights under Articles 26 and 27 of UNCROC (respectively the right to social security and the right to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development).

28. Defining child poverty against human rights, or more specifically UNCROC, requirements
also shifts the issue from one that is a moral imperative to one that is a legal responsibility against which compliance can be measured.

29. Such measurement already occurs in the form of the periodic reviews undertaken by UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on ratified State Parties implementation of UNCROC. These reviews include recommendations of actions States Parties could take to increase compliance and enhance implementation of UNCROC.

30. In the case of New Zealand, the CRC has made several useful recommendations which address or are of relevance to child poverty issues, such as:

- Greater co-ordination between health policies and those aimed at reducing income inequality and poverty.
- Implementation of comprehensive policy and national plan of action and establishment of a high-level co-ordinating mechanism.
- Development of a child-focused budgetary mechanism that enables the tracking, monitoring and evaluation of impact on allocations aimed at children.

**Child Poverty Strategies – international comparisons (Table 1)**

31. Table 1, set out below as the appendix to this Working Paper, provides an overview of child poverty related policy frameworks in seven developed countries. Of these countries it is notable that only two, Ireland and the UK, have in place governmental anti-poverty strategies (although a number of Canadian provinces have anti-poverty strategies in place). The UK is the only country listed with a specific, stand-alone government strategy designed to address child poverty. Of the other countries, Sweden includes the combating of child poverty as one of its goals within its wider family policy.

32. This may reflect cautiousness on the part of governments to use the term ‘poverty’ to define those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage or inequality. It may also reflect that there is no uniform definition that applies across the international community.

33. All countries, however, have in place sophisticated social security systems that are designed to reduce or address socio-economic disadvantage or alleviate hardship, albeit to differing degrees. High-level ‘social inclusion’ strategies are in place in Australia and Ireland which are designed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups.

**Socio-economic issues**

34. A common concern amongst a number of countries is family joblessness. A *New Approach to Poverty*, the UK Government’s first national poverty strategy vested under the Child Poverty Act 2010 is explicitly tied to welfare reform designed to move beneficiary parents into the workforce. In Australia, this concern is included as a *Social Inclusion Priority* as part of its wider social inclusion strategy. The Netherlands’ social
security system is also predicated upon the ethos that employment prevents or mitigates social exclusion.

35. Notably, the OECD has found that the poverty rate of jobless households is three times that of households with employees and has identified sole-parent beneficiary households as an important factor in OECD child poverty rates. The OECD has proposed a measure for identifying whether a ‘benefit strategy’ or a ‘work strategy’ would have the largest impact in reducing child poverty in individual OECD countries. The OECD has accordingly suggested that ‘work strategies’ that promote employment are likely to be successful in reducing child poverty in countries like Australia, the UK, Germany and Ireland, whereas a ‘benefit strategy’ raising the levels of family benefits would have the greatest impact in the United States, Italy, Japan and Poland.

36. Wider long-term socio-economic and demographic changes brought about by aging populations, the rise in numbers of solo parent families, immigration and changing income distributions and employment opportunities as a result of technological change and globalisation of markets, have also been identified as factors in the rise and entrenchment of economic inequalities in rich countries. Sweden, for example has identified chronic poverty amongst its immigrant communities as a major social issue.

Instruments

37. As noted above, the only country listed in Table 1 to have implemented legislation specifically designed to reduce child poverty is the UK through the Child Poverty Act 2010. However, all the countries included have detailed social security systems and tax and transfer systems which redistribute income in various forms and degrees. These include specific child-related benefits, tax credit and subsidies. Both Sweden and the Netherlands have particularly generous parental leave and early childhood education entitlements to support working mothers. This results in high levels of employment amongst mothers, including single mothers.

38. Taxation settings, however, differ between jurisdictions, which has a bearing on the scope and degree of social security entitlements available. Sweden, for example, funds its extensive, universal social benefits via comparatively high levels of taxation. UNICEF has concluded that the different child poverty rates between developed countries are not only the product of differences in social security policies and entitlements, but also reflect ‘very significant differences in the distribution of earned incomes’.

