



International
Labour
Organization



Child domestic work: Global estimates 2012

This factsheet is an update to the global estimates on child domestic work 2008

Within the framework of the global estimates on child labour recently published,¹ the ILO-IPEC, for the second time, has produced global estimates of children in domestic work. This effort builds on detailed information from national household surveys, which contain a valuable source of data on child domestic work. The 2012 estimates on child domestic work and child labour in domestic work are based on the industry-approach when measuring domestic work. For this reason, results are not fully comparable with the previous estimates (2008), which were based on an occupation-approach. The industry-based approach was recently recommended by the ILO.²

The precise number of child domestic workers worldwide is still not known, because reliable data on this type of activity remain limited. An additional difficulty in measuring child domestic work has been the ambiguity surrounding which children to include. As measurement involves decisions of what and how to measure, it is important to note that in this factsheet the term “child domestic work” refers to the situation where children aged 5 to 17 years perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or employer (with or without remuneration). Also in statistical terms, therefore, child domestic work is considered as “economic activity” – or a subset of children in employment.

Despite a number of limitations to fully capturing all hidden work situations, a number of household surveys among those used in the 2012 ILO’s global estimates on child labour, provide important quantitative information on child domestic work – allowing for global estimates on child domestic workers to be made. All estimates

¹ ILO-IPEC. *Marking progress against child labour - Global estimates and trends 2000-2012*. International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) (Geneva, ILO, 2013). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_221513/lang--en/index.htm.

² ILO. *Domestic workers across the world: global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection* (Geneva, 2013). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/travail/Whatsnew/WCMS_173363/lang--en/index.htm.

are for the benchmark year 2012.³ These estimates are based on established ILO statistical methodologies.

1. Children in domestic work

By age group

It is estimated that 17.2 million children aged 5-17 years were engaged in domestic work in the world in 2012, representing 6.5 per cent of all children in economic activity in this age group.⁴ Of this, the number of child domestic workers between 5-14 years old is estimated to be 11.2 million, accounting for approximately 7.8 per cent of all children in employment in that age group. A marked difference in the incidence of child domestic work can be observed as one crosses the international benchmark minimum age to work of 15 years. The estimated number of child domestic workers in the 15-17 year old age category was 6 million in 2012, approximately 5 per cent of all children in economic activity in that age category (**Table 1**).

By sex

Perhaps not surprisingly, girls far outnumber boys in domestic work. Statistically speaking, 3.8 per cent of all boys aged 5-17 years in economic activity are in domestic work, compared to 9.9 per cent of all 5-17 years old working girls. In absolute terms, at least 5.6 million boys are involved in domestic work compared to 11.5 million girls aged 5-17 years. The gap widens as children cross the minimum age for work threshold, with

1.8 per cent of working boys aged 15-17 years old in domestic work, against 9.8 per cent of girls (**Table 1**). Of the total number of children aged 5-17 years old engaged in domestic work, some 67.1 per cent are girls and 32.9 per cent are boys (**Figure 1**).

2. Child labour in domestic work

Child labour in domestic work denotes those situations which are internationally unacceptable, either because of the child's age, or the circumstances under which domestic work is carried out (as defined by ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182).⁵ Therefore, in keeping with the ILO's global estimate classifications, child labour in domestic work statistically includes: (i) all children aged 5-11 years engaged in domestic work; (ii) all children aged 12-14 years engaged in domestic work for more than 14 hours per week; and (iii) all children aged 15-17 years engaged in hazardous domestic work which includes "for long hours" defined for purposes of these estimates as "43 and more hours per week".⁶

By age group

Table 2 and **Figure 2** show that in 2012 there were an estimated 11.5 million children in child labour in domestic work in the world, of whom 82.6 per cent (9.5 million) were in the age group 5-14 years old. Almost two-thirds of all children in child labour in domestic work were younger than 12 (7.4 million).

³ For further explanation on the definitions and methodology used, please refer to ILO-IPEC. *Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012*. International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_23015/lang-en/index.htm.

⁴ The term "children in economic activity" is numerically same as "children in employment" in the context of child labour statistics.

