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Childcare and early years survey of parents 2014 to 2015

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**Tom Huskinson, Sylvie Hobden, Dominic Oliver, Jennifer
Keyes, Mandy Littlewood, Julia Pye, and Sarah Tipping**

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Executive Summary

This report provides the main findings of the 2014-2015 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and carried out by Ipsos MORI. The study has two key objectives. The first is to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use of childcare and early years provision, and their views and experiences. The second is to continue the time series – which has now been running for over ten years – on issues covered throughout the survey series. With respect to both of these aims, the study aims to provide information to help monitor the progress of policies and public attitudes in the area of childcare and early years education.

The report describes in detail what childcare is used by different types of families, changes in uptake over the years, parents' reasons for using or not using childcare and for choosing particular providers, and parents' views on the providers they used and on childcare provision in their local area in general.

Key findings

Use of childcare and early years provision

- Overall, 79 per cent of all families in England with children aged 0 to 14 had used some form of childcare during their most recent term-time week. This equated to 4,329,000 families or 6,285,000 children. Two in three families (66%) had used formal childcare and early years provision, and 40 per cent had used informal childcare (provided by friends and family). Over a quarter (28%) had used both formal and informal childcare. This overall pattern of childcare usage has remained unchanged since the last survey in 2012-13.
- The proportion of all children (rather than families, as reported above) receiving formal childcare was 55 per cent. Usage of formal childcare was progressively less widespread as area deprivation levels increased; 65 per cent of children living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare, compared with 49 per cent of children living in the most deprived areas. There have been no changes in uptake of formal childcare by area deprivation level since the last survey in 2012-13.
- Characteristics that were independently associated with the use of formal childcare for those aged 0 to 14 included:
 - age of child: parents with children aged 3 to 4 were most likely to use formal childcare;
 - family annual income: a higher family annual income was associated with a higher likelihood of using formal childcare; and

- family type and work status: children in dual-working couple families, and children in working lone-parent families, were most likely to receive formal childcare.
- For the first time in the series, the 2014-15 survey measured uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2-year-olds, in addition to 3- and 4-year-olds. Nine in ten (90%) parents of 3- and 4-year-olds said they received government funded early education, in line with 2012-13 rates (89%). Take-up among 4-year-olds was 99%, among 3-year-olds was 81%, and among 2-year-olds was 54%. Among eligible 2- to 4-year-olds 87% were in receipt of government funded early education. Official statistics from the Department for Education Early Years Census and Schools Census¹ show that receipt of government funded early education was 96% among 3- and 4-year-olds in 2015: 99% of 4-year-olds and 94% of 3-year-olds. Official Department for Education statistics show the number of 2-year-olds in receipt of the free entitlement, which is estimated to be 58% of those eligible in January 2015.²
- Around three in five (62%) pre-school children (aged 0-4) received childcare for economic reasons (for instance, to enable parents to work, look for work, or study), with child-related reasons being almost as common (59%) (for instance, attending for their educational or social development, or because the child liked attending). A lower proportion of pre-school children (24%) received childcare for parental time-related reasons such as allowing parents to conduct domestic activities, socialise or look after other children.
- Just under half (47%) of families with school-aged children (aged 5-14) used childcare during school holidays. Some 62 per cent of parents of school age children who worked during holidays reported that it was very easy or easy to arrange childcare during the holiday periods, but 21 per cent reported that it was difficult or very difficult to arrange.

Perceptions of childcare and early years provision

- The majority of parents (64%) rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as very or fairly good. This proportion has increased from 58 per cent in 2012-13.
- Some 46 per cent of parents felt the number of local childcare places was 'about right', although nearly three in ten (28%) said there were not enough places. As was the case with quality, the proportion of parents who thought that the right number of places were available has risen since the last survey in 2012-13 (from 42% to 46%).
- Just under half (49%) of parents said the amount of information available to them about childcare in their local area was 'about right'. One in three (32%) thought

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2015>

² Available data cannot be used to identify accurately the total number of eligible 2-year-olds.

there was too little information. Three in ten (28%) parents were aware of Family Information Services: 11% of all parents had used the service, while another 17% were aware of Family Information Services but had not used them..

- Two thirds of parents (66%) felt they spent enough time with their children on learning and play activities; however, a third (33%) said they would like to do more with their children.

Paying for childcare

- Three in five (59%) families who used a childcare provider in the reference week reported paying for this childcare. Some 65% reported paying for formal providers with 6% reported paying for informal providers.
- The overall median weekly amount paid by families to childcare providers was £23 and the mean cost was £53. These amounts varied widely depending on the number of hours and type of provider used. Breakfast clubs were the only provider type to see a change between 2012-13 and 2014-15 in the weekly amount paid by parents (median payments of £9 and £10, respectively). . However, this should not be interpreted as a measure of providers' standard fees: costs statistics are subject to a number of caveats, as described in Chapter 5.
- Two in five parents (39%) rated the affordability of local childcare as very or fairly good, an increase since 2012-13 when one in three parents (32%) thought affordability was very good or fairly good. A third (33%) said affordability was very or fairly poor.
- Just over half of parents (53%) said it was fairly or very easy to meet their childcare costs, with 22% of families finding it fairly or very difficult to pay (a fall from 27% in 2012-13). Specifically, the proportions of dual-working couple families, couple families in which one parent worked, and non-working lone parent families that found it difficult to pay for childcare have fallen.
- Among parents who have not used any childcare in the past year, the main reasons given related to choice, rather than to constraints. For example two in three parents (65%) said they would rather look after their children themselves, while the cost of childcare was cited by fewer parents (12%).

Mothers, work and childcare

- Two thirds of mothers (66%) were in employment, in line with the 2012-13 survey (64%).
- Around a third of mothers (34%) were not working at the time of the survey, which is in line with 36 per cent in 2012-13. Around half (53%) of non-working mothers agreed that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable.

- Among mothers who had returned to work in the previous two years, the most commonly reported (30%) factor that had influenced their return to work was finding a job that enabled them to combine work and childcare. Mothers who had transitioned from part-time to full-time work in the previous two years most commonly reported that a job opportunity/promotion (36%) or their financial situation (28%) had influenced them to make the transition.
- Almost half of working mothers (46%) said that having reliable childcare helped them to go out to work. Relatives helping with childcare (42%) and children being at school (38%) were also helpful factors for many.

Methodology

A total of 6,198 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study between October 2014 and July 2015. The sample of parents was ultimately derived using Child Benefit records which, given its high take-up, provides almost complete coverage of families with dependent children.

To maintain comparability with earlier surveys in the series, we limited the children's age range to under 15. In order to have sufficient numbers of children attending early years provision to enable separate analysis of this group, the proportion of 2- to 4-year-olds was boosted by increasing their probability of selection.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted around three-quarters of an hour, as in 2012-13. Following the model of previous surveys in the series, the study used a very inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that their child was not with resident parents, or their current partner, or at school. Hence this covered informal childcare, such as grandparents, as well as formal childcare and early years education. For school-age children, the definition of childcare covered time they spent attending before- and after-school activities.

Among all those parents selected and eligible for interview (in other words excluding families who did not have a child aged under 15) 59 per cent were interviewed, maintaining the response rate of 59 per cent in 2012-13. For further details on response see Appendix B.

Use of childcare and early years provision

Formal and informal childcare usage during term time has remained largely unchanged between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys. Overall, 79 per cent of parents used childcare during term time, with 66 per cent using formal provision, 40 per cent using informal provision and 28 per cent using both formal and informal provision.

The proportion of all children (rather than families, as reported above) receiving formal childcare was 55 per cent. The survey indicates that in 2014-15, approximately 6.3 million children across 4.3 million families in England received childcare, with 5.0 million children receiving formal provision, and 2.9 million children receiving informal provision.

Usage of formal childcare fell as area deprivation levels rose; 65 per cent of children living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare, compared with 49 per cent of children living in the most deprived areas. There have been no changes in uptake of formal childcare by area deprivation level since the last survey in 2012-13.

The receipt of childcare varied across age groups, and between provider types. Receipt of childcare overall, and formal childcare in particular, was highest among children aged 3 to 4 (reflecting their entitlement to government funded early education). Receipt of childcare overall was lowest among 0- to 2-year-olds and 12- to 14-year-olds, mainly due to their low take-up of formal childcare. Take-up of informal childcare was highest among children aged 0 to 2.

Three- and four-year-olds received formal childcare from a wide range of providers. School-age children, however, received formal childcare primarily through after-school clubs and activities. Grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider across all age groups, with their use decreasing as children get older.

Children's ethnic background was associated with their likelihood of receiving childcare, with children from White British and Black Caribbean backgrounds most likely to receive childcare, and children from Asian Pakistani, other Asian, and Bangladeshi backgrounds least likely to. Turning to family characteristics, children in couple families were more likely to receive formal childcare than those in lone-parent families, but were less likely to receive informal childcare. Children in working families (and relatedly, in families with higher incomes), were more likely to use formal childcare than children in non-working families (and children in families with lower incomes); these relationships held once other factors had been controlled for.

Use of informal childcare was associated with the age of the child, family type and work status, family size, and the ethnic background of the child, and these associations held after controlling for other factors.

By region, children in London were least likely to receive childcare overall. This is largely explained by the particularly low use of informal childcare in London, with the use of formal childcare being much closer to the national average. Receipt of formal childcare was highest in the East of England and the South West, while receipt of informal childcare was highest in the North East.

Among children who received formal childcare from a breakfast club or an after-school club, the majority accessed this provision on a school or nursery site, or on a site provided by a school or nursery.

Children receiving childcare overall spent 10.8 hours in childcare per week on average, in line with the 2012-13 survey. Pre-school children spent around six times longer in formal childcare than did school-age children, attributable to school-age children spending much of their time at school, while for pre-school children, early years education constitutes formal childcare provision. Children aged 3 to 4 received the maximum entitlement of 15.0 hours of government funded early education per week on average.

The amount of time children spent at providers varied substantially by provider type. With respect to formal provision, reception classes and day nurseries were attended for the longest each week (31.3 hours and 17.9 hours respectively), while children spent the least time at breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (3.0 and 2.0 hours respectively). Turning to informal provision, non-resident parents provided the most hours of care per week (16.9 hours for children in their care). Children received far fewer hours of care from other informal providers (between 3.0 and 6.0 hours per week).

A regression analysis of the number of hours per week children spent in formal childcare found that, once other factors had been controlled for, the age of the child, family type and work status, and family annual income was associated with the hours children spent in formal childcare per week. The same regression analysis performed on the number of hours per week that children spend in informal childcare found a relationship between hours per week and family type and work status, once other factors had been controlled for. Additionally, for pre-school children only, family size was also found to be independently associated with use of informal childcare.

For the first time in the series, the 2014-15 survey measured uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2-year-olds, in addition to 3- and 4-year-olds. Take-up among 4-year-olds was 99%, among 3-year-olds was 81%, and among 2-year-olds was 54%. Among eligible 2- to 4-year-olds 87% were in receipt of government funded early education³. Official statistics from the Department for Education Early Years Census and Schools Census⁴ show that receipt of government funded early education was 96% among 3- and 4-year-olds in January 2015: 99% of 4-year-olds and 94% of 3-year-olds. Official Department for Education statistics show the number of 2-year-olds in

³ As responses were based on parents' own awareness of their child's receipt of government funded provision, and were confined to a specific reference week during which there may have been one-off reasons why the child did not attend (for instance sickness), there may be a degree of under-reporting of uptake of government funded early education – and as a result differences in these figures compared to the Official statistics from the Department's Early Years Census and Schools Census.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2015>

receipt of the free entitlement, which is estimated to be 58% of those eligible in January 2015.⁵

Almost half (47%) of parents of children aged 2 to 4 using the entitlement said they would have paid for some or all of the hours they used had they not been available, and of these parents, over three in five (62%) said they would have paid for all of the hours they used.

Take-up of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2 to 4 year olds varied by family type and work status, and by income. Children in lone-parent non-working families and non-working couple families were most likely to receive government funded early education. Take-up of the entitlement increased with income.

Among parents not using the entitlement to government funded early education but who were eligible to receive it, just over a quarter (27%) were unaware of the scheme.

Packages of childcare for pre-school children

The survey examined parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their pre-school children during term time. Overall, three in four pre-school children (75%) used some type of childcare, with 25 per cent not in receipt of any childcare. Older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) however, were far more likely to receive childcare (92%) than younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) (61%).

The three packages of childcare most commonly used by pre-school children were formal centre-based care only (such as nursery classes or day nurseries) (30%); a combination of formal centre based and informal care (19%); and informal care only (such as non-resident parents or grandparents) (12%). Use of formal centre-based provision was higher among older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) than among younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2), reflecting the high take-up of the entitlement to government funded early years provision among this age group, as well as perhaps a preference for parents to look after younger pre-school children themselves. Accordingly, children aged 0 to 2 were more likely than their older 3 to 4 year old counterparts to receive informal care only.

Pre-school children spent an average of 6.1 hours per day in childcare, and 21.0 hours per week. Pre-school children aged 3 to 4 spend longer in childcare per week than those aged 0 to 2 (25 hours and 18 hours respectively), again reflecting the entitlement to government funded early years education among this age group. Pre-school children from families with higher annual incomes spent more time in childcare than those from families with lower annual incomes (29.0 hours per week for children in families earning

⁵ Available data cannot be used to identify accurately the total number of eligible 2-year-olds.

£45,000 or more, compared with between 15.6 and 20.0 hours per week for children in families earning up to £30,000 per year). Pre-school children from working lone-parent families (31.6 hours) and dual-working couple households (26.7 hours) were the highest users of childcare per week. In comparison, children from non-working households and those from couple households with one of the two parents used the least childcare.

Children receiving a combination of centre-based and informal childcare (19% of all pre-school children) were by far the heaviest users of childcare, receiving 29.6 hours per week on average, compared with 15.0 hours for children receiving formal childcare only, and 11.4 hours for those receiving informal childcare only. These children were also the most likely to have both parents (or their lone parent) in work, and to attend childcare for economic reasons, suggesting that this package of care was designed to cover parents' working hours.

Around three in five (62%) pre-school children who received childcare did so for economic reasons (for instance, to enable parents to work, look for work, or to study). The next most common reason for pre-school children to receive childcare (59%) was for child-related reasons (for instance, for their educational or social development, or because the child liked going there). A quarter (24%) of pre-school children receiving childcare did so for reasons relating to parental-time (for instance, so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise or look after other children).

Younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to receive childcare for economic reasons (70% compared with 57% respectively), but were less likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (42% compared with 73% respectively).

Across all pre-school children, centre-based childcare was most likely to be chosen for child-related reasons (for example because a provider helped with the child's education or social development), followed by economic reasons, while informal care was most likely to be chosen for economic reasons, followed by child-related reasons. Where childcare was used for economic reasons it was used for the longest number of hours per day and per week (26.0 hours per week and 6.0 hours per day).

Packages of childcare for school-age children

The survey examined parents' use of different packages and forms of childcare for their school-age children, during term time and outside of school hours.

School age children were less likely than pre-school children to be recipients of childcare, with two in three receiving it (67%). Formal out-of-school childcare (a breakfast and/or after-school club) was the most common package of childcare (24%), followed by a

combination of out-of-school and informal childcare (15%) and informal childcare only (13%). No other package of childcare was used by more than two per cent of children.

The packages of childcare used varied by age of child. The oldest children, aged 12- to 14-years-old (17%) were more likely than younger children to receive informal childcare only. Children aged 8 to 11 were more likely than other age groups to attend out-of-school childcare, either on its own (28%) or in combination with informal childcare (19%).

Of school age children who received informal care only, the great majority (82%) attended just one provider, compared with 67 per cent among children receiving out-of-school childcare only.

School age children spent on average 2.0 hours per day in childcare, substantially less time than pre-school children (6.1), likely due to many children attending school full time. On average, school-age children spent 5.8 hours in childcare per week compared to 21.0 hours per week for pre-school children. Those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare received the most hours of care per week (10.0), followed by those receiving informal care only (7.4). Those receiving out-of-school care only attended far fewer hours per week (2.5).

Three in four (73%) families with school-age children only used childcare compared to nine in ten (89%) of those with both pre-school and school-age children. The proportions of families who used the same packages of childcare for every child also tended to be higher among those with school-age children only. For example, the proportion of families who used informal childcare only or formal childcare only for all children in the household was higher among those with school-age children only (13% and 19% respectively) than among those with both pre-school and school-age children (both 2%).

School age children most commonly received childcare for child-related reasons (71%), followed by economic reasons (49%), and parental time reasons (17%). The age of the children in the household bore a relationship to the reasons for using providers. Older school age children were more likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (for example for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there) (75% of 12- to 14-year olds), whereas economic reasons were more likely to be given for younger school age children than for older children (for example to enable parents to work) (58% of 5- to 7-year-olds). School age children of all ages were equally likely to receive childcare for parental time related reasons (for example so that parents could socialise or look after other children). The reasons for choosing childcare in any of the age groups remained consistent between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

School age children receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare were more likely to use childcare for economic reasons compared with those using either one or the other. This indicates that, even once children start full-time school, both formal and

informal childcare could still be required to cover parents' working hours. As with pre-school children, school-age children receiving informal care only were the least likely to be using this care for child-related reasons (40%). Those receiving formal, out-of-school childcare only on the other hand, were most likely to receive this care for child-related reasons (80%).

Paying for childcare

Parents were asked about the amount of money their family paid for childcare for all children in the household in the reference week. It should be noted that respondents were asked to report the amount the family paid themselves, therefore excluding any money paid by their employer, local authority or the government. This also excludes any money they may have received from other individuals such as an ex-partner or a grandparent

Three in five (59%) families who used a childcare provider in the reference week reported paying for this childcare. Families were far more likely to pay formal providers (65%) than informal providers (6%). Among formal providers, parents were most likely to pay childminders (93%), nannies or au pairs (79%), and day nurseries (77%), and were least likely to pay nursery classes (29%), nursery schools (58%), and playgroups or pre-schools (56%), reflecting the entitlement to government funded early education among 3- and 4-year-olds. Parents were most likely to pay for childcare fees or wages (59%), followed by education fees or wages (36%), refreshments (26%), and use of equipment (19%).

Families paying for childcare reported spending a median of £23 per week on this provision, and a mean of £53, although this amount varied by the provider used. This cost is in line with 2012-13; however, this should not be interpreted as a measure of the consistency of providers' standard fees (these cost statistics are subject to a number of caveats, as described in section 5.2).

Weekly payments varied by parents' employment status. Dual-working couples and working lone parents paid the most for childcare (medians of £30 and £28 per week respectively), while non-working lone parents (£8) and non-working couples (£5) paid the least. Families in London paid the most per week on childcare (median of £40), while parents in the North East (£11) and the East Midlands (£17) paid the least. Turning to levels of deprivation, families paying for childcare who lived in the most deprived areas paid a median of £16 per week, while those in the least deprived areas paid a median of almost twice this amount per week (£30).

Costs were also considered at the level of the selected child, to provide estimates for childcare costs on a per child (rather than per family) basis. A median of £15 per week

was spent on formal childcare provision for children receiving paid formal childcare in the reference week. This rose to £53 among pre-school children, and fell to £10 for school-age children.

Monthly payment was the most common arrangement, with one in three (32%) parents paying in this way, followed by termly payment (28%) and weekly payment (23%), although this varied widely by provider type. The majority (74%) of parents paid their main formal provider in advance, however few paid an upfront refundable deposit (14%).

Almost one in five (18%) families using childcare for a child in the household reported they had received financial help from others, including the local education authority, social services, their employer, or ex-partner. This is likely to be an underestimate of the scale of the contributions from other sources, as many parents seem not to consider their early education place to be 'paid for'. Parents using formal childcare most commonly reported getting financial assistance from their employer (11%), followed by their local education authority (8%). Help from employers was primarily in the form of childcare vouchers paid for by salary sacrifice.

Among parents receiving support (whether from the entitlement to government funded early education, from tax credits or from an employer), seven per cent reported that this support had enabled them to increase the number of hours they worked, and four per cent reported that it had enabled them to start work.

Just over one in five (22%) families found it difficult or very difficult to pay for childcare, a fall from 2012-13, when 27 per cent reported difficulties. Since 2012-13, there has been a fall in the proportion finding it difficult to cover their childcare costs among dual-working couple families (23% in 2012-13 compared with 19% in 2014-15), among couple families in which one parent works (23% compared with 16%), and among non-working lone parent families (48% compared with 35%). Nevertheless, when asked what changes to childcare would suit their needs better, making childcare more affordable was the most commonly given reason (by 34% of parents).

Factors affecting decisions about childcare

The 2014-15 survey has shown an increase in the proportion of parents who are satisfied with the level of information about childcare that is available to them (from 43% in 2012-13 to 49% in 2014-15). Almost seven in ten (69%) parents accessed at least one source of information about childcare in the last year. Parents were most likely to receive information about childcare via word of mouth (41%) for example from friends or relatives or at their child(ren)'s school (33%).

Access to sources of information about childcare varied depending on the type of childcare used; parents who used formal childcare were more likely to access information than parents who only used informal childcare or who did not use childcare at all.

The proportion of parents who had used of Family Information Services has decreased since 2012-13, with around one in ten (11%) parents having used the service (12% in 2012-13). The proportion of parents who are aware of the service has also fallen by two percentage points from 19% in 2012-13 to 17% in 2014-15.

Childminder agencies, which were introduced in 2014, were reportedly used by six per cent of those parents who used a childminder. Three in five (62%) of those who did not use a childminder agency to hire their childminder were unaware of childminder agencies.

The proportion of parents who knew their childcare provider's Ofsted rating varied by type of provider, with parents most likely to know the ratings of pre-school providers such as nursery schools and day nurseries. The influence that the rating had on parents' decision to use the provider followed a similar pattern, with greatest impact on decisions to use nursery schools and day nurseries.

Over two in five (46%) parents said that the right amount of childcare places were provided in their local area; however, three in ten (28%) said there were not enough places. A higher proportion (64%) of parents said the quality of childcare in their local area was good, with only nine per cent of parents saying it was poor. Almost two in five (39%) parents said that affordability of childcare in their area was good; although 33 per cent perceived the affordability of childcare to be poor. Parents were positive about the availability of flexible childcare, with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs. Similarly, around half (51%) of parents agreed they were able to find term time childcare that fitted in with their or their partner's working hours.

Around one in three (35%) parents of children aged 2 to 4 said that they would use childcare provided by a nursery class or infant school between 8am and 9am if it were available. A similar proportion (37%) said that they would use evening provision between 3pm and 6pm if it were available.

Of families with school-age children who had not used a before- or after-school club in the reference week, 63 per cent said their child's school offered before-school provision. A slighter higher proportion (68%) said their child's school offered after-school provision before or after 6pm. The main reasons for not using both before- and after-school clubs, where these were available, were more likely to be related to the parents' or their child's choice or preference rather than to constraints coming from the childcare provider or elsewhere.

Over one in ten (11%) parents reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education in the past year. Two in three (65%) of these parents said that this was because they would rather look after their children themselves. The cost of childcare (12%) was cited by fewer parents. Looking specifically at parents of children aged 0 to 2, the most common reason for not using nursery education in the reference week was that parents felt that their child was too young (58%).

Two in five (43%) parents of children with a disability said they found it easy to travel to the nearest childcare provider who could accommodate their child's condition. However, fewer parents agreed that there are providers in their area who can cater for their child's condition (33%) or that the hours available fitted with their commitments (30%). Of those who used a provider, around three in five (58%) said that staff were trained in how to deal with their child's condition.

The majority (71%) of parents who did not use childcare were confident they could find an informal provider as a one-off if needed. The likelihood of finding informal providers for regular childcare was lower, with less than half (46%) of parents who had not used childcare in the last year stating that they would not be able to get any informal childcare on a regular basis. Grandparents were most commonly cited as being available for both regular childcare and as a one-off.

Parents were asked which times of the year they would like childcare provision to be improved in order to meet their needs. Parents were most likely to say they would like improved provision during the summer holidays (65%), followed by the half-term holidays (37%) and the Easter holidays (34%).

Making childcare more affordable (34%), followed by more childcare being available during the school holidays (19%), receiving more information about what childcare is available (16%) and longer provider opening hours (16%) were the most common changes to childcare that parents said would suit their needs better.

When asked whether there were types of formal childcare that they would like to use or use more, 59 per cent of parents said they were happy with their current use of formal childcare. However, one in five stated after-school clubs or activities (20%) or holiday clubs or schemes (16%) would be the formal providers they would like to use or use more of in the future.

New questions were added to the survey about parents' likelihood of applying for the new Tax-Free Childcare scheme when it becomes available from 2017. Around one in five (18%) parents reported being aware of the scheme. Around half of parents (49%) said they would probably or definitely apply and a similar proportion said they probably or definitely would not. Among those who would not apply, the most frequently given reasons were that they have alternative support, such as employer-supported childcare

(30%), did not use formal childcare (28%), that they or their partner were not working (10%), or that they thought they earned too much (7%).□

Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

The survey found that when choosing a formal childcare provider parents had taken into account a range of factors. The two most common factors, for both pre-school and school-age children, were the provider's reputation (62%) and convenience (59%). Compared with the last survey in 2012-13, fewer parents said they chose their formal provider because there were no other options available to them (1%), suggesting that most parents were able to choose from a range of providers.

Parents of pre-school children felt that the most important factor for high quality childcare was the provision of activities that encourage the children to socialise with other children, followed by each member of staff having a small number of children to look after. Furthermore, parents' generally favoured children choosing learning activities themselves over adults choosing structured approaches to learning.

The great majority of parents reported that their main formal childcare provider encouraged their child to develop a range of academic and social skills. The most commonly encouraged academic skills (asked of parents of pre-school children only) were enjoying books (encouraged by 93% providers), and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (encouraged by 91%). Playing with other children, and good behaviour, were the most commonly encouraged social skills by both pre-school providers (97% and 94% respectively) and school-age providers (76% and 75% respectively). Reception classes were most likely to be seen as encouraging both academic and social skills, while childminders were the least likely.

Most parents (66%) of children aged 2 to 5 felt they spent enough time with their children on learning and play activities; however, a third of parents said they would like to do more with their children. The survey measured parents' involvement with their child's learning and development through seven types of early home learning activities. Looking at books or reading stories was the most frequent home learning activity that parents engaged their children in, followed by playing at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes, reciting nursery rhymes or songs, and playing indoor or outdoor games. Fewer parents used a computer with their child; however, there was a rise in the proportion of parents using a computer with their child every day or on most days (42% in 2014-15, compared with 36% in 2012-13).

Informal social networks, such as friends or relatives (61%) and other parents (42%), were more likely to be used as sources of information for parents about learning and play

activities than were official sources, such as FIS (9%), local authorities (7%) or other national organisations (1%).

Awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was high; nearly four in five (78%) of parents with children aged 2 to 5 said they had heard of the framework.

Use of childcare during school holidays

In line with the findings from the 2012-13 survey, just under half (47%) of families with school-age children used childcare during the school holidays. Consistent with previous surveys in the series, families were more likely to use informal childcare in the holidays (34%) than formal childcare (24%).

The use of childcare during holiday periods varied both by parents' working status and their patterns of work. Parents in employment were more likely than those who were not working to use both formal and informal childcare. Parents whose job allowed them to work during term time only were less likely to use holiday childcare, both formal and informal, than those whose job required them to work during term time and holidays.

Families' use of childcare during the school holidays was linked to their use of childcare during term time. Over half (52%) of families with school-age children who used any form of term-time childcare also used childcare during the holiday. On the other hand, nearly three-quarters (73%) of families who did not use childcare during term time also did not use childcare in the holidays.

School-age children were more likely to have received formal care during term time than during the school holidays (55% compared with 21%, respectively), and this pattern also pertained to informal childcare (31% and 24% respectively). Looking more closely at the variation in childcare provision between term time and holidays, after-school clubs were the provider with the greatest fluctuation in use. Across both term time and holiday periods, grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider (18% and 16%, respectively).

