

The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth, and Family Policies at
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

The prevalence of lone parenthood ranges from a low of three percent in Greece to 29 percent in the United States and New Zealand. Nearly one-quarter of all families with children are headed by lone mothers in New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. Nearly all lone-parents are headed by mothers in Portugal (99%) in contrast to Greece (82 percent), Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States (83 percent), and New Zealand (84 percent). It should be noted that the definition of lone parenthood or single-parenthood is not uniform across countries. In the Netherlands and Norway, for example, it includes mothers who co-habitat with men who are not the father of their children, and in southern European countries, lone mothers often live multi-unit households and are not consistently reported as lone-mother households.

Table 2.17 Lone parents and lone mothers as percentage of all families with children: most recent data

	<i>Percentage of all working age parents with dependent children who are:</i>		<i>Lone mothers as % of lone parents</i>
	Lone parents	Lone mothers	
Australia (2000)	21	18	86
Austria (1999)	15	14	90
Belgium (1997)	12	11	89
Canada	(1998) 17	(1996) 14	(1996) 83
Denmark	(2001) 22	18	87
Finland (1999)	19	17	88
France ¹ (0-24) (1999)	12	10	85
Germany (2000)	21 ¹	18 ²	85
Greece (1999)	3	..	82
Ireland (1999)	14	14	95
Israel	(1999) 8	(1999) 7	(2001) 96
Italy	(1995) 10	..	(1998) 84
Japan (1999) ²	8	7	85
Luxembourg (2000)	11	10	93
Netherlands (2001)	13	12	89
New Zealand (2001)	29	24	84
Norway ³	(1998) 19	(2000) 16	(2000) 89
Portugal (1996)	13	13	99
Spain	(1995) 9	..	(1999) 88
Sweden (1990)	18	16	85
UK (2001)	29	23	83
USA (2000)	29	23	83

Source: Bradshaw, J. & Finch, N. (2002). *A Comparison of Child Benefit Packages in 22 Countries*. Table 2.2. UK: Department for Work and Pensions.

Notes:

.. = Data not available

¹ Dependent child = 0-24 and no reference to working age parents

² Excludes lone parents living in three generation families. Dependent children = age under 18

³ Dependent children = age under 18. for column 2, the data is for children only, for example, of all children under 17 in Norway, 16% were living with a lone mother.