⁵ ILO-IPEC. *Ending child labour in domestic work and protecting young workers from abusive working conditions*. International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). (Geneva, ILO, 2013). See Chapter 1, available at: http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_207924/lang-fr/index.htm.

⁶ See ILO-IPEC. *Marking progress against child labour*, op. cit., Figure 22. See also ILO-IPEC. *Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012*, op. cit.



Table 1: Estimates of children in domestic work by age and sex, 2012

Age group and sex	Children in employment (CE)	Children in domestic work (CDW)	CDW as % of CE
5-11 years old	73,072,000	7,424,000	10.2
Boys	36,317,000	2,934,000	8.1
Girls	36,755,000	4,490,000	12.2
12-14 years old	70,994,000	3,784,000	5.3
Boys	39,621,000	1,417,000	3.6
Girls	31,373,000	2,367,000	7.5
Total 5-14 years old	144,066,000	11,208,000	7.8
Boys	75,959,000	4,350,000	5.7
Girls	68,107,000	6,858,000	10.1
Total 15-17 years old	120,362,000	5,991,000	5.0
Boys	72,368,000	1,306,000	1.8
Girls	47,994,000	4,685,000	9.8
Total 5-17 years old	264,427,000	17,199,000	6.5
Boys	148,306,000	5,657,000	3.8
Girls	116,120,000	11,542,000	9.9

Figure 1: Distribution of children in domestic work by age and sex, 2012

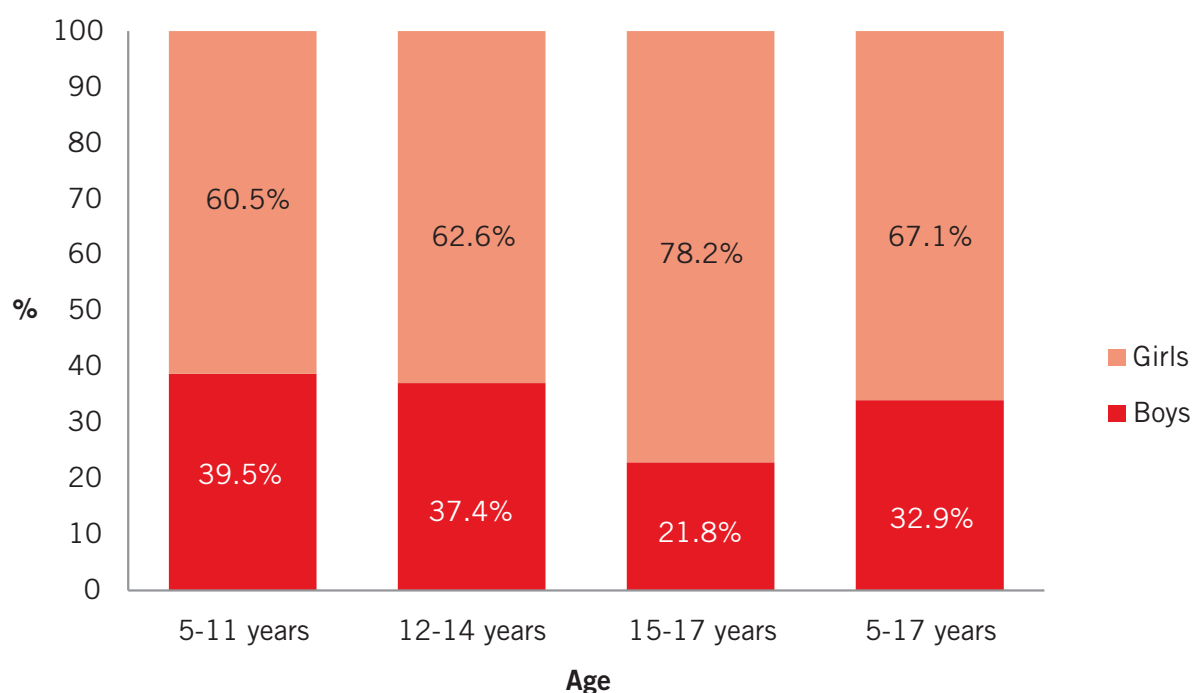
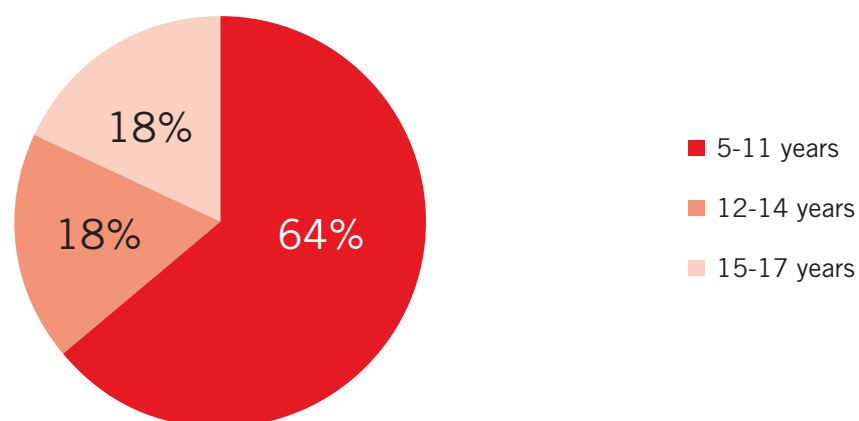