The use of childcare in the holidays varied by family circumstance and by children's characteristics. Children in families with higher household incomes and those living in less deprived areas were more likely to have received both formal and informal childcare than children from lower-income households and those living in more deprived areas. Children aged 5 to 11 were more likely than older school-age children to have received formal holiday childcare. Children's ethnic background was also related to their receipt of childcare: children from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other Asian and Black African backgrounds were less likely than children from other ethnic groups to receive either formal or informal holiday childcare provision. Children with special educational needs,

and those with a disability, were more likely than those without to use an informal childcare provider.

The average cost of holiday childcare varied considerably by provider type. Parents paid a median of £12.27 per day for after-school clubs, rising to £20.00 for holiday clubs/schemes, and £33.55 for childminders (findings reflect that some after-school clubs remain open during school holidays). It is important to bear in mind that children attended childminders for longer than any other formal provider, which is reflected in the higher cost. The number of hours per day for which families used formal providers in the holidays is in line with 2012-13.

Most parents (62%) who worked during the school holidays said that it was easy or very easy to arrange childcare for these periods (in line with 2012-13); however, 21 per cent felt it was difficult or very difficult to do so. Similarly, while the majority (58%) of parents were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available, one in five (20%) said they had trouble finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs, and over a quarter (27%) said they had difficulty finding childcare they could afford.

Over half (53%) of families with school-age children did not use any childcare in the holidays. The most commonly cited reasons for this (among families that used formal providers during term time that were open during holidays) were that they preferred to look after their children themselves (50%), that they or their partner was at home during the holidays (20%), and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (19%).

Mothers, childcare and work

The survey explored the relationship between childcare and work, focusing mainly on mothers who were in paid work at the time of the survey.

Two thirds of mothers (66%) were in employment, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (64%). Both the proportion of mothers in work, and mothers' working patterns, varied by family type. Partnered mothers (32%) were more likely than lone mothers (26%) to work full time. While similar proportions of partnered mothers and lone mothers worked part time, lone mothers (41%) were more likely than partnered mothers (32%) to be workless.

Almost a third (31%) of mothers reported working atypical hours. Atypical working patterns were similar between partnered and lone mothers, although lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to work every Saturday (12% compared with 9%). Working patterns were also related to atypical hours; mothers in full-time employment were more likely to work atypical hours than those working part time (38% of those in full-time employment compared to 25% of those working 16-29 hours and 18% of those working 1-15 hours per week).

Among mothers who worked atypical hours, the types of atypical working arrangements that were most frequently reported to have caused problems with childcare were working before 8am (31% finding this a problem) and working after 6pm (27%) at least three days every week.

Considering working patterns at the family level, the most common employment patterns for couple families were both parents in full-time employment (28%), and one partner in full-time employment and the other in part-time employment of 16 to 29 hours per week (28%). A quarter of couple families (26%) consisted of one parent working full time and one non-working parent.

Mothers who had entered employment in the previous two years were asked what had influenced their decision to do so. The most common influence (30%) was finding a job that enabled them to combine work and childcare. Mothers who had transitioned from part-time to full-time work within the previous two years were asked what had influenced this decision. The most common influences were a promotion or job opportunity (36%) or their financial situation (28%).

When asked whether they would like to increase their working hours if there were no barriers to doing so, the majority of mothers who worked part time (53%) said that they would not change their working hours. One in three (32%) however, said that they would increase their hours but stay part time. Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to say they would like to increase their hours, or that they would like to work full time. The changes that were most frequently mentioned as factors that would support mothers to work full time or increase their working hours were being able to afford suitable childcare (40%) and the option to work flexi-time (25%).

Employed mothers were asked what childcare arrangements helped them go out to work. Having reliable childcare was most frequently cited (mentioned by 46%), followed by having relatives who could help with childcare (42%), having all children at school (38%), and having childcare that fits with their working hours (34%). Employed mothers were also asked what other factors influenced their decision to work. Two in three (66%) said they needed the money, almost half (46%) said having their own money was important and one in four (24%) said that they needed to maintain pension contributions. Of the non-financial reasons, enjoying work was the most frequently mentioned reason (64%), followed by a desire to get out of the house (26%), and feeling useless without a job (25%).

Working mothers were asked for their views on different working arrangements. Over half (54%) said that if they could afford it, they would work fewer hours to spend more time looking after their children, and over a third (36%) said that if they could afford to give up work altogether, they would prefer to stay at home and look after their children. Almost one in four (23%) said they would increase their working hours if they could arrange good

quality childcare.

Around a third (34%) of mothers were not working at the time of the survey, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (36%). Around half (53%) of non-working mothers agreed that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable.

1 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the study

This report provides the main findings of the 2014-2015 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and carried out by Ipsos MORI. The study has two key objectives. The first is to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use of childcare and early years provision, and their views and experiences. The second is to continue the time series statistics – which have now been running for over ten years – on issues covered throughout the survey series. With respect to both of these objectives, the study aims to provide information to help monitor effectively the progress of policies in the area of childcare and early years education.

1.2 Policy background

The childcare system in England is a mixed economy, with services provided by the public, private, voluntary and independent sectors. Most providers must register with and be inspected by the regulator Ofsted.

Since the 1998 National Childcare Strategy (DfE, 1998), key government policies and programmes have focused on how to increase the **availability** of early education and childcare services, improve the **quality** of provision and make services more **affordable** to parents. This trend has continued under the Coalition and Conservative governments. The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a number of measures which aim to help parents better balance their work and home life, including extending the right to request flexible working to all employees from 30 June 2014, and mothers, fathers and adopters being able to share parental leave around their child's birth or placement from April 2015.⁶

Childcare services for children aged up to 5 years (which includes the first year of school – known as reception class) must comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This framework was introduced in 2008 and specifies the ways in which children's learning and development should be supported with a series of milestones which children can expect to reach by particular ages. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed at age five, which assesses whether the child has achieved a good level of emotional, cognitive and physical development. The EYFS also specifies requirements concerning the welfare of children and the staffing for settings. All

⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

Note that the right to request flexible working for all employees was not in place during the survey fieldwork period.

registered settings are inspected by Ofsted against how well they meet the requirements of the EYFS. A new, streamlined framework was introduced in September 2012 and updated in September 2014.⁷ The revised framework includes key features of the original, but reduces the number of Early Learning Goals which children are assessed against. It also aims to reduce burdens, including unnecessary regulation and paperwork, so professionals have more time to concentrate on supporting children.

Since September 2010, all 3- and 4-year-old children have been entitled to 570 hours of government funded early education per year, accessed over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 15 hours a week). Parents are able, if they wish, to pay for additional hours beyond the entitlement. In addition to this, the government introduced government-funded early education for the least advantaged 2-year-olds to reach around 20 per cent of the cohort from September 2013 and around 40 per cent from September 2014. Currently, all 2-year-olds who meet the criteria for free school meals (from families on out of work benefits or on low incomes and who receive Working Tax Credits) are eligible for a free early education place, as are those children who are: looked after by a local council; have a current statement of special education needs or an education health and care plan; receive Disability Living Allowance or are under special guardianship order, child arrangements or adoption order.

Other government support for childcare includes the means-tested childcare element of Working Tax Credit, through which parents working 16 hours or more per week can claim up to 70 per cent of their childcare costs up to maximum limits of £175 for one child and £300 for two or more children. From April 2013 Universal Credit began to roll out across the country in controlled stages. Universal Credit will be present in every jobcentre by spring 2016. Universal Credit is a new service that provides a single system of means-tested support for working-age people who are in or out of work, regardless of the number of hours worked and will eventually replace a number of benefits and Tax Credits. From April 2016, working families on Universal Credit will be able to claim up to 85% of their eligible childcare costs up to a maximum support of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 per month for two or more children.⁸

Working parents can also benefit from savings of up to £933 per year by using Employer Supported Childcare vouchers to pay for their childcare; employers participating in the scheme enable payment directly from parents' salaries before tax and National Insurance is deducted.

From early 2017, a new government initiative called Tax-Free Childcare will be introduced. Over time it will replace the existing Childcare Voucher Scheme. Under the new scheme, working parents will be able to apply to open an online childcare account,

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/491027/uc-and-your-family-jan16.pdf

and for every £8 families pay in the government will make a top-up payment of an additional £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child up to the age of 12 per year (or £4,000 for disabled children until age 17). Parents will then be able to use the funds to pay for registered childcare.⁹

There has also been substantial investment in improving staff qualification levels as research has demonstrated that staff characteristics, qualifications and training are the key drivers of high quality provision and better outcomes at age 5 (Sylva et al).¹⁰ Under the coalition government, a joint Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions Commission on childcare published, *More Great Childcare* (January 2013) and *More Affordable Childcare* (July 2013).¹¹ As a result the government: introduced the Early Years Teacher qualification for graduates and Early Years Educator qualification for staff without graduate status; ended duplication of inspection, assigned Ofsted sole responsibility and reformed the Early Years inspections that they undertake; and established childminder agencies.

Introduced in 2014, childminder agencies have been designed to increase the number of childminders entering the profession and to deliver improved quality. The agencies recruit childminders and help them with registration, training, business advice and visit them to make sure the childminders meet the right standards. Ofsted inspects childminder agencies to check the quality of childminders' provision. The agencies provide information to parents and carers to help them find childminders, including holiday or illness cover.

Children's centres continue to be an important part of the local early years landscape; they offer integrated services including information, health, parenting support, and childcare for children up to the age of five. Their core purpose, revised in April 2014, is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in: child development and school readiness; parenting aspirations and parenting skills; and child and family health and life chances¹².

A number of other developments have taken place in childcare policy in 2014-15. Policies that were not in place during the survey fieldwork period but are of note are described below.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know> Note that while Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) was not in place during the survey fieldwork period, a set of questions in the survey explained TFC to parents and sought their views on it.

¹⁰ Department for Education (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report. A Longitudinal Study Funded by the DfE 1997-2004* by Sylva et al. DfE Publications: Nottingham.

¹¹ Department for Education (2013) *More Great Childcare: raising quality and giving parents more choice* Department for Education: London. Department for Education (2013) *More Affordable Childcare* Department for Education: London.

¹² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf

In the coming years, the cross-government Childcare Implementation Taskforce will support effective joint working across government to deliver: the doubling of free childcare for working parents of three- and four-year-olds; Universal Credit and Tax-Free Childcare to support parents to work if they choose to; and further improvements in the supply of childcare.

Building on earlier commitments to provide government-funded early education to around 40 per cent of 2-year-olds,¹³ the Childcare Bill 2015 proposes to extend the entitlement to free childcare for working parents of three- and four-year-olds. Eligible parents will be entitled to a total of 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks or the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year.¹⁴

The Government announced in 2015 that it will be investing over £1 billion per year by 2019-20 to fund its manifesto pledge for 30 hours of childcare for working parents on 3 and 4 year olds. The funding includes £300 million for a significant uplift to the rate paid for the 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlements.

In addition the Government will be consulting on a package of reforms to improve efficiency in the sector, improve value for money and a fairer funding system. It will introduce a national funding formula for early years so that funding is transparently and fairly matched to need and fairly distributed between different types of providers and different parts of the country.

The Government introduced the early years pupil premium in April 2015 to provide nurseries, schools and other providers of government funded early education with additional funding for disadvantaged three and four year olds.¹⁵

1.3 Times series of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

The current study is the eighth in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, which began in 2004. As explained in the report of the 2009 survey (Smith et al 2010), the time series stretches back further than 2004, as the current series is the merger of two survey

¹³ See Department for Education (2011) *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years* Department for Education, Department of Health: London.

¹⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/482517/Childcare_Bill_Policy_Statement_12.03.2015.pdf). Note that the extended entitlement to free childcare hours was not in place during the interviewing period for this survey. The government is making progress towards full implementation of the new entitlement from September 2017 and early implementation in some areas in September 2016.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities>

series that preceded it. The survey ran annually until 2012 and is now run biennially with the 2012-13 survey and this 2014-15 survey.

As discussed by Smith et al, changes to the questionnaire over time mean that in many instances it is not possible to provide direct comparisons that extend to the beginning of the time series. Most of the comparisons in this report examine changes in the results between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys, although statistics from earlier surveys in the series are compared where possible. Where statistically significant increases or decreases have been identified between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 survey, efforts have been made, using evidence, to explain the changes.

On occasion, statistics from the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys cannot be compared owing to changes in the way the questionnaire was administered and/or the data were constructed.

1.4 Overview of the study design

The sample

6,198 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study between October 2014 and July 2015. The sample of parents was ultimately derived using Child Benefit records, which given its high take-up, provides a comprehensive sampling frame for families with dependent children.¹⁶

The sample design was changed in 2010 so that a sample of children was selected from the Child Benefit records, rather than a sample of Child Benefit recipients (in other words parents) as in previous surveys in the series. This change was made to reduce the level of corrective weighting necessary compared with previous surveys in the series, hence resulting in more precise survey estimates.

To maintain comparability with earlier surveys in the series, we limited the children's age range to under 15. The number of 2- to 4-year-olds was boosted to ensure sufficient numbers attending early years provision were included in the sample. This was necessary to provide separate analysis for this group.

Among all those selected and eligible for interview (e.g. excluding families who did not have a child aged under 15), 59 per cent of parents were interviewed, maintaining the

¹⁶ It should be noted that the High Income Child Benefit Charge came into force from 7 January 2013 which meant that any Child Benefit claimant would be liable to repay some or all of their Child Benefit award if they or their partner had an adjusted net income of more than £50,000 per year. This policy is likely to lead to under-coverage of higher earner families in the sample frame over time as some claimants who now have no net gain from Child Benefit may choose not to register in the first place.

response rate of 59% achieved in 2012. For further details on the sample achieved see Appendix A. For further details on the response rate see Appendix B.

The interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted around three-quarters of an hour, as in the 2012-13 survey. The main respondent to the survey was always a parent or guardian with main or shared responsibility for childcare decisions and tended to be the mother of the children (see Appendix A for the gender breakdown of respondents). In addition, any partners at home during the interview were asked personally about their employment and other socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Where this was not possible, the main respondent was asked to provide proxy information about their partner.

The interview was similar to that in 2012-13 and focused on families' use of both childcare and early years provision. Because of the constraint of interview length, detailed information on the use and needs of all children in the family could not be collected (unless the child was an only child). Rather, in families where there were two or more children, we obtained a broad picture about the childcare arrangements of all children, before asking more detailed questions about one randomly selected child (referred to as the selected child in relevant sections of the report). If the selected child had received care from more than one childcare or early years provider, we collected some information about all providers, but concentrated on their main provider.

As childcare arrangements may vary between school term-time and school holidays, most of the questions focused on a reference term-time week (which was the most recent term-time week). A separate set of questions was asked about the use of childcare during the school holidays by parents of school-age children (these questions had been added in 2008).

The interview broadly covered the following topic areas:

For all families:

- use of childcare and early years provision in the reference term-time week, school holidays (if applicable) and last year;
- payments made for childcare and early years provision (for providers used in the last week), and use of tax credits and subsidies;
- sources of information about, and attitudes towards, childcare and early years provision in the local area; and
- if applicable, reasons for not using childcare.

For one randomly selected child:

a detailed record of child attendance in the reference week; and
reasons for using and views of the main formal provider.

Classification details:

household composition;
parents' education and work details; and
provider details.

A small number of new questions were tested and added to the survey for 2014-15.
Topics included:

- Factors parents consider as important components of good quality childcare and;
- Extent of problems finding childcare to fit parent needs and working hours and parents' interest in early years childcare based at school sites and after-school provision;
- Awareness and interest in using Tax-Free Childcare arrangements when they are introduced;
- Impact of Ofsted rating on parents' choice of formal childcare provider;
- Awareness and interest in using childminder agencies;
- Payment arrangements with formal childcare providers, including frequency of payments, and whether payments are in advance or arrears;
- Awareness of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and feelings about the amount of learning and play activities and what help is needed to do more

Full details of the study design and implementation can be found in Appendix B.

Defining childcare

The study uses a very inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that the child was not with a resident parent or a resident parent's current partner, or at school. In order to remind parents to include all possible people or organisations that may have looked after their children, they were shown the following list:

Formal providers:

nursery school
nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school

reception class at a primary or infants' school

special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs

day nursery

playgroup or pre-school

childminder

nanny or au pair

baby-sitter who came to home

breakfast club

after-school clubs and activities

holiday club/scheme

Informal providers:

my ex-husband/wife/partner/the child's other parent who does not live in this household

the child's grandparent(s)

the child's older brother/sister

another relative

a friend or neighbour

Other:

other nursery education provider

other childcare provider

Definitions of main formal providers for pre-school children

A short definition for each of the main formal providers for pre-school children is included below. The definitions were not provided to parents in the survey but these are included in this report to help the reader differentiate between the most common categories.

nursery school – this is a school in its own right, with most children aged 3 to 5.

Sessions normally run for 2 ½ to 3 hours in the morning and/or afternoon;

nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school - often a separate unit within the school, with those in the nursery class aged 3 or 4. Sessions normally run for 2½ to 3 hours in the morning and/or afternoon;

reception class at a primary or infants' school - this usually provides full-time education during normal school hours, and most children in the reception class are aged 4 or 5;

special day school/nursery or unit for children with special educational needs - a nursery, school or unit for children with special educational needs;

day nursery - this runs for the whole working day and may be closed for a few weeks in summer, if at all. This may be run by employers, private companies, community/voluntary group or the Local Authority, and can take children who are a few months to 5-years-old; and

playgroup or pre-school - the term 'pre-school' is commonly used to describe many types of nursery education. For the purposes of this survey, pre-school is used to describe a type of playgroup. This service is often run by a community/voluntary group, parents themselves, or privately. Fees are usually charged, with sessions of up to 4 hours.

In accordance with the 2012-13 survey, we classified providers according to the service for which they were being used by parents, for example daycare or early years education. Thus we have classified providers and referred to them in analysis according to terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than include forms of integrated provision such as Children's Centres. Reception classes were only included as childcare if it was not compulsory schooling, that is the child was aged under 5 (or had turned 5 during the current school term). Further details of the definitions of the above categories are supplied in Appendix B.

This inclusive definition of childcare means that, as in 2012-13, parents will have included time when their child was visiting friends or family, at a sport or leisure activity, and so on. The term early years provision covers both 'care' for young children and 'early years education'.

Deciding on the correct classification of the 'type' of provider can be complicated for parents. We have therefore checked the classifications given by parents with the providers themselves in a separate telephone survey. Appendix B contains more detail about the provider checks that we have undertaken.

1.5 The report

The data from this study are very detailed and hence the purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings. We report on all the major topics covered in the interview with parents and look across different types of families, children and childcare providers.

Where tables that are referenced are very long or very detailed they have been included in Appendix C.

Interpreting the results in the report

The majority of findings in this report relate to one of two levels of analysis:

- the family level (e.g. proportions of families paying for childcare, parents' perceptions of childcare provision in their local areas); and

- the (selected) child level (e.g. parents' views on the provision received by the selected child from their main childcare provider).

However, for most of the analysis carried out for Chapters 3 and 4 we restructure the data so that 'all children' in the household are the base of analysis. This was done to increase the sample size and enable us to explore packages of childcare received by children in different age groups in more detail. We do not use this approach in the rest of the report, because much more data was collected on the selected child compared with all children in the household.

Weights

A 'family level' weight is applied to the family level analysis. This weight ensures that the findings are representative of families in England in receipt of Child Benefit, and re-balances families with children aged 2 to 4 and children of other age groups to their proportion in the population.

A 'child level' weight is applied to the analysis carried out at the (selected) child level. This weight combines the family level weight with an adjustment for the probability of the child being randomly selected for the more detailed questions. Full details of the weighting are provided in Appendix B.

Bases

The tables in this report contain the total number of cases being analysed (e.g. different types of families, income groups). The total base figure includes all the eligible cases (in other words all respondents or all respondents who were asked the question where it was not asked of all) but, usually, excludes cases with missing data (codes for 'don't know' or 'not answered'). Thus while the base description may be the same across several tables, the base sizes may differ slightly due to the exclusion of cases with missing data.

Unweighted bases are presented throughout. These are the actual number of people or families responding to the question.

In some tables, the column or row bases do not add up to the total. This is because some categories might not be included in the table, either because the corresponding numbers are too small to be of interest or the categories are otherwise not useful for the purposes of analysis.

Where a base contains fewer than 50 respondents, particular care must be taken, as confidence intervals around these estimates will be very wide, and hence the results should be treated with some caution. In tables with bases sizes below 50, these figures are denoted by squared brackets [].

Percentages

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to 100 per cent. This also applies to questions where more than one answer can be given ('multi-coded' questions).

Continuous data

Parents' responses to questions eliciting continuous data are included at relevant places throughout the report; for instance, the number of hours of childcare used per week (see Table 2.9) and the amount paid for childcare per week (see Table 5.3). For these data, both median and mean values are included in the data tables, but median values are reported in the text as they are less influenced by extreme values, and are therefore considered a more appropriate measure of central tendency. It should be noted that 'outlier' values, those identified as being either impossible or suspect responses, were removed from the dataset prior to data analysis. As such, the extreme values which remain can be considered as valid responses which lie at the far ends of their respective distributions.

Where significance testing has been conducted on continuous data, this has been carried out using mean values rather than medians. This is because the continuous data is subject to 'rounding' by respondents, for instance where payments are rounded to the nearest ten pounds, or where times are rounded to the nearest half hour; this rounding can result in similar median values where the underlying distributions are quite different, and testing for differences between means is more appropriate in these instances as it takes the entire distribution into account. It should be noted however that although mean values are more influenced than median values by extreme values, significance testing on mean values accounts for extreme values by widening the standard error of the mean, which is used in the calculation of the test statistic, thereby reducing the likelihood of finding a significant result. As such, it is not the case that a significant change will be reported between years or between sub-groups simply due to a small number of respondents reporting an extreme value on a continuous variable.

Statistical significance

Where reported survey results have differed by sub-group, or by survey year, the difference has been tested for significance using the complex samples module in SPSS 17.0 or SPSS 19.0, and found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above. The complex samples module allows us to take into account sample stratification, clustering, and weighting to correct for non-response bias when conducting significance testing. This means that we are much less likely to obtain 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpret a difference as real when it is not) than if we used the standard formulae.

Symbols in tables

The symbols below have been used in the tables and they denote the following:

- n/a this category does not apply (given the base of the table)
- [] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents (unweighted)
- * percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero
- 0 percentage value of zero.

1.6 Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the parents who took part in the survey for their time. The survey would not have been possible without their willingness to tell our interviewers about their childcare arrangements in great detail, their reasons for using or not using childcare, and their views on particular childcare providers and on childcare in their local area.

We are also grateful to Michael Dale, Max Stanford, Allan Little, Eimear Donnelly and Steve Hamilton at the Department for Education (DfE) for their support throughout the survey and feedback on the report.

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Finally, we would like to thank our consultant Mandy Littlewood of Mandy Littlewood Social Research and Consulting Ltd. Her outstanding expertise, patience and diligence have been of invaluable support to the report authors.

2. Use of childcare and early years provision

Key Findings:

- 79 per cent of all families in England with children aged 0 to 14 had used some form of childcare during the most recent term-time week. This equated to 4,329,000 families or 6,285,000 children. Two in three families (66%) had used formal childcare and early years provision, whereas 40 per cent had used informal childcare (provided by friends and family). A minority (28%) had used both formal and informal childcare. This overall pattern of childcare usage has remained unchanged since the last survey in 2012-13.
- The proportion of all children (rather than families, as reported above) receiving formal childcare was 55 per cent. Usage of formal childcare fell as area deprivation levels rose; 65 per cent of children living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare, compared with 49 per cent of children living in the most deprived areas. There have been no changes in uptake of formal childcare by area deprivation level since the last survey in 2012-13.
- Characteristics that were independently associated with the use of formal childcare for those aged 0 to 14 included:
 - age of child: parents with children aged 3 to 4 were most likely to use formal childcare;
 - family annual income: a higher family annual income was associated with a higher likelihood of using formal childcare; and,
 - family type and work status: children in dual-working couple families, and children in working lone-parent families, were most likely to receive formal childcare.
- For the first time in the series, the 2014-15 survey measured uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2-year-olds, in addition to 3- and 4-year-olds. Nine in ten (90%) parents of 3- and 4-year-olds said they received government funded early education, in line with 2012-13 rates (89%). Take-up among 4-year-olds was 99%, among 3-year-olds was 81%, and among 2-year-olds was 54%. Among eligible 2- to 4-year-olds 87% were in receipt of government funded early education. Official statistics from the Department for Education Early Years Census and Schools Census¹⁷ show that receipt of government funded early education was 96% among 3- and 4-year-olds in 2015: 99% of 4-year-olds and 94% of 3-year-olds. For 2-year olds those in receipt of government funded early education was 58% of those estimated to be eligible.

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2015>

- Children receiving childcare overall spent 10.8 hours in childcare per week on average, which is in line with the 2012 survey. Pre-school children spent around six times longer in formal childcare than did school-age children, largely because the latter spend much of their time at school.

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores families' use of childcare during term time. As childcare arrangements may vary between school term-time and school holidays, most of the questions focused on a reference term-time week (usually the week immediately preceding the interview) and it is on these questions that the analysis in this chapter is based. The chapter includes analysis of how patterns of usage varied by children's characteristics (for example their age and ethnicity), by the characteristics of families (for example family income), as well as by geography (for example region of residence, area deprivation, and rurality).

For the purposes of the survey, childcare is defined as any time when the child was not with their resident parent (or their resident parent's current partner) or at school. This includes any day of the week and any time of the day, and was irrespective of the reason the child was away from their resident parent. Childcare included periods when the child was being cared for by their non-resident parent. The chapter includes analyses of both formal childcare provision (for example nurseries) and informal childcare provision (for example grandparents). For more detail on the definition of childcare that is used for the survey, see section 1.4.

The first part of the chapter (sections 2.2 and 2.3) shows that use of different forms of childcare has changed over time, and provides estimates of the numbers of families using these different forms. Subsequent sections describe:

- how different types of families in different regions used formal and informal providers (sections 2.4 to 2.6 and 2.9);
- the provision of nursery classes and reception by schools and nurseries (section 2.7);
- the provision of breakfast and after-school clubs by academies and free schools (section 2.8);
- the amount (in hours) of childcare families used (section 2.10); and

- early years provision for 2- to 4-year-olds, exploring patterns of use and the entitlement to government funded early education (section 2.11). For information on the government's current policy on government funded early education, see section 1.2.

2.2 Use of childcare: trends over time

Earlier studies have found that there has been little change in the uptake of formal childcare since 2004, following a substantial increase over the period 1999 to 2004 due to the roll out of the entitlement to government funded early education to 3- and 4-year-olds and growth in the use of wrap-around care before and after school (Smith et al. 2010).

In line with these findings, this survey series found no change in the uptake of either formal or informal childcare between 2008 and 2009. From 2010-11 this survey introduced additional prompts to check whether the family had used childcare, following their initial unprompted responses. Consequently, direct comparisons with estimates of the use of childcare and early years provision prior to 2010-11 cannot be made.

Table 2.1 details the use of childcare provision in 2014-15 among parents with a child aged 0 to 14, alongside the results from the 2012-13 survey. In 2014-15, nearly four in five (79%) parents had used some form of childcare during the reference term-time week. Two-thirds (66%) had used formal childcare providers and 40 per cent had used informal provision, with over a quarter (28%) using both formal and informal childcare (table not shown). The overall pattern of childcare usage has remained unchanged since 2012-13.

Usage of specific formal and informal providers has also remained largely unchanged since 2012-13. After-school clubs and activities are still the most commonly used formal provider type, used by 38 per cent of parents. This is followed by reception classes, day nurseries, and breakfast clubs (used by 10%, 9%, and 8% of parents respectively).

The only provider to have seen a change in usage since 2012-13 is breakfast clubs, use of which has risen from 6 per cent in 2012-13 to 8 per cent in 2014-15.

