



Save the Children®

# THE TOUGHEST PLACES TO BE A CHILD

GLOBAL CHILDHOOD REPORT 2021





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Some names of children have been changed to protect identities.

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501 Kings Highway East, Suite 400  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06825  
United States  
(800) 728-3843  
savethechildren.org

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# Introduction

For millions of children worldwide, childhood has ended too soon. The major reasons include ill health, malnutrition, exclusion from education, child labor, child marriage, early pregnancy, conflict and extreme violence. This report examines the many factors that rob children of their childhoods and reveals where greater investments are needed to save children from poverty, discrimination and neglect.

The *End of Childhood Index* compares the latest data for 186 countries – the highest number ever – and assesses where the most and fewest children are missing out on childhood. Singapore and Slovenia top the ranking this year with scores of 990 out of 1,000. Eight Western European countries rank in the top 10, attaining very high scores for children’s health, education and protection status. Niger ranks last among the countries surveyed, scoring 392.

The 10 bottom-ranked countries – all from sub-Saharan Africa – are a reverse image of the top, performing poorly on most indicators. Children in these countries are the least likely to fully experience childhood, a time that should be dedicated to emotional, social and physical development, as well as play. In these and many other countries around the world, children are robbed of significant portions of their childhoods.

The United States badly trails nearly all other advanced countries in helping children reach their full potential. The U.S. score of 948 puts it at least 25 points behind most Western

European countries. Countries with similar scores include Bahrain, China, Montenegro, Qatar, Russia and Slovakia.

It should be noted that data in the *End of Childhood Index* are almost all from years prior to COVID-19, so they provide a baseline for how the world’s children were doing before the pandemic hit. The rankings reflect where children are most likely to experience extreme poverty and inadequate safety nets. These children are the world’s most vulnerable. As such, they are particularly unable to withstand the additional assaults to their well-being that COVID introduces: intensified poverty, increased hunger, reduced health care and schooling, and the diminished presence of caring, healthy adults in their lives.<sup>1</sup> The *End of Childhood Index* may be used as a tool to help decision-makers target investments to children who are most in need of care, protection and special services that allow them to overcome the compounding disadvantages they face when the effects of chronic marginalization and COVID interact.

## WHAT DO THE SCORES MEAN?

*End of Childhood Index* scores for countries are calculated on a scale of 1 to 1,000. Countries with higher scores do a better job of protecting childhoods. The scores measure the extent to which children in each country experience “childhood enders” such as death, chronic malnutrition, being out of school and being forced into adult roles of work, marriage and motherhood. Here’s a quick guide on how to interpret country scores:

- 940 or above – Few children missing out on childhood
- 760 to 939 – Some children missing out on childhood
- 600 to 759 – Many children missing out on childhood
- 380 to 599 – Most children missing out on childhood
- 379 or below – Nearly all children missing out on childhood

For more details, see the Methodology and Research Notes beginning on page 8.

## END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX RANKING 2021

TOP 10 WHERE CHILDHOOD IS MOST PROTECTED		BOTTOM 10 WHERE CHILDHOOD IS MOST THREATENED	
RANK	COUNTRY	RANK	COUNTRY
1	Singapore	177	Madagascar
1	Slovenia	178	Guinea
3	Ireland	179	Burkina Faso
3	Norway	180	Nigeria
5	Cyprus	181	Mali
5	Sweden	182	South Sudan
7	Netherlands	183	Somalia
7	South Korea	184	Chad
9	Belgium	185	Central African Republic
9	Iceland	186	Niger



*In Afghanistan, 9-year-old Abdul processes sheep wool for carpet weaving. His grandmother, brother and sister have all been injured in the fighting between government forces and insurgents.*