Table 2: Estimates of children in child labour in domestic work by age and sex, 2012

Age group and sex	Children in employment (CE)	Child labour in domestic work (CL in DW)	CL in DW as % of CE
5-11 years old	73,072,000	7,424,000	10.2
Boys	36,317,000	2,934,000	8.1
Girls	36,755,000	4,490,000	12.2
12-14 years old	70,994,000	2,097,000	3.0
Boys	39,621,000	677,000	1.7
Girls	31,373,000	1,420,000	4.5
Total 5-14 years old	144,066,000	9,521,000	6.6
Boys	75,959,000	3,611,000	4.8
Girls	68,107,000	5,910,000	8.7
Total 15-17 years old	120,362,000	2,007,000	1.7
Boys	72,368,000	422,000	0.6
Girls	47,994,000	1,585,000	3.3
Total 5-17 years old	264,427,000	11,528,000	4.4
Boys	148,306,000	4,033,000	2.7
Girls	116,120,000	7,495,000	6.5

Figure 2: Distribution of children in child labour in domestic work by age, 2012





By sex

Differentials by sex with regard to children in child labour in domestic work increase with age (Figure 3). These differentials are quite similar to those between the 17.2 million total number of boys and girls in child domestic work (Figure 1).

The results indicate that in 2012, of the total number of children aged 5-17 years found in child labour in domestic work, around 65 per cent (7.5 million) were girls and 35 per cent (4 million) were boys.

Considering the differentials by sex among children in child labour in domestic work as a percentage of the 264 million children in all types of economic activity, we see that:

(a) for the age group 5-11 years, 12.2 per cent (4.5 million) of girls in economic activity were in child labour in domestic work, in comparison with 8.1 per cent (2.9 million) of boys; and

(b) by contrast, in the age group 15-17 years, while 3.3 per cent (1.6 million) of all girls in economic activity were in child labour in domestic work, only 0.6 per cent (0.4 million) of all working boys were (Table 2).

By comparing Table 1 on the total number of children in domestic work and Table 2 on the total number of children in child labour in domestic work we see that:

- (a) all children in domestic work in the age group 5-11 years (7.4 million) are in child labour because they are below the minimum age for employment, including light work;
- (b) in the age group 12-14 years, more than half of children in domestic work are in child labour, – 55.4 per cent or 2.1 million – while 44.6 per cent or 1.7 million perform light work in domestic work, i.e. they work less than 14 hours per week in non-hazardous conditions; and

Figure 3: Distribution of children in child labour in domestic work by age and sex, 2012