	2012-13	2014-15
Use of childcare	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(6,393)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Any childcare	78	79
Formal providers	64	66
Nursery school ¹⁸	5	5
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	5	5
Reception class ¹⁹	11	10
Special day school/ nursery/ unit for children with SEN	*	*
Day nursery	10	9
Playgroup or pre-school	5	5
Other nursery education provider	*	*
Breakfast club	6	8
After-school club or activity	36	38
Childminder	5	5
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Babysitter who came to home	1	1
Informal providers	40	40
Ex-partner	6	6
Grandparent	27	26
Older sibling	4	5
Another relative	6	5
Friend or neighbour	6	6
Other²⁰		
Leisure/sport	3	3
Other childcare provider	2	2
No childcare used	22	21

Table 2.15: Use of childcare providers, 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys²¹

¹⁸ Where parents mentioned pre-school providers, contact details of these providers were taken, and where possible were interviewed to check what services they provide. This revealed that a common error was for parents to incorrectly classify a 'day nursery' as a 'nursery school'. While the interviews with providers meant that many of these errors could be corrected in the data, some errors will remain (for instance, where providers could not be interviewed), and this should be borne in mind (see Appendix B for further information).

¹⁹ The data on the use of reception classes should be treated with caution, as there may be under- and over-reporting of the use of this type of childcare. The potential under-reporting concerns 4-year-olds, whose parents may not have considered reception classes a type of childcare, even if their 4-year-olds were attending school (hence likely to be in reception). The potential over-reporting concerns 5-year-olds who attended reception classes as compulsory school rather than childcare but whose parents thought of it as a type of childcare.

²⁰ The use of other types of childcare counts towards any childcare but not towards formal or informal provision.

2.3 National estimates of the use of childcare

Grossing the figures reported in Table 2.1 on families' use of childcare up to national estimates²², there were 4.3 million families in England that used some form of childcare or early years education during term time in 2014-15. Of these, 3.6 million families used formal provision, and 2.2 million used informal provision (Table 2.2). After-school clubs and activities, the most commonly used formal provider, were used by 2.1 million families. Grandparents, the most commonly used informal provider, were used by 1.4 million families.

With respect to the number of children in England in receipt of childcare, 6.3 million children received some form of childcare or early years education during term time in 2014-15. Of these, 5.0 million received formal provision (with 2.8 million receiving provision from after-school clubs and activities), and 2.9 million received informal provision (with 1.9 million being looked after by their grandparents).

	Number of families	Number of children
Any childcare	4,329,000	6,285,000
Formal providers	3,594,000	5,008,000
Nursery school	255,000	360,000
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	260,000	303,000
Day nursery	509,000	550,000
Playgroup or pre-school	257,000	292,000
Breakfast club or activity	419,000	516,000
After-school club or activity	2,078,000	2,759,000
Childminder	277,000	344,000
Informal providers	2,204,000	2,874,000
Ex-partner	349,000	469,000
Grandparent	1,436,000	1,885,000
Older sibling	247,000	246,000
Another relative	248,000	302,000
Friend or neighbour	355,000	399,000

Note: all figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000

Table 2.16: National estimates of use of childcare

²¹ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

²² Figures are grossed to a national level using national estimates (number of families in England and number of children aged 0-14 in England) calculated from the Child Benefit Register as of October 2014.

2.4 Use of childcare, by children's age, ethnicity and SEN

This section explores the variation in childcare usage by a range of characteristics, including children's age, ethnicity and whether they have special education needs or health problems/disabilities. The subsequent two sections (sections 2.5 and 2.6) explore differences in childcare usage by family characteristics, namely income and work status.²³ All these analyses are based on the proportion of children receiving childcare, rather than the proportion of families using childcare.

The proportion of all children (rather than families, as reported in section 2.2) who had used some form of childcare during their most recent term-time week was 70 percent. Over half (55%) had used formal childcare and 32 per cent had used informal childcare.

There was a relationship between receipt of childcare and children's age (Table 2.3). Receipt of any type of childcare was highest among 3- to 4-year-olds (93%) and lowest among 12- to 14-year-olds (54%) and 0- to 2-year-olds (60%) (Table 2.3). This pattern also applies to receipt of formal childcare, with 90 per cent of 3- to 4-year-olds receiving formal provision, compared with 36 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds and 40 per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds.

The high uptake of childcare among children aged 3 to 4 can, to a large extent, be attributed to two factors: the entitlement to government funded early education among this age group (explored in section 2.11), and the greater requirement for childcare in general among pre-school children. The comparatively low uptake of childcare among children aged 12 to 14 can be attributed to the greater independence of this age group.

The type of formal childcare received also varied with the age of the child. Day nurseries were the most commonly used provider among children aged 0 to 2 (20%), whereas children aged 3 to 4 were most likely to have received formal childcare at a reception class (24%). Older children were most likely to have received formal childcare at an after-school club or activity.

In addition to day nurseries, smaller proportions of 0- to 2-year-olds received care from childminders (7%), playgroups and pre-schools (7%) or nursery schools (5%). Of those 0- to 2-year-olds attending a nursery school, 42 per cent were 'rising threes' (table not shown).²⁴

Children aged 3 to 4 received childcare from the widest range of formal providers. Most commonly, this included reception classes (24%) and nursery classes (20%), but day

²³ Income and work status were often inter-related, and section 2.7 tries to unpick this using regression analysis.

²⁴ 'Rising threes' are those children aged 2 years 6 month or older, but not yet 3.

nurseries (17%), and playgroups and nursery schools (each 14%) were also used by notable proportions of children.

Among school-age children, after-school clubs and activities were the most frequently attended formal provider, attended by half (50%) of 8- to 11-year-olds, over two-fifths of 5- to 7-year-olds (42%) and a third (34%) of 12- to 14-year-olds.

Receipt of informal childcare also varied by age group, albeit less so than for formal childcare provision. Children aged 0 to 2 were most likely to receive informal provision (37%), falling to 27 per cent among children aged 12 to 14.

Across all age groups, grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider, and were most likely to be used among the younger age groups (30% of 0- to 2-year-olds, falling to 13% of 12- to 14-year-olds). Older siblings most commonly cared for children in the older age groups, with six per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds receiving care from an older sibling, compared with less than one per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds.

	Age of child					
	0-2	3-4	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children</i>	<i>(1,034)</i>	<i>(1,319)</i>	<i>(1,309)</i>	<i>(1,496)</i>	<i>(1,040)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Any childcare	60	93	72	71	54	70
Formal providers	40	90	60	56	36	55
Nursery school	5	14	*	*	0	3
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	1	20	1	0	0	3
Reception class	0	24	12	0	0	6
Day nursery	20	17	*	*	0	6
Playgroup or pre-school	7	14	*	0	0	3
Breakfast club	*	3	12	9	1	6
After-school club or activity	1	8	42	50	34	31
Childminder	7	5	5	3	*	4
Nanny or au pair	1	1	2	*	1	1
Informal providers	37	30	33	32	27	32
Ex-partner	4	4	6	6	5	5
Grandparent	30	23	23	18	13	21
Older sibling	*	1	1	4	6	3
Another relative	5	3	3	4	2	3
Friend or neighbour	2	3	5	6	4	4

No childcare used	40	7	28	29	46	30
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Table 2.17: Use of childcare providers, by age of child

Additional analyses showed that among 2-year-olds, around three in four (76%) received some form of childcare during term time, with 61 per cent receiving formal childcare and 39 per cent receiving informal childcare.²⁵ Grandparents and day nurseries were the most commonly used type of childcare for this age group (30% and 29% each). Fewer 2-year-olds received childcare from playgroups or pre-schools (13%), nursery schools (9%) or childminders (8%) (see Table C2.2 in Appendix C).

Table 2.4 shows how the uptake of formal and informal childcare in 2014-15 varied by the child's ethnic background, by whether or not they had a special educational need, and by whether or not they had a health problem/disability.

The child's ethnic group bore a relationship to receipt of both formal and informal childcare. Children from Black Caribbean, other mixed and White British backgrounds were most likely to receive formal childcare (68%, 59%, 58% respectively), while children from Asian Pakistani, other Asian, and Bangladeshi backgrounds were least likely to (41%, 41% and 35% respectively). Receipt of informal childcare was highest among White British (38%), and was lowest among children from Asian Bangladeshi backgrounds (9%).

The variance in childcare uptake by ethnic background may be due in part to other socio-economic characteristics. For example, it could be that Asian children of Pakistani background with working mothers were just as likely to use formal childcare as White British children of working mothers, and that the overall difference between the two groups was caused by the higher employment rate among White British women. For this reason, the findings in Table 2.4 should be interpreted in combination with the regression analysis presented in section 2.9. However the regression analysis confirms that parents of pre-school children from Asian Pakistani and Asian Indian backgrounds were less likely than parents of children who were White British to use formal childcare when other factors such as the age of the child, the work status and annual income of the family were taken into account. Parents of school-age children from Asian Bangladeshi backgrounds were less likely than parents of children who were White British to use formal provision after other factors were taken into account. Parents of school-age children from Black Caribbean backgrounds however, were more likely to do so. The remaining differences listed above were not found to be significant after other factors were taken into account.

²⁵ Fieldwork for the 2014-15 survey began one year after the entitlement to government funded early education was extended to the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds.

Children with special educational needs were less likely than those without to receive formal childcare (46% compared to 56%). They were however, no less likely to receive informal childcare than those without a special educational need (29% compared with 32%) (see Table C2.13 in Appendix C).

Child characteristics	Use of childcare			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6, 198)
Ethnicity of child, grouped				
White British	73	58	38	(4,348)
Other White	63	55	16	(399)
Black Caribbean	74	68	15	(143)
Black African	56	47	12	(89)
Asian Indian	62	47	15	(52)
Asian Pakistani	55	41	19	(190)
Asian Bangladeshi	44	35	9	(233)
Other Asian	51	41	12	(86)
White and Black	71	57	26	(127)
White and Asian	66	54	23	(85)
Other mixed	71	59	33	(255)
Other	61	45	20	(151)
Whether child has SEN				
Yes	63	46	29	(444)
No	70	56	32	(5,751)
Whether child has health problem/disability				
Yes	65	48	31	(339)
No	70	56	32	(5,859)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 2.18: Use of childcare, by child characteristics

2.5 Use of childcare by families' circumstance

A range of family characteristics were associated with children's likelihood of receiving childcare (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). In terms of family type (that is, whether children were part of a couple or a lone-parent family), children in couple and lone-parent families were equally likely to receive childcare (69% and 70% respectively). However,

children in couple families were more likely to receive formal childcare (57%, compared with 50% in lone-parent families), and less likely to receive informal childcare (29%, compared with 39% in lone-parent families).

Although the greater uptake of informal childcare by children in lone-parent families can be accounted for to some extent by care received from non-resident parents²⁶ the proportion of children receiving childcare from the ex-partner of a parent is relatively low (5%) (Table 2.3), and as such this does not entirely explain the greater use of informal childcare by children of lone parents.

Lone parents were also less likely to be in work than parents in couples, and so the differences in the use of formal and informal childcare may have been influenced by work status rather than family type (in other words working lone parents may have been as likely to use childcare as working couple parents but fewer lone parents were in work).

Figure 2.1 explores the variation among children receiving childcare by family type and work status.²⁷

Children in dual-working couple families, and children in working lone-parent families, were most likely to receive some form of childcare (79% each). They were also the most likely to receive formal childcare (65% and 56% respectively) and informal childcare (38% and 51%).

Children in couple families with one working parent and children in non-working lone-parent families were similar in their access to childcare overall (58% and 59%), as well as in their access to formal childcare (47% and 44%). These children differed, however, in their receipt of informal childcare: 17 per cent of children in couple families with one working parent received informal childcare, compared with 26 per cent of children in non-working lone-parent families.

Children in non-working couple families were the least likely to receive childcare, with 51 per cent receiving some type of childcare, 42 per cent receiving formal childcare, and 15 per cent receiving informal childcare.

²⁶ Respondents were asked whether their ex-partner provided childcare, and, since this will usually (although not exclusively) be a child's non-resident parent, this section will refer to 'ex-partners' as children's non-resident parent.

²⁷ Income and work status were often inter-related, and section 2.9 tries to unpick this using regression analysis.

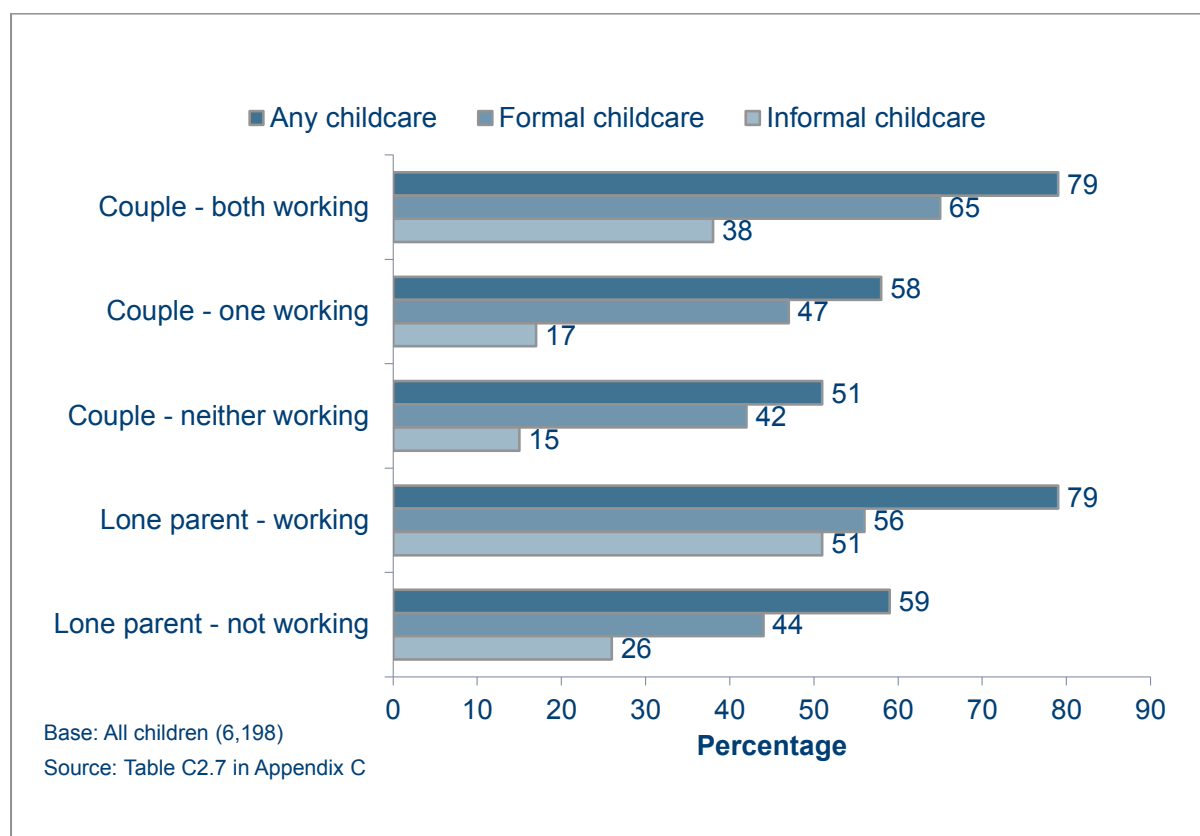


Figure 2.7: Use of childcare, by family type and work status

Table C2.3 in Appendix C shows the proportion of children in receipt of childcare, broken down by household type and work status, for both the 2014-15 and 2012-13 surveys. There were no changes in the uptake of childcare by household type and work status between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Turning to the uptake of childcare by a more detailed breakdown of family type and working arrangements, there were variations in childcare uptake (see Table C2.5 in Appendix C):

- Formal childcare uptake was highest for children in couple households where both parents were in full-time employment (70%) and where one was in full-time and one in part-time (16-29 hours per week) employment (65%).
- Formal childcare uptake was lowest among children in non-working couple households (42%), children in couple households with one parent working part-time and one not working (44%), and children in non-working lone-parent households (44%).
- Informal childcare uptake was highest among children in lone-parent part-time working families (between 49% and 54%).
- Informal childcare uptake was lowest among children in couple families where one or both parents were not working (between 13% and 18%).

After-school clubs were the most frequently used formal childcare provider across all household types and working statuses. There was a relationship between household type, work status and the type of childcare providers used (see Table C2.6). For example, nursery schools (2%), nursery classes (2%) and playgroups (1%) were less likely to be used by working lone parents. Breakfast clubs (9%) and childminders (7%) however were most likely to be used by working lone parents and least likely to be used in couple families where only one parent works (2% and 1% respectively).

With regards to informal childcare, grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider across all household types. Children in dual-working couple households and children in working lone-parent families were most likely to be cared for by their grandparents (29% and 26% respectively), while among children in non-working lone-parent families, only 13 per cent were cared for by their grandparents. A fifth (21%) of children in working lone-parent families and 11 per cent of children in non-working lone-parents families received childcare from an ex-partner.

There was a relationship between family annual income and children's receipt of both formal and informal childcare. While this might be expected given the relationship between income and work status (47% of families with an annual income under £10,000 were working compared with 99 per cent of those earning £45,000 or more – table not shown), the regression analysis discussed in section 2.9 (and in Table C2.13 in Appendix C) shows that both the working status and income level of the family independently help predict the use of formal childcare.

Three in five (60%) children in families with an annual income of under £10,000 received some type of childcare, rising to four in five (80%) of children in families with an annual income of £45,000 or more (see Table 2.5). Uptake of formal childcare also increased with family annual income: 45 per cent of children in families with an annual income of under £10,000 received formal childcare, rising to 69 per cent of children in families with an annual income of £45,000 or more.

Uptake of formal childcare was higher than uptake of informal childcare across all income groups. Receipt of informal childcare also increased with rising income, however, the trend was less pronounced than for formal childcare. Children in families with an annual income of under £30,000 received similar levels of informal childcare (26% for families earning under £10,000, 28% for families earning £10,000 to £20,000, and 31% for families earning £20,000 to £30,000), while children in families with higher annual incomes received higher levels of informal childcare (38% for families earning between £30,000 and £40,000, and 37% for families earning £45,000 and more).

Annual income	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				

All	70	56	33	(6,198)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	60	45	26	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	62	46	28	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	66	51	31	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	76	59	38	(1,088)
£45,000+	80	69	37	(1,608)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 2.19: Use of childcare, by family annual income

There was a relationship between family size and children's receipt of childcare (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Over seven in ten (73%) only children and children with one other sibling aged under 15 in the household accessed any form of childcare. Children with two or more siblings aged under 15, however, were less likely to have received childcare (61%). Turning to formal childcare, uptake was highest among children with one sibling (59%) and only children (56%), and was lowest among children with two or more siblings in the family (49%). Receipt of informal childcare was highest among only children (40%) and lower among children with one sibling (33%) or two or more siblings (23%).

Family size is related to a number of factors, such as age(s) of the child(ren), the family income, and work status. After controlling for these factors, family size did not bear a relationship with receipt of formal childcare among school-age children (see Table C2.13 in Appendix C). Among pre-school children, however, family size did bear a relationship with receipt of formal childcare, with only children more likely to receive formal childcare than children from larger families.

One possible explanation of this is that the practical difficulties of organising formal childcare for multiple children outweighed the benefits for such families. Another explanation may relate to childcare costs. Those providers typically used by parents of pre-school children (such as day nurseries) cost more per week than those used by parents of school-age children (such as after-school clubs and activities and breakfast clubs) (see Table 5.3), because pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare than school-age children (see Table 2.9). Costs for pre-school providers may also be higher because of a higher ratio of adults to children among these providers. Therefore, for parents of larger families with pre-school children, greater childcare costs may have been an important factor as well.

Children's receipt of childcare bore a relationship to the occupational group of their working parent(s) (see Table C2.5 in Appendix C). Children of parent(s) in modern professional occupations, traditional professional occupations and senior managerial and administrative roles were most likely to receive childcare (80%, 79%, and 79%

respectively), while children of parent(s) in routine or semi-routine occupations were least likely to receive childcare (61% and 63% respectively). Uptake of formal childcare followed a similar pattern. With respect to informal childcare however, uptake was highest for children of parent(s) in senior manager or administrator roles (38%) and lowest for children with parents in routine manual and service roles (26%).

2.6 Use of childcare by area characteristics

The surveys in the series so far have consistently found that uptake of childcare has varied across regions within England, with uptake in London lower than elsewhere in the country. This trend is also apparent in the 2014-15 survey, with 57 per cent of children in London receiving some type of childcare, compared with 70 per cent of children across England. This relatively low level of childcare usage in London, however, can be largely attributed to the low uptake rates of informal childcare: only one in nine (12%) children in London received informal childcare compared with the average in England of 32 per cent. Uptake of formal childcare in London (51%) was much closer to the national average (55%).

Children living in the East of England and the South West were most likely to receive formal childcare (61% and 60% respectively), while children living in the East Midlands and London were least likely to (49% and 51% respectively). Children living in the North East (51%) were most likely to receive informal childcare (46%), and excluding London, uptake of informal childcare across the other regions varied between 26 per cent in the East Midlands, to 40 per cent in the South West and in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Region	Use of childcare			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6,198)
North East	72	51	46	(267)
North West	72	56	36	(794)
Yorkshire and the Humber	74	58	40	(736)
East Midlands	66	49	26	(570)
West Midlands	67	52	31	(645)
East of England	75	61	38	(637)
London	57	51	12	(981)
South East	72	58	35	(985)
South West	78	60	40	(583)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 2.20: Use of childcare, by region

The level of deprivation in families' area of residence also bore a relationship with the uptake of childcare (Figure 2.2).²⁸ Overall uptake of childcare was highest in the least deprived areas (78%) and lowest in the most deprived areas (63%). Usage of formal childcare was also progressively less widespread as area deprivation levels increased; 65 per cent of children living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare, compared with 49 per cent of children living in the most deprived areas.

Uptake of informal childcare was also lowest among children living in the most deprived areas (26%). However, the uptake of informal childcare was similar across the rest of the deprivation quintiles, with uptake ranging between 32 and 36 per cent.

These differences may be driven to some extent by the association between area deprivation and employment rates (72% of families in the most deprived areas were in work compared with 95% of those in the least deprived areas – table not shown) and the corresponding lower need for childcare in the more deprived areas. The regression analysis (section 2.9) shows that, among families with school-age children, area deprivation did not bear a relationship with the use of informal childcare once other factors had been controlled for. However, among pre-school children, deprivation did bear a relationship with the use of informal childcare after controlling for other factors.

²⁸ For each family we established the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for their area. We then grouped families into area deprivation quintiles according to the following schema: most deprived quintile (score of 31.79 or more), 2nd quintile (score of 21.15 to 31.77), 3rd quintile (score of 14.74 to 21.14), 4th quintile (score of 10.25 to 14.73) and 5th (least deprived) quintile (score of 2.27 to 10.24).

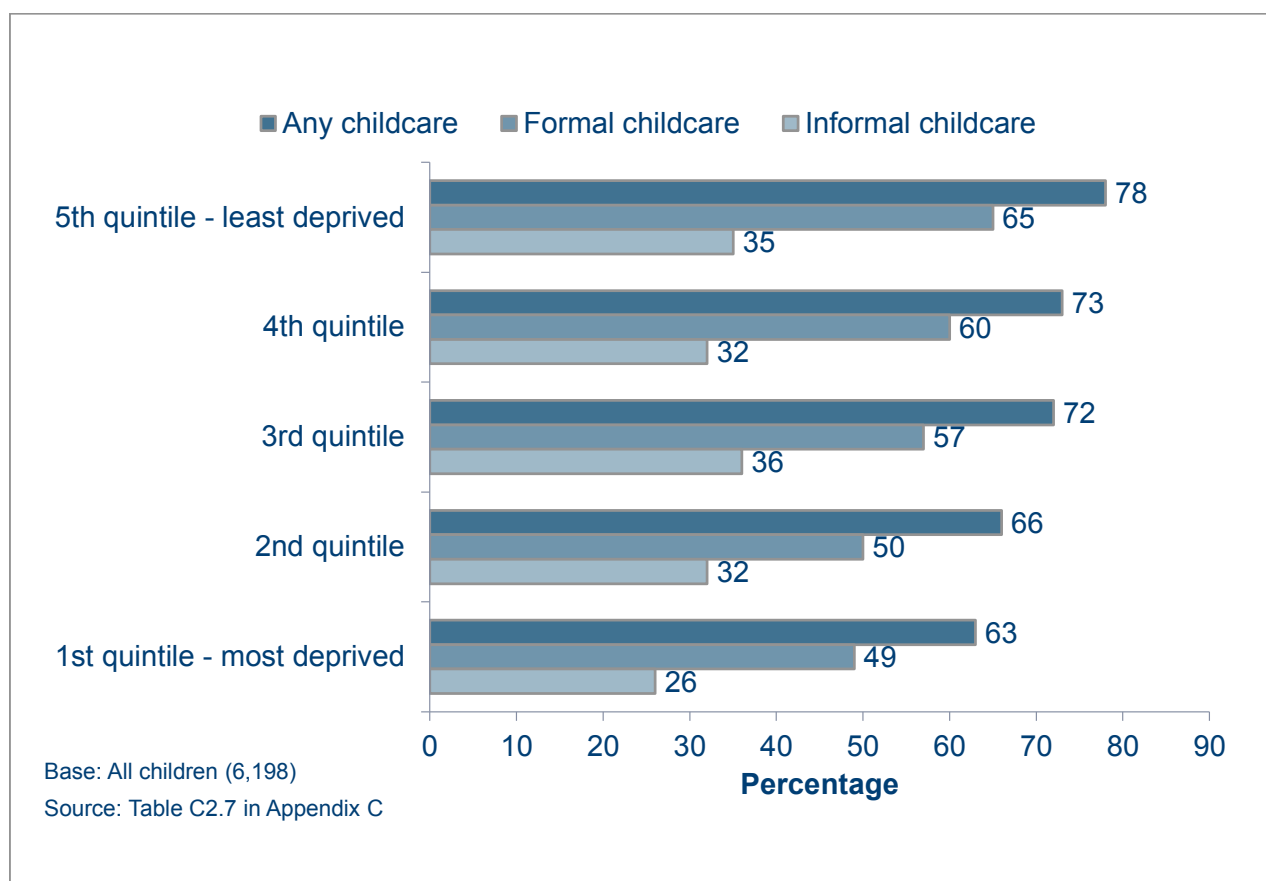


Figure 2.8: Use of childcare, by area deprivation

Table C2.8 in Appendix C shows the proportion of children receiving childcare by level of deprivation in the local area for both the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys. Uptake of childcare is broadly in line with 2012-13, with the exception of receipt of informal childcare among families in the second most deprived areas, which has increased from 26 per cent in 2012-13 to 32 per cent in 2014-15. There were no differences in the uptake of formal childcare by area deprivation level between 2012-13 and 2014-15. Nor were there any differences between 2012-13 and 2014-15 with respect to receipt of either formal or informal childcare by family work status (Table C2.3 in Appendix C).

Turning to the use of childcare by rurality (Table 2.7), overall uptake was consistent across rural and urban areas (73% and 69% respectively). This pattern held for both formal childcare (59% compared with 55% respectively) and informal childcare (34% compared with 32% respectively). Once other factors had been controlled for, rurality was not found to be a factor in the uptake of childcare (section 2.9).

	Use of childcare			
Rurality	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	<i>(6,198)</i>
Rural	73	59	34	<i>(720)</i>
Urban	69	55	32	<i>(5,478)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

Table 2.21: Use of childcare, by rurality

2.7 Provision of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs by schools and nurseries

The analysis in this section is based on the proportion of children receiving this type of provision, as opposed to the proportion of families using this provision.

Of the six per cent of children receiving childcare from a breakfast club (Table 2.3), 95 per cent accessed it on a school or nursery site, or on a site provided by a school or nursery (table not shown).

Of the 31 per cent of children who went to an after-school club (Table 2.3), 74 per cent accessed it on a school or nursery site, or on a site provided by a school or nursery (table not shown).

2.8 Provision of nursery classes and reception classes by academies and free schools

This section describes the provision of nursery classes and reception classes by academies and free schools. Again, the analysis in this section is based on the proportion of children receiving this type of provision, as opposed to the proportion of families using the provision.