# End of Childhood Index Ranking 2021

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE
1	Singapore	990 <span>▲</span>	63	Algeria	915 <span>▲</span>	125	Ghana	776 <span>▲</span>
1	Slovenia	990 <span>▲</span>	63	Sri Lanka	915	125	Rwanda	776 <span>▼</span>
3	Ireland	984 <span>▼</span>	65	Maldives	914	127	Cambodia	772 <span>▲</span>
3	Norway	984 <span>▼</span>	65	Mauritius	914 <span>▼</span>	128	South Africa	771 <span>▼</span>
5	Cyprus	983 <span>▲</span>	67	Albania	912	129	Kenya	767 <span>▼</span>
5	Sweden	983 <span>▼</span>	68	Brunei Darussalam	911 <span>▲</span>	129	Nauru	767
7	Netherlands	982 <span>▼</span>	69	North Korea	910 <span>▲</span>	131	Kiribati	763
7	South Korea	982	70	Bulgaria	909 <span>▼</span>	132	Colombia	762 <span>▲</span>
9	Belgium	981	71	Turkmenistan	905 <span>▲</span>	133	Timor-Leste	753 <span>▲</span>
9	Iceland	981	72	Saint Lucia	901 <span>▲</span>	134	El Salvador	749 <span>▲</span>
11	Czechia	980	72	Samoa	901 <span>▼</span>	135	Eswatini	744 <span>▼</span>
11	Portugal	980 <span>▼</span>	74	Georgia	897 <span>▼</span>	136	Solomon Islands	742 <span>▲</span>
13	Italy	979 <span>▼</span>	75	Costa Rica	891 <span>▼</span>	137	Nepal	740 <span>▲</span>
14	Estonia	977 <span>▲</span>	76	Malaysia	890	138	Djibouti	735 <span>▼</span>
14	France	977	77	Mongolia	886 <span>▲</span>	139	Congo	734 <span>▼</span>
16	Greece	976 <span>▲</span>	78	Uruguay	883 <span>▼</span>	140	Bangladesh	722 <span>▼</span>
16	Israel	976 <span>▲</span>	79	Tonga	882 <span>▼</span>	141	Marshall Islands	715
16	Lithuania	976 <span>▲</span>	80	Cuba	881 <span>▼</span>	142	Gambia	713 <span>▲</span>
16	Spain	976	81	Argentina	880 <span>▼</span>	143	Lao PDR	708 <span>▲</span>
16	Switzerland	976	81	Jordan	880 <span>▲</span>	144	Papua New Guinea	706 <span>▲</span>
21	Austria	975	83	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	877 <span>▲</span>	145	Venezuela*	697 <span>▼</span>
21	Denmark	975 <span>▼</span>	84	Fiji	875 <span>▲</span>	146	Haiti	693 <span>▲</span>
21	Finland	975 <span>▼</span>	85	Morocco	874 <span>▲</span>	147	Honduras	690 <span>▲</span>
21	Japan	975	86	Moldova	869 <span>▲</span>	147	Pakistan	690 <span>▲</span>
25	Canada	974 <span>▲</span>	87	Seychelles	867 <span>▼</span>	149	Comoros	687 <span>▲</span>
25	Luxembourg	974 <span>▼</span>	88	Trinidad and Tobago	865 <span>▲</span>	150	Zimbabwe	686 <span>▼</span>
25	Poland	974 <span>▲</span>	89	Bahamas	861 <span>▼</span>	151	Mauritania	682 <span>▲</span>
28	Australia	972 <span>▼</span>	90	Iran	858 <span>▼</span>	152	Liberia	676 <span>▼</span>
28	United Kingdom	972 <span>▲</span>	91	Libya	857	153	Guinea-Bissau	674 <span>▲</span>
30	Latvia	971 <span>▲</span>	92	Kyrgyzstan	856 <span>▲</span>	154	Malawi	673 <span>▲</span>
31	Germany	970 <span>▼</span>	93	Azerbaijan	854 <span>▼</span>	155	Senegal	670 <span>▼</span>
32	Croatia	968 <span>▲</span>	93	Cabo Verde	854 <span>▲</span>	156	Uganda	668 <span>▼</span>
33	Malta	967 <span>▲</span>	93	Thailand	854 <span>▼</span>	157	Zambia	656 <span>▼</span>
34	Lebanon	960 <span>▲</span>	96	State of Palestine	853 <span>▲</span>	158	Benin	653 <span>▲</span>
35	Belarus	959 <span>▲</span>	97	Mexico	852	159	Burundi	652
36	Hungary	955 <span>▼</span>	97	Suriname	852 <span>▲</span>	160	Togo	650 <span>▲</span>
37	Russia	954 <span>▲</span>	99	Peru	850 <span>▲</span>	161	Côte d'Ivoire	645 <span>▲</span>
37	Slovakia	954	100	Bhutan	848 <span>▲</span>	162	Yemen*	644 <span>▼</span>
37	United Arab Emirates	954 <span>▲</span>	100	Tuvalu	848	163	Guatemala	642 <span>▼</span>
40	Qatar	953 <span>▲</span>	102	Jamaica	842 <span>▲</span>	163	Sudan	642 <span>▲</span>
41	New Zealand	952 <span>▼</span>	103	Vietnam	841 <span>▲</span>	165	Syria*	639 <span>▼</span>
42	Bahrain	951 <span>▼</span>	104	Egypt	840 <span>▲</span>	166	Afghanistan	628 <span>▲</span>
43	United States	948 <span>▲</span>	105	Tajikistan	830 <span>▲</span>	167	Tanzania	625 <span>▲</span>
44	Montenegro	943 <span>▲</span>	106	Paraguay	819 <span>▲</span>	168	Lesotho	621 <span>▲</span>
45	China	942	107	Indonesia	816 <span>▲</span>	169	DR Congo	619 <span>▼</span>
46	Antigua and Barbuda	941	108	Brazil	815 <span>▲</span>	170	Eritrea	614 <span>▼</span>
47	Kuwait	940 <span>▼</span>	109	Ecuador	813 <span>▲</span>	170	Ethiopia	614 <span>▲</span>
48	Saudi Arabia	938 <span>▲</span>	110	Philippines	812 <span>▲</span>	172	Sierra Leone	613 <span>▲</span>
49	Kazakhstan	933	111	Guyana	810 <span>▼</span>	173	Cameroon	611 <span>▲</span>
49	North Macedonia	933 <span>▲</span>	112	Dominican Republic	809 <span>▲</span>	174	Equatorial Guinea	609 <span>▲</span>
51	Oman	931 <span>▲</span>	113	Sao Tome and Principe	801 <span>▲</span>	175	Angola	608 <span>▲</span>
52	Serbia	930 <span>▼</span>	114	Belize	800 <span>▲</span>	176	Mozambique	574
52	Ukraine	930 <span>▼</span>	115	Vanuatu	799 <span>▲</span>	177	Madagascar	568 <span>▲</span>
54	Tunisia	929 <span>▼</span>	116	Nicaragua	796 <span>▲</span>	178	Guinea	566 <span>▲</span>
55	Bosnia and Herzegovina	928 <span>▼</span>	117	Myanmar*	793 <span>▲</span>	179	Burkina Faso	557 <span>▼</span>
55	Chile	928 <span>▲</span>	118	India	789 <span>▲</span>	180	Nigeria	549 <span>▲</span>
57	Barbados	924 <span>▼</span>	119	Botswana	788 <span>▲</span>	181	Mali	520 <span>▲</span>
58	Romania	923 <span>▲</span>	120	Iraq	782 <span>▲</span>	182	South Sudan	499 <span>▲</span>
59	Grenada	918	120	Panama	782 <span>▼</span>	183	Somalia	489 <span>▲</span>
59	Turkey	918 <span>▲</span>	122	Bolivia	778 <span>▲</span>	184	Chad	450 <span>▲</span>
61	Armenia	917 <span>▼</span>	123	Gabon	777 <span>▲</span>	185	Central African Republic	399 <span>▲</span>
62	Uzbekistan	916 <span>▲</span>	123	Namibia	777 <span>▼</span>	186	Niger	392 <span>▲</span>

## Few children missing out on childhood\*\*

Some children missing out on childhood

Many children missing out on childhood

Most children missing out on childhood

▲ Score is up from last year

▼ Score is down from last year

Index scores reflect the average level of performance across a set of eight indicators related to child health, education, labor, marriage, childbirth and violence. The only reason a country was not included in this analysis was insufficient data (i.e., the country was missing values for three or more indicators). To see the underlying dataset, including data gaps, turn to pages 4-7. Performance bands reflect the extent to which children are missing out on childhood. For details, see Methodology and Research Notes.

\* Data collection during humanitarian emergencies can be difficult and dangerous. Latest available data for crisis-affected countries often predate escalations of violence/displacement and do not capture the harsh realities for children in these settings. In Syria and Yemen, for example, recent evidence suggests rates of child labor and child marriage have risen. These trends are not reflected in the data or index ranking.

\*\* Although relatively small proportions of children in these countries are missing out on childhood, the absolute number of children missing out likely totals in the millions. This is especially true in more populous countries at the bottom of the performance band (e.g., Russia, United States, China).

