Poverty has serious consequences for children’s well-being as well as for their achievements in adult life. The Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis for the European Union (EU-MODA) compares the living conditions of children across the EU member states. Rooted in the established multidimensional poverty measurement tradition, EU-MODA uses the international framework of child rights to inform the construction of indicators and dimensions essential to children’s material well-being, taking into account the needs of children at various stages of their life cycle. EU-MODA analyses dimensions of child deprivation individually and simultaneously (Figure 1), constructing multidimensional deprivation indices, and studying the overlaps between monetary poverty and multidimensional deprivation.

This paper demonstrates the application of the EU-MODA methodology to preschool-age children in three countries: Finland, Romania and the United Kingdom, using data from the material deprivation module of the EU-SILC 2009. Figure 2 shows the incidence of deprivation for preschool children separately by dimension. Across the three countries, child deprivation rates are highest in Romania in each of the six dimensions, with the largest differences between Romania and the other two countries observed in housing, information and child development. Across the six dimensions, some of the highest deprivation rates are observed in housing: 86% in Romania, 33% in the UK and 15% in Finland. It is driven by multiple housing problems in the UK and Finland and by overcrowding in Romania.
The distribution of the number of dimensions children are deprived in, i.e. the overall severity of deprivation, varies noticeably across the three countries (Figure 3). In Finland, just under two-fifths (37%) of preschool-age children are deprived in one, two or three dimensions out of six, with the rest not deprived in any. The distribution is similar but more spread out in the UK, with just over one-half (54%) of preschool-age children deprived in one, two or three dimensions, 1% deprived in four or five, and the rest not deprived in any. The distribution is more symmetric in Romania: fewer than one in ten children are not deprived in any dimensions (7%) or all six (3%), while about as many are deprived in one or two dimensions (34%) as in four or five (30%). The distribution peaks at three dimensions (26%). Thus, the vast majority (93%) of preschool-age children in Romania are deprived in at least one dimension, while one-third (33%) are deprived in four, five or six.