Of the three per cent of children attending a nursery class (Table 2.3), 15 per cent accessed the nursery class at an academy or at a site linked to an academy, and a further 39 per cent accessed the nursery class at a free school or a site linked to a free school (table not shown).²⁹ Among the six per cent of children who attended a reception

²⁹ Note that fewer than 41,000 children attend free schools according to DfE school statistics; it is likely that parents answered about schools in general rather than 'free schools' specifically when answering this

class (Table 2.3), 13 per cent did so at an academy or at a site linked to an academy, and a further 29 per cent did so at a free school or at a site linked to a free school (table not shown).

2.9 Key characteristics associated with the use of childcare

Key characteristics associated with use of formal childcare

The analysis presented above shows that there were a range of factors related to the child, to their family, and to the area in which they live which had an impact on the use of formal childcare, with many of these factors being inter-related. For example, uptake of formal childcare was higher among higher income families, and also among working families. However, as working families tended to have higher incomes, it is not clear which factor drove the differences – whether the working status of the family meant that they needed formal childcare to allow the parents to work, or whether their financial situation meant that they could afford childcare. To disentangle these effects, we have undertaken multivariate logistic regression analysis (a statistical procedure which measures the independent contribution of multiple factors on a single outcome) separately for pre-school and school-age children.

The regression analysis showed that for both pre-school and school-age children, the age of the child, the parents' family type and work status, the family annual income and ethnicity were independently associated with the use of formal childcare (see Table C2.13 in Appendix C for more details). For pre-school children the number of children in the family was also independently associated with the use of childcare, while deprivation and whether the child had special educational needs were not statistically significant when other factors were taken into account. For school-age children, deprivation and whether the child had special educational needs were associated with the use of formal childcare, while the number of children in the family was not statistically significant once other factors had been accounted for. Whether the family lived in a rural or an urban area was not associated with the use of formal childcare for both pre-school and school-age children.

After controlling for other factors, couple families in which one or both parents were out of work, and non-working lone parents, were less likely than dual-working couples to use formal childcare. Families earning £45,000 or more per year were more likely than families earning less to use formal childcare.

Parents of children aged 3 to 4 were more likely than parents of children aged 0 to 2 to use formal childcare, reflecting the universal entitlement to government funded early

education among 3 to 4 year olds. This may also be due to the reluctance of some parents with children aged 0 to 2 to put their children in childcare because they felt they were too young (see Table 6.13). For pre-school children, parents with one or two children were more likely to use formal childcare than parents with three children or more.

Parents of children aged 8 to 14 were less likely than parents of children aged 5 to 7 to use formal childcare, likely due to parents trusting 12- to 14-year-olds to be unsupervised.

Parents of children from an Asian Indian background were less likely than parents of children who were White British to use formal provision. Parents of pre-school children from Asian Pakistani and Other White backgrounds were less likely than parents of children who were White British to use formal childcare. Parents of school-age children from Asian Bangladeshi backgrounds were less likely than parents of children who were White British to use formal provision while parents of school-age children from Black Caribbean and Other Mixed backgrounds were more likely to do so.

Parents of school-age children who had a special educational need were less likely than parents who did not have a child with such needs to use formal childcare.

Parents of school-age children who lived in the middle and more deprived end of the deprivation distribution were less likely than parents living in the least deprived areas to use formal childcare.

Key characteristics associated with use of informal childcare

Family and area characteristics were associated with the use of informal childcare, as shown earlier, and many of these factors were inter-related. For example, as with formal childcare, use of informal childcare was higher among higher income families, and also among working families. To disentangle these effects, multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken for informal childcare, separately for pre-school and school-age children.

The regression analysis showed that for both pre-school and school-age children, the age of the child, family type and work status, the number of children in the family and ethnicity were independently associated with the use of informal childcare (see Table C2.14 in Appendix C). For pre-school children only, deprivation was also independently associated with the use of informal childcare while among parents of school-age children family annual income was associated.

Whether the child had a special educational need, or whether the family lived in a rural or urban area, were not associated with the use of informal childcare once other factors had been taken into account.

Couple families in which one or both parents were out of work were less likely to use informal childcare than dual-working couple families, while working lone parents were more likely than dual-working couple families to use informal childcare. In addition, for parents of pre-school children only, non-working lone parents were less likely than dual-working couple families to use informal childcare.

Parents with one or two children were more likely to use informal childcare than parents with three or more children.

Parents of White British children were more likely to use informal childcare than were parents of children from Black Caribbean, Black African, White and Black, Other White, Asian Indian and Other Asian backgrounds. Parents of pre-school children from White British backgrounds were more likely to use informal childcare than those from Asian Pakistani and Other backgrounds. In addition, among parents with school-age children only, those with children from White British backgrounds were more likely to use informal childcare than were parents of children from Asian Bangladeshi and White and Asian backgrounds.

Parents of children aged 3 to 4 were less likely than parents of younger pre-school children aged 0 to 2 to use informal childcare, and parents of children aged 12 to 14 were less likely than parents of younger school-age children aged 5 to 7 to use formal childcare.

Parents of pre-school children living in the least deprived areas were less likely to use informal childcare than those living in the second least deprived areas. Among parents of school-age children, those with a family annual income of £45,000 or more were more likely to use informal childcare than were parents earning less than £20,000 (or who refused or were unable to give income details).

2.10 Hours of childcare used

This section describes the number of hours that children spent in childcare per week. The approach adopted is to report the median values in the text (referred to as averages) because they more accurately reflect levels of childcare use as they are less affected by extreme values (in other words numbers of hours that fall well outside the typical range of answers given by parents). Mean values are also shown in the tables in this section and were used to test for differences between age groups.³⁰

Children receiving some type of childcare spent on average 10.8 hours being cared for per week (Table 2.8). This did not differ from the 10.0 hours of childcare recorded in the

³⁰ For more detail on the conventions followed when presenting and conducting significance tests on continuous data, see Section 1.5.

2012-13 survey (see Table C2.25 in Appendix C). Children aged 3 to 4, however, received more childcare per week in 2014-15 than in 2012-13 (25.0 hours compared with 23.8 hours). There were no changes between 2012-13 and 2014-15 among the other age groups.

The amount of time children spent in formal childcare has remained unchanged since 2012-13 (7.0 hours per week for both 2014-15 and 2012-13). However, there was an increase in the number of hours spent in formal childcare among children aged 3 to 4 (18.8 hours in 2014-15 compared with 18.0 hours in 2012-13). By contrast, children aged 5 to 7 spent slightly less time in formal childcare in 2014-15 (4.3 hours) than they did in 2012-13 (5.0 hours).

Children using informal childcare received 7.5 hours of childcare per week in 2014-15, in line with 2012-13 (7.0 hours). Children aged 3 to 4, however, did receive more informal childcare per week than in 2012-13 (9.0 hours compared with 8.0 hours). Across all other age groups, the amount of time spent in informal childcare was in line with 2014-15 and 2012-13.

Pre-school children spent nearly six times longer in formal childcare than did school age children (17.5 hours compared with 3.0 hours). The size of this difference can be attributed to school-age children spending much of their time at school, while for pre-school children, early years education constitutes formal childcare provision. Pre-school children also spent longer in informal childcare than did school age children (10.0 hours compared with 6.0 hours), although this difference was far less pronounced than was the case for formal childcare.

Pre-school children spent far more time per week in formal childcare (17.5 hours) than in informal childcare (10.0 hours), while for school-age children the opposite was true, with more time spent in informal childcare (6.0 hours) than in formal childcare (3.0 hours).

Looking at pre-school children specifically, 3- to 4- year-olds spent longest in formal childcare (18.8 hours, compared with 16.0 hours for 0- to 2-year-olds), while 0- to 2-year-olds spent longest in informal childcare (11.0 hours compared with 9.0 hours for 3- to 4-year-olds). Among school-age children, those aged 5 to 7 spent the longest in formal childcare (4.3 hours, compared with 2.6 hours among 8- to 11-year-olds and 3.0 hours among 12- to 14-year-olds). There was little variation within school-age-children in the amount of time spent in informal childcare (6.0 hours for children aged 5 to 7 and 8 to 11, and 6.3 hours for children aged 12 to 14).

	Age of child							
Use of childcare	0-2	3-4	All pre-school children	5-7	8-11	12-14	All school-age children	All
<i>Base: All children</i>	(646)	(1,128)	(1,774)	(881)	(960)	(529)	(2,370)	(4,144)
Any childcare								
Median	18.0	25.0	21.0	7.8	5.0	5.0	5.8	10.8
Mean	21.4	26.2	24.1	13.7	9.4	9.4	10.9	15.6
Standard error	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3
<i>Base: All children receiving formal childcare</i>	(453)	(1,094)	(1,547)	(744)	(746)	(341)	(1,831)	(3,378)
Formal childcare								
Median	16.0	18.8	17.5	4.3	2.6	3.0	3.0	7.0
Mean	18.5	22.5	21.1	10.4	4.7	4.2	6.7	12.1
Standard error	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<i>Base: All children receiving informal childcare</i>	(382)	(362)	(744)	(396)	(452)	(261)	(1,109)	(1,853)
Informal childcare								
Median	11.0	9.0	10.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.0	7.5
Mean	14.2	13.4	13.9	10.5	11.6	12.8	11.5	12.3
Standard error	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.3

Table 2.22: Hours of childcare used per week, by age of child

The number of hours children spent in childcare per week varied by the type of childcare provider (see Table 2.9). With regards to pre-school provision, children attended reception classes for 31.3 hours on average (representing a full-time school place). Children attended day nurseries for 17.9 hours per week on average, while those attending nursery schools or nursery classes did so for 15.0 hours per week. Children attending playgroups or pre-schools did so for 12.0 hours, while childminders and nannies provided care for 11.2 and 12.0 hours respectively (note there are low base sizes for nannies).

With regards to out of school provision, children typically spent 3.0 hours a week at breakfast clubs and 2.0 hours at after-school clubs and activities.

Turning to informal provision, children looked after by non-resident parents spent on average 16.9 hours per week in their care, while those looked after by grandparents spent on average 6.0 hours in their care. Children cared for by another relative spent 5.0 hours in their care, while children who were looked after by older siblings, or by friends

and neighbours, spent fewer hours on average in their care (3.1 and 3.0 hours respectively).

Chapters 3 and 4 describe further the patterns of childcare use among children of different ages, examining which types of childcare were used for how long (per week and per day), in which combinations and for which reasons.

	Hours of childcare used per week			
Provider type	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Any childcare	10.8	15.6	0.3	(4,144)
Formal providers	7.0	12.1	0.2	(3,378)
Nursery school	15.0	17.6	0.7	(240)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	15.0	18.8	0.6	(277)
Reception class	31.3	28.5	0.4	(475)
Day nursery	17.9	20.1	0.5	(448)
Playgroup or pre-school	12.0	11.6	0.5	(248)
Breakfast club	3.0	3.3	0.2	(311)
After-school club or activity	2.0	3.7	0.1	(1,582)
Childminder	11.2	14.9	0.9	(229)
Nanny or au pair	[12.0]	[15.0]	[1.8]	(49)
Informal providers	7.5	12.3	0.3	(1,853)
Ex-partner	16.9	21.1	1.1	(295)
Grandparent	6.0	10.1	0.3	(1,244)
Older sibling	3.1	5.3	0.5	(150)
Another relative	5.0	10.1	1.0	(193)
Friend or neighbour	3.0	5.4	0.4	(243)

Table 2.23: Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type³¹

Figure 2.3 shows the number of hours of childcare children received per week broken down by family type and detailed work status. Children in lone-parent families where the parent worked full time spent the longest in childcare (17 hours per week on average). Children in couples families where one parent worked full time, and the other worked under 16 hours per week, spent the least amount of time in childcare per week (6 hours).

Children from lone-parent non-working families and from couple families where one parent worked part time, and the other was not working spent the longest time in formal

³¹ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

childcare in the week (11 hours each). Children spending the least amount of time in formal childcare were those in lone parent part-time (under 16 hours) working families, those in couples families where one parent worked full time and the other worked under 16 hours per week, and those in non-working couple families (3, 4 and 5 hours respectively).

With respect to informal childcare, children in lone-parent families where the parent worked full time spent the longest in informal childcare (16 hours). Children in couple families in which one parent worked full time and the other worked less than 16 hours per week, and those in couple families in which one parent worked full time and the other was not working spent the least amount of time in informal childcare (4 and 5 hours per week respectively).

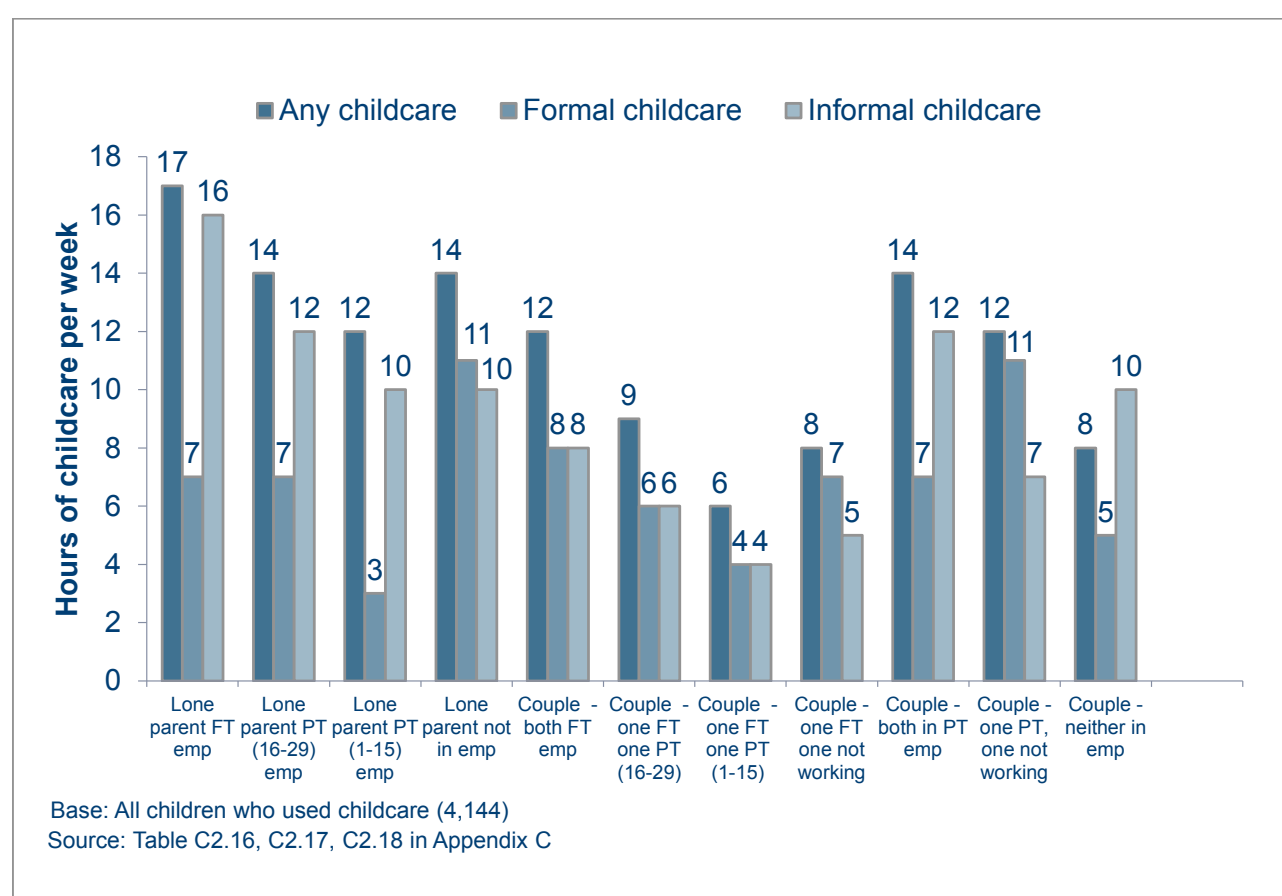


Figure 2.9: Median hours of childcare use per week, by family type and detailed work status

Key characteristics associated with formal childcare hours used

For both pre-school and school-age children we analysed the key drivers of using formal childcare for more than the median number of hours per week.³² For pre-school children the median number of hours of formal childcare parents used per week was 17.5 hours per week, and for school-age children it was 3.0 hours per week (see Table 2.8).

The analysis showed that the age of the child, family type and work status, and family annual income were independently associated with using more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. For pre-school children, the number of children in the family and ethnicity were also associated factors. For school-age children, deprivation was also associated with using more than the median of 3.0 hours of formal childcare per week. There was, however, no association after accounting for other factors with whether or not the child had special educational needs (see Table C2.22 in Appendix C).

Couples in which only one partner was working were less likely than dual-working couple families to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. In addition, among parents with pre-school children, non-working couple families were less likely than working couple families to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. On the other hand, children in lone-parent working families were more likely than working couple families to use more than the median number of hours.

Among parents of pre-school children, those earning below £45,000 were less likely than those earning £45,000 or more to use more than the median number of 17.5 hours of formal childcare per week. Parents of school-age children whose income was between £10,000 and £20,000 and between £30,000 and £45,000 were less likely than those earning above £45,000 to be using more than the median of 3.0 hours per week.

Parents of children aged 3 to 4 were more likely than those with children aged 0 to 2 to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week, again likely attributable to both the entitlement to government funded early education, and the reluctance of some parents of 0- to 2-year-olds to put their children due to the child's young age (see Table 6.13). For pre-school children, parents with one or two children were more likely to use more than the median of 17.5 hours per week than parents with three children or more.

Parents of pre-school children from Black African background were more likely than those with children from White British backgrounds to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week.

³² Analysis of the data for formal hours of childcare used showed that it was quite "lumpy", in other words grouped around whole numbers. Hence we decided to run the regression based on a binary dependent variable rather than continuous data. We chose the median number of hours as the cut-off.

Parents of school-age children aged 8 to 14 were less likely than those with children aged 5 to 7 to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare.

Key characteristics associated with informal childcare hours used

For pre-school children the median number of hours of informal childcare parents used per week was 10.0 hours, and for school-age children it was 6.0 hours (see Table 2.8).

The regression analysis showed that family type and work status were independently associated with using more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week for parents of both pre-school and school-age children. In addition, among parents of pre-school children, the number of children in the family was independently associated with using more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week (see Table C2.23 in Appendix C).

Other factors such as the age of the child, annual income, whether the child had special educational needs or not, and deprivation were not associated with parents using more than the median number of hours of informal childcare. For parents of school-age children, the number of children in the family was not associated either.

Turning first to parents of pre-school children, couple families in which only one partner was working were less likely than dual-working couple families to use more than the median of 10.0 hours of informal childcare per week, after accounting for other factors. One-child families where the child was of pre-school age were more likely than those with three or more children to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare.

With regards to parents of school-age children, those in lone-parent families (whether working or non-working) were more likely than parents in working couple families to use more than the median number of 6 hours of informal childcare per week.

2.11 Uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education by 2- to 4-year-old children

This section explores the uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education for all eligible 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.³³ A new question on the uptake of the funded early

³³ Children are eligible for the entitlement to government funded early education from 1 April, 1 September or 1 January following their 3rd birthday, and are entitled to up to two years (six terms) of government funded early years provision before reaching statutory school age, which is the first term following their 5th birthday. The base for the figures on the entitlement to government funded early education is all children who are eligible. To ensure that uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education does not appear artificially low, children attending school are included here in the proportion of children receiving their entitlement (even though they were not asked the question about government funded hours).

education among 2-year-olds was included for the first time in this survey. Unlike the funded early education for 3- and 4-year-olds, which is available to all children in this age group, only some 2-year-olds are eligible for the funded early education.³⁴ For this section, analyses are based on 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, as opposed to 3- and 4-year-olds only as in all previous studies.

Parents were asked whether their child received any early years provision, and separately, whether they received any 'free hours' (i.e. government funded hours) of early years provision.³⁵ As the responses were based on parents' own awareness of their child's receipt of government funded provision, and were confined to a specific reference week during which there may have been one-off reasons why the child did not attend (for instance sickness), there may be a degree of under-reporting of uptake of government funded early education.

Table 2.10 shows the receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2- to 4-year-olds who were eligible for the entitlement.

Reported uptake of the entitlement among eligible 2- to 4-year-olds was 87 per cent. Almost all (99%) 4-year-olds received their entitlement, compared with 81 per cent of 3-year-olds. Overall, nine in ten (90%) 3- to 4-year-olds received their entitlement, similar to the 89 per cent recorded in 2012-13. Over half (54%) of eligible 2-year-olds received the entitlement to government funded early education.

With respect to those children who received some early years provision (that is, those who received some government funded hours; some early years provision but no government funded hours; or some early years provision but where the parent was not sure about the government funded hours) – we found that 95 per cent of 3- to 4-year-olds received some early years provision in 2014-15, in line with 2012-13 (94%) (table not shown).

³⁴ 2-year-olds were considered eligible if they were old enough (2-year-olds are eligible from 1 April, 1 September or 1 January following their 2nd birthday), and satisfied one or more of the following criteria: were in a household in receipt of income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit; were in a household in receipt of Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) and with an annual gross household income not over £16,190; were in a household in receipt of Working Tax Credits and with an annual gross household income not over £16,190; had a current statement of special education needs. Further criteria result in a 2-year-old becoming eligible, but the survey did not collect the relevant data, and therefore these criteria have not been applied in determining eligibility. These criteria are: were in a household in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), receiving support through part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act; or in receipt of the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on; had left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order; was looked after by a local council; was in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

³⁵ Early years provision is defined as: nursery school, nursery class, reception class, day nursery, special day school/nursery, playgroup, childminder and other nursery education provider. Children aged 3 to 4 who attended school (full or part time) are also considered to be receiving early years provision.

	Age of child			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	All
Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds</i>	(121)	(539)	(672)	(1,332)
Received entitlement (or attended school)	54	81	99	87
Received early years provision but not government funded hours	6	8	*	4
Received early years provision but not sure about government funded hours	-	2	*	1
Received no early years provision	39	10	1	8

Table 2.24: Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education, by age of child

These figures can be compared with the more reliable figures provided by the Department for Education 'Provision for children under five years of age'. The most recently available of these data, from June 2015, show that receipt of 'some government funded early education' stands at 94 per cent among 3-year-olds, 99 per cent among 4-year-olds, and 97 per cent across both 3- and 4-year-olds.³⁶ The same release shows that 58 per cent of all eligible 2-year-olds took up the government's funded early education.³⁷

The receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education bore a relationship with work status within family type (see Table 2.11). Children in dual-working couple families were most likely to receive the entitlement (95%). Children in non-working couple families were least likely to receive the entitlement (78%).

³⁶ Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England: June 2015, Department for Education (June 2015).

³⁷ The data provided in the release by the Department for Education is based only on 2-year-olds who were eligible for the early funded education; the survey did not capture information about all the eligibility criteria and so the survey findings are based on an approximation of the eligible 2-year-old population. Therefore, the data for this age group is not directly comparable.

	Family type and work status					
	Couple families			Lone parents		All
	Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	
Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds</i>	(497)	(415)	(73)	(133)	(214)	(1,332)
Received entitlement (or attended school)	95	83	78	83	81	87
Received early years provision but not government funded hours	2	4	8	8	5	4
Received early years provision but not sure about government funded hours	1	1	0	1	0	1
Received no early years provision	2	11	14	9	15	8

Table 2.25: Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education, by family type and work status

Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education shows variation by family annual income (see Table C2.19 in Appendix C). Among families earning below £10,000 per year receipt of the entitlement was 80%, and this rose throughout the income scale to 94% among those earning £45,000 or more.

Receipt of government funded early education bore a relationship to children's ethnic background, with children from White British backgrounds most likely to receive the entitlement (90%) (see Table C2.19 in Appendix C). Uptake also varied by region, with children living in the South West most likely to receive it (94%), and those in London least likely (76%). Uptake did not vary between rural and urban areas.

Parents whose children were not receiving the entitlement to government funded early education were asked whether they were aware the government paid for some hours of nursery education per week. Just over a quarter (27%) were unaware of the scheme (based on 70 responses, table not shown), indicating that there is scope for improving information provision to those parents not receiving the entitlement.

Among parents who were aware of the scheme, the most common reasons for not receiving the entitlement was the child being too young, the childcare provider not offering government funded hours, and parents not knowing that their child could receive government funded hours, for instance, due to a lack of awareness of eligibility criteria (note that data are based on fewer than 50 responses, table not shown).

Turning to the number of hours of government funded provision received, three-quarters (75%) of children received 15 hours or more (see Table C2.20 in Appendix C).³⁸ Among

³⁸ Although a maximum of 15 hours of government funded early education entitlement was available to 2-

4-year-olds, 80 per cent received 15 hours or more, compared to 72 per cent among 3-year-olds and 76 per cent among eligible 2-year-olds. The median number of hours received were the same for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds, at 15 hours each.³⁹

Nine in ten (89%) parents were fairly or very satisfied with the number of government funded hours available and just seven per cent were fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (Figure 2.4).

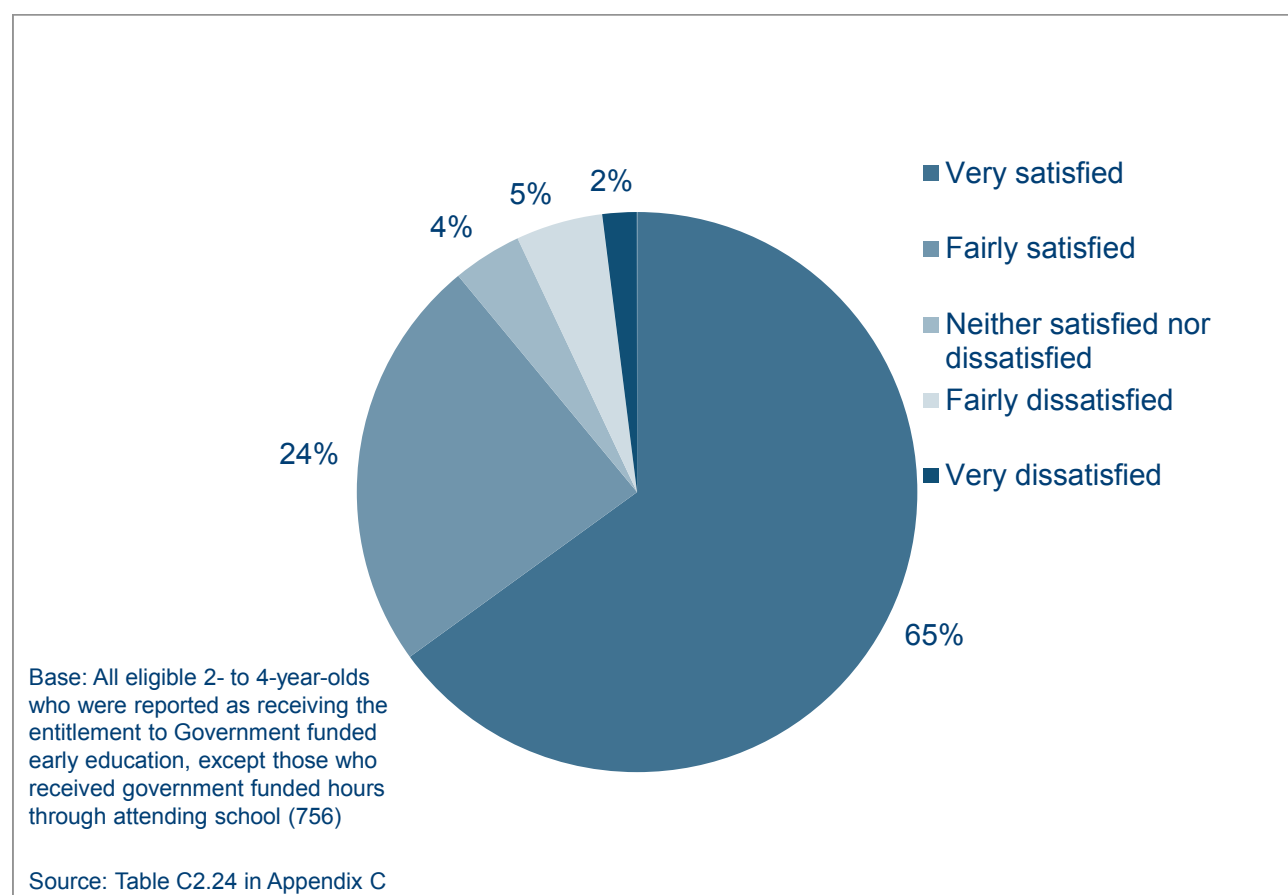


Figure 2.10: Whether parents satisfied with the number of government funded hours

and 4-year-olds per week, some parents, perhaps mistakenly, reported using a higher number of government funded hours.