Mechanisms

39. Of the countries analysed, only the UK has established a specific statutory office dedicated to the issue of child poverty. In other countries, oversight is generally left to Departments of State with responsibility for social security and welfare policy and Children’s Commissioners or Ombudsmen.
40. Notably, Australia and Ireland have high level institutional mechanisms in place to implement and co-ordinate their respective social inclusion strategies, including specialist Offices or Units, boards and steering groups and dedicated Cabinet committees.

41. The type of mechanisms utilised by each country is of course reflective of the relative policy approaches of each jurisdiction. Countries with over-arching national strategies in place will almost certainly create mechanisms to enable or oversee its implementation.

**OECD ‘Doing Better for Children’ comparisons**

42. The OECD’s 2009 report *Doing Better for Children* compared well-being outcomes for children across a range of OECD countries. The table below illustrates New Zealand’s rating across the report’s six dimensions comprising of child well-being indicators compared to the seven overseas jurisdictions we have analysed. The numbers denote how each country ranks in each dimension amongst a cohort of 30 OECD countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Material well-being</th>
<th>Housing and environment</th>
<th>Educational well-being</th>
<th>Health and safety</th>
<th>Risk behaviours</th>
<th>Quality of school life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Australia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. New Zealand, the UK and the USA all stand-out amongst this cohort of countries as displaying generally the most adverse well-being outcomes for children. New Zealand’s ratings for health and safety and risk behaviours are particularly concerning and sit near the foot of the OECD ranks.

44. Each of the six dimensions is broken down into a total of 21 child wellbeing indicators. For example, Health and Safety comprises of eight indicators; infant mortality, low birth weight, breastfeeding rates, vaccinations rates (both pertussis and measles), physical activity, mortality rates and suicide rates.

45. *Doing Better for Children* is concerned with a broader measurement of child ‘well-being’, as opposed to poverty specifically. However, it provides a comprehensive comparative assessment of the overall performance of OECD countries in meeting the needs of children.

46. In *Doing Better for Children*, the OECD noted that the New Zealand Government spends
‘considerably’ less on children than the OECD average, although it does not appear to frame this conclusion against the context of New Zealand’s comparatively low OECD economic ranking. Based on the international evidence available, the OECD concluded that the New Zealand Government should increase its spending towards meeting the needs of younger, disadvantaged children and ensure that its spending on older children is targeted more effectively.

**UNICEF Report Card 10 – Measuring child poverty**

47. In May 2012, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre released *Report Card 10: Measuring child poverty: New league tables of child poverty in the world’s rich countries*, the latest of UNICEF’s Report Card series which are designed to periodically assess the development and implementation of the rights of children in developed countries.

48. *Report Card 10* provides the most recent account of comparative data on child poverty and material deprivation across the developed world. However, the report refers to the lack of availability of timely data, with most data drawn from surveys conducted in 2009 and thus taken too early to reflect the impact of the global financial crisis and recession on outcomes for children. UNICEF links this ‘crisis of monitoring’ to an ‘underlying lack of any public or political consensus on how child poverty should be defined and measured’.

**Child Material Deprivation**

49. The comparative data in *Report Card 10* is set out in two league tables. The first is a *League Table of Child Deprivation* which compares the data of 29 European countries in respect of a Child Deprivation Index developed by the UNICEF Innocenti Centre comprising of the ability of households to afford 14 basic items. It does not therefore enable a comparison of deprivation outcomes of developed countries outside Europe, such as New Zealand, Canada or Japan.

50. Unsurprisingly, child material deprivation is considerably higher amongst the poorer Central and Eastern European countries (running as high as 70 percent in Romania) than the richer, more developed nations of Western Europe, where all, bar France and Italy, have deprivation rates of less than 10 percent. The Northern European countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway all have child deprivation rates below three percent.