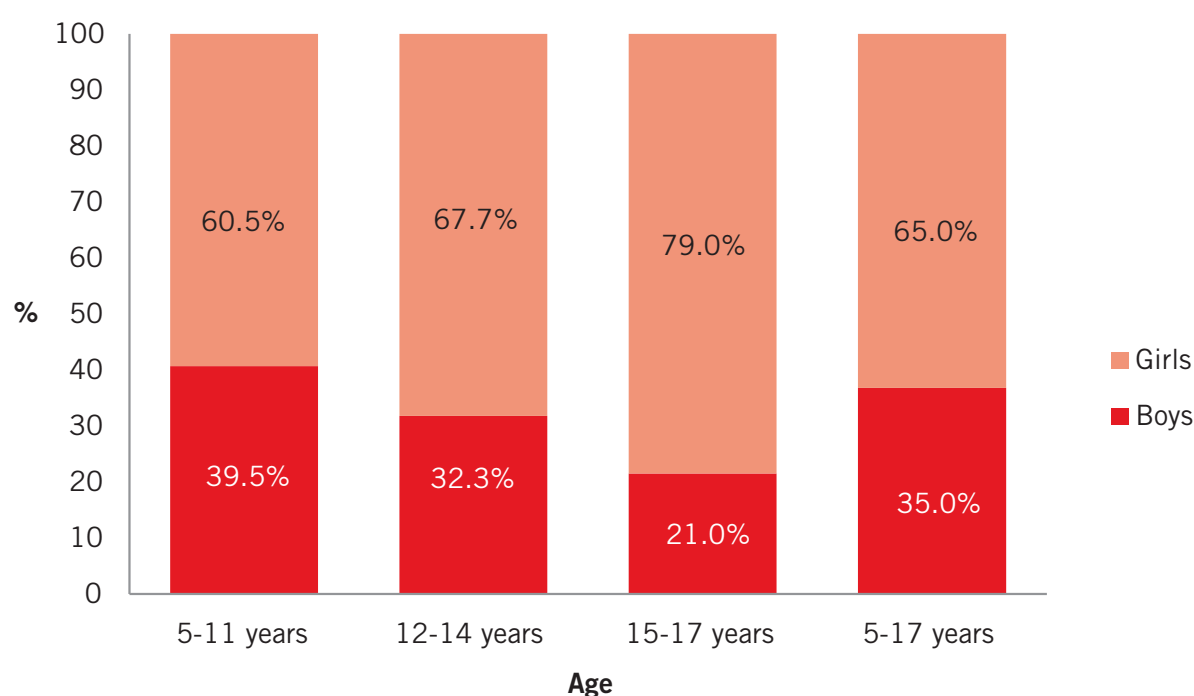


Figure 4: Distribution of children in domestic work by age: child labour, light work and youth employment, 2012