³⁹ For information on the conventions followed when presenting and conducting significance tests on continuous data, see Section 1.5.

Parents of children aged 2 to 4 who received the entitlement to government funded early education were asked if they would have paid for the hours had the hours not been available for free. Almost half (47%) of these parents said they would have paid for some or all of these free hours had the entitlement not been available (table not shown).

Of those parents saying they would have paid for some or all of the entitlement they used had it not been available, over three in five (62%) said that they would have paid for all the hours they used (Table 2.12).

	Family type		
	Couple families	Lone parents	All
Proportion	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families receiving entitlement to government funded early education who would have paid for some of this entitlement had it not been available</i>	(409)	(110)	(519)
Up to 25 per cent	6	14	7
26 to 50 per cent	17	18	17
51 to 75 per cent	10	12	10
76 to 99 per cent	3	3	3
100 per cent	65	54	62
Mean	81	73	79

Table 2.26: Proportion of the entitlement to government funded early education received that parents would have paid for were it not available

Parents whose children received some of the entitlement to government funded early education during the reference week, but less than the full 15 hours, were asked why their child did not receive more hours (see Table C2.21 in Appendix C). Two in five (39%) parents said that they thought more hours would have to be paid for, over one-quarter (27%) of parents said that they did not need childcare for any longer, and 11 per cent mentioned that their child was too young to go for longer or that settings had no sessions available.

Parents were asked on which day(s) of the week their child received government funded hours (see Table 2.13). The most common option across all ages was for children to receive their government funded hours across five days per week (41%), followed by receiving their government funded hours across three days per week (30%).

	Age of child			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	All
Number of days	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to government funded early education, except those who received government funded hours through attending school</i>	(67)	(433)	(255)	(755)
1	2	2	2	2
2	12	13	9	12
3	35	31	27	30
4	8	10	10	10
5	39	38	47	41
Unsure – government funded hours received as part of a longer care package	4	6	6	6
Median	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Mean	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.8

Table 2.27: Number of days per week over which 2- to 4-year-olds received their entitlement to government funded early education, by age of child

Among children who received their government funded hours across more than one day per week, the majority (78%) received the same number of hours each day. For a small proportion of children (3%) parents were unable to say whether the number of hours received varied day-by-day because the government funded hours were received as part of a longer childcare package (table not shown).⁴⁰

The types of providers at which 2- to 4-year-olds received their government funded early education are shown in Table 2.14. 4-year-olds most commonly used reception classes (90%), with a small proportion using nursery classes (12%). Among 3-year-olds receipt of government funded hours was more evenly spread across providers, with 29 per cent using day nurseries, 25 per cent nursery classes, 21 per cent nursery schools, and 20 per cent playgroups or pre-schools. Among 2-year-olds, more than two in five (44%) received their government funded early education at a day nursery, with the next most frequently used providers being playgroups and pre-schools (26%) and nursery schools (20%).

⁴⁰ For instance, if a child attended an early years provider for 30 hours per week they may have received a discount off their bill equivalent to the cost of 15 hours, and may not have been able to identify which of the 30 hours were government funded, and which were paid for.

Provider type	Age of child			
	2 years %	3 years %	4 years %	All %
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to government funded early education, or attended school</i>	(65)	(432)	(662)	(1,159)
Nursery school	20	21	9	14
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	10	25	12	16
Reception class	2	4	90	52
Day nursery	44	29	8	18
Playgroup or pre-school	26	20	7	13
Childminder	2	2	1	1
Other	0	2	1	1

Table 2.28: Use of childcare providers for 2- to 4-year-olds receiving their entitlement to government funded early education, by age of child

2.12 Summary

Formal and informal childcare usage during term time has remained largely unchanged between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys. Overall, 79 per cent of parents used childcare during term time, with 66 per cent using formal provision, 40 per cent using informal provision and 28 per cent using both formal and informal provision. The survey indicates that in 2014-15, approximately 6.3 million children across 4.3 million families in England received childcare, with 5.0 million children receiving formal provision, and 2.9 million children receiving informal provision.

The proportion of all children (rather than families, as reported above) receiving formal childcare was 55 per cent. The receipt of childcare varied across age groups, and between provider types. Receipt of childcare overall, and formal childcare in particular, was highest among children aged 3 to 4 (reflecting their entitlement to government funded early education). Receipt of childcare overall was lowest among 0- to 2-year-olds and 12- to 14-year-olds, mainly due to their low take-up of formal childcare. Take-up of informal childcare was highest among children aged 0 to 2.

Usage of formal childcare fell as area deprivation levels rose; 65 per cent of children living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare, compared with 49 per cent of children living in the most deprived areas. There have been no changes in uptake of formal childcare by area deprivation level since the last survey in 2012-13.

Three- and four-year-olds received formal childcare from a wide range of providers. School-age children, however, received formal childcare primarily through after-school clubs and activities. Grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider

across all age groups, with their use decreasing as children get older.

Children's ethnic background was associated with their likelihood of receiving childcare, with children from White British and Black Caribbean backgrounds most likely to receive childcare, and children from Asian Pakistani, other Asian, and Bangladeshi backgrounds least likely to. Turning to family characteristics, children in couple families were more likely to receive formal childcare than those in lone-parent families, but were less likely to receive informal childcare. Children in working families (and relatedly, in families with higher incomes), were more likely to use formal childcare than children in non-working families (and children in families with lower incomes); these relationships held once other factors had been controlled for.

Use of informal childcare was associated with the age of the child, family type and work status, family size, and the ethnic background of the child, and these associations held after controlling for other factors.

By region, children in London were least likely to receive childcare overall. This is largely explained by the particularly low use of informal childcare in London, with the use of formal childcare being much closer to the national average. Receipt of formal childcare was highest in the East of England and the South West, while receipt of informal childcare was highest in the North East.

Among children who received formal childcare from a breakfast club or an after-school club, the majority accessed this provision on a school or nursery site, or on a site provided by a school or nursery.

Children receiving childcare overall spent 10.8 hours in childcare per week on average, in line with the 2012 survey. Pre-school children spent around six times longer in formal childcare than did school-age children (21.0 hours compared to 5.8 hours). This was attributable to school-age children spending much of their time at school, while for pre-school children, early years education constitutes formal childcare provision. Children aged 3 to 4 received the maximum entitlement of 15.0 hours of government funded early education per week on average.

The amount of time children spent at providers varied substantially by provider type. With respect to formal provision, reception classes and day nurseries were attended for the longest each week (31.3 hours and 17.9 hours respectively), while children spent the least time at breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (3.0 and 2.0 hours respectively). Turning to informal provision, non-resident parents provided the most hours of care per week (16.9 hours for children in their care). Children received far fewer hours of care from other informal providers (between 3.0 and 6.0 hours per week).

A regression analysis of the number of hours per week children spent in formal childcare

found that, once other factors had been controlled for, the age of the child, family type and work status, and family annual income was associated with the hours children spent in formal childcare per week. The same regression analysis performed on the number of hours per week that children spend in informal childcare found a relationship between hours per week and family type and work status, once other factors had been controlled for. Additionally, for pre-school children only, family size was also found to be independently associated with use of informal childcare.

For the first time in the series, the 2014-15 survey measured uptake of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2-year-olds, in addition to 3- and 4-year-olds. Take-up among 4-year-olds was 99%, among 3-year-olds was 81%, and among 2-year-olds was 54%. Among eligible 2- to 4-year-olds 87% were in receipt of government funded early education.⁴¹ Official statistics from the Department for Education Early Years Census and Schools Census⁴² show that receipt of government funded early education was 96% among 3- and 4-year-olds in January 2015: 99% of 4-year-olds and 94% of 3-year-olds. Official Department for Education statistics show the number of 2-year-olds in receipt of the free entitlement, which is estimated to be 58% of those eligible in January 2015.⁴³

Almost half (47%) of parents of children aged 2 to 4 using the entitlement said they would have paid for some or all of the hours they used had they not been available, and of these parents, over three in five (62%) said they would have paid for all of the hours they used. Nine in ten (89%) parents were fairly or very satisfied with the number of government funded hours available, and just seven per cent were fairly or very dissatisfied. The most common pattern of care across all ages was for children to receive their government funded hours across five days per week (41%), followed by receiving their government funded hours across three days per week.

Take-up of the entitlement to government funded early education among 2 to 4 year olds varied by family type and work status, and by income. Children in lone-parent non-working families and non-working couple families were most likely to receive government funded early education. Take-up of the entitlement increased with income.

Only four per cent of eligible 2- to 4-year-olds who received formal childcare did not use the entitlement to government funded early education (6% of eligible 2-year-olds, 8% of 3-year-olds and less than 1% of 4-year-olds). Among parents not using the entitlement to

⁴¹ As responses were based on parents' own awareness of their child's receipt of government funded provision, and were confined to a specific reference week during which there may have been one-off reasons why the child did not attend (for instance sickness), there may be a degree of under-reporting of uptake of government funded early education – and as a result differences in these figures compared to the Official statistics from the Department's Early Years Census and Schools Census.

⁴² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-years-of-age-january-2015>

⁴³ Available data cannot be used to identify accurately the total number of eligible 2-year-olds.

government funded early education, just over a quarter (27%) were unaware of the scheme.

3. Packages of childcare for pre-school children

Key Findings:

- Overall, three in four pre-school children (75%) used some type of childcare, with 25 per cent not in receipt of any childcare. Older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) however, were far more likely to receive childcare (92%) than younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) (61%).
- The three packages of childcare most commonly used by pre-school children were formal centre-based care only (such as nursery classes or day nurseries) (30%); a combination of formal centre based and informal care (19%); and informal care only (such as non-resident parents or grandparents) (12%).
- Pre-school children spent an average of 6.1 hours per day in childcare, and 21.0 hours per week. Pre-school children aged 3 to 4 spend longer in childcare per week than those aged 0 to 2 (25 hours and 18 hours respectively), again reflecting the universal entitlement to government funded early years education among this age group.
- Around three in five (62%) pre-school children who received childcare did so for economic reasons (for instance, to enable parents to work, look for work, or to study). The next most common reason for pre-school children to receive childcare (59%) was for child-related reasons (for instance, for their educational or social development, or because the child liked going there). A quarter (24%) of pre-school children receiving childcare did so for reasons relating to parental-time (for instance, so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise or look after other children).

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores parents' use of childcare for their pre-school children. From previous surveys in the series we know that some children received childcare from more than one formal provider, and some families combined formal childcare with informal childcare. Furthermore, the types of childcare taken up by parents varied by children's age, as shown in Chapter 2. In Chapter 2 we classified childcare providers as either 'formal' or 'informal'; in this chapter, we use a more refined classification for formal and informal providers as follows:

Formal: Centre-Based

- nursery school
- nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school
- reception class
- day nursery
- playgroup or pre-school
- special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs
- other nursery education provider

Formal: Individual

- childminder
- nanny or au pair
- babysitter

Formal: Out-of-School

- breakfast club
- after-school club or activity
- holiday club/scheme ⁴⁴

Formal: Leisure/Other

- other childcare provider
- leisure/sport activity

Informal:

- children's non-resident parent ⁴⁵
- grandparents
- older siblings
- other relatives
- friends and neighbours

Employing this detailed classification of providers is beneficial as it captures the crucial differences between the various provider types. Furthermore, this classification allows us to explore the 'packages' of childcare parents arrange for their children, for example, the proportion of parents who combine centre-based childcare with informal childcare. This chapter also investigates how the types and packages of childcare used for pre-school children relate to: the children's ages (0- to 2-year-olds compared with 3- to 4-year-olds: see section 3.2); the number of providers used (section 3.3); patterns of use in terms of days and hours (section 3.4); the use of childcare packages for pre-school children at the

⁴⁴ While this chapter focuses on the childcare children used in the term-time reference week, a small number (less than 0.5 per cent) of parents said they used a holiday club or scheme during term time.

⁴⁵ Respondents were asked whether an ex-partner provided childcare. Since this will usually (although not exclusively) be a child's non-resident parent, this chapter will refer to 'ex-partners' as children's non-resident parent.

family level (section 3.5), and parents' reasons for using particular providers (section 3.6).

All findings presented in this chapter relate to childcare used during the reference term-time week. However, unlike most other chapters in the report, the analysis draws on information about all children in the household rather than just a selected child (see Appendix B for further information about the selected child). This approach was taken here, and in Chapter 4, because most of the relevant data was available for all children in the responding household, and looking at a larger sample of children allows us to explore the use of different types of childcare in greater detail. The only findings presented in this chapter that draw on information for a selected child only are those relating to patterns of use (days and hours). It is necessary to focus on the selected child in these cases because the data was part of the detailed record of childcare attendance that was only collected for the selected child (see Chapter 1).

3.2 Use of childcare packages by age of pre-school child

Table 3.1 details the various 'packages' of childcare used by parents of pre-school children, broken down by the age of the child. Formal centre-based childcare was the most common package overall for pre-school children (30%) and along with formal centre-based and informal packages (19%) and informal only packages (12%), was much more common than any other packages. Other packages were used by no more than three per cent of children. Just over a quarter (25%) of pre-school children received no childcare at all.

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family</i>	<i>(2,239)</i>	<i>(2,266)</i>	<i>(4,505)</i>
Formal: Centre-Based only	17	47	30
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal	15	24	19
Informal only	20	3	12
Formal: Individual only	4	1	3
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Individual	1	3	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Individual and Informal	1	1	1
Formal: Individual and Informal	2	*	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School	*	5	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	*	5	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Leisure/Other	*	1	*
Formal: Centre-Based and Leisure/Other and Informal	0	*	*
Other	*	1	*
Any childcare used	61	92	75
No childcare used	39	7	25

Table 3.1: Use of childcare packages for pre-school children, by age of child⁴⁶

There was variation between the packages used by younger and older pre-school children, most likely driven by the take-up of government funded early years provision for 3- to 4-year-olds.⁴⁷ The most common arrangement used by 0- to 2-year-olds was informal childcare, with 20 per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds using this type of arrangement compared with only 3 per cent of 3- to 4-year-olds. The next two most used arrangements for 0-2-year-olds were formal centre-based only package and centre-based and informal childcare package (17% and 15% respectively). The formal centre-based childcare package was the most common type of childcare among 3- to 4-year-olds (47%) with fewer (24%) using a formal centre-based and informal package.

Overall three per cent of pre-school children were only cared for by a formal individual provider (for instance, a childminder or a babysitter). The youngest pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) were more likely to be cared for through this package (4% compared with 1% for children aged 3 to 4).

⁴⁶ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

⁴⁷ The Department for Education's 'Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England: June 2015' (June 2015) reported that 96 per cent of the 3- to 4-year-old population were benefiting from some government funded early years education.

Younger children aged 0 to 2 were more likely not to use any childcare package compared with children aged 3 to 4 (39% compared with 7% respectively), in line with findings from section 2.4.

3.3 Number of providers used for pre-school children

Within each type of childcare package, for instance formal centre-based or formal individual, children may use a number of different providers. For example, a child using only formal childcare could go to both a nursery and a playgroup. This chapter examines the number of different providers used in addition to the type of provision.

Table 3.2 shows the number of providers used by pre-school children, split by the age of the child. Over half (56%) of pre-school children used just one provider, which was the most common arrangement overall. This was particularly the case for younger pre-school children with three in five (60%) children aged 0 to 2 using just one provider compared with 53 per cent of those aged 3 to 4. Older pre-school children were more likely to use multiple providers, with 16 per cent of 3- to 4-year-old children using three or more providers compared with 7 per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds.

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Number of providers	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,262)	(2,079)	(3,341)
1	60	53	56
2	33	31	32
3+	7	16	12

Table 3.2: Number of providers, by age of child

Table 3.3 examines the number of providers used by pre-school children split by the type of childcare package. For those children using formal centre-based providers nearly all used just one provider (96%). In addition, pre-school children who only used informal childcare predominantly used a single provider (82%).

While pre-school children who only used a single type of childcare rarely used more than one provider, nearly one in five (19%) of those who used a combination of centre-based and informal childcare used three or more providers (1% of all children aged 0 to 14). (Section 3.4 provides detailed information on whether these providers were used on the same or on different days).

	Package of childcare		
	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based and Informal
Number of providers	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,486)	(445)	(761)
1	96	82	0
2	4	16	81
3+	*	2	19

Table 3.3: Number of providers, by package of childcare

Nursery classes and nursery schools were the most likely of the centre-based providers to be used as the sole childcare provider for pre-school children (55% and 51% respectively). At the other end of the scale, reception and playgroups were the least likely (both 44%) (see Table C3.1 in Appendix C).

Regarding informal childcare provisions, those using grandparents were the most likely to rely on them as the sole provider (27%), whereas friends or neighbours were the least likely to be the sole childcare provision when used (15%) (see Table C3.2 in Appendix C).

3.4 Patterns of childcare use for pre-school children

This section looks at the number of hours that pre-school children spent in childcare per day and per week. The approach adopted is to report the median values in the text (referred to as averages) because they more accurately reflect levels of childcare use as they are less affected by extreme values (in other words numbers of hours that fall well outside the typical range of answers given by parents). Mean values are also shown in the tables in this section and were used to test for differences between age groups.⁴⁸

Table 3.4 shows that the average number of hours pre-school children spent in childcare per day was 6.1 hours (on days that childcare was used), and 21.0 hours across the whole week. Older pre-school children spent longer in childcare than younger pre-school children (25.0 hours per week for 3- to 4-year-olds compared with 18.0 hours for 0- to 2-year-olds). However, younger children spent longer in childcare during the day where childcare was used compared with older children (6.7 hours for 0- to 2-year-olds and 6.0 hours for 3- to 4-year-olds). This reflects the fact that children aged 3 to 4 were more likely to receive childcare across more days per week than those aged 0 to 2. Over half (54%) of 3- to 4-year-olds received childcare across 5 days in the reference week

⁴⁸ For more detail on the conventions followed when presenting and conducting significance tests on continuous data, see Section 1.5.

compared with 18 per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds. Younger children were more likely to receive childcare on fewer days in the week with around one quarter (23%) receiving care over two days and a further quarter (25%) receiving care over three days. This reflects the entitlement to government funded early years provision being offered usually across five days of the week (see section 2.11), and may also reflect the reluctance of some parents with younger pre-school children to have their child(ren) cared for due to their young age (see Table 6.5).

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(646)	(1,128)	(1,774)
Days per week			
1	15	2	8
2	23	6	13
3	25	16	20
4	16	14	15
5	18	54	39
6	2	5	4
7	1	3	2
Median hours per day	6.7	6.0	6.1
Median hours per week	18.0	25.0	21.0

Table 3.4: Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

As shown in Table 3.5, pre-school children who used a combination of centre-based and informal packages were the heaviest users of childcare (29.6 hours per week on average) when compared with those using formal centre-based childcare only (15.0 hours on average) or informal childcare only (11.4 hours on average). Children using this combination also spent the most hours in childcare on the days where childcare was used; an average of 7.3 hours a day compared with 5.0 and 5.1 hours a day respectively for those using centre-based and informal childcare only.

Children using a combination of centre-based and informal childcare were more likely to come from working families than children using other packages of care. Three in four of these children (74%) came from families where all parents worked, whether this was a dual-working couple family or a working lone-parent family (table not shown). In contrast, 56 per cent of children receiving informal care only and 39 per cent of those receiving centre-based care only were from these working families.

Of those pre-school children that received childcare through centre-based arrangements around half (47%) received their childcare on five days per week, reflecting the fact that formal childcare settings are typically open during week days (see Table 3.5). In accordance with this, very few (less than 2%) children received this arrangement of childcare on six or seven days per week. In comparison, 13 per cent of pre-school children who received a combination of centre-based and informal childcare did so on six or seven days per week.

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Centre- Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based and Informal		
			Total	Centre- based	Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(827)	(220)	(420)	(419)	(420)
Days per week					
1	6	31	*	10	41
2	13	30	6	24	29
3	22	16	20	25	15
4	11	14	23	13	7
5	47	6	38	29	8
6	*	2	9	0	1
7	1	*	4	*	*
Median hours per day	5.0	5.1	7.3	6.2	5.7
Median hours per week	15.0	11.4	29.6	16.5	9.5

Table 3.5: Patterns of childcare use, by package of childcare

Table 3.6 shows how the number of hours pre-school children spent in childcare per day, and within the reference week as a whole, varied by the family type and work status of their parent(s).

The heaviest users of childcare per week were working lone-parent families (31.6 hours), followed by dual-working couple families (26.7 hours). In comparison, children from non-working households (whether a couple or a lone-parent household) and those from couple households with one of the two parents working received 15.0 hours per week.

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(1,368)	(807)	(489)	(72)	(406)	(181)	(225)
Days per week							
1	8	6	10	11	9	2	14
2	14	13	15	17	12	9	14
3	20	21	20	15	18	19	17
4	15	18	12	6	14	20	8
5	39	38	41	43	38	38	38
6	3	3	3	6	6	10	4
7	1	1	1	4	4	3	4
Median hours per day	6.2	7.1	5	4.2	6.0	7.4	5
Median hours per week	20.9	26.7	15	15	23.0	31.6	15

Table 3.6: Patterns of childcare use, by family type and work status

Table 3.7 shows the number of hours of childcare received per day and per week both for 0- to 2-year-olds and 3- to 4-year-olds and how these varied by family type and work status.

There were notable differences between younger and older pre-school children. For instance, among couple families with one parent in work, 0- to 2-year-olds received on average 9.5 hours of childcare per week, which was just over half of that received by the older 3- to 4-year-olds in that family type (17.0 hours).

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children aged 0 to 2 who received childcare</i>	(495)	(330)	(142)	(23)	(151)	(65)	(86)
Pre-school children aged 0 to 2							
Median hours per day	6.9	8.0	4.0	[4.0]	5.2	7.5	4.0
Median hours per week	18.0	24.0	9.5	[11.9]	17.0	28.2	14.0
<i>Base: All pre-school children aged 3 to 4 who received childcare</i>	(873)	(477)	(347)	(49)	(255)	(116)	(139)
Pre-school children aged 3 to 4							
Median hours per day	6.0	6.5	5.0	[4.7]	6.3	7.3	5.4
Median hours per week	24.5	30.0	17.0	[18.1]	29.0	32.6	19.6

Table 3.7: Patterns of childcare use of 0- to 2-year-olds and 3- to 4-year-olds by family type and work status⁴⁹

Family size and family income bore a relationship to the number of hours that pre-school children spent in childcare, as Table 3.8 shows.

Children from families with the highest income (£45,000 or more per year) spent the longest in childcare per week (29.0 hours) with children from families in other income brackets spending between 15.6 and 20.0 hours per week in childcare. These results can be understood in the context of the findings in Table 3.6, which show that working parents use more hours of childcare for their children than those not working.

Households with one pre-school child only were the heaviest users of childcare. These children received on average 25.4 hours per week, compared with 16.0 hours received by pre-school children in families with three or more children aged 0 to 14 in the household.

⁴⁹ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

	Family annual income					Number of children in family aged 0-14		
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 – £19,999	£20,000 – £29,999	£30,000 – £44,999	£45,000 +	Only 1	2	3 or more
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(139)	(376)	(326)	(330)	(504)	(537)	(807)	(430)
Days per week								
1	12	8	10	11	4	8	8	10
2	19	13	11	14	13	15	12	12
3	19	22	13	21	21	20	20	17
4	10	14	12	16	19	18	15	11
5	33	36	49	32	39	32	40	45
6	4	5	4	4	2	5	3	3
7	4	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
Median hours per day	5.0	5.0	5.6	6.2	7.6	7.0	6.0	5.0
Median hours per week	15.6	15.8	18.3	20.0	29.0	25.4	22.0	16.0

Table 3.8: Patterns of childcare use by family annual income and number of children

The heaviest users of centre-based care among pre-school children were those in reception classes, attending for 31.3 hours per week on average (see table C3.4 in Appendix C). This implies that most 4-year-olds attending reception classes did so full time. Whilst children attending reception classes full time are not eligible for government funded early years provision, the entitlement for 3- to 4-year-olds is reflected in the 15.0 hours of centre-based childcare received on average a week by children attending nursery schools or nursery classes.

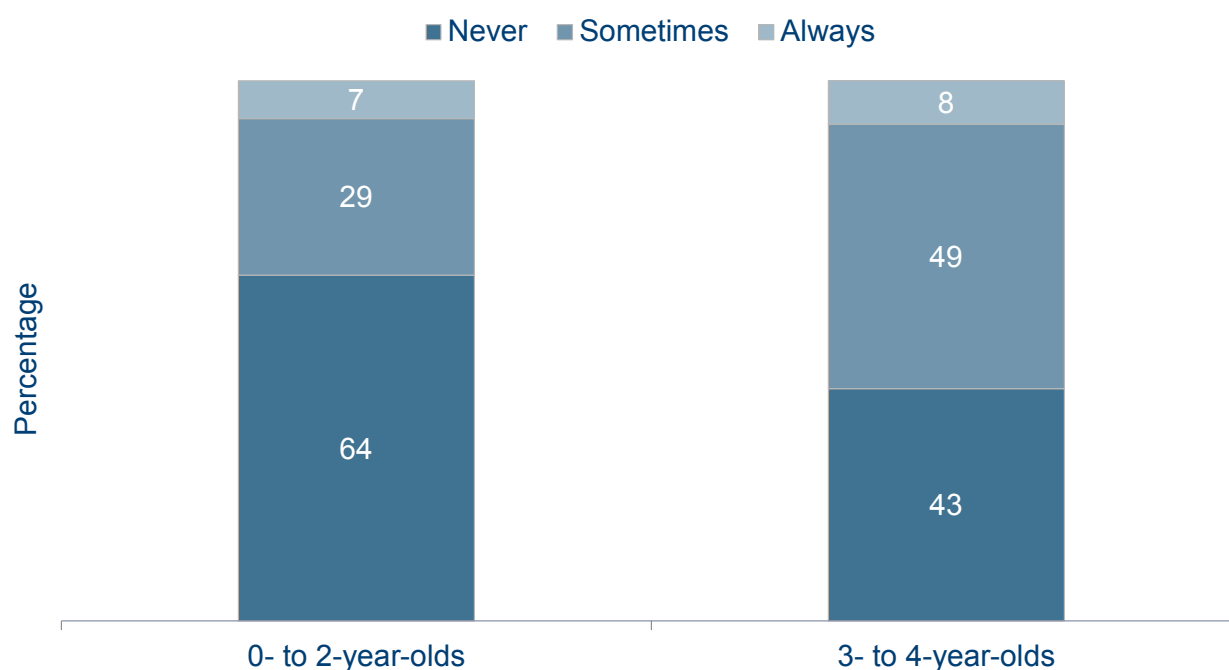
Pre-school children attending day nurseries received an average of 18.0 hours of centre-based care per week (7.5 hours for every day they were there), and those attending playgroups received 14.5 hours per week (3.6 hours for every day they were there) (see table C3.4 in Appendix C).

Turning to informal provision, pre-school children who received care from a non-resident parent received the most hours of informal care on average (21.3 hours per week, 7.0 hours per day) (see table C3.5 in Appendix C). This was more than the hours received by children who had care provided by grandparents (10.5 hours per week, 5.6 hours a day), other relatives (11.5 hours, 5.0 hours a day) or a friend or neighbour (4.0 hours a week, 3.0 hours a day). It is likely that this pattern reflects joint parenting and access arrangements for non-resident parents to look after their children.

Patterns of use among those receiving a package of centre-based and informal childcare

We now explore the patterns of childcare for pre-school children who use a combination of centre-based and informal childcare. As seen in section 3.4, these were the heaviest users of childcare.