51. However, material deprivation rates are not necessarily always directly determined by a country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). *Report Card 10* notes significant disparities in child deprivation rates amongst countries with similar per-capita GDP. Portugal and the Czech Republic have very similar per-capita GDP (around USD25,000) yet Portugal’s child deprivation rate is three times higher. Similarly, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium and Germany have similar per capita GDP, yet of that group the Nordic countries have much lower child deprivation rates than their Western European counterparts.
52. *Report Card 10* goes on to compare and collate deprivation rates across four different categories:

- Children living in single parent families
- Children living in families with low parental education
- Children living in jobless households
- Children living in migrant families.

53. Again, there is considerable variation in outcomes across these categories. For example, child deprivation in jobless households is over twice that in Belgium, Austria, Germany and France (around 40 percent), than it is in Sweden, the UK and Norway (all under 15 percent). Similarly, deprivation rates for children in migrant families in Sweden, Ireland, Norway and Iceland is four times lower (less than five percent) than in France and Italy (around 20 percent).

54. *Report Card 10* infers that such disparities are representative of the various levels of state protection and social security afforded to vulnerable children amongst European countries. This fluctuates across the categories listed above. For example, in the UK the deprivation rates for children in migrant families and jobless families is relatively low (7.4 percent and 13.3 percent respectively), whereas child deprivation in families with low parental education is much higher (19.3 percent). In Germany, overall material deprivation is measured at 8.8 percent, yet child deprivation in jobless families is 42.2 percent.

55. Seven countries – Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Iceland – all feature in the top third of each deprivation category and thus have the best overall records in minimising child deprivation. *Report Card 10* suggests that this indicates that across the above categories “the level of risk incurred is not a function of chance or necessity but of policy and priority.”

**Relative child poverty rates in developed countries**

56. *Report Card 10* also provides a *League table of relative child poverty in 35 economically advanced countries*, which compares the relative income poverty rates across a wider cohort of developed countries, including New Zealand. The league table utilises the 50 percent income threshold also used by the OECD, as noted above.

57. At this measurement, New Zealand sits in the middle of the table in 20th place, between Slovakia and Estonia, with a relative poverty rate of 11.7 percent, marginally behind Australia (18th place, 10.9 percent) and ahead of the UK (22nd place, 12.2 percent).

58. New Zealand’s ranking improves slightly to 18th when the measurement is taken at 60 percent of median income levels. However, at that income measurement the relative poverty rate rises to 19.4 percent. It is notable than no country in the league table has a
relative poverty rate of less than 10 percent when measured against a 60 percent threshold (Iceland is the closest at 10.1 percent). Report Card 10 notes that there was little change in the overall country rankings when comparing their respective relative poverty rates at 50 percent and 60 percent of median income.

The poverty gap
59. Report Card 10 also compares the extent of ‘the poverty gap’ across the various countries. The poverty gap is defined as the distance between the poverty line and the median income of those below the poverty line, based on a poverty line set at 50 percent of the national median income. New Zealand compares relatively well against this criteria, ranking 8\textsuperscript{th} with a poverty gap measurement of 16 percent, three places below Australia which ranks 5\textsuperscript{th} with a measurement of 13.6 percent. The Unites States, by comparison, is in 35\textsuperscript{th} place with a poverty gap measurement of 37.5 percent.

Impact of tax and transfers on relative child poverty rates
60. New Zealand also ranks towards the top of the league table in 6\textsuperscript{th} place (one place behind Australia) when comparing relative child poverty rates before and after taxes and income transfers are factored in.

61. Interestingly, both New Zealand and Australia have very high relative child poverty rates of almost 30 percent before taxes and income transfers are applied (compared to the final rates of 11.7 percent and 10.9 percent respectively) Only four of the 35 countries included in the league table have relative poverty rates above 30 percent before tax and transfers are applied (Romania, UK, Hungary and Ireland). By comparison, the tax and income transfer systems of countries such as the United States, Greece, Italy, Switzerland and Japan make little difference to their overall child poverty rates.