# Complete End of Childhood Index 2021

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL		CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE		CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE		END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2021		
			Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)			Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)			
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	2015-2019*	2015-2020*	2018	2018	2018	2018	2020	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 186)	
Afghanistan*	60.3	38.2	42.0	z	21.4	x	17.2	65.1	14.7	b	2.9	628	166
Albania	9.7	11.3	7.3		3.3	x	6.1	19.6	1.2		2.0	912	67
Algeria*	23.3	9.8	9.7	a	2.5	x,z	4.4	9.8	0.0		1.6	915	63
Angola	74.7	37.6	33.0	x	18.7		17.6	148.0	0.2		5.0	608	175
Antigua and Barbuda	6.6	...	3.0		...		3.9	41.8	0.2		0.8	941	46
Argentina	9.3	7.9	2.8		4.4	x,y,z	14.2	62.6	0.0		3.1	880	81
Armenia	11.8	9.4	9.8		4.1		4.3	20.9	0.7		0.6	917	61
Australia	3.6	2.0	2.1	x	...		2.4	11.3	0.0		0.4	972	28
Austria	3.5	...	3.5		...		2.2	7.0	0.0		0.2	975	21
Azerbaijan	20.4	17.8	3.5	x	6.5	x,y,z	8.9	56.5	6.6		0.9	854	93
Bahamas	12.6	...	27.4		...		2.1	29.2	0.3		9.1	861	89
Bahrain	6.9	...	5.1		...		6.4	13.2	0.0		0.3	951	42
Bangladesh	30.8	28.0	28.1	a	6.8	x	32.7	82.3	0.1		1.5	722	140
Barbados	12.7	7.7	3.0	x	1.4	x	2.4	31.1	0.1		4.1	924	57
Belarus	3.2	4.5	1.2	x	4.0	a	3.2	13.8	0.1		0.5	959	35
Belgium	3.4	...	0.9		...		2.1	4.6	0.0		0.4	981	9
Belize	12.3	15.0	9.9		3.3	x	21.0	68.0	0.1		12.0	800	114
Benin	90.3	32.2	23.8	x	24.8		18.4	84.0	0.0		3.8	653	158
Bhutan	28.5	33.5	12.6	x	3.5	x	4.4	18.9	0.9		0.6	848	100
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	26.0	16.1	12.6		26.4	x,y,z	10.1	63.9	0.0		6.0	778	122
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.9	8.9	...	x	5.3	x,y,z	6.4	9.1	5.0		0.7	928	55
Botswana	41.6	28.9	...	x	9.0	x,y,z	8.1	45.4	0.0		4.5	788	119
Brazil	13.9	7.0	6.9	x	5.4		13.9	57.9	0.0		17.9	815	108
Brunei Darussalam	11.4	19.7	7.7	x	...		2.0	9.7	0.0		1.0	911	68
Bulgaria	6.7	7.0	12.8	x	...		7.5	39.3	0.0		0.4	909	70
Burkina Faso	87.5	24.9	37.6		42.0	x	30.6	102.1	4.5		5.0	557	179
Burundi	56.5	54.0	25.4		30.9		5.6	54.8	4.1		4.1	652	159
Cabo Verde	14.9	...	13.1		6.4	x,y,z	9.7	72.7	0.0		4.8	854	93
Cambodia	26.6	32.4	22.4	x	12.6	x	15.5	50.7	0.1		0.7	772	127
Cameroon	74.8	28.9	23.1		38.9	x	18.7	103.5	5.5	b	6.1	611	173
Canada	4.9	...	1.8		...		1.5	8.0	0.0		0.7	974	25
Central African Republic	110.1	39.8	50.0	a	26.9	a	53.8	127.0	28.2	b	7.5	399	185
Chad	113.8	37.8	46.7	a	39.0	a	37.8	157.9	2.2		5.6	450	184
Chile	7.0	1.8	3.1	x	5.9	x	5.3	40.1	0.0		1.9	928	55
China*	7.9	8.1	7.6	x,z	...		3.0	7.6	0.0	d	0.5	942	45
Colombia	13.8	12.7	7.3		3.6		13.1	65.5	16.3	b	20.6	762	132
Comoros	62.9	31.1	24.9	x	28.5	x	14.6	64.1	0.3		3.7	687	149
Congo*	47.8	21.2	11.1	x,z	14.1		18.3	110.9	2.9		4.6	734	139
Costa Rica	8.6	9.0	1.7	a	7.2	a	8.6	52.5	0.0		3.3	891	75
Côte d'Ivoire	79.3	21.6	27.8		22.1		21.8	116.2	0.2		6.7	645	161
Croatia	4.8	...	5.6		...		1.4	8.3	0.7		0.2	968	32
Cuba	5.1	7.1	7.6	a	...		20.6	51.5	0.6		1.3	881	80
Cyprus	2.3	...	2.0		...		1.3	4.5	0.0		0.5	983	5
Czechia	3.2	...	1.4		...		0.8	11.9	0.0		0.2	980	11
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	17.3	19.1	...		4.3		0.2	0.3	0.0		2.7	910	69
Democratic Republic of the Congo*	84.8	41.8	16.6	a	14.7	x,z	14.7	122.6	7.4	b	7.3	619	169
Denmark	3.8	...	2.9		...		3.3	4.2	0.0		0.3	975	21
Djibouti	57.5	33.5	48.8	x	7.7	x,y,z	6.2	18.4	0.3		3.6	735	138
Dominican Republic	28.0	7.1	8.9	x	7.0	x	19.9	93.0	0.0		5.6	809	112