By definition, these children must spend time with at least two providers; section 3.3 showed that around one in five (19%) were in fact attending three or more providers. Figure 3.1 shows the proportion of these children that attended more than one provider on the same day. Fifty-eight per cent of 3- to 4-year-olds with this combination of childcare arrangements either always or sometimes attended more than one provider on the same day, compared with 36 per cent of the younger pre-school children who received this package of childcare.



Base: All pre-school children in the household who received a package of centre-based and informal childcare (472)

Source: Table C3.6 in Appendix C

Figure 3.1: Whether pre-school children attended more than one provider on the same day, by age of child

3.5 Use of childcare packages for pre-school children at the family level

This section looks at childcare packages at the family level, rather than at the child level explored in previous chapters. This is an important level of observation because families with more than one child may arrange their childcare taking into account the needs of their children collectively, for example by making joint arrangements. On top of this, parents with multiple children may face the greatest challenges in affording and organising suitable childcare, which could influence the arrangements chosen.

Overall among families with pre-school children only, 14 per cent did not use any childcare (see Table C3.7 in Appendix C). Thirty-seven per cent of families with pre-school children only used a single package of childcare for each child in the household. This was made up of 24 per cent of families for whom all children received formal centre-based childcare only and 14 per cent of families whose children all received informal childcare packages only.

Eighteen per cent of families with two or more pre-school children only used the same package of childcare for each child in the household. Thirteen per cent used formal centre-based childcare only for each child, and four per cent used informal childcare only for each child (table not shown).

Formal centre-based and informal was the most commonly used mixed package, used by 20 per cent of families.

There were considerable variations by family size. Nearly all (96%) families with three or more pre-school children (and no school-age children) used some form of childcare, compared with 89 per cent of families with only two pre-school children, and 84 per cent among families with a single pre-school child only.

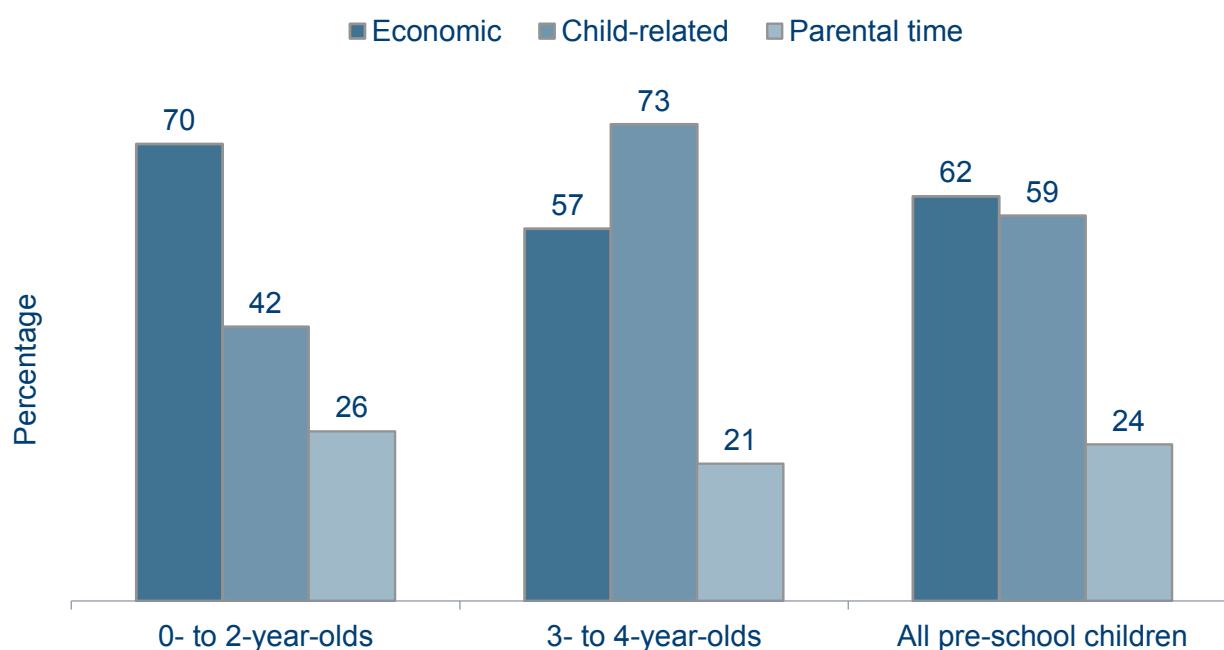
3.6 Reasons for using childcare providers for pre-school children

For each childcare provider used in the reference term-time week, parents were asked about the reasons why they had used it. Parents were able to give as many answers as they wanted from a pre-coded list and these responses have been grouped together into three categories:

- **Economic reasons** - for example so that parents could work, look for work, or study

- **Child related reasons** – for example because a providers helped with a child's educational or social development, or because they liked going there; and
- **Parental time reasons** – for example so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise or look after other children.

Figure 3.2 shows that 62 per cent of pre-school children in receipt of childcare were cared for due to economic reasons; 59 per cent for child-related reasons; and 24 per cent for parental time reasons. When taking the age of the pre-school child into account we see a difference between the reasons for childcare. In particular, while 70 per cent of children aged 0 to 2 received childcare for economic reasons this proportion dropped to 57 per cent among 3- to 4-year-olds. By contrast, 42 per cent of 0- to 2-year-olds received childcare for child-related reasons whereas for 3- to 4-year-olds this figure was nearly three-quarters (73%). It may be the case that these differences were accentuated because some 4-year-olds are in reception class, a provision that would typically be perceived as being used for the child's benefit rather than to cover working hours. Finally, younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) were more likely to receive childcare for the parental time reasons (26%), compared with their older 3- to 4-year-old counterparts (21%).



Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare (3,341).

Source: Table C3.9 in Appendix C

Figure 3.2: Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

Table 3.9 shows parents' reasons for choosing different packages of childcare for their pre-school children. Just less than four in five (78%) children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare attended a provider for economic reasons. When considered in tandem with the finding in section 3.4 that these children were the heaviest users of childcare, this implies that a combination of childcare could be required to cover parents' working hours.

Children who were in receipt of formal centre-based childcare, whether on its own (63%) or in combination with informal childcare (69%), were more likely to be receiving childcare for child-related reasons than children who received informal provision only (32%). This pattern continues when analysing separately the reasons for attending the centre-based providers and the informal providers for those children whose childcare arrangements involved a combination of both. Thirty-eight per cent of children in a combination of childcare went to their informal carer for child-related reasons, compared with 63 per cent who went to their centre-based provider for child-related reasons.

In contrast, those receiving informal childcare only were more likely to say parental time was a reason for choosing their childcare (33%). This compares to 18 per cent of those pre-school children who received centre-based childcare only and 29 per cent of those children who received a combination of centre-based and informal childcare. Similarly, those in a combination of childcare were more likely to use the informal providers for reasons relating to parental time (24%) than their centre-based ones (12%).

Of all centre-based providers, day nurseries were the most likely to be used for economic reasons (76% compared with between 31% and 59% for those attending other centre-based providers) (see table C3.10 in Appendix C). This mirrors the findings in section 3.4 that, other than reception classes where most children attended full time, day nurseries were used for more hours per week, and for longer days, than other centre-based providers; that is for times appropriate to cover parents' working hours.

	Package of childcare				
			Formal: Centre-based and Informal		
	Formal: Centre- Based only	Informal only	Total	Centre- based	Informal
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,486)	(445)	(761)	(761)	(761)
Economic	47	57	78	65	69
Child-related	63	32	69	63	38
Parental time	18	33	29	12	24

Table 3.9: Reasons for using childcare providers, by package of childcare

Table 3.10 shows how the reasons for using childcare varied by the amount of childcare used per day and per week as well as by number of days. Where childcare was used for economic reasons it was used for the longest number of hours per day and per week. Pre-school children whose parents used a provider for economic reasons received an average of 26.0 hours per week and 7.0 hours per day, compared with 21.0 hours per week and 6.0 hours per day for those with child-related reasons and 16.0 per week and 5.0 hours per day for those children whose childcare was used for parental time reasons. Again, these findings reinforce the picture of working parents being heavy users of childcare.

	Reasons		
	Economic	Child-related	Parental time
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(1,062)	(1,086)	(402)
Days per week			
1	5	6	13
2	13	11	14
3	21	17	19
4	18	15	13
5	38	44	32
6	4	5	5
7	1	2	3
Median hours per day	7.0	6.0	5.0
Median hours per week	26.0	21.0	16.0

Table 3.10: Patterns of childcare use, by reasons for using childcare providers

3.7 Summary

The survey examined parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their pre-school children during term time. Overall, three in four pre-school children (75%) used some type of childcare, with 25 per cent not in receipt of any childcare. Older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) however, were far more likely to receive childcare (92%) than younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) (61%).

The three packages of childcare most commonly used by pre-school children were formal centre-based care only (such as nursery classes or day nurseries) (30%); a combination of formal centre based and informal care (19%); and informal care only (such as non-resident parents or grandparents) (12%). Use of formal centre-based provision was higher among older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) than among younger pre-school

children (aged 0 to 2), reflecting the high take-up of the entitlement to government funded early years provision among this age group, as well as perhaps a preference for parents to look after younger pre-school children themselves. Accordingly, children aged 0 to 2 were more likely than their older 3 to 4 year old counterparts to receive informal care only.

Pre-school children spent an average of 6.1 hours per day in childcare, and 21.0 hours per week. Pre-school children aged 3 to 4 spend longer in childcare per week than those aged 0 to 2 (25 hours and 18 hours respectively), again reflecting the entitlement to government funded early years education among this age group. Pre-school children from families with higher annual incomes spent more time in childcare than those from families with lower annual incomes (29.0 hours per week for children in families earning £45,000 or more, compared with between 15.6 and 20.0 hours per week for children in families earning up to £30,000 per year). Pre-school children from working lone-parent families (31.6 hours) and dual-working couple households (26.7 hours) were the highest users of childcare per week. In comparison, children from non-working households and those from couple households with one of the two parents used the least childcare.

Children receiving a combination of centre-based and informal childcare (19% of all pre-school children) were by far the heaviest users of childcare, receiving 29.6 hours per week on average, compared with 15.0 hours for children receiving formal childcare only, and 11.4 hours for those receiving informal childcare only. These children were also the most likely to have both parents (or their lone parent) in work, and to attend childcare for economic reasons, suggesting that this package of care was designed to cover parents' working hours.

Around three in five (62%) pre-school children who received childcare did so for economic reasons (for instance, to enable parents to work, look for work, or to study). The next most common reason for pre-school children to receive childcare (59%) was for child-related reasons (for instance, for their educational or social development, or because the child liked going there). A quarter (24%) of pre-school children receiving childcare did so for reasons relating to parental-time (for instance, so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise or look after other children).

Younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to receive childcare for economic reasons (70% compared with 57% respectively), but were less likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (42% compared with 73% respectively).

Across all pre-school children, centre-based childcare was most likely to be chosen for child-related reasons (for example because a provider helped with the child's education or social development), followed by economic reasons, while informal care was most likely to be chosen for economic reasons, followed by child-related reasons. Where

childcare was used for economic reasons it was used for the longest number of hours per day and per week (26.0 hours per week and 6.0 hours per day).

4. Packages of childcare for school-age children

Key Findings:

- School-age children were less likely than pre-school children to be recipients of childcare, with two in three receiving it (67%). Formal out-of-school childcare (a breakfast and/or after-school club) was the most common package of childcare (24%), followed by a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare (15%) and informal childcare only (13%).
- The packages of childcare used varied by age of child. The oldest children, aged 12- to 14-years-old (17%) were more likely than younger children to receive informal childcare only. Children aged 8 to 11 were more likely than other age groups to attend out-of-school childcare, either on its own (28%) or in combination with informal childcare (19%).
- On average, school-age children spent 5.8 hours in childcare per week compared to 21.0 hours per week for pre-school children. School age children spent on average 2.0 hours per day in childcare, substantially less time than pre-school children (6.1), likely due to many children attending school full time.
- Three in four (73%) families with only school-age children used childcare compared to nine in ten (89%) of those with both pre-school and school-age children. The proportions of families who used the same packages of childcare for every child also tended to be higher among those with school-age children only.
- School age children most commonly received childcare for child-related reasons (71%), followed by economic reasons (49%), and parental time reasons (17%). Child-related reasons were the most common reasons for receiving childcare for children in all age groups, but the age of the children in the household bore a relationship to the reasons for using providers:
 - Older school age children were more likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (for example for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there) (75% of 12- to 14-year olds).
 - Younger school age children were more likely to receive childcare for economic reasons (for example to enable parents to work) (58% of 5- to 7-year-olds).

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we explore parents' use of childcare for school-age children (aged 5- to 14-years-old) outside of school hours during term time. Formal providers are categorised in the same way as in Chapter 3⁵⁰ (see section 3.1 for full details) in order to distinguish between different provider types.⁵¹ This classification allows for a detailed exploration into how the types and packages of childcare used by parents relate to: children's ages (section 4.2); the number of providers used (section 4.3); patterns of use in terms of days and hours per week (section 4.4); use of childcare packages for school-age children at the family level (section 4.5); and, parents' reasons for choosing particular providers (section 4.6).

In order to provide an in-depth analysis of parents' use of childcare for their school-age children, we have divided school-age children into three age groups: 5- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 11-year-olds, and 12- to 14-year-olds. These groupings reflect differing childcare needs, and represent infant, junior and early secondary stages.

Furthermore, in line with Chapter 3, all findings in this chapter relate to parents' use of childcare during the reference term-time week, with the child (as opposed to the family) as the unit of analysis. Distinct from other chapters in this report, all children within the selected household form the subject of analysis rather than just the selected child (see Appendix B for further information about the selected child). This approach was taken here, as in Chapter 3, because most of the relevant information was available for all children in the household, and looking at a larger sample of children allows us to explore the use of different types of childcare in greater detail. The only findings presented in this chapter that focus on the selected child only are those relating to patterns of use (days and hours - section 4.4), since this data was part of the detailed record of childcare attendance that was only collected for the selected child (see Chapter 1).

In Chapter 2 (Table 2.3), we showed that the oldest school-age children (12- to 14-year-olds), were considerably less likely to be receiving childcare (54%) than their younger counterparts (72% of 5- to 7-year-olds and 71% of 8- to 11-year-olds). This is likely to be because older school-age children do not require constant adult supervision. School-age children most commonly used an after-school club (42% of 5- to 7-year-olds, 50% of 8- to 11-year-olds and 34% of 12- to 14-year-olds) with only a small proportion of school-age children using any other type of formal provider. With respect to informal providers,

⁵⁰ Categories are: Formal: Centre-Based (nursery school, nursery class, reception class, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, special day school or nursery, other nursery education provider); Formal: Individual (childminder, nanny or au pair, babysitter); Formal: Out-of-school (breakfast club, after-school club or activity, holiday club/scheme); Formal: Leisure/Other (other childcare provider, leisure/sport activity); and, Informal (non-resident parent, grandparent, older sibling, other relative, friend or neighbour). Categories used are the same as those in Chapter 3. See section 3.1 for full details.

⁵¹ Use of childcare in the school holidays is explored in Chapter 8.

grandparents were most commonly used (23% of 5- to 7-year-olds, 18% of 8- to 11-year-olds and 13% of 12- to 14-year-olds).

4.2 Use of childcare by age of school-age children

In Chapter 3 we reported that nearly three-quarters (74%) of pre-school children accessed at least one type of formal or informal childcare provider, leaving 25 per cent of pre-school children not using any form of childcare (see Table 3.1). Table 4.1 shows that school-age children were less likely to be recipients of childcare with one in three (33%) not using any childcare at all, leaving 67 per cent using at least one type of childcare. Formal out-of-school childcare (a breakfast and/or after-school club) was the most common package of childcare for school-age children (24%). The next two most common packages used among school-age children were a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare (15%) and informal childcare only (13%).

Parents' choice of childcare varied by age of child. Children aged 8 to 11 were more likely than both younger and older school-age children to attend out-of-school childcare, either on its own (28% compared with 21% for 5- to 7-year-olds and 12- to 14-year-olds) or in combination with informal childcare (19% compared with 15% for 5- to 7-year-olds and 10% for 12- to 14-year-olds). Children aged 12- to 14 were more likely to receive informal childcare only (17%), than 5- to 7-year-olds (11%) and 8- to 11-year-olds (13%).

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family</i>	(3,029)	(3,539)	(2,109)	(8,677)
Informal only	11	13	17	13
Formal: Out-of-School only	21	28	21	24
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	15	19	10	15
Formal: Leisure/Other only	1	2	1	1
Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other	1	1	2	1
Formal: Leisure/Other and Informal	*	1	1	1
Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other and Informal	1	2	1	1
Formal: Individual only	2	1	1	1
Formal: Centre-Based only	6	*	*	2
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School	2	2	*	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal	2	0	0	1
Formal: Individual and Informal	1	1	0	1
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	1	1	*	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School	3	*	0	1
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other	*	*	0	*
Formal: Centre Based and Formal: Out-of-school and Informal	*	0	0	*
Formal: Individual and Formal: Leisure/Other	*	0	0	*
Other	*	*	0	*
No childcare used	26	30	46	33

Table 4.1: Use of childcare packages for school-age children, by age of child⁵²

4.3 Number of providers used for school-age children

As detailed in Chapter 3, childcare packages could incorporate not only different types of provision but also include various providers within each type. For example, children using informal childcare only could be using a grandparent as well as a friend or neighbour for their childcare. In this context it is useful to examine the number of providers used as well as the form of provision.

Around half (52%) of school-age children attended two or more childcare providers in the reference term-time week. There was a difference in the number of providers attended by age; children aged 12 to 14 were more likely than younger children to attend one provider and less likely than children aged 5 to 11 to attend two or more (see Table 4.2).

⁵² The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Number of providers	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,119)	(2,354)	(1,078)	(5,551)
1	44	44	57	47
2	30	30	27	29
3	17	14	11	14
4+	9	12	5	9

Table 4.2: Number of providers, by age of child

When looking at informal providers, older siblings were the most likely sole childcare providers for school-aged children, with one in three (33%) children who were cared for by an older sibling not receiving care from any other provider (see Table C4.1 in Appendix C). Grandparents were the next most likely to act as the sole provider (29%), followed by other relatives (27%), ex-partners (25%) and friends and neighbours (21%).

Table 4.3 shows how the number of providers used varied by the package of childcare received. Over four in five (82%) children who used informal packages only used a solitary provider, compared with two in three (67%) among those who used formal out-of-school packages only. Bearing in mind that a child using a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare must, by definition, use at least two providers, children using this mixed package of provision were more likely to use three or more providers than those using either out-of-school only or informal only packages (47% compared with 13% and 3% respectively).

	Package of childcare		
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal
Number of providers	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,087)	(1,041)	(1,145)
1	67	82	0
2	20	15	53
3	7	3	31
4+	6	*	17

Table 4.3: Number of providers, by package of childcare

4.4 Patterns of childcare use for school-age children

This section examines how patterns of childcare use differed by a range of factors: the number of days across which childcare was received; the type of childcare package received; and, the child's age. The approach adopted is to report the median values in the text (referred to as averages) because they more accurately reflect levels of childcare use as they are less affected by extreme values (in other words numbers of hours that fall well outside the typical range of answers given by parents). Mean values are also shown in the tables in this section and were used to test for differences between age groups.⁵³

Just over two in five (42%) school-age children who received childcare did so for just one or two days per week (see Table 4.4). At the other end of the scale, one in five (20%) received childcare on five days per week. School-age children in receipt of childcare spent on average 2.0 hours per day in childcare, and 5.8 hours per week. This compares to the average of 6.1 hours per day and 21.0 hours per week spent in childcare by pre-school children (see Table 3.4).

Younger school-age children were higher users of childcare within the reference term-time week, with the average of 7.8 hours a week used by 5- to 7-year-olds comparing to 5.0 hours used by 8- to 11-year-olds and by 12- to 14-year-olds. Similarly, younger school-age children were more likely to receive childcare across a greater number of days per week, with over a third (36%) of 5- to 7-year-olds receiving childcare on five days of the week or more, compared with only 26 per cent of 8- to 11-year-olds and 18 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds. This pattern of childcare use for 5- to 7-year-olds may reflect the fact that a notable minority attended reception classes and childminders. In addition, these providers were typically used for longer periods of time than either out-of-school providers or most informal providers (see section 2.10 in Chapter 2).

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(885)	(963)	(529)	(2,377)
Days per week				
1	17	22	28	22
2	19	20	24	21
3	16	18	19	17
4	13	13	11	13

⁵³ For more detail on the conventions followed when presenting and conducting significance tests on continuous data, see Section 1.5.

5	27	18	11	20
6	6	6	4	6
7	2	1	2	2
Median hours per day	2.4	1.8	2.0	2.0
Median hours per week	7.8	5.0	5.0	5.8

Table 4.4: Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

The number of hours of childcare school-age children received per week or per day did not vary between the 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys.

Table 4.5 shows how the days and hours of childcare received by school-age children varied by the type of childcare package they received. The three main packages of childcare are formal (out-of-school only), informal only and a mixture of both formal (out-of-school) and informal. For each separate category analysis of the number of days per week and hours of childcare received has been provided.

Considering the median hours of childcare received per week, school-age children receiving formal out-of-school childcare only received the fewest hours of care (2.5 hours per week) whilst those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal care (10.0 hours) received the most. In terms of number of days per week that care was received, 61 per cent of school-age children who attended formal out-of-school childcare only received care on just one or two days over the term-time reference week. In contrast, less than one in five (19%) of those children who received a mixture of out-of-school and informal childcare received childcare on one or two days per week.

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal		
			Total	Out-of-School	Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(899)	(449)	(479)	(479)	(479)
Days per week					
1	35	31	1	41	40
2	25	25	18	26	27
3	15	18	25	12	15
4	10	9	20	8	9
5	12	12	21	11	7
6	2	2	13	2	2
7	*	3	2	*	*
Median hours per day	1.7	3.0	2.5	1.3	2.9
Median hours per week	2.5	7.4	10.0	2.3	5.3

Table 4.5: Patterns of childcare use, by package of childcare

Chapter 3 showed that pre-school children receiving childcare from a parent's ex-partner spent markedly more time in informal care per week than did children receiving care from another informal provider (see Table C3.5 in Appendix C). A similar pattern emerged with respect to school-age children: those cared for by an ex-partner received on average 20.5 hours per week, compared with between 4.5 and 6.5 hours among school-age children receiving childcare from other informal providers (see Table C4.3 in Appendix C). On each day they were cared for by an ex-partner they spent on average 7.5 hours there, markedly more than the hours spent on average per day with other informal providers (between 2.0 and 2.9 hours). This pattern is likely to reflect joint parenting and access arrangements for non-resident parents to see their children.

4.5 Use of childcare packages for school-age children at family level

This section explores childcare packages for school-age children at the family level, and is analogous to the type of analysis used for pre-school children in Section 3.5; families with school-age children only are analysed first, followed by families with both pre-school and school-age children.

Packages of childcare used by families with school-age children only

Over a quarter (27%) of families with only school-age children did not use any childcare (see Table C4.5 in Appendix C). Around one in five (19%) used out-of-school childcare only for all the children in their household; more than the proportion who used informal care only (13%) or that used a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare for every child in the household (15%).

Packages of childcare used by families with school-age children showed variation based on the number of children in the household. Those with just one school-age child were the least likely to use childcare; 30 per cent of these families used no childcare at all. Families with more school-age children were more likely to use childcare, reflecting the greater need for care for multiple children. One in five (20%) families with two school-age children and around one in four (24%) families with three or more school-age children did not use any childcare.

Families with one school-age child only were the most likely to use formal out-of-school childcare only. These families were also most likely to use informal childcare only and a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare only for all of their children.

Packages of childcare used by families with both pre-school and school-age children

Among families with both pre-school and school-age children, almost nine in ten (89%) used some form of childcare during the reference term-time week (see Table C4.6 in Appendix C). Not many of these families, however, used the main packages of childcare for every child. For instance, two per cent of these families used informal childcare only for every child in the household. The same proportion (2%) used formal centre-based care for every child, and one per cent used out-of-school care for every child.

The type of childcare packages used for both pre-school and school-age children varied by the number of children in the household. Among families with three or more children, 22 per cent used either no childcare or formal centre-based childcare only for every child in the household, higher than among families with two children (18%). However, families with three or more children in these age groups were less likely to combine formal centre-based and informal childcare or use informal childcare only for every child in their household than were families with two children (4% and 9% respectively). Families with three or more children were also less likely to use a combination of centre-based and out-of-school childcare than their counterparts with only two children from these age groups (5% and 9% respectively). Nearly two in five (37%) families with two or more pre-school and school-age children said they have made some other arrangements.

4.6 Reasons for using childcare providers for school-age children

As detailed in Chapter 3, parents were asked why they had used each of their childcare providers from the reference term-time week, being able to give as many reasons as were applicable from a pre-coded list. These reasons were grouped into three categories:

- Economic reasons, for example so that parents could work, look for work, or study;
- Child related reasons, for example because a provider helped with a child's education or social development, or because the child enjoyed going there; and
- Parental time reasons, for example so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise or look after other children.

Figure 4.1 shows that 71 per cent of school-age children received care for child-related reasons; almost half (49%) for economic reasons; and just under one in five (17%) for parental time reasons. By contrast, we can see from Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3 that economic reasons were the most common when choosing childcare packages for pre-school children (62%), followed by child-related (59%) and parental time reasons (24%).

These differences in reasons for using childcare between school-age and pre-school children were statistically significant in terms of the proportion using childcare for economic and child related reasons, but not with regard to the proportion using childcare for parental time reasons.

Within families with school-age children, the age of the child bore a relationship to the reasons for choosing providers. Older children in this group were more likely to receive their childcare for child-related reasons (75% of 12- to 14-year-olds and 73% of 8- to 11-year-olds compared with 66% of 5- to 7-year-olds). By contrast economic reasons were more likely to be selected for younger school-age children (58% of 5- to 7-year-olds compared with 50% of 8- to 11-year-olds and 36% of 12- to 14-year-olds).

School-age children of all age groups were equally likely to receive childcare for parental-time reasons (16% of 5- to 7-year-olds, 18% of 8- to 11-year-olds and 17% of 12- to 14-year-olds).