62. New Zealand also ranks 8\textsuperscript{th} in respect of spending on families and children, as a proportion of GDP. However, compared to countries such as Denmark (5\textsuperscript{th}), Sweden (3\textsuperscript{rd}), the UK (2\textsuperscript{nd}) and the Netherlands (11\textsuperscript{th}), New Zealand’s spending is largely weighted towards cash transfers to families in comparison to spending on services. This type of weighting, together with New Zealand’s comparatively low per-capita GDP ranking, perhaps is reflective of the OECD’s finding that New Zealand spends considerably less on children than the OECD average.

63. The comparative data indicates the degree of influence tax and transfer settings and policies can have on reducing child poverty. It also illustrates the significant impact that New Zealand’s current tax and transfer settings have in reducing relative child poverty rates. It follows that any reform of tax and income transfer settings in New Zealand should be carefully calibrated in order that they continue to work effectively in reducing relative income poverty.

64. Report Card 10 acknowledges a number of problems in comparing relative child poverty
rates amongst different countries through an income measurement. These comparisons do not take into account the fact that health, child care and education services may be heavily subsidised or free in some countries and more costly in others. Nor do the figures reflect either the real level of resources available to a family, nor the overall economic capacity and competence of families (relative to home ownership, savings and debts, spending habits and priorities etc.).

**Impact of global financial crisis/recession**

65. In its conclusion, *Report Card 10* re-iterates its concern that the data currently available does not enable a comparison of the impact of the global financial crisis and recession on low-income families and their children across the developed world. While acknowledging the impact that the crisis has had in government priorities, it notes that “*without up-to-date information there is little possibility of putting in place policies that use limited resources in cost-effective ways to protect children from the effects of poverty*”.

66. However it refers to recent country-specific reports which paint a sobering picture of the impact of the global recession on child poverty and deprivation rates. In Ireland, child deprivation rates rose from 23.5 percent in 2009 to 30.2 percent in 2010. In the United Kingdom, the Institute of Fiscal Studies has predicted that the relative child poverty rate will start to rise in 2013, after a relatively stable period. The IFS has also predicted that relative and absolute child poverty rates in the UK will rise to 24 percent and 23 percent respectively, based on current government policy settings. This has obvious implications for the implementation of the Child Poverty Act 2010, which sets 2020 targets of 10 percent and five percent for relative and absolute poverty rates respectively.
References


# Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Child poverty frameworks in overseas jurisdiction</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Govt anti-poverty strategy</strong></td>
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• Previous focus on income support targets (achieved), now focus on service delivery. | • Child Benefit, Family Income Supplement, Child Dependant Allowance, Early Childcare Supplement, Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.  
• Minimum wage. | • Office for Social Inclusion.  
• Office of the Minister for Children.  
• Cabinet Committee, Senior Officials Group and Local Govt Steering Groups for Social Inclusion.  
• Poverty Impact Assessment. |
| Canada | No. | No. | • Active social policies – social benefits tied to labour market participation.  
• Governments increasingly turning to family, businesses and community. | • Child and family benefits (Canada Child Tax Benefit, Child Disability Benefit; National Child Benefit Supplement).  
• Seniors benefits.  
• Employment-related benefits.  
• Social assistance programs.  
• Minimum wage.  
• Employment training.  
• Community economic development.  
• Early childhood care and education.  
• Home and nurse visiting. | No. |

¹ “People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society” (1997).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Govt anti-poverty strategy</th>
<th>Official defn</th>
<th>Current focus</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Institutional mechanisms</th>
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| No.         | No.                         | • Increasingly opting for strategies at neighbourhood level.  
   • Integration of minorities.  
   • Affordability of social security system with an ageing population.  
   • Reintegrating invalidity benefit claimants who have now been found fully or partially fit for work. | • Work and Social Assistance Act 2004 - social security system based on social insurances and supplementary income support provisions. Those who are capable to work must work, because working avoids social exclusion.  
   • Childcare Act 2005 – makes it easier for mothers to return to work or to increase their working hours, childcare capacity has increased substantially. | No. |