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

# Complete End of Childhood Index 2021

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE		END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2021	
							Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)		
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	2020	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 186)
	2019	2015-2020*	2015-2019*	2015-2020*	2018	2018	2020	2016		
Ecuador	14.0	23.9 x	6.8	4.9 y,z	19.3	78.8	0.1	2.8	813	109
Egypt	20.3	22.3 x	6.2	4.8 x	15.0	53.1	0.0	2.2	840	104
El Salvador	13.3	13.6 x	19.8	10.0	15.8	68.6	4.1	17.8	749	134
Equatorial Guinea	81.8	26.2 x	...	27.8 x,y,z	20.5	153.5	0.0	1.0	609	174
Eritrea	40.5	52.5 x	44.9	...	20.2	50.7	17.0	4.7	614	170
Estonia	2.4	...	1.7	...	4.1	7.1	0.0	0.3	977	14
Eswatini	49.4	25.5 x	12.7	7.8 x	12.0	75.4	0.0	12.6	744	135
Ethiopia	50.7	36.8	33.8	48.6 x	16.7	65.1	1.7	4.1	614	170
Fiji	25.7	...	7.5 x	...	6.4	49.1	0.3	1.4	875	84
Finland	2.4	...	1.6	...	5.5	5.7	0.0	0.5	975	21
France	4.5	...	1.4	...	2.4	4.7	0.0	0.4	977	14
Gabon*	42.5	17.0 x	7.8 x,z	19.6 x	10.3	93.6	0.1	3.7	777	123
Gambia*	51.7	13.6	36.3 x,z	16.9	20.1	75.7	1.1	5.3	713	142
Georgia	9.6	5.8 a	1.6	1.6	14.0	45.2	7.8	1.1	897	74
Germany	3.8	1.7	5.9	...	1.8	7.9	0.0	0.3	970	31
Ghana	46.2	17.5	9.3	27.9 a	5.4	65.8	0.1	4.5	776	125
Greece	3.8	...	2.9	...	2.1	6.9	0.0	0.2	976	16
Grenada	16.5	...	5.2 x	...	3.5	28.2	0.1	2.0	918	59
Guatemala	24.5	46.7	28.3	25.8 x,y,z	20.0	69.8	0.9	10.4	642	163
Guinea	98.8	30.3	38.9 x	24.2	28.3	133.4	0.4	5.2	566	178
Guinea-Bissau*	78.5	27.7 a	30.6 x,z	17.2 a	8.3	103.2	0.2	6.9	674	153
Guyana	29.3	11.3 x	8.7 x	10.8 x	15.7	72.9	0.1	6.1	810	111
Haiti*	62.8	21.9	14.3 x,z	35.5 x	6.4	51.0	0.9	14.7	693	146
Honduras	16.8	22.6 x	27.6	14.1 y,z	21.4	71.8	4.3	17.6	690	147
Hungary	3.7	...	6.6	...	3.8	24.3	0.1	0.3	955	36
Iceland	2.0	...	3.6	...	0.5	5.9	0.0	0.7	981	9
India	34.3	34.7	20.3 x	11.8 x,y,z	14.9	12.1	0.0	1.3	789	118
Indonesia	23.9	30.8	12.6	6.9 x,y,z	9.1	46.9	0.0	2.8	816	107
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	13.9	6.8 x	7.4	11.4 x,y,z	21.9	40.7	0.3 b	1.4	858	90
Iraq	25.9	12.6	21.4 x	4.5	18.4	71.7	5.4 b	7.0	782	120
Ireland	3.3	...	0.3	...	1.0	7.1	0.0	0.3	984	3
Israel	3.7	...	0.6	...	2.6	9.2	0.0	0.8	976	16
Italy	3.1	...	3.8	...	1.3	5.1	0.0	0.2	979	13
Jamaica	13.9	6.0 x	18.6	2.9	2.7	51.3	0.1	14.4	842	102
Japan	2.5	7.1 x	...	...	0.5	3.7	0.0	0.1	975	21
Jordan	15.6	7.8 x	26.3	1.7	7.6	25.8	0.1	1.5	880	81
Kazakhstan	10.5	8.0	0.7 x	2.2 x,y,z	5.7	29.4	0.1	1.3	933	49
Kenya	43.2	26.2 x	15.4 x	...	11.1	74.0	0.0	2.4	767	129
Kiribati	50.9	15.2 a	...	25.4 a	14.0	15.4	0.0	7.0	763	131
Kuwait	7.9	6.4	7.0	...	5.7	7.9	0.1	0.9	940	47
Kyrgyzstan	18.3	11.8	5.5	22.3	9.3	32.4	0.1	1.2	856	92
Lao People's Democratic Republic	45.5	33.1	23.2	28.2	11.0	64.9	0.1	3.9	708	143
Latvia	3.6	...	1.8	...	2.0	15.8	0.0	0.9	971	30
Lebanon	7.2	...	...	1.9 x,y,z	2.5	14.2	0.3	1.2	960	34
Lesotho	86.4	34.6	13.1	13.9	18.5	92.6	0.0	21.9	621	168
Liberia	84.6	30.1	14.2 x	14.0 x	12.2	135.6	0.2	6.0	676	152
Libya	11.5	38.1 x	...	...	6.5	5.7	6.3 b	0.9	857	91
Lithuania	3.7	...	0.7	...	1.6	10.2	0.0	1.0	976	16
Luxembourg	2.8	...	7.8	...	0.8	4.6	0.0	0.1	974	25
Madagascar	50.6	41.6	25.4	46.9 a	31.2	107.7	0.0	4.4	568	177
Malawi	41.6	39.0	16.6	19.4 x	23.4	132.1	0.0	0.9	673	154
Malaysia	8.6	20.7	13.4	...	5.0	13.5	0.1	1.9	890	76

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

# Complete End of Childhood Index 2021

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE		END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2021	
							Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)		
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	2020	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 186)
	2019	2015-2020*	2015-2019*	2015-2020*	2018	2018				
Maldives*	7.6	15.3 a	11.3 x,z	...	5.0	7.4	0.0	1.3	914	65
Mali	94.0	26.9	50.7	13.2	42.2	166.9	2.2 b	7.0	520	181
Malta	7.0	...	3.5	...	0.5	12.5	0.0	0.4	967	33
Marshall Islands	31.8	34.8	30.3	...	21.1 x,z	84.5 x,z	0.0	1.6 z	715	141
Mauritania	72.9	22.8	32.2	14	22.4	69.6	1.0	7.2	682	151
Mauritius	16.0	...	9.2	...	6.3	25.3	0.0	0.5	914	65
Mexico	14.2	10.0	8.8	4.7	15.1	59.5	0.1	5.1	852	97
Mongolia	15.6	9.4	8.5 x	14.7	3.7	31.4	0.2	1.4	886	77
Montenegro	2.3	7.2 a	5.8	7.7 a	1.7	8.8	0.2	0.5	943	44
Morocco	21.4	15.1	9.1	8.3 x,y,z	8.8	30.7	0.0	0.7	874	85
Mozambique	74.2	42.3	24.9	22.2 x,y,z	38.3	146.3	1.0	1.7	574	176
Myanmar	44.7	29.4	16.8	9.9	11.8	28.2	2.5 b	1.9	793	117
Namibia	42.4	22.7 x	12.2 x	...	5.0	61.6	0.0	9.2	777	123
Nauru	30.9	24.0 x	13.4	...	18.3 x,z	94.0 z	0.2	2.5 z	767	129
Nepal	30.8	31.5 a	9.0	21.7 x	26.4	64.4	0.1	1.6	740	137
Netherlands	4.0	...	0.9	...	1.6	3.7	0.0	0.3	982	7
New Zealand	4.7	...	1.0	...	9.7	18.6	0.0	0.7	952	41
Nicaragua	16.6	17.3 x	11.8 x	...	21.8	83.3	1.1	5.0	796	116
Niger	80.4	48.5	52.0	34.4 x	57.5	183.5	1.4	7.4	392	186
Nigeria*	117.2	36.8	38.0 z	31.5	22.8	105.4	1.5 b	5.4	549	180
North Macedonia	6.1	4.3 a	15.2 x	2.9 a	3.3	15.2	0.2	0.4	933	49
Norway	2.4	...	1.9	...	1.2	5.1	0.0	0.2	984	3
Oman	11.4	11.4	3.3	...	2.2	12.7	0.0	2.0	931	51
Pakistan*	67.2	37.6	38.3 x,z	12.8	13.5	38.2	0.1	6.0	690	147
Panama	14.9	19.0 x	20.3	2.6 x	16.7	81.0	0.0	9.6	782	120
Papua New Guinea	44.8	49.5 x	20.5	...	13.5	52.0	0.0	4.3	706	144
Paraguay	19.4	5.6	15.7 x	17.9	14.1	70.2	0.0	3.0	819	106
Peru	13.2	12.2	3.1	14.5	11.2	56.0	0.9	3.8	850	99
Philippines	27.3	30.3	5.7	11.1 x,y,z	8.3	54.8	0.2 b	3.5	812	110
Poland	4.4	2.6 x	2.5	...	1.0	10.2	0.0	0.2	974	25
Portugal	3.7	...	0.4	...	2.1	8.0	0.0	0.4	980	11
Qatar	6.5	...	4.1 x	...	1.7	9.6	0.0	3.8	953	40
Republic of Korea	3.2	2.5 x	2.2	...	0.4	1.3	0.0	0.4	982	7
Republic of Moldova	14.4	6.4 x	17.1	16.3 x,y,z	9.7	22.2	0.2	0.8	869	86
Romania	7.0	...	13.6	...	5.7	35.5	0.0	0.3	923	58
Russian Federation	5.8	...	0.7	...	6.5	19.6	0.1	1.5	954	37
Rwanda	34.3	36.9	15.4	19.0 x	2.6	38.9	2.2	3.0	776	125
Saint Lucia	22.3	2.5 x	7.4	3.3 x	4.8	39.9	0.5	5.1	901	72
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	14.6	...	4.7	...	14.3	48.2	0.9	4.5	877	83
Samoa	15.0	7.3 a	4.0	13.9 a	6.6	23.3	0.1	1.2	901	72
Sao Tome and Principe	29.8	11.7 a	12.1	10.5 a	14.3	93.3	0.0	4.0	801	113
Saudi Arabia	6.6	9.3 x	2.6	...	2.9	7.1	0.0	4.1	938	48
Senegal	45.3	17.9 a	49.4 x	22.8	24.3	70.7	0.2	4.5	670	155
Serbia	5.3	5.4 a	5.5	9.5 a	3.4	14.1	2.9 c	0.3	930	52
Seychelles	14.2	7.9 x	6.3	...	6.6	61.2	0.0	1.4	867	87
Sierra Leone	109.2	29.5	29.7	25.2	14.6	110.2	0.2	6.5	613	172
Singapore	2.5	...	0.2	...	0.3	3.5	0.0	0.2	990	1
Slovakia	5.8	...	6.5	...	1.4	25.9	0.0	0.3	954	37
Slovenia	2.1	...	1.0	...	0.4	3.7	0.0	0.2	990	1
Solomon Islands	19.7	31.7	31.3 x	17.9	9.6	78.4	0.0	1.8	742	136
Somalia	117.0	25.3 x	...	49.0 x,y,z	21.1	97.6	22.9 b	3.1	489	183
South Africa	34.5	27.4	13.8	3.6	3.0	67.8	0.0	15.8	771	128