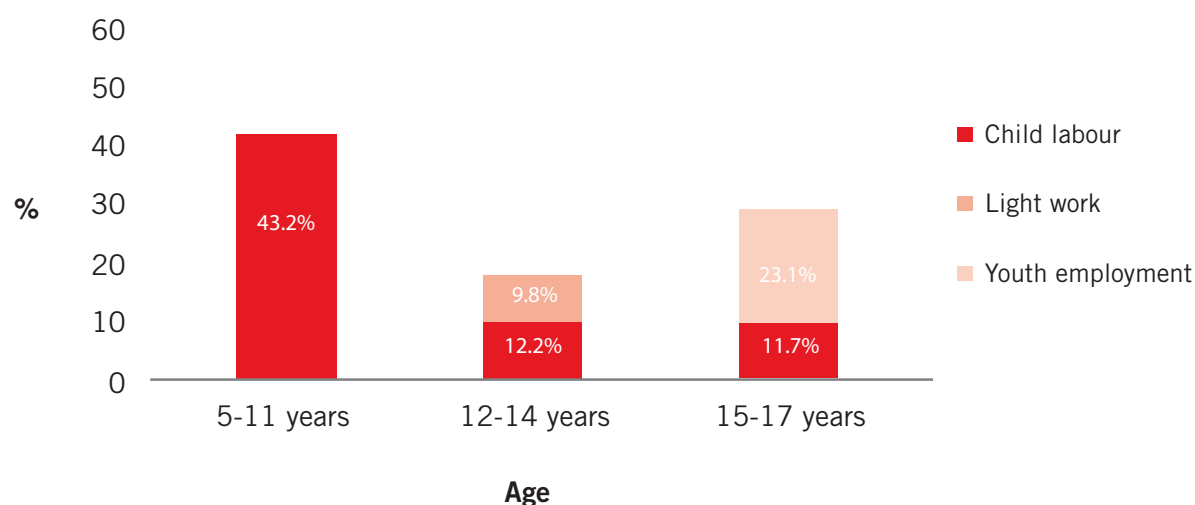


Table 3: Estimates of children in hazardous domestic work by age and sex, 2012

Age group and sex	Children in employment (CE)	Hazardous domestic work (HDW)	HDW as % of CE
5-11 years old	73,072,000	930,000	1.3
Boys	36,317,000	417,000	1.1
Girls	36,755,000	513,000	1.4
12-14 years old	70,994,000	740,000	1.0
Boys	39,621,000	279,000	0.7
Girls	31,373,000	461,000	1.5
Total 5-14 years old	144,066,000	1,670,000	1.2
Boys	75,959,000	696,000	0.9
Girls	68,107,000	974,000	1.4
Total 15-17 years old	120,362,000	2,007,000	1.7
Boys	72,368,000	422,000	0.6
Girls	47,994,000	1,585,000	3.3
Total 5-17 years old	264,427,000	3,677,000	1.4
Boys	148,306,000	1,118,000	0.8
Girls	116,120,000	2,559,000	2.2



- (c) among the age group 15-17 years, 33.5 per cent or 2 million children engaged in domestic work are in child labour – given their age, that means, by definition, that they are in hazardous work (see **Section 3**). In that same age group, 66.5 per cent or 3.9 million children are engaged in domestic work in permissible conditions, i.e. they are above the minimum age for employment and their work is in compliance with legal requirements (**Figure 4**).

3. Hazardous domestic work by children

By age group

Hazardous domestic work by children is work which, by its nature or the circumstances under which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. It is a worst form of child labour under ILO Convention No. 182 and is a subcategory of child labour in domestic work. Almost one third (3.7 million) of all children between 5 and 17 years in child labour in domestic work – above one fifth of all children in domestic work – are performing hazardous work. A quarter of children performing hazardous domestic work are under 12 years old (**Table 3**). This includes children working for long hours, defined for the purposes of these estimates as at least 43 hours per week. However, hazardous work also includes other conditions or circumstances such as night work, or exposure to physical or sexual abuse, for which there are currently no reliable and comparable data.⁷

⁷ As demonstrated in previous exercises on hazardous work by children, the measurement of children in these hazardous work conditions depends on the extent to which the appropriate elements are covered by national surveys. Full comparability of national datasets has therefore not always been possible in this respect.

By sex

In contrast to the usually larger number of boys involved in other forms of hazardous work, 2.6 million girls are involved in hazardous domestic work, compared to 1.1 million boys.

Data emerging from previous global estimates on child labour have shown that gender differentials with regard to the work children do increase with age and with the dangers children face. **Table 3** seems to confirm these earlier estimates. In the age group 5-14 years, 0.9 per cent of all boys in economic activity were in hazardous domestic work, as against 1.4 per cent of all girls. Amongst 15-17 year olds, this dropped to 0.6 per cent of boys as compared to 3.3 per cent of girls.

4. Domestic work and children in slavery-like situations

In 2012, the ILO produced its Global Estimate of Forced Labour. Of the total number of 20.9 million forced labourers, women and girls represent the greater share of total forced labour – 11.4 million victims (55 per cent), compared to 9.5 million (45 per cent) men and boys. Children aged 17 years and below represent 26 per cent of all forced labour victims (or 5.5 million children).⁸ While the specific number of children in forced labour and trafficking for domestic work remains unknown, evidence points to the existence of significant numbers of children in debt bondage, victims of trafficking and in servitude situations.⁹

⁸ ILO. *Global Estimate of Forced Labour 2012: Results and Methodology* (Geneva, 2012). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/publications/WCMS_182004/lang-en/index.htm.

⁹ ILO-IPEC. *Ending child labour in domestic work...*, op. cit. Box 6.

Copyright © International Labour Organization - October 2013

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
International Labour Office (ILO)
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22 - Switzerland
Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 81 81 - Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 87 71
e-mail: ipec@ilo.org - www.ilo.org/ipec