   • Tackling debt: building financial capability and literacy.  
   • Strengthening families: enhanced relationship and parenting support.  
   • Tackling education failure: targeted childcare/ECE and school support for most disadvantaged families.  
   • Tackling poor health: new life course approach to public health policy with enhanced supported for infants. | Primary Instrument  
   • Child Poverty Act 2010 – establishes a statutory definition of child poverty, sets targets and timeframes towards lowering and eradicating child poverty by 2020, requires national child poverty strategy to be implemented, defines income thresholds, establishes Child Poverty Commission.  
   Secondary Instruments  
   • NHS, education, social security, care and protection systems etc.  
   • Children’s Act 2004.  
   • NOTE: Welfare Reform Bill 2011 (introduces Universal Credit system – due to come into force in 2013). | • Department for Work and Pensions.  
   • Department for Education.  
   • Child Poverty Commission. |

² Section 25(2) Child Poverty Act 2010 (UK) – “A child is taken to be living in poverty if the child experiences socio-economic disadvantage and references to child poverty have a corresponding meaning” NOTE: Section 25(3) goes on to define ‘socio-economic disadvantage’ as households within the ‘relative low income target’, ‘absolute low income target’ and ‘combined low income targets’ vested under ss3-5 of the Act. The UK Government’s 2011 child poverty strategy A New Approach to Child Poverty states – ‘Poverty is about more than income; it is about a lack of opportunity, aspiration and stability’. 

Page 15 of 17
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Govt anti-poverty strategy</th>
<th>Official defn</th>
<th>Current focus</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>Institutional mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- Social Inclusion Priorities includes a focus on Jobless Families with Children – facilitating entry of beneficiary parents into the workforce.  
- 2009 Communiqué of Australian Federal and State Ministers had these social inclusion priorities:  
  - children at risk of disadvantage  
  - jobless families  
  - disengaged young people. | - Extensive social security system vested under the Social Security Act 1991 and delivered by the Federal Government via Centrelink service – includes a wide range of benefits including:  
  - Parenting payments  
  - Maternity payments  
  - Carer Allowances.  
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance). Act provides family assistance tax credits, which include:  
  - Family Tax Benefits Part A  
  - Family Tax Benefits Part B (for sole parents)  
  - Maternity Immunisation Allowance  
  - Child Care Benefit. | - Social Inclusion Unit within DPMC.  
- Social Inclusion Committee of Cabinet.  
- Social Inclusion Board.  
- NOTE - each State of Australia has its own Children’s Commissioner or Children’s Guardian, akin to NZ/UK Children’s Commissioner roles. |
| United States | No US Federal child poverty strategy. National Centre for Children in Poverty (NCCP) based at Columbia University, NY - www.nccp.org. | No. | | - Federal assistance programmes and benefits are passed through US Federal Agencies to recipients, which include State Governments, municipal governments and NGOs - approx $400 billion per year.  
- Cover a wide array of assistance programmes, including:  
  - Aid to Families with Dependent children  
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program  
  - Food Stamp Program  
  - Section 8 Housing Vouchers  
- US Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and subsidiary organisations –budget of approx $59 billion per year.  
- ACF does not appear to have a child poverty strategy.  
- Under ACF sits agencies such as American Public Human Services Association. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Govt anti-poverty strategy</th>
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| Sweden                    | Combating child poverty is one of the primary goals of Swedish family policy. | No. | • Issue – chronic poverty among immigrant children  
• Sickness insurance reform eg. time limits and individual assessments, testing ability to work. | • Extensive and universal social benefits funded by high taxes (51.1% of GDP in 2007, or 30-50% depending on income).  
• Family policies:  
  - monthly universal child subsidy  
  - rent subsidy for low income families  
  - free education, health and dental care for all children  
  - ECE heavily subsidised, employment participation by women high, even for single mothers  
  - parental leave, 13 months @ 80% of at-home parent’s income, with a cap  
  - child support calculated on age of child not income of non-custodial parent  
  - added income support for low income families | • Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.  
• Office of the Children’s Ombudsman. |