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

# Complete End of Childhood Index 2021

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED		CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE		END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2021					
		Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)						Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)						
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2015-2020*		2015-2019*	2015-2020*	2018	2018	2020	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 186)				
South Sudan	96.2	31.3	x	61.9	...	22.9	59.4	36.3	b	2.7	499	182			
Spain	3.1	...		2.1	...	3.6	7.5	0.0		0.2	976	16			
Sri Lanka	7.1	17.3		5.0	1.0	y,z	5.9	20.7	0.9	0.8	915	63			
State of Palestine	19.4	8.7	a	8.0	7.3	a	14.7	51.9	2.2	3.9	z	853	96		
Sudan	58.4	38.2	x	47.5	x	18.1	x	18.3	60.8	6.2	b	3.1	642	163	
Suriname	18.0	8.3	a	18.1	4.3		10.5	60.6	0.0	3.4		852	97		
Sweden	2.6	...		0.6	...		2.3	5.1	0.0	0.6		983	5		
Switzerland	4.0	...		6.1	...		0.4	2.6	0.0	0.3		976	16		
Syrian Arab Republic	21.5	27.9	x	41.1	x	4.0	x,y,z	11.1	38.0	76.9	b	1.2	639	165	
Tajikistan	33.8	17.5		10.3	x	10.0	x,y,z	12.6	57.5	0.0		0.5	830	105	
Thailand	9.0	13.3	a	12.2	x	8.3	x,y,z	15.7	44.7	0.0		2.0	854	93	
Timor-Leste	44.2	45.6	a	11.1	...		7.8	32.4	0.0	5.3		753	133		
Togo	66.9	23.8		21.1	48.5	a	11.1	88.7	0.1	4.9		650	160		
Tonga	16.6	2.2	a	7.6	26.1	a	4.2	14.3	0.5	2.3		882	79		
Trinidad and Tobago*	17.5	9.2	x	4.2	x,z	0.8	x	5.4	29.3	0.1	16.3		865	88	
Tunisia*	16.9	8.4		13.3	x,z	2.3	x	0.9	7.9	0.0		0.6	929	54	
Turkey	10.0	6.0		9.4	5.9	x,y,z	5.2	25.6	0.2	0.9		918	59		
Turkmenistan	42.0	7.1	a	6.8	0.3		6.0	24.2	0.0	1.5		905	71		
Tuvalu	23.9	10.0	x	26.8	...		8.0	x,y,z	28.0	x,z	0.0	2.2	z	848	100
Uganda*	45.8	28.9		23.3	z	18.1		19.9	116.1	5.2		6.7	668	156	
Ukraine	8.4	...		5.7	x	3.2	x	5.2	23.0	5.7		0.6	930	52	
United Arab Emirates	7.5	...		3.4	...		5.7	5.9	0.0	1.7		954	37		
United Kingdom	4.3	...		1.6	...		2.4	12.6	0.0	0.6		972	28		
United Republic of Tanzania	50.3	31.8		39.7	24.8	x	22.6	116.9	0.0	4.3		625	167		
United States	6.5	3.5		1.3	...		3.5	18.6	0.0	3.4		948	43		
Uruguay	7.1	10.7	x	3.3	4.2	x	10.7	58.2	0.0	3.6		883	78		
Uzbekistan	17.4	10.8		4.0	...		3.8	24.2	0.0	0.5		916	62		
Vanuatu	25.9	28.9	x	13.5	15.6	x	10.6	48.9	0.0	1.2		799	115		
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	24.2	13.4	x	13.2	...		14.0	85.0	17.2	25.1		697	145		
Vietnam*	19.9	23.8		10.2	x,z	13.1	x	9.5	29.2	0.3		1.2	841	103	
Yemen	58.4	46.4	x	28.1	22.7	x,y,z	16.4	59.2	12.7	b		2.8	644	162	
Zambia*	61.7	34.6		22.1	x,z	23.0	x	15.5	118.3	0.0		5.5	656	157	
Zimbabwe	54.6	23.5		14.1	x	27.9		19.1	83.2	2.0		9.3	686	150	
GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES*															
Sub-Saharan Africa§	75.8	32.7		30.3	28.9		23.0	102.8	2.8	5.4		610	–		
Eastern and Southern Africa	55.4	32.7		26.9	26.6		20.0	92.1	2.6	5.2		652	–		
West and Central Africa	94.7	32.7		32.3	30.6		26.7	114.7	2.8	5.9		570	–		
Middle East and North Africa	21.8	14.3		16.7	4.7		12.8	40.0	4.6	2.6		840	–		
South Asia	40.2	33.2		23.7	12.4	y,z	29.0	z	25.5	0.3		2.0	739	–	
East Asia and Pacific	14.3	11.0		9.2	10.0	y,z**	5.7	20.5	0.1	1.3		895	–		
Latin America and Caribbean	16.3	9.0		9.1	10.5	z	10.9	63.0	2.3	11.6		817	–		
CEE/CIS‡	11.5	7.7		5.5	5.4	y,z	7.3	26.2	1.0	1.0		915	–		
World	37.7	21.3		16.9	12.6	y,z**	16.0	44.0	1.0	z	3.3	789	–		

Coloring reflects prevalence: **Moderate** **High** **Very high**

... Data are unavailable or outdated (i.e., pre-2005)

+ Data refer to the most recent year available during the reference period

a Estimate from recent MICS or DHS (pending reanalysis)

b There is evidence of recruitment and use of children (e.g., as child soldiers)

c Includes displaced populations from Serbia and Kosovo

d Includes displaced populations of Tibetan origin

x Data refer to the most recent year available during the period 2005-2014

y Data differ from the standard definition (interpret with caution)

z Data are from a secondary source (interpret with caution)

§ Includes Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Djibouti, Sudan

‡ Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

\* To include as many countries as possible in the ranking, school attendance data for these 17 countries were sourced from surveys because recent enrollment data were not available

\*\* Excludes China

† Includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees (refugees and IDPs), Venezuelans displaced abroad and others of concern to UNHCR

Note: For indicator definitions, primary and secondary data sources, prevalence thresholds and regional classifications, see Methodology and Research Notes.

