

# UNECE Guidance on Statistics for Children and Youth: Spotlight on children in alternative care

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# Children in alternative care



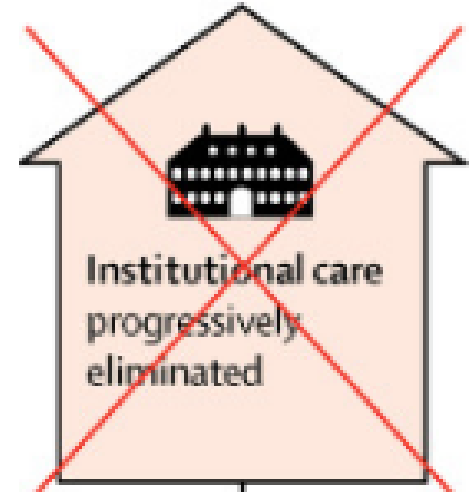
# Main topics covered by the UNECE survey

- Whether statistics on children are regularly/systematically produced
- Main indicators produced, including:
  - Data source
  - Type of entity producing the statistics
  - Measure or definition (alternative care/violence/disability)
  - Disaggregators
  - Frequency of data collection and reporting
- Challenges faced in the collection of data and reporting of statistics
- Improvements that could be made to data collection and reporting



# Background and International definitions/measures

- Alternative care can be divided into two main categories:
  - **residential care** and **family-based care**
- The 2009 *UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* speak in favour of deinstitutionalization as do EU policies:
  - “where large residential care facilities (institutions) remain, alternatives should be developed in the context of an overall Deinstitutionalisation strategy, with precise goals and objectives, which will allow for their progressive elimination”
- UN Guidelines do not serve the purpose of classification and no clear definition of ‘institutional care’ currently exists



# Background and International definitions/measures

- **International statistical standards have not yet been developed**
- One of the few international efforts to capture data on children in alternative care is the **TransMonEE (Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity)** database
  - Includes indicators from **administrative data** for 29 countries
  - **Data issues including quality and comparability as well as gaps**
  - To complement data from the UNECE survey, the Task Force considered additional data collected via TransMonEE







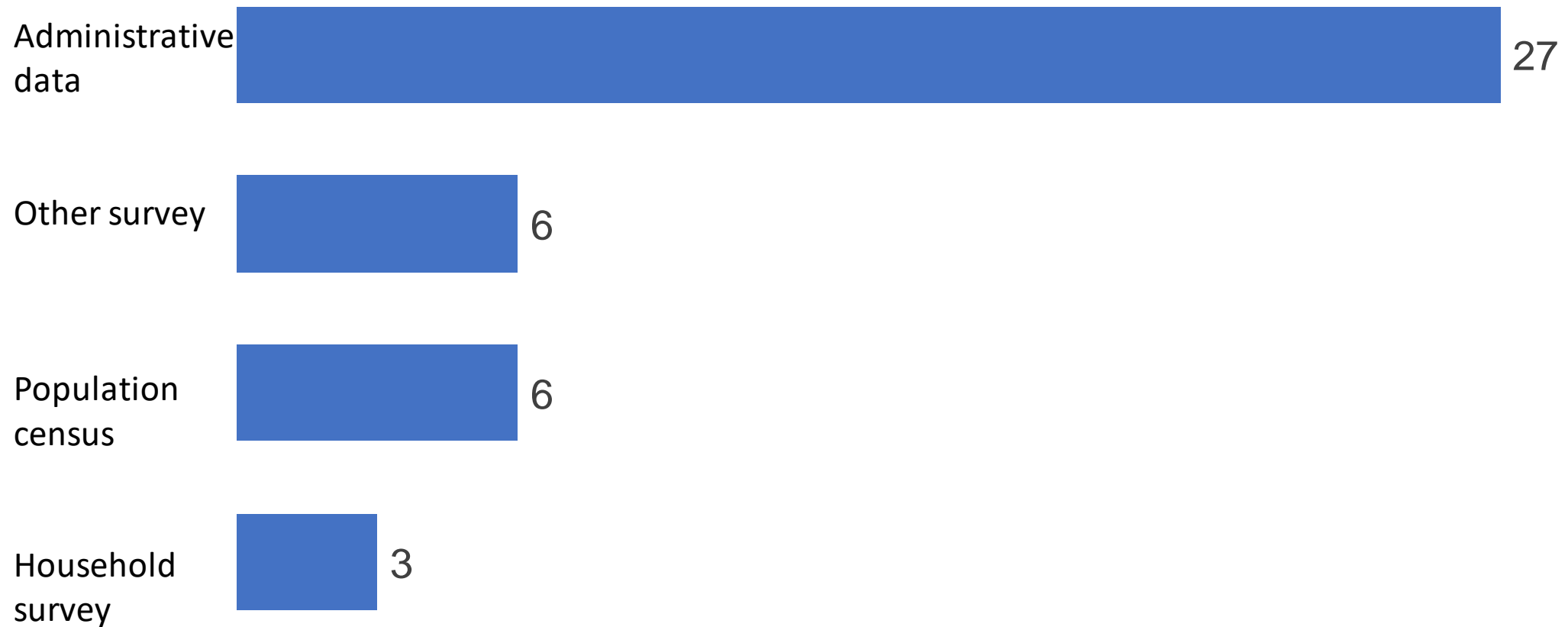
## Key findings: Children in Alternative Care

- **Data are collected by most of the countries** that participated in the UNECE survey
- **Definitions** and classifications of sub-types of care **vary across countries** and across jurisdictions
- Agreement in the trend of deinstitutionalization, but **no clear definition of institutional nor how it differs from other forms of residential care exists**
- Most countries (43 or 86%) report **stock** indicators. Fewer countries report **inflow** (27 or 54%) and **outflow** (21 countries or 42%) indicators
- Most countries collect data on **sex, age, and disability status** of children in alternative care



# Key findings

Most countries that responded to the UNECE survey rely on **administrative data sources**



# Spotlight on Canada



- The Census of Population provides information on the number of foster children aged 0-14
- Definitions of 'children in care' and placement categories vary by jurisdiction
  - The age of protection also varies (ranging from 0-15 to 0-18)
- Efforts have been made to produce point-in-time counts of the number of children in alternative care in Canada

Canadian Child Welfare  
Research Portal



## Children in Out-of-Home Care in Canada in 2019

Marie Saint-Girons, Nico Trocmé, Tonino Esposito, & Barbara Fallon  
November 2020





## Key recommendations

- Countries should develop and adopt **standardized definitions and classifications** for alternative care
- NSOs should **assess the quality** of national surveys and administrative data
  - administrative data appears to be a good starting point
- Countries should adopt an **indicator framework**, including a **standard set of disaggregation variables**
  - At minimum, alternative care **indicators should be disaggregated by sex and age**
- **NSOs and line ministries** should exchange **national experiences and good practices**



# Statistics on children and youth – Key messages

1. The work to produce internationally standard and comparable statistics on children and youth is in its infancy
2. Definitions and classifications pose a challenge; inconsistency is found around even the most fundamental concepts of children and youth
3. International organizations such as UNICEF, OECD, and Eurostat have made efforts to improve the collection and dissemination of data on children and youth. Yet, there is a need *for* better coordination of these efforts.

# Thank you!

For more information, please feel free to contact:



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