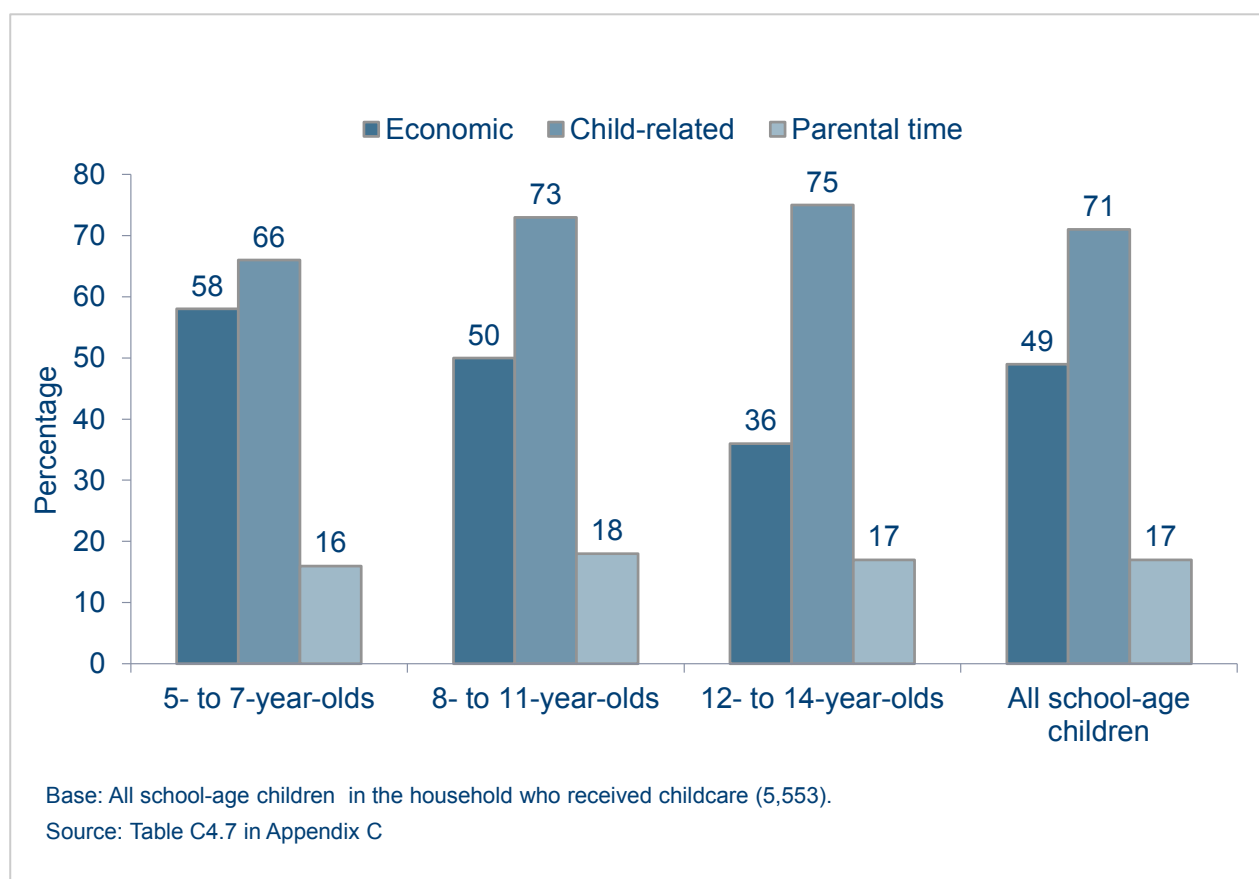


Figure 4.1: Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

There were no changes with respect to any of the reasons for choosing childcare in any of the age groups between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

Table 4.6 shows the reasons that school-age children received particular packages of childcare. Economic reasons were most commonly cited by those with children using a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare compared with those either using one or the other only (69% compared with 59% for those using informal care only and 26% for those using formal out-of-school care only). This pattern is in line with the finding from Table 4.5 that children using a combination of out-of-school and informal care were using the highest number of hours in childcare per week. The fact that children receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare were the most likely to be using childcare providers for economic reasons compared with other groups suggests that, even once children start full-time school, a combination of informal and formal childcare providers could still be required to cover parents' working hours.

As with pre-school children (see Table 3.9), informal care used by school-age children was the least likely type of care to be chosen for child-related reasons (40% compared with 80% of those using out-of-school childcare only, and 81% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare). This finding is reflected when we examine separately the reasons that those who use a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare use their informal provider and their out-of-school provider. Forty per cent of children receiving this package were cared for by their informal provider for child-related reasons, compared with 77 per cent who were cared for by their out-of-school provider for child-related reasons.

Turning to parental time reasons for choosing childcare providers, only eight per cent of school-age children attending formal out-of-school care only received care for these reasons, compared with 21 per cent of those receiving informal care only and 26 per cent of those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare. Again, this pattern holds when looking at the separate provider types within the combination care package of formal out-of-school and informal care. Specifically, looking at those receiving this combination care package, seven per cent attended their out-of-school provider for reasons relating to parental time and just around one in four (24%) attended their informal carer for these reasons. As discussed in Chapter 3 for pre-school children (see Table 3.9), parental time reasons were more commonly associated with the choice of informal providers for school-age children too.

	Package of childcare				
			Formal: Out-of-School and Informal		
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Total	Out-of-School	Informal
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,089)	(1,041)	(1,145)	(1,145)	(1,145)
Economic	26	59	69	37	60
Child-related	80	40	81	77	40
Parental time	8	21	26	7	24

Table 4.6: Reasons for using childcare providers, by package of childcare

Looking at reasons for choosing specific informal providers, ex-partners were the most likely to be used for child-related reasons (75% compared with between 25% and 43% for other informal providers – see Table C4.8 in Appendix C). Ex-partners were, however, the least likely to be used for economic reasons (33% compared with between 57% and 69% for other informal providers). Custodial arrangements between respondents and their former partners and the part that other informal providers play in enabling parents to work are likely to factor into these findings.

Table 4.7 shows how patterns of childcare use varied by the reasons for childcare providers being chosen. Children who received childcare for economic reasons were more likely to receive childcare spread across five or more days per week (38%), than were children who received childcare for child-related reasons (27%) or parental time reasons (31%). Accordingly, while 25 per cent of children who received care for economic reasons were cared for on one or two days per week, the proportion was far higher among children receiving care for child-related and parental time reasons (43% and 38% respectively).

	Reasons		
	Economic	Child-related	Parental time
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(1,132)	(1,672)	(394)
Days per week:			
1	11	22	17
2	15	22	20
3	20	17	17
4	17	13	15
5	27	17	18
6	8	7	10
7	2	2	3
Median hours per day	2.5	1.9	2.5
Median hours per week	8.8	5.5	7.9

Table 4.7: Patterns of childcare use, by reasons for using childcare providers

4.7 Summary

This chapter examined parents' use of different packages and forms of childcare for their school-age children, during term time and outside of school hours.

School age children were less likely than pre-school children to be recipients of childcare, with two in three receiving it (67%). Formal out-of-school childcare (a breakfast and/or after-school club) was the most common package of childcare (24%), followed by a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare (15%) and informal childcare only (13%). No other package of childcare was used by more than two per cent of children.

The packages of childcare used varied by age of child. The oldest children, aged 12- to 14-years-old (17%) were more likely than younger children to receive informal childcare only. Children aged 8 to 11 were more likely than other age groups to attend out-of-school childcare, either on its own (28%) or in combination with informal childcare (19%).

Of school age children who received informal care only, the great majority (82%) attended just one provider, compared with 67 per cent among children receiving out-of-school childcare only.

School age children spent on average 2.0 hours per day in childcare, substantially less time than pre-school children (6.1), likely due to many children attending school full time. On average, school-age children spent 5.8 hours in childcare per week compared to 21.0

hours per week for pre-school children. Those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare received the most hours of care per week (10.0), followed by those receiving informal care only (7.4). Those receiving out-of-school care only attended far fewer hours per week (2.5).

Three in four (73%) families with school-age children only used childcare compared to nine in ten (89%) of those with both pre-school and school-age children. The proportions of families who used the same packages of childcare for every child also tended to be higher among those with school-age children only. For example, the proportion of families who used informal childcare only or formal childcare only for all children in the household was higher among those with school-age children only (13% and 19% respectively) than among those with both pre-school and school-age children (both 2%).

School age children most commonly received childcare for child-related reasons (71%), followed by economic reasons (49%), and parental time reasons (17%). The age of the children in the household bore a relationship to the reasons for using providers. Older school age children were more likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (for example for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there) (75% of 12- to 14-year olds), whereas economic reasons were more likely to be given for younger school age children than for older children (for example to enable parents to work) (58% of 5- to 7-year-olds). School age children of all ages were equally likely to receive childcare for parental time related reasons (for example so that parents could socialise or look after other children). The reasons for choosing childcare in any of the age groups remained consistent between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

School age children receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare were more likely to use childcare for economic reasons compared with those using either one or the other. This indicates that, even once children start full-time school, both formal and informal childcare could still be required to cover parents' working hours. As with pre-school children, school-age children receiving informal care only were the least likely to be using this care for child-related reasons (40%). Those receiving formal, out-of-school childcare only on the other hand, were most likely to receive this care for child-related reasons (80%).

5. Paying for childcare

Key findings:

- The overall median weekly amount paid by families to childcare providers was £23 and the mean cost was £53. The amount varied widely depending on the number of hours and type of provider used. Breakfast clubs were the only provider type to see a change in their weekly cost, rising from £9 in 2012-13 to £10 in 2014-15.
- Three in five (59%) families who used a childcare provider in the reference week reported paying for this childcare. Families were far more likely to pay formal providers (65%) than informal providers (6%).
- Just over half of parents (53%) said it was easy or very easy to meet their childcare costs, although a substantial minority (22%) of families found it difficult or very difficult to meet childcare costs. These findings represent a fall in the proportion of families finding it difficult to cover their childcare cost between 2012-13 (27%) and 2014-15 (22%). Specifically, the proportions of dual-working couple families, couple families in which one parent worked, and non-working lone parent families that found it difficult to pay for childcare have fallen.
- Among parents receiving support (whether from the entitlement to government funded early education, from tax credits or from an employer), seven per cent reported that this support had enabled them to increase the number of hours they worked, and four per cent reported that it had enabled them to start work.

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the affordability of childcare. It establishes the proportion of families who paid for childcare in the reference week, what services they paid for, and how much they paid for the childcare they used (in both weekly and hourly amounts) (section 5.2). In addition to this family-level analysis, this chapter also presents the amount spent per week on childcare at the level of the selected child, to establish childcare costs on a per child basis (also section 5.2).

The chapter then goes on to examine families' payment arrangements with their main formal childcare provider (section 5.3), financial help parents received from their

employers and from other sources (section 5.4), the proportion of families in receipt of tax credits and how much they were receiving (sections 5.5 and 5.6), and the impact of the support parents received on their families' working arrangements (section 5.7). The chapter closes by considering how affordable parents believed their childcare arrangements to be (section 5.8).

For information on the government's current policy for helping parents with the cost of childcare via the government funded entitlement to early education, and its plans to tackle the cost of childcare, see section 1.2.

Where possible, comparisons are made with previous surveys in the series, particularly the last 2012-13 survey. Also, where possible, findings have been cross-checked with those from the Department for Education's biennial Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey⁵⁴. Differences in the classifications used in the reporting mean the findings are not directly comparable, but they do provide useful context for the findings of this survey. Comparisons have also been made, where relevant, to data from The Childcare Costs Survey 2015, published by the Family and Childcare Trust.⁵⁵

5.2 Family payments for childcare

This section describes the amount of money families paid for childcare used for all children in the household in the reference week and what this payment was for (including childcare fees, education fees and refreshments). Payments to different childcare providers are analysed in both weekly and hourly amounts, and we also consider how payments vary by family work status and by region.

It should be noted that respondents were asked to report the amount the family paid themselves, therefore excluding any money paid by their employer, local authority or the government. This also excludes any money they may have received from other individuals such as an ex-partner or a grandparent (for instance as shown in Table 5.5, three per cent of families that used formal childcare received financial assistance from an ex-partner).

How many families paid for childcare and what were they paying for?

Three in five (59%) families who used a childcare provider in the reference week for any children in their household reported paying for this childcare (see Table 5.1). This proportion is unchanged since 2012-13 (59%). Parents were far more likely to report paying formal childcare providers than informal childcare providers (65% compared with 6%).

⁵⁴ Department for Education (2015), *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Providers*.
⁵⁵ Family and Childcare Trust (2015), *Childcare Costs Survey 2015*.

Parents' payments to formal providers varied by provider type. Parents were most likely to report paying childminders (93%), nannies or au pairs (79%), and day nurseries (77%), and were least likely to pay nursery classes (29%), nursery schools (58%), and playgroups or pre-schools (56%), reflecting the entitlement to government funded early education among 3- and 4-year-olds.

The proportions of parents reporting that they paid for nursery schools, nursery classes, and playgroups for any children in their household are in line with 2012-13; however, there has been a fall in the proportion reporting that they paid for day nurseries (from 85% in 2012-13, to 77% in 2014-15).

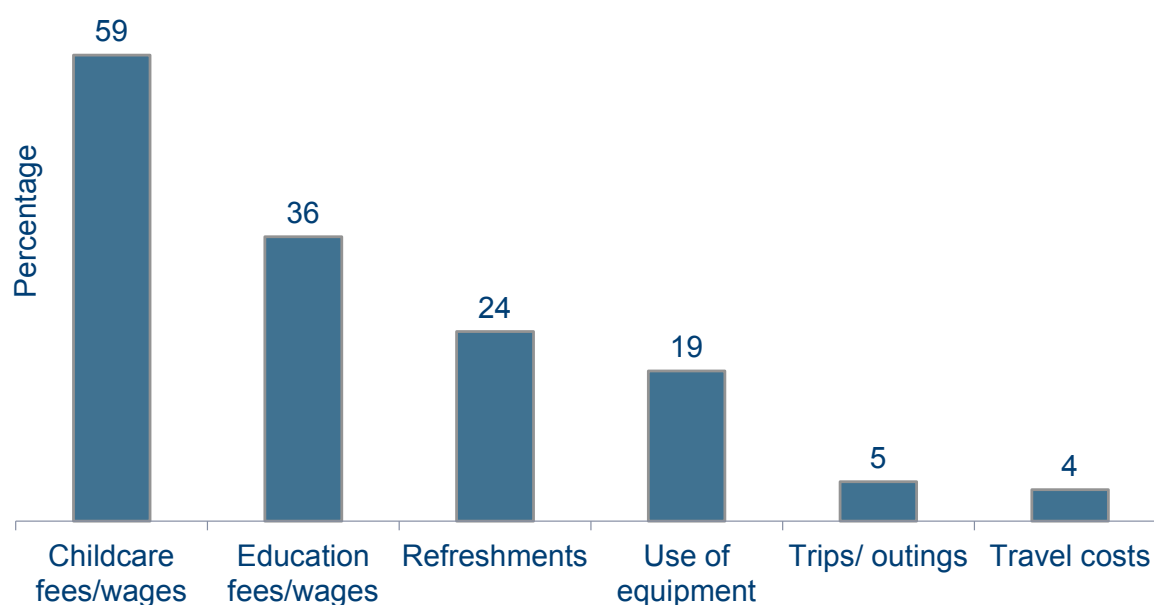
Three in four (76%) families using breakfast clubs, and seven in ten (70%) families using after-school clubs, reported paying for this provision.

Among informal childcare providers, parents were most likely to report paying other relatives (13%), followed by older siblings, and friends or neighbours (both 8%). Grandparents were the most commonly used informal childcare provider, but were the least likely to be paid, with just one in twenty families (5%) reporting that they paid grandparents that provided childcare.

Provider type	Family paid provider	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families using provider type</i>		
Any childcare provider	59	(5,180)
Formal childcare and early years provider	65	(4,575)
Nursery school	58	(400)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infant's school	29	(415)
Day nursery	77	(661)
Playgroup or pre-school	56	(418)
Breakfast club	76	(529)
After-school club or activity	70	(2,488)
Childminder	93	(333)
Nanny or au pair	79	(65)
Babysitter who came to house	75	(67)
Informal childcare provider	6	(2,375)
Grandparent	5	(1,604)
Older sibling	8	(195)
Another relative	13	(281)
Friend or neighbour	8	(385)
Other		
Leisure/ sport activity	90	(202)
Other childcare provider	66	(143)
NB: Row percentages.		

Table 5.1: Family payment for childcare, by provider type

Figure 5.1 describes what services parents paid for when paying their provider(s) (parents selected these options from a showcard rather than providing spontaneous answers). Parents were most likely to pay for childcare fees or wages (59%), followed by education fees or wages (36%), refreshments (26%), and use of equipment (19%).



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,058)

Source: Table 5.2

Figure 5.1: What families were paying provider for

The services which parents paid for varied by provider type (see Table 5.2). Parents were most likely to pay childcare fees or wages to childminders (91%) day nurseries (82%) and nannies/au pairs (82%).

As detailed in Table 5.1, reflecting the entitlement to government funded early education, parents were less likely to report paying for nursery schools, nursery classes, and playgroups or pre-schools than other formal providers. However, many parents did make payments to these providers, with the most common payment to nursery schools and playgroups or pre-schools being for childcare fees or wages (62% and 64% respectively), and the most common payment to nursery classes being for refreshments (56%) (see Table 5.2).

With respect to payments to out-of-school childcare providers, parents were most likely to pay breakfast clubs for childcare fees and wages (67%), followed by refreshments (47%), and were most likely to pay after-school clubs for childcare fees and wages (45%) and education fees and wages (44%). A quarter (25%) of parents paying after-school clubs and activities paid for the use of equipment, which compares to just seven per cent for breakfast clubs.

Turning to informal provision, families paying grandparents for childcare were most likely to pay for childcare fees (28%), refreshments (24%), and travel costs (20%).

	Services paid for							
Provider type	Childcare fees/ wages	Education fees/ wages	Refreshments	Use of equipment	Trips/ outings	Travel costs	Other	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>								
All	59	36	26	19	5	4	7	(3,058)
Formal provider								
Nursery school	62	29	36	9	4	1	2	(203)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	36	22	56	10	12	1	5	(114)
Day nursery	82	23	32	8	1	1	1	(481)
Playgroup or pre-school	64	30	30	9	3	1	3	(229)
Breakfast club	67	14	47	7	1	1	1	(386)
After-school club or activity	45	44	15	25	3	3	9	(1,701)
Childminder	91	10	20	6	6	6	*	(308)
Nanny or au pair	82	12	8	3	11	16	0	(55)
Babysitter	[87]	[1]	[10]	[2]	[2]	[2]	0	(50)
Informal provider								
Grandparent	28	9	24	8	17	20	13	(63)
Older sibling	[28]	[26]	[25]	0	[25]	[10]	[17]	(17)
Another relative	[47]	[8]	[31]	0	[8]	[19]	[4]	(29)
Friend or neighbour	[57]	[16]	[10]	[12]	[8]	[0]	[7]	(28)
NB: Row percentages.								

Table 5.2: Services paid for, by type of provider paid⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero. The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

How much were families paying per week?

The three in five (59%) families who reported paying for childcare in the reference week (see Table 5.1) were asked in detail about the amount they paid for each provider they used.⁵⁷ This included the amount of money the family paid themselves, excluding financial help from other organisations or individuals (such as their employer, local authority, or the government).

Several features of the data need to be made explicit:

- Respondents were asked about what they paid for 'out of their own pocket'. Therefore it is likely they included money received in the form of tax credits, but did not include money paid directly to providers from other individuals or organisations such as from the entitlement to government funded early education. **This means that any change in the weekly amount paid by families compared with previous years can be influenced by changes in the number of hours of childcare families used during the reference week.** For instance, if more hours were used for a specific provider the weekly amount paid by families will also increase.
- Linked to the above, the questionnaire was not specific about the inclusion of financial help from employers such as childcare vouchers. Consequently it is not possible to tell whether parents included or excluded these from the amounts they reported.
- Estimates are based on the amounts families reported paying for the childcare they used for all children, during the reference week. They therefore represent an overall average, and take no account of the number of children in the household or the number of hours used. Note that both median and mean payment estimates are included in the data tables, but medians are less influenced by extreme values and are therefore a more appropriate measure of central tendency.
- Our analysis also takes no account of the fees policies of the relevant providers (because we did not collect this information). Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2013 suggests that it is common for fees to vary for different children depending on their age, whether they have any siblings that attend, and the number of hours that they attend the provider for each week.⁵⁸ For example, in 2013, 32 per cent of childminders varied their fees, as did 25 per cent of after-school clubs and 41 per cent of providers offering 'full day care'.

⁵⁷ Parents using early years provision in many cases did not pay for childcare due to the entitlement to government funded early years education.

⁵⁸ Department of Education (2013) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2013* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London.

- The questionnaire asked respondents to state how much they had paid each of the childcare providers used during the reference week. In order to provide the most accurate data possible, they were also asked whether the total amount was the amount they usually paid, and if it was not, they were asked for the usual amount they paid for childcare per week. This usual amount, where provided, was used in calculation of the overall cost estimate.

The median cost of childcare, for those families paying for childcare, was £23 per week (see Table 5.3), in line with that recorded in 2012-13, when families paid £25 per week.⁵⁹ However, it should be noted that this is not a measure of the consistency or otherwise of the fees providers are charging, as this amount is subject to variation in the number of hours between survey years (these cost statistics are subject to a number of caveats, as detailed in the bullet points above).

Costs varied across provider types, with the highest median cost being for day nurseries (£90 per week), followed by childminders (£60 per week).⁶⁰ These comparatively high costs are likely to reflect the provision of whole-day childcare by these providers, meaning that parents were paying for a greater number of hours compared with providers which children attend for much shorter sessions, such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs or activities. For instance, as described in Chapter 2, children attending day nurseries spent a median of 17.9 hours per week in their care, and children attending childminders spent a median of 11.2 hours per week in their care, while children attending breakfast clubs and after-school clubs spent fewer hours per week in their care (3.0 and 2.0 hours respectively).

The median weekly payments to nursery classes and playgroups were low, at £12 and £19 respectively, and this could reflect parents' use of their entitlement to government funded early education. Parents' median weekly payment to nursery schools was £50, which is also likely to reflect the use of their entitlement to government funded early education. The higher payments to nursery schools than to nursery classes or playgroups may be due to a combination of providers' fees structures, the number of hours for which the providers were used, and the specific services paid for (see Table 5.2).

⁵⁹ For information on the conventions followed when presenting and conducting significance tests on continuous data, see Section 1.5.

⁶⁰ Nannies or au pairs were paid a median of £149 per week, but given the low base size (55) this figure should be treated with caution.

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Use of childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>				
All	23	53	1.90	(3,016)
Formal provider				
Nursery school	50	82	8.15	(203)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	12	40	7.14	(114)
Day nursery	90	114	6.18	(481)
Playgroup or pre-school	19	30	3.01	(229)
Childminder	60	82	5.38	(308)
Nanny or au pair	149	173	16.44	(55)
Babysitter who came to home	[25]	[28]	[2.99]	(50)
Breakfast club	10	20	2.46	(386)
After-school club or activity	10	24	1.65	(1,701)
Informal provider				
Grandparents	25	32	6.23	(63)

Table 5.3: Weekly payment for childcare, by provider type

Breakfast clubs were the only provider type to see a change between 2012-13 and 2014-15 in the weekly amount paid by parents (median payments of £9 and £10 respectively)⁶¹

Table 5.4 compares the costs of different childcare providers by illustrating the amounts parents reported paying per hour.⁶² A similar pattern emerges to weekly childcare costs, as presented in Table 5.3. Parents reported paying the highest median hourly cost to childminders (£4.50) and day nurseries (£4.38).⁶³ Parents reported paying less to playgroups (£1.90) and nursery classes (£0.83), reflecting the use of the entitlement to government funded early education at these providers. Also of relevance, as detailed in Table 5.2, is that families were more likely to report paying childcare fees or wages to day nurseries (82%) than they were to nursery classes (36%) or playgroups (64%).

⁶¹ The mean payments were £14 in 2012-13 and £20 in 2014-15.

⁶² The average family payment per hour was calculated by dividing the total cost paid by the family to the provider type (across all hours of care for all children, not including subsidies) by the total hours the family used at that provider type (which may include government funded hours paid by the local authority or other subsidies). This average family payment per hour may therefore differ from the actual hourly cost of the childcare, particularly because any government funded hours paid for by the local authority or other subsidies would be included (the denominator) but not in the cost paid by parents (the numerator).

⁶³ Nannies or au pairs had the highest cost at £7.69 per hour, but due to the low base size (55), this result should be treated with caution.

	Median	Holiday Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Use of childcare	£	£	£		
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>					
Formal provider					
Nursery school ⁶⁴	3.60		4.02	0.29	(202)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants school	0.83		3.59	1.02	(113)
Day nursery	4.38		5.48	0.36	(481)
Playgroup or pre-school	1.90		2.84	0.30	(228)
Childminder	4.50	4.46	5.71	0.34	(308)
Nanny or au pair	7.69		8.07	0.64	(55)
Babysitter who came to home	[3.88]		[4.29]	[0.60]	(50)
Breakfast club	3.11	[2.60]	5.76	0.66	(386)
After-school club or activity	3.11	3.13	5.53	0.34	(1,699)
Informal provider					
Grandparents	0.95		2.65	0.53	(62)

Table 5.4: Amount family paid per hour, by provider type

Breakfast clubs were the only provider type to see a change between 2012-13 and 2014-15 in the hourly amount paid by parents (median payments of £3.00 and £3.11 respectively).^{65,66}

Did weekly payments vary by family or area characteristics?

As detailed in Chapter 2, use of childcare is associated with parents' employment status. For instance, among couple families in which both parents worked, four in five (79%) children received childcare, compared with half (51%) among couple families in which neither parent was working, and three in five (59%) among non-working lone parent families (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Weekly reported payments for childcare also varied by parents' employment status. Dual-working couples and working lone parents paid the most for childcare (median weekly payments of £30 and £28 respectively), while

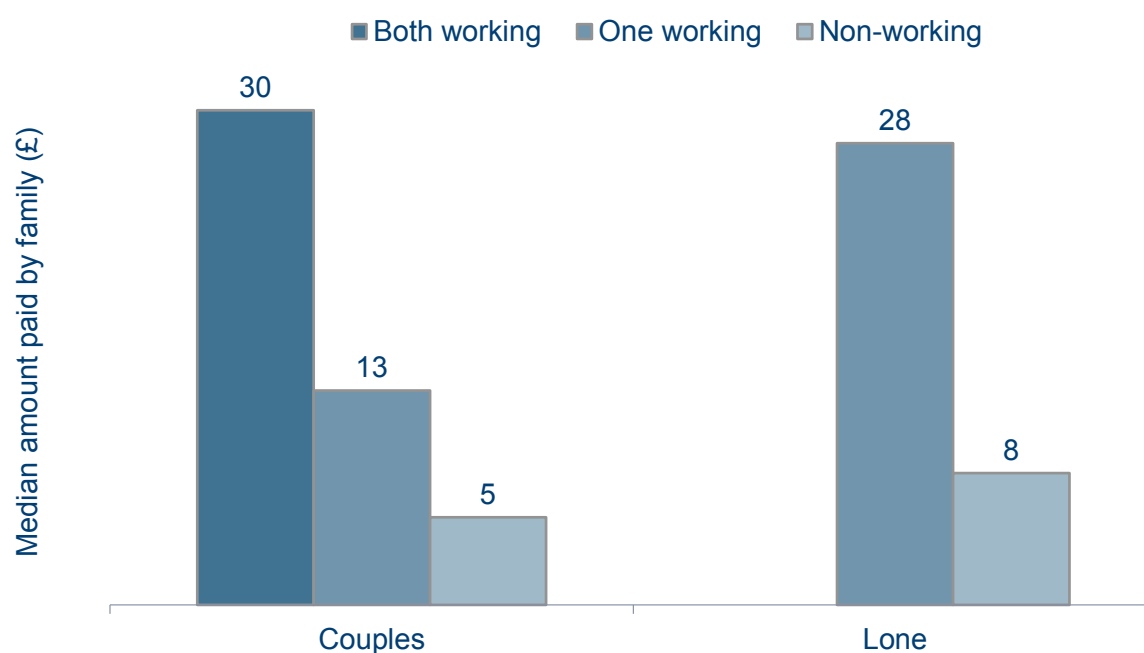
⁶⁴The Childcare Costs Survey 2015, published by the Family and Childcare Trust, found that the hourly cost of a part-time nursery place in England for a child under 2 was £4.69 per hour, and for a child aged 2 or over was £4.67. The hourly cost of a childminder in England for a child aged under 2 was found to be £4.21, and for a child aged 2 or over was £4.17. It should be noted that the Childcare Costs Survey 2015 collected data direct from local authorities, asking them to estimate an average price that parents pay for different forms of childcare, and this should be borne in mind when making comparisons.

⁶⁵ The mean hourly amount that parents reported paying for Breakfast clubs was £3.57 in 2012-13 and £5.76 in 2014-15.

⁶⁶ It should be noted that this increase does not necessarily mean that breakfasts clubs have increased the amount they charge since 2012-13. For instance, it could be that parents are spending more on available services at breakfast clubs, there has been a shift towards using more expensive breakfast clubs, that breakfast clubs have increased their prices, or a combination of these factors.

couple families in which only one parent was in work paid a median of £13 per week (see Figure 5.2).

Non-working families paid the least for childcare, with non-working couple families paying a median of £5 per week, and non-working lone parent families paying a median of £8 per week. These payments are in line with those made in 2012-13.