# Methodology and Research Notes

Every child has a right to childhood. The concept of childhood is defined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.<sup>2</sup> It represents a shared vision of childhood: healthy children in school and at play, growing strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults, gradually taking on the responsibilities of adulthood, free from fear, safe from violence, protected from abuse and exploitation. This ideal contrasts starkly with the childhood many experience.

Countries differ greatly in their ability to protect childhood. The *End of Childhood Index* explores this variation across countries, revealing where and how children are being robbed of the childhoods they deserve. The hope is it will stimulate discussion and action to ensure every last child fully experiences childhood.

## CHILDHOOD ENDERS

This index does not capture the full extent of deprivations or hardships affecting children. Instead, it focuses on some key rights or “guarantees” of childhood: life, healthy growth and development, education and protection from harm. If a child experiences all of these, his/her childhood is considered to be “intact.”

The index tracks a series of events that, should any one of them occur, mark the end of an intact childhood. These events are called “childhood enders” and include: child dies, malnutrition permanently impairs child’s development, child leaves or fails to enter school, child begins work life, child marries, child has a child, and child is a victim of extreme violence.

Ender events erode childhood. Depending on the number and severity of enders experienced, the loss of childhood could be complete or only partial.<sup>3</sup> But once a child experiences an ender, childhood becomes fractured rather than complete.<sup>4</sup> Each event represents an assault on childhood. At some point, as the assaults mount up, childhood ends.

Countries are scored and ranked according to performance across this set of enders, revealing where childhood is most and least threatened.

## INDICATORS, DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

The following eight indicators were selected because they best represent these enders, are available for a large number of countries and are regularly updated.<sup>5</sup> Data were obtained from reliable and reputable sources, almost exclusively UN agencies, and are publicly available to those interested in doing additional analyses.

**Under-5 mortality rate (U5MR):** The probability of dying between birth and exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births. Estimates are for 2019. Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation ([childmortality.org](http://childmortality.org)).

**Child stunting (moderate and severe):** Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median height-for-age of the WHO Child Growth Standards. Estimates are for the most recent year available 2005-2020. Sources: UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group. *Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, July 2020 Edition, updated with data from recent MICS and DHS surveys for 24 countries (see Complete End of Childhood Index).*

**Out-of-school rate for children, adolescents and youth of primary and secondary school age (OOSC):** The number of children, adolescents and youth of official primary and secondary school age who are not enrolled<sup>6</sup> in

ENDER	INDICATOR
Child dies	Under-5 mortality rate
Child is severely malnourished	Child stunting (%)
Child is out of school	Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (%)
Child begins work life	Child labor (%)
Child marries	Adolescents currently married or in union (%)
Child has a child	Adolescent birth rate
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (%)
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Child homicide rate

## Methodology and Research Notes

primary, secondary or higher levels of education, expressed as a percentage of the population of official school age. Children and young people (about ages 6 and over) who are enrolled in pre-primary education are considered to be out of school.<sup>7</sup> Data are for the most recent year available 2005-2019.

Sources: UNESCO's UIS.Stat ([data.uis.unesco.org](http://data.uis.unesco.org)), supplemented with household survey data from UNESCO's World Inequality Database on Education ([education-inequalities.org](http://education-inequalities.org)) for 17 countries (see Complete End of Childhood Index). Note: Household survey data were used to estimate OOSC rates only where official data were unavailable or outdated (i.e., pre 2005). Rates were derived by dividing the number of children, adolescents and youth out of school (calculated as: primary OOSC\*primary population + lower secondary OOSC\*lower secondary population + upper secondary OOS\*upper secondary population) by the total population of official primary and secondary school age. Official school age population data were sourced from UIS.Stat and refer to the same OOSC reference year.

**Child labor:** Percentage of children 5-17 years old involved in child labor.<sup>8</sup> Data are for the most recent year available 2005-2020. Sources: UNICEF Data Warehouse ([data.unicef.org/dv\\_index/](http://data.unicef.org/dv_index/)), supplemented with data from UNICEF's The State of the World's Children 2017 for 27 countries and from recent MICS and DHS surveys for 19 countries (see Complete End of Childhood Index).

**Adolescents currently married or in union:** Percentage of girls 15-19 years of age who have been married and are not either divorced, widowed or separated. Estimates are for 2018 for all but the three countries with supplemental data. Sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Population Division, Estimates and Projections of Women of Reproductive Age Who Are Married or in a Union: 2020 Revision, supplemented with data for Marshall Islands, Nauru and Tuvalu from UNDESA, Population Division, World Marriage Data 2019 ([population.un.org/MarriageData/index.html](http://population.un.org/MarriageData/index.html)).

**Adolescent birth rate:** Births to women aged 15-19 per 1,000 women in that age group. Estimates are for 2018 for all but the three countries with supplemental data. Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators ([data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT)), supplemented with data for Marshall Islands, Nauru and Tuvalu from the SDG Indicators Global Database ([unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database](http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database)).

**Population forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution:** Total population of concern to UNHCR,<sup>9</sup> by country or territory of origin, expressed as a percentage of the country's or territory's population. Data are for mid-2020. Sources: UNHCR, Mid-Year Trends 2020. (Geneva: 2020) and UNDESA, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

**Evidence of child soldiers:** Countries identified as having governmental armed forces, government-supported armed groups or other parties that recruit or use child soldiers. The term "child soldier" includes children who are serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard or sex slave. Sources: CSPA List from Trafficking in Persons Report 2020 ([state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/](http://state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/)) and Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, Annex I and Annex II ([undocs.org/A/74/845](http://undocs.org/A/74/845)). Note: This indicator is not factored into the index score but has been noted in the Complete End of Childhood Index table.

**Child homicide rate:** Estimated number of deaths caused by interpersonal violence among children and adolescents aged 0-19 years (from WHO), expressed per 100,000 population in that age group (from UNDESA, Population Division). Estimates are for 2016. Sources: WHO, Global Health Estimates 2016: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2016 ([terrance.who.int/mediacentre/data/ghe/](http://terrance.who.int/mediacentre/data/ghe/)) and UNDESA, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision ([esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/)), supplemented with rates for Marshall Islands, Nauru, State of Palestine and Tuvalu from Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 ([ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool](http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool)).

