

# Low-performing students

## Why they fall behind & how to help them succeed



If by 2030, every 15-year-old in high-income OECD countries acquires at least basic literacy and numeracy skills, the long-term gains for their economies could be about 1.5 times their current GDP.

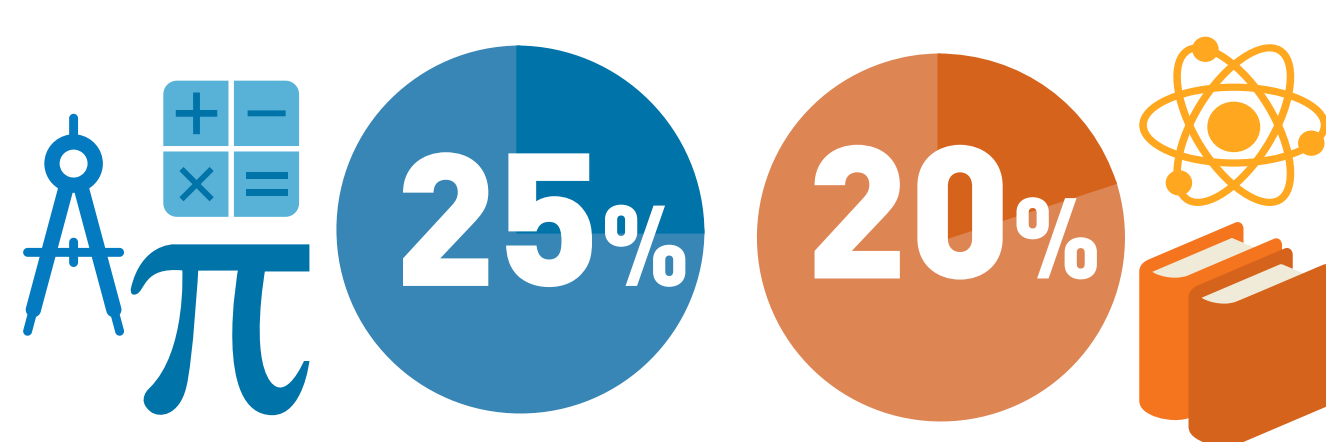
For upper-middle income countries the gains could be about 7 times their GDP.

In OECD countries, more than

### 1 in 4 students

do not reach the baseline proficiency level in at least one of the 3 PISA subjects: mathematics, reading & science.

The share of low performers is almost 25% in mathematics compared to almost 20% in reading and science.



## There are many risk factors associated with low performance at age 15:



In OECD countries, students with an immigrant background and who do not speak the same language at home as in school are about 2.5 times more likely to be low performers.



Girls are at greater risk of being low performers in mathematics than boys. Whereas boys are more commonly low performers in reading and science.



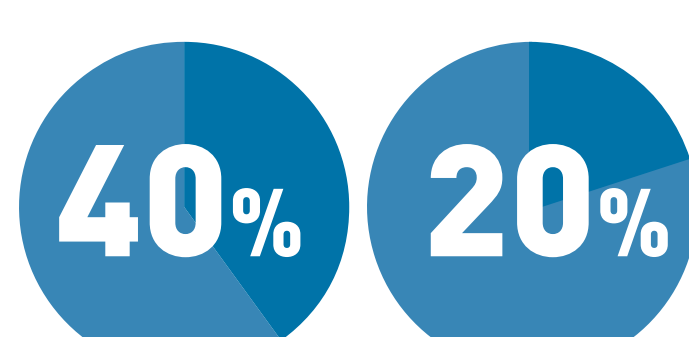
The share of low performers is larger among students from rural areas and from single-parent families.



Students who have repeated a grade are 7 times more likely to be low performers at age 15 than those who haven't.



For students who had not attended pre-primary education, the chances of being low performers are 3 times greater than for those who had attended for more than one year.



Around 40% of students enrolled in a vocational track and 20% of students enrolled in a general track are low performers in mathematics.



Low performers in mathematics tend to have less perseverance, motivation and self-confidence and skip school more.

Students who have skipped school at least once in the two weeks prior to the PISA test are 3 times more likely to be low performers in mathematics.



In all countries, socio-economically disadvantaged students are more likely to be low performers than their advantaged peers; and the cumulative effect of other risk factors contributing to low performance is greater for these students than for advantaged students.



Between 2003 and 2012, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Tunisia and Turkey managed to reduce the percentage of low performers in mathematics.

## Actions countries can take to reduce their share of low performers include:

### Improve access to early education for everyone

### Help struggling students early.

Provide assistance with homework and exam preparation, and offer attractive school activities. Limit grade repetition and sorting students by ability.

### Help motivate

students by creating a nurturing environment. Teachers with high morale, who support and hold high expectations for all students, help low performers the most.

### Distribute resources more equitably across schools and encourage social diversity.

### Give schools more freedom

to decide what to teach and how they assess students' progress.

### Involve parents and local communities and offer special programmes for immigrant, minority-language and rural students and single-parent families.