## CALCULATIONS

As indicators are measured on different scales, each was first normalized using a linear scaling technique:

$$X_N = (X - \text{Worst}) / (\text{Best} - \text{Worst})$$

Where:

$X_N$  is the normalized value

$X$  is the actual value

Worst is the highest observed value for the indicator

Best is the lowest possible value for the indicator

This technique ensures scores range between 0 and 1 and that all indicators are coded positively (i.e., higher scores indicate better performance).<sup>10</sup>

All indicators are weighted equally. The overall index score was calculated by summing across the normalized scores for each indicator and then dividing by eight. Scores were multiplied by 1,000 and rounded to three digits. Countries were sorted from high to low by this overall index score (with 1,000 being the best possible score) and then ranked from 1 to 186.

To help ensure index scores are comparable from year to year and that countries can track progress over time, the best

## Methodology and Research Notes

ENDER	INDICATOR	BEST	WORST	WEIGHT
Child dies	Under-5 mortality rate	0.0	156.9	1/8
Child is severely malnourished	Child stunting (%)	0.0	57.5	1/8
Child is out of school	Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (%)	0.0	67.5	1/8
Child begins work life	Child labor (%)	0.0	55.8	1/8
Child marries	Adolescents currently married or in union (%)	0.0	59.8	1/8
Child has a child	Adolescent birth rate	0.0	201.2	1/8
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (%)	0.0	65.4	1/8
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Child homicide rate	0.0	32.8	1/8

(i.e., minimum) and worst (i.e., maximum) values and the indicator weights have been fixed from the inaugural year onwards as shown in the table above.

### MISSING VALUES

The *Complete End of Childhood Index* table includes all 186 countries with recent data (from 2005 and onwards) for at least five of the eight indicators.

Countries missing violence data were dropped from the ranking.<sup>11</sup> Countries missing up to any two of the other six indicators were allowed to remain in the index. This was the only way to ensure a sufficient number of high-income OECD countries were included, as most do not collect or publish data on stunting or child labor.

In total, 186 countries had sufficient data to be ranked. 106 countries have data for all eight indicators. 35 countries are missing one indicator. 45 countries are missing two indicators, 39 of which are high-income countries.<sup>12</sup>

For countries lacking stunting, out-of-school or child labor data, the normalized score for their under-5 mortality rate was used in place of the missing value(s). Under-5 mortality is the leading indicator of child well-being and is strongly correlated with these three indicators.<sup>13</sup> For countries lacking child marriage data, the normalized score for their adolescent birth rate was ascribed. These two indicators are also highly correlated.<sup>14</sup>

Ascribing fillers for these missing values helped ensure countries weren't being rewarded for the lack of data and that data imputations for missing values were based on a country's performance on another, strongly correlated, childhood ender.

### PREVALENCE THRESHOLDS AND PERFORMANCE BANDS

Country-level performance on each indicator was assessed according to the thresholds in the table on the next page. Countries with "moderate," "high" or "very high" prevalence of enders were color-coded as shown.

To the greatest extent possible, indicator thresholds were based on international standards. The classification schemes used for under-5 mortality and stunting are established.<sup>15</sup> The same breakdowns for stunting were used for out-of-school, child labor and child marriage. The breakdowns for adolescent births were adapted from those used by the World Bank and the WHO.<sup>16</sup> Those for displacement were based loosely on categories used by UNHCR for a related indicator.<sup>17</sup> The homicide strata were adapted from UNICEF and UNODC.<sup>18</sup>

To establish tiers or "performance bands," the boundary points between threshold levels were normalized for each indicator and then indexed. Index scores were rounded to two

BAND	SHARE OF CHILDREN MISSING OUT ON CHILDHOOD	INDEX SCORES
1	Relatively few children	≥ 940
2	Some children	760 to 939
3	Many children	600 to 759
4	Most children	380 to 599
5	Nearly all children	≤ 379

## Methodology and Research Notes

INDICATOR	VERY LOW	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000)	< 10	10 to < 25	25 to < 50	50 to < 100	≥ 100
Child stunting (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Out-of-school children and youth (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Child labor (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Child marriage (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000)	< 15	15 to < 50	50 to < 100	100 to < 150	≥ 150
Population displaced by conflict (%)	< 1	1 to < 2	2 to < 5	5 to < 20	≥ 20
Child homicide rate (per 100,000)	< 1	1 to < 5	5 to < 10	10 to < 20	≥ 20
<b>PERFORMANCE BAND</b>	≥ 940	760 - 939	600 - 759	380 - 599	≤ 379

decimal places and then multiplied by 1,000 to give the cut-off points for each tier. Countries were placed into one of 5 bands according to their index score.

### COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION

The *End of Childhood Index* presents data for the world as a whole and for various country groupings. These groupings are based on UNICEF's nomenclature and regional classification. For a list of countries and territories in each region, see: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2016*, p. 112.

Global and regional data were sourced from the UN,<sup>19</sup> with the exception of out-of-school, forced displacement and child homicide rates. Regional averages for these three indicators were calculated by Save the Children, as were global rates for the last two. Each was calculated as a weighted average, with the relevant population used as the weights.<sup>20</sup> All UNICEF countries with available data were included in these estimates.<sup>21</sup> Population coverage was above 95% for all region-indicator pairs.<sup>22</sup>

The designations employed in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Save the Children concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

### LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

It would not be possible to include all the factors that erode childhood in a single index. This index focuses only on the most significant enders for which reliable and comparable data are widely available. Some indicators (e.g., sexual violence, trafficking, hazardous work) would have been

included had there been sufficient data. Others (e.g., incarceration, orphanhood, migration, bullying, corporal punishment, substance use) had data but weren't included because they do not necessarily – in and of themselves – signal the end of childhood. A child who is incarcerated, for example, can receive substantial rehabilitation services including counseling, schooling and a reliable network of caring adults. Many potential indicators (e.g., child abuse) were also discarded due to data quality concerns or because they were not the most relevant indicator for the ender in question (e.g., suicide for child dies).<sup>23</sup>

Save the Children has not independently verified the data used in this report. To ensure the data are of the highest quality, all data are from reputable international sources that closely review and adjust national data to ensure that they are as accurate and comparable as possible.

The index presents the most recent data available as of 10 February 2021. Data are not available for the same reference year for all indicators or for all countries. Of the 186 countries ranked, 97 have very recent data (i.e., 2014-onward) for all indicators. 89 countries have at least one data point from 2005-2013.

For 12 countries without official education data, as well as five whose most recent official figures predate 2005, household survey data were used to give an indication of the extent of exclusion from education.<sup>24</sup>

Using the total population of concern to UNHCR can overestimate the share of national population forcibly displaced by conflict because "others of concern" can include host communities who are affected by conflict but aren't necessarily displaced persons.<sup>25</sup>

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, UNICEF and Save the Children, *Technical Note: Impact of COVID-19 on Child Poverty* (2020) and *Children in Monetary Poor Households and COVID-19; Projections as of November 2020* (2020); UNICEF, *COVID-19: Are Children Able to Continue Learning During School Closures? A Global Analysis of the Potential Reach of Remote Learning Policies Using Data From 100 Countries* (2020); T. Robertson, E.D. Carter, V.B. Chou, et al. “Early Estimates of the Indirect Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Maternal and Child Mortality in Low-Income and Middle-Income Countries: A Modelling Study,” *Lancet Global Health* 2020, 8:e901–e908; Artur Borkowski, Ortiz Correa Javier Santiago, Donald A.P. Bundy, Carmen Burbano, Chika Hayashi, Edward Lloyd-Evans, Jutta Neitzel and Nicolas Reuge, “COVID-19: Missing More Than a Classroom. The Impact of School Closures on Children’s Nutrition,” *Innocenti Working Papers*, No. 2021-01 (2021); WHO and UNICEF, *Immunization Coverage: Are we Losing Ground?* (2020)

<sup>2</sup> Childhood means more than just the time between birth and adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child’s life – to the quality of those years. As the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by all but one country, represents a global consensus on the terms of childhood. Although there is not absolute agreement on the interpretation of each and every provision of the Convention, there is substantial common ground on what the standards of childhood should be. Source: UNICEF. *The State of the World’s Children 2005*.

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, enders unequivocally signal the end of childhood (e.g., death). Others (e.g., departure from school, child labor) may only chip away at childhood, especially if remedial action is taken (e.g., child re-enrolls in school, child stops working).

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that children who experience enders are not still children or that they cannot still enjoy some aspects of childhood. A child who is out of school, for example, may still learn other skills at home. Refugee children still play and may study if the right policies and programs are in place. And even though they have taken on adult roles and responsibilities, child brides and teen mothers are still children entitled to protection and support.

<sup>5</sup> Other selection criteria included: reliability, face validity, comparability, policy relevance, news-worthiness, contemporaneity and alignment with SDG targets.

<sup>6</sup> For the 17 countries where household survey data are used, the indicator represents the share of school-aged children not attending school.

<sup>7</sup> The current international standard is to treat children of primary school age or older enrolled in pre-primary education as out of school because pre-primary education does not meet the same education standards as formal primary or higher education. This may result in an overestimate of the rate of children who are not in school, in particular in countries where pre-primary education is compulsory.

<sup>8</sup> A child is considered to be involved in child labor under the following conditions: a) children aged 5-11 who, during the reference week, did at least one hour of economic work or at least 28 hours of household chores; b) children aged 12-14 who, during the reference week, did at least 14 hours of economic work or at least 28 hours of household chores; and c) children aged 15-17 who, during the reference week, did at least 43 hours of economic work or household chores.

<sup>9</sup> Includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees (refugees and IDPs) and others of concern who do not necessarily fall directly into any of the other groups but to whom UNHCR may extend its protection and/or assistance services.

<sup>10</sup> Syria’s score for displacement is the only exception. Because this year’s estimate (74.5%) exceeds the “worst” possible score of 65.4, Syria’s normalized score is actually negative (-0.14).

<sup>11</sup> This did not affect any countries in 2021.

<sup>12</sup> The *Complete End of Childhood Index* table indicates the indicator(s) that are missing for these 80 countries.

<sup>13</sup> In the inaugural year, correlation coefficients were 0.68, 0.76 and 0.74, respectively.

<sup>14</sup> The correlation coefficient in the inaugural year was 0.81.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, [data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/](https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/) and [data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/](https://data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/)

<sup>16</sup> See [gamapserver.who.int/mapLibrary/Files/Maps/Global\\_AdolescentBirthRate\\_2015.png](https://gamapserver.who.int/mapLibrary/Files/Maps/Global_AdolescentBirthRate_2015.png) and [data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?view=map](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?view=map)

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR. *Mid-Year Trends 2016*. p.11

<sup>18</sup> See UNICEF. *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children*. (New York: 2014) p.39 and UNODC. *Global Study on Homicide 2013*. (Vienna: 2014) p.12

<sup>19</sup> Under-5 mortality rates and stunting data were pulled from [data.unicef.org](https://data.unicef.org). World and regional averages for child labor and adolescent childbearing were pulled from UNICEF’s *The State of the World’s Children (SOWC) 2019*, while child marriage rates are from SOWC 2017, with the following exceptions: the global average for child labor, the CEE/CIS average for child labor and child marriage rates for South Asia are all from SOWC 2015, the child labor rate for East Asia and Pacific is from SOWC 2016 and the child labor rate for Latin America and Caribbean is from SOWC 2017.

<sup>20</sup> The official primary + secondary school-aged population in 2019 (UIS Stat), total national population in 2020 (UNDESA) and child population aged 0-19 in 2016 (UNDESA) were used as weights for out-of-school, displacement and child homicide averages, respectively. The only exceptions were school-aged populations for Brazil (2011), Singapore (2018) and Ukraine (2014). The global average for child homicide was estimated in the same way (i.e., as a weighted average of country rates) but the rate of forced displacement worldwide was calculated directly from the latest global count from UNHCR ([unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html](https://unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html)) and world population data from UNDESA, both for the start of 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Even if a country did not have sufficient data to be included in the *Complete End of Childhood Index* table, if it had indicator-level data, it was included in global and regional rates for that indicator.

<sup>22</sup> Coverage reached or exceeded 99% for all estimates except for school-aged populations in the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa (both 97%).

<sup>23</sup> A list of excluded indicators has been compiled and can be provided upon request.

<sup>24</sup> Household surveys measure participation as attendance at any time during the preceding school year – a fairly generous approach that is not substantively dissimilar to formal enrollment. Holding constant other reasons that survey and administrative data may differ (such as attendance in non-formal schools), one would expect attendance to be slightly lower than enrollment since children may be officially enrolled but not attend. For the seven countries with old enrollment data, attendance rates are actually higher than enrollment figures, which produced more favorable results.

<sup>25</sup> This is especially true in Uganda, where over 99% of the total population of concern to UNHCR (2.35 million of 2.37 million people) are host communities.



*5-year-old Valentina and her mother Aubrey inside their shelter in Colombia. The family fled Venezuela's economic and political crisis in 2018.*

## Acknowledgements

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Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Since our founding over 100 years ago, we've changed the lives of over 1 billion children. Around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

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Save the Children USA  
501 Kings Highway East, Suite 400  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06825  
United States  
1 (800) 728-3843  
[savethechildren.org](http://savethechildren.org)

Save the Children International  
St Vincent's House  
30 Orange Street  
London WC2H 7HH  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)20 3272-0300  
[savethechildren.net](http://savethechildren.net)



#### ON THE COVER

*In Niger, 11-year-old Salbia was taken out of school to help at home. Her responsibilities include fetching water, pounding grain, cooking and taking care of her younger siblings.*

Photo: Victoria Zegler