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,016)

Source: Table C5.2 in Appendix C

Figure 5.2: Median weekly payment for childcare, by family work status

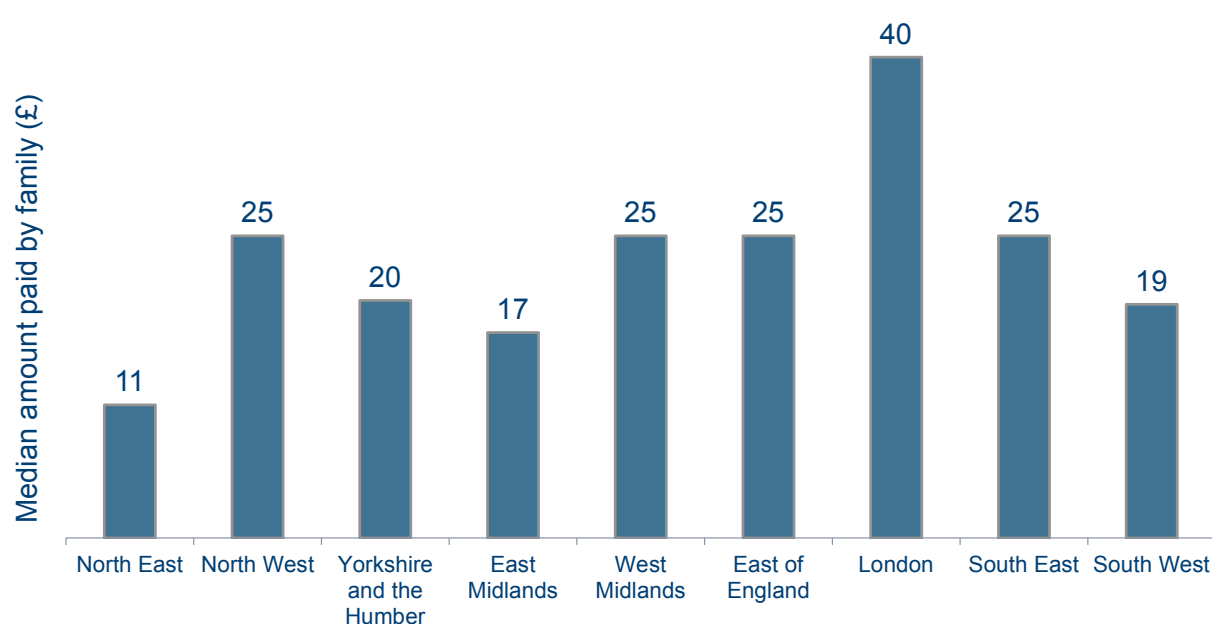
The reported median weekly cost of childcare for all children in the household varied by family annual income (see Table C5.2 in Appendix C). Those earning under £10,000 per year and paying for childcare spent a median of £10 per week on childcare, rising to £40 per week among families earning £45,000 or more. The weekly payments for childcare by family annual income are in line with the amounts paid in 2012-13.

Families' weekly childcare payments, among those paying for childcare, was associated with the number of children in the family. The median weekly cost of childcare was £20 among families with three or more children, £25 among those with two children, and £24 among those with one child.

The median weekly cost of childcare for all children also varied by the age(s) of the child(ren) in the household. Families that paid for childcare who had pre-school children only in their household paid the most, with a median payment of £64 per week. This

compares to a median of £30 per week among families with both pre-school and school-age children, and £15 per week among families with school-age children only. This pattern reflects the finding that families with pre-school children are likely to be paying for more hours of childcare (see Chapter 2).

The median amount families reported spending on childcare per week varied by region, as illustrated in Figure 5.3. Families in London paid the most per week (£40), while parents in the North East (£11) and the East Midlands (£17) paid the least. The West Midlands was the only region to see a change in the weekly amount spent on childcare, rising from a median of £20 in 2012-13 to £25 in 2014-15 (table not shown).



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,016)

Source: Table C5.3 in Appendix C

Figure 5.3: Median weekly payment for childcare, by region

Turning to levels of deprivation, families paying for childcare who lived in the most deprived areas paid a median of £16 per week, while those in the least deprived areas paid a median of almost twice this amount per week (£30) (see Table C5.3 in Appendix C). The weekly payments for childcare by deprivation level are in line with the amounts paid in 2012-13. Table C5.2 in Appendix C shows how families' weekly childcare payments, among those paying for childcare, were related to the number of children in the family, and within this, by family working status. The median weekly cost of childcare, for those families paying for childcare, was £20 among families with three or more children, £25 among those with two children, and £24 among those with one child.

How much was spent on childcare per child each week

The previous section, including Tables 5.3 and 5.4 above, describe how much those families paying for childcare in the reference week reported spending on childcare, for all of the children in their household. In this section, the focus turns to the selected child only, meaning the analyses concern the average amount of money spent on a per child basis, rather than the average amount of money spent on a per family basis.

Several features of the data need to be made explicit:

- As with the family-level cost data, respondents were asked about what they paid 'out of their own pocket'. Therefore it is likely they included money received in the form of tax credits but did not include money paid directly to providers from other individuals or organisations such as from the entitlement to government funded early education.
- As with the family-level cost data, and linked to the above, the questionnaire was not specific about the inclusion of financial help from employers such as childcare vouchers. Consequently it is not possible to tell whether parents included or excluded these from the amounts they reported.
- As with the family-level cost data, our analysis takes no account of the fees policies of the relevant providers (because we did not collect this information). As described earlier, data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2013 suggests that it is common for fees to vary for different children.
- Estimates are based on the amounts families reported paying for childcare for the selected child, during the reference week. Where money paid to a provider covered more than one child, respondents were asked to specify how much of the cost was for the selected child. Where they were unable to do this, the total cost was divided equally across those children using the provider in question.
- The questionnaire asked respondents to state how much they had paid each of the childcare providers used during the reference week. They were then asked whether the total amount was the amount they usually paid, and if it was not, they were asked for the usual amount they paid for childcare per week. While this figure was used in the calculation of the overall family level cost estimate (reported in Tables 5.3 and 5.4), because this figure covered all children in the household, rather than the selected child only, it was not used in the derivation of the total amount spent on the selected child. As a result of this, the overall cost estimate for the selected child may be subject to measurement error, for instance, where costs have been overestimated because lump payments made during the reference week have been included in the total for that week, or

where costs have been underestimated because lump payments made outside the reference week have not been correctly allocated to the reference week.

Table 5.A shows the weekly amount spent on formal childcare provision for children receiving paid formal childcare in the reference week. The data is broken down by the number of hours of formal childcare received, using bands around the median number of formal hours received, which was seven hours (see Table 2.8).

A median of £15 per week was spent on formal childcare provision per child for children who received paid formal childcare in the reference week (see Table 5.5). More was spent on formal provision for pre-school children (median of £53 per week per child), than on formal provision for school-age children (£10 per week).

The amount parents paid bore a relationship with the number of hours of formal childcare that children received. Those children receiving less than five hours of formal childcare per week had a median of £6 spent on their formal childcare, increasing to £82 among those children receiving 20 hours or more of formal childcare per week. This relationship held for both pre-school children and school-age children.

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Hours of formal childcare used by selected child in reference week	£	£		
<i>Base: Children receiving paid formal childcare</i>				
All	15	43	1.86	(1,961)
Less than 5 hours	6	14	1.39	(745)
5.0 – 9.9 hours	23	32	2.80	(331)
10.0 – 19.9 hours	33	50	3.70	(392)
20.0 hours or more	82	108	5.40	(493)
Pre-school children	53	83	4.06	(777)
Less than 5 hours	[10]	[11]	[1.42]	(41)
5.0 – 9.9 hours	35	39	3.19	(77)
10.0 – 19.9 hours	31	53	5.51	(261)
20.0 hours or more	100	122	6.19	(398)
School-age children	10	24	1.60	(1,184)
Less than 5 hours	6	14	1.45	(704)
5.0 – 9.9 hours	20	30	3.25	(254)
10.0 – 19.9 hours	35	47	4.52	(131)
20.0 hours or more	28	54	8.70	(95)

Table 5.5: Weekly payment for formal childcare, by age of child

Among children receiving paid childcare, those who received formal childcare only had a median of £15 per week spent on their childcare, while those who received informal childcare only had a median of £17 per week spent on their childcare (see Table 5.6).⁶⁷

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Type of childcare received	£	£		
<i>Base: Children receiving paid childcare</i>				
Formal only	15	44	2.29	(1,294)
Informal only	17	27	4.60	(58)

Table 5.6: Weekly payment for childcare, by type of childcare received

Table 5.7 shows how the amount of money parents reported spending on children receiving paid childcare in the reference week (whether formal childcare, informal childcare, or both), varied by the age of the child. Pre-school children receiving paid childcare had a median of £50 per week spent on their childcare, far higher than the median of £10 per week spent per week on school-age children.

Among pre-school children, the median amount spent per week was lower among 3- to 4-year-olds (£30) than among 0- to 2-year-olds (£73), which is likely to reflect the higher take-up of the entitlement to government funded early education among 3- and 4-year-olds (see Table 2.10).

Among school-age children, there was also a relationship between the age of children, and the weekly amount spent on their childcare. Children aged 5 to 7 who received paid childcare had the most spent on them (median of £11 per week), while children aged 12 to 14 (£8) had the least spent on them.

⁶⁷ Given the low base size of those children receiving paid informal childcare only (58), this finding should be treated with caution.

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Age of child	£	£		
<i>Base: All children receiving paid childcare</i>				
All	15	42	1.75	(2,125)
Pre-school children	50	82	3.99	(812)
0-2	73	97	5.40	(337)
3-4	30	67	5.05	(475)
School-age children	10	24	1.54	(1,313)
5-7	11	29	2.56	(511)
8-11	10	21	1.43	(572)
12-14	8	22	3.81	(230)

Table 5.7: Weekly payment for childcare, by age of child

Children aged 3 to 4, as well as some 2-year-olds, were eligible for 15 hours per week of government funded early education. Table 5.8 shows the reported weekly amount spent on childcare for those 2- to 4-year-olds who received paid childcare and who were eligible to receive government funded early education. The table is broken down by the amount of the entitlement to government funded early education children received: no use; some use, but less than the full entitlement of 15 hours; and full use (15 hours).

Overall, a median of £40 per week was spent on children aged 2 to 4 who received paid childcare, and who were eligible to receive government funded early education. Those children who did not receive any government funded provision had the most spent on them per week (a median of £52), compared with £29 among those who received some government funded hours, and £25 among those who received their full entitlement of 15 hours of government funded hours. This might indicate that parents taking up the entitlement are paying for hours in addition to their free entitlement hours.

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education	£	£		
<i>Base: All eligible 2-4 year olds receiving paid childcare</i>				
All	40	73	4.42	(623)
Full use (15 hours)	25	60	7.57	(209)
Some use (less than 15 hours but not zero)	29	64	11.60	(72)
No use (0 hours)	52	82	5.75	(342)

Table 5.8: Weekly payment for childcare for children aged 2-4, by receipt of the entitlement to government funded early education

5.3 Families' payment arrangements with their main formal provider

Parents were asked how frequently they paid the main formal provider they used for the selected child (see Table 5.8 in Appendix C). Monthly payment was the most common arrangement, with one in three (32%) parents paying in this way, followed by termly payment (28%) and weekly payment (23%). Few parents (7%) paid on a daily basis.

Payment arrangements varied substantially by provider type. Parents were most likely to make monthly payments to day nurseries (72%), childminders (58%), and nursery schools (49%), and were most likely to make termly payments to playgroups (41%), after-school clubs (38%), nursery classes (37%) and reception classes (28%). Payments to breakfast clubs were broadly split between weekly (27%), monthly (24%), daily (23%) and termly (22%) payments.

Parents most commonly paid their main formal provider in advance (74%), with one in five (22%) paying in arrears (see Table 5.Z9 in Appendix C). Childminders were the only provider which parents were more likely to pay in arrears (54%) than in advance (46%).

One in seven parents (14%) paid their main formal provider an upfront refundable deposit (see Table 5.10 in Appendix C). Parents were most likely to pay an upfront refundable deposit to day nurseries (46%) and nursery schools (34%).

5.4 Financial help with childcare costs⁶⁸

Parents were asked whether they received any financial help towards childcare costs for any children in the household. This covered a variety of sources, including the local education authority⁶⁹ (for instance, the entitlement to government funded early education); an employer (via childcare vouchers, direct payments to providers, or provision at the parent's place of work); and an ex-partner.

Among families who used childcare in the reference week, almost one in five (18%) reported that they received financial assistance from at least one external source. Very few families (less than half of one percent) reported that they received assistance from at least one external source, but did not make any payment for childcare themselves (table not shown).

Parents using formal childcare were far more likely to receive financial assistance (22%) than those using informal care only (2%) (table not shown).

It should be noted that because these figures rely on parents' own reports of the help they received, they are likely to underestimate the true extent of subsidies. For example, while receipt of the government funded entitlement to early education counts as help from the local education authority (LEA), among parents in receipt of the entitlement, many (42%) did not mention the LEA as a source of financial help (table not shown).

How many families were receiving help with childcare costs?

Because parents tended to receive financial help for formal rather than informal childcare, Table 5.9 focuses just on families that used formal childcare. Parents were most likely to receive financial help from employers (11%), followed by LEAs (8%). Three per cent of parents using formal childcare received financial assistance from an ex-partner, and one per cent received help from Social Services.

Among families using formal childcare, those with pre-school children only were far more likely to receive financial assistance than those with school-age children only (37% compared with 12%). This is attributable both to financial assistance from LEAs being received almost wholly by families with pre-school children (likely due to LEAs' provision

⁶⁸ Respondents were asked whether they received any financial help towards childcare costs from a list of sources, such as: the local authority (for example the entitlement to government funded early education for 3- and 4-year-olds); an employer; or an ex-partner (financial assistance through the tax credit system was asked separately and is discussed in section 5.4).

⁶⁹ Local Education Authorities are now undertaken by the director of Children's Services within each local authority district (LAD) (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/other/local-education-authorities/index.html). However, the questionnaire in this survey used showcards which included "Local Education Authority", and so where reference is made to local education authority, this is because parents specifically chose this, rather than because the report is simply referring to an old term disassociated from parents' responses. Therefore this term is used throughout the report to reflect parents' responses.

of the entitlement to government funded early education), and to financial assistance from employers being far more common among families with pre-school children only (23%) than among families with school-age children only (6%). This latter finding may be explained by the relatively lower cost of out-of-school childcare for school-age children and the shorter time they spend at the provider compared with pre-school childcare (see Table 5.7), meaning that employer assistance is less frequently sought, or provided, for school-age children.

	Financial help from others					
Family characteristics	None	LEA	Social Services	Employer	Ex-partner	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families using formal childcare in reference week</i>						
All	78	8	1	11	3	(4,575)
Family type						
Couple	78	8	1	14	1	(3,506)
Lone parent	80	7	1	3	9	(1,069)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	74	8	*	19	1	(2,114)
Couple – one working	85	9	1	5	1	(1,185)
Couple – neither working	91	5	1	0	1	(207)
Lone parent – working	76	6	1	4	14	(554)
Lone parent – not working	88	8	*	0	1	(515)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	86	6	1	3	2	(274)
£10,000 - £19,999	85	8	1	2	3	(951)
£20,000 - £29,999	84	8	*	2	4	(878)
£30,000 - £44,999	78	8	1	9	4	(835)
£45,000+	69	9	*	25	1	(1,339)
Number of children						
1	78	5	1	12	4	(965)
2	77	10	1	13	2	(2,164)
3+	83	11	1	4	2	(1,446)
Age of children						
Pre-school only	63	17	*	23	2	(959)
Pre- and school-age	74	16	1	11	2	(1,858)
School-age only	88	*	1	6	4	(1,758)
NB: Row percentages.						
[1] Percentages in this table may not sum to 100 per cent in all cases as not all organisations which provided financial help are included.						
Table 5.9: Financial help from others, by family characteristics						

Help from employers

Employers can offer three types of childcare support which qualify for reliefs from Income Tax and National Insurance contributions: childcare vouchers, directly contracted childcare (where the employer contracts and pays the provider directly) and workplace

nurseries. If an employer provides childcare vouchers or directly contracts childcare, employees who are basic rate tax payers do not have to pay Income Tax or National Insurance contributions on the first £55 per week (£243 per month), higher rate tax payers do not have to pay Income Tax or National Insurance contributions on the first £28 per week (£124 per month), and additional rate tax payers do not have to pay Income Tax or National Insurance contributions on the first £25 per week (£110 per month). There is unlimited Income tax and National Insurance contributions relief available where childcare for eligible children is provided by an employer through a workplace nursery.

Among families who reported paying for childcare and receiving financial help from an employer, childcare vouchers were the most common form of assistance received (88%, see Table 5.10). Fewer than one in ten (9%) families had an arrangement whereby an employer paid their childcare provider directly, and just four per cent used a childcare provider at a place of work.

Among families who reported paying for childcare and receiving financial help from an employer, financial help from employers was most commonly in the form of a salary sacrifice arrangement⁷⁰ (82%), with other arrangements being used far less often (7% received an addition to their salary, and 5% received a flexible benefits package).

All types of financial assistance from employers tended to be received by families at the higher end of the income distribution. Of those families paying for childcare and receiving financial assistance from an employer, three in four (75%) had an annual family income of £45,000 or over, and a further 15 per cent earned between £30,000 and £45,000.

⁷⁰ A salary sacrifice happens when an employee gives up the right to part of the cash remuneration due under his or her contract of employment. Usually, the sacrifice is made in return for the employer's agreement to provide the employee with some form of non-cash benefit, in this case for childcare vouchers.

Financial help/income	%
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare and received financial help from employer</i>	(466)
Type of financial help from employer	
Childcare vouchers	88
Employer pays childcare provider directly	9
Childcare provider is at respondent's/ partner's work	4
Other	2
Nature of financial help	
Salary sacrifice	82
Addition to salary	7
Flexible benefits package only	5
Family annual income	
Under £10,000	2
£10,000 - £19,999	4
£20,000 - £29,999	4
£30,000 - £44,999	15
£45,000+	75

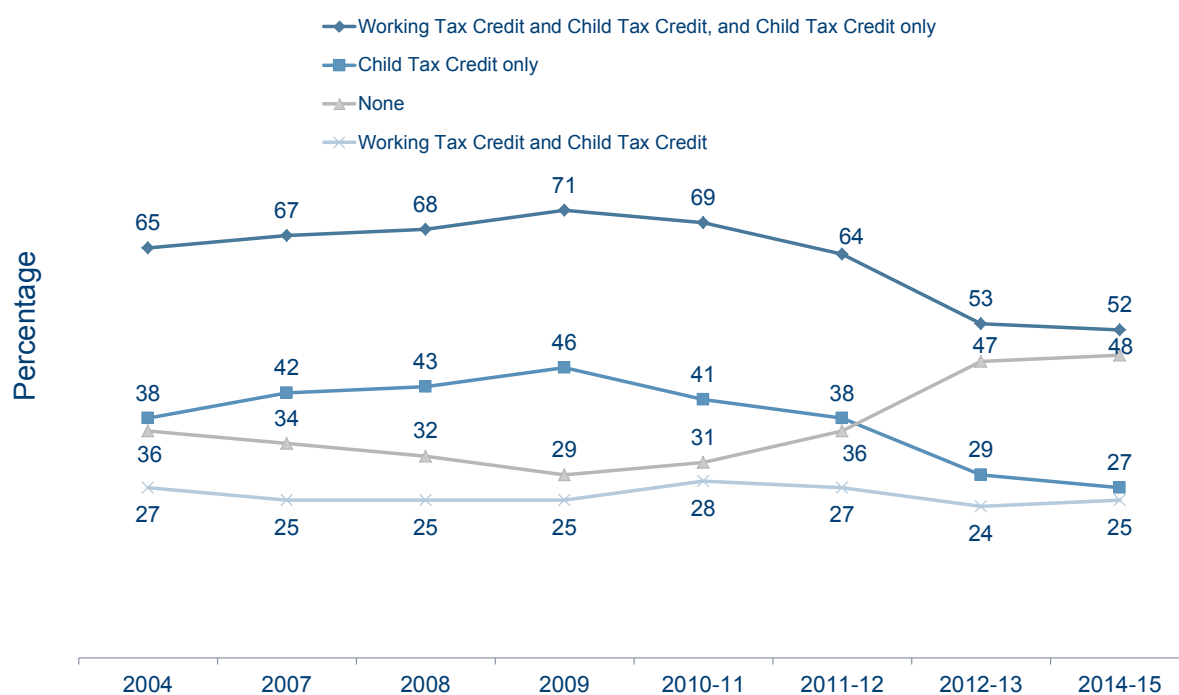
Table 5.10: Employer assistance with childcare costs

5.5 How many families reported receiving Tax Credits?

Having considered the financial help towards their childcare costs that families were receiving from sources such as the local education authority, their employer, and their ex-partner, we now turn to the proportion of families that received assistance with their childcare costs via Child Tax Credits.

Just over half (52%) of families in 2014-15 reported receiving Child Tax Credit, either on its own (27%) or in conjunction with Working Tax Credit (25%, see Figure 5.4). Between 2010-11 and 2012-13 the proportion of families that reported receiving Child Tax Credit on its own or along with Working Tax Credit fell (from 69% in 2010-11 to 53% in 2012-13).⁷¹ There has not been a major change in the proportion of families who reported being in receipt of Child Tax Credit (either on its own, or along with Working Tax Credit) between 2012-13 and 2014-15; however, since 2012-13 there has been a fall in the proportion of families that reported only receiving Child Tax Credit (from 29% to 27% in 2014-15).

⁷¹This fall is likely to reflect changes to the tax credits system. For instance, tax credit statistics published by HMRC shows that the caseload of families with children fell by 1 million between December 2011 and December 2012.



Base: All families (6,167 in 2014-15)

Source: Table 5.7 in Appendix C

Figure 5.4: Receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, 2004 to 2014-15

Among working families, just under half (45%) reported receiving Child Tax Credit, either on its own (17%) or in conjunction with Working Tax Credit (28%) (see Table 5.11). Reported receipt of Child Tax Credit (either alone, or in conjunction with Working Tax Credit) was highest among working lone-parent families (84%), and lowest among dual-working couple families (26%).

	Couple both working	Couple one working	Lone parent working	All working families
Tax credits received	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Working families</i>	<i>(2,676)</i>	<i>(1,656)</i>	<i>(802)</i>	<i>(5,134)</i>
Child Tax Credit only	14	22	16	17
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	12	34	68	28
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit only	26	56	84	45

Table 5.11: Working families' receipt of Working Tax Credit

5.6 How much Tax Credit were families receiving?

Parents were asked about the amount of Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit they (or their partner) received. The great majority (90%) of families were able to state how much they received, and of these, one in three (33%) consulted information received from HMRC when answering questions about their Tax Credits (tables not shown). It should be noted throughout this section that the data is self-reported and differ from HMRC's own data on Tax Credit customers.

Families receiving both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit reported receiving a median of £137 per week (a rise from the £130 recorded in 2012-13), and those receiving Child Tax Credit only, reported receiving a median of £73 per week (a rise from the £62 recorded in 2012-13) (table not shown).

Families receiving Child Tax Credit only who used formal childcare reported receiving a median amount of £83 per week, more than the amount reported to be received by families who used informal childcare only (£62). This is likely to reflect families using formal childcare claiming for help with their formal childcare costs (table not shown).

5.7 Impact of support on number of hours worked

Those respondents in work and receiving support (whether from the entitlement to government funded early education, from tax credits, from an employer, or a combination of these) were asked whether this support had led them to make any changes to the number of hours they worked. The great majority (86%) of parents did not make any changes to their working arrangements. However, seven per cent increased the number of hours they worked, and four per cent were able to start work as a result of receiving support (see Table 5.12). A further three per cent of parents decreased the number of hours they worked as a result of receiving support.

These changes to working arrangements varied by family characteristics. Lone parents who received support were more likely to have either increased the number of hours they

worked, or to have started working, than parents in couple families (15% compared with 8% respectively). With respect to family annual income, families with lower incomes were more likely to have either increased the number of hours they worked, or to have started working, than families with higher incomes (12% among those earning below £10,000 per year, compared with 7% among those earning £45,000 or more per year).

Family characteristics	Changes in parents' working patterns as a result of receiving support				
	Increased hours worked	Decreased hours worked	Was able to start work	No change in working patterns	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Parents in work and receiving support (free hours, tax credits, or employer support)</i>					
All	7	3	4	86	(2,314)
Family type					
Couple	6	3	2	88	(1,600)
Lone parent	10	3	5	82	(714)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	6	4	2	88	(1,324)
Couple – one working	5	2	3	90	(276)
Lone parent – working	10	3	5	82	(714)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	9	4	3	84	(116)
£10,000 - £19,999	9	4	6	82	(579)
£20,000 - £29,999	8	3	4	85	(591)
£30,000 - £44,999	8	4	3	86	(428)
£45,000+	4	2	3	91	(479)
Number of children					
1	8	3	4	85	(611)
2	6	3	3	88	(1,119)
3+	9	4	3	84	(584)
Age of children					
Pre-school only	5	5	4	86	(520)
Pre- and school-age	9	3	3	85	(818)
School-age only	8	2	4	87	(976)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 5.12: Changes in parents' working patterns as a result of receiving support

Respondents in couple families who were in receipt of support, and whose partners were in work, were further asked whether the support they received had led their partner to make any changes to the number of hours he or she worked (see Table 5.13). The great majority (95%) of partners had not made any changes as a result of this support, with just three per cent having increased the number of hours they worked, and two per cent having decreased the number of hours they worked.

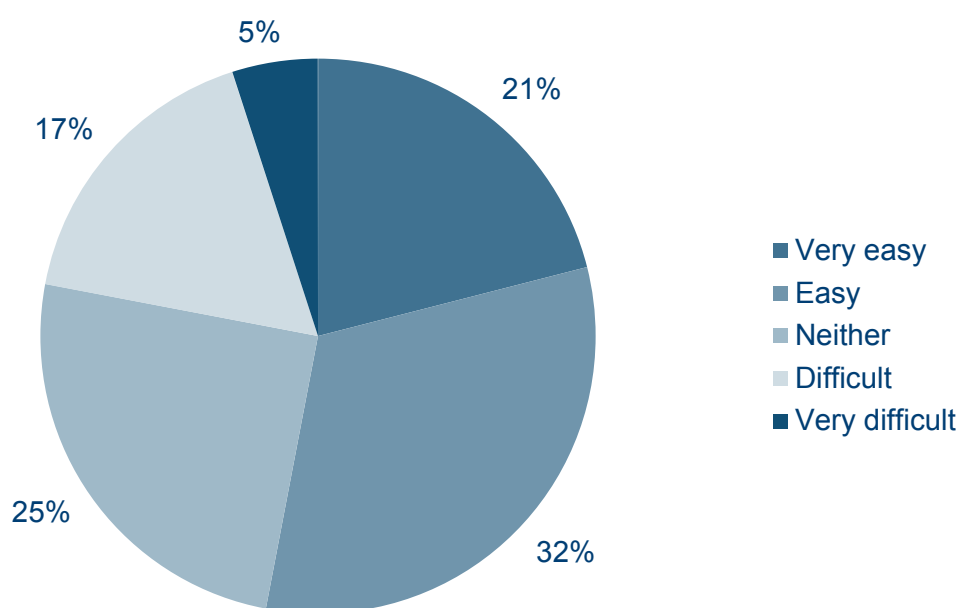
Family characteristics	Changes in partners' working patterns as a result of receiving support				
	Increased hours worked	Decreased hours worked	Was able to start work	No change in working patterns	Unweighted base
Base: Partners in work receiving support (free hours, tax credits, or employer support)					
All	3	2	*	95	(2,249)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	2	2	*	95	(1,325)
Couple – one working	3	1	1	95	(923)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	0	5	0	95	(68)
£10,000 - £19,999	2	1	1	95	(405)
£20,000 - £29,999	4	3	1	92	(592)
£30,000 - £44,999	2	1	0	96	(489)
£45,000+	2	1	*	97	(549)
Number of children					
1	2	2	1	96	(417)
2	3	1	*	95	(1,072)
3+	3	2	1	94	(760)
Age of children					
Pre-school only	2	2	*	95	(564)
Pre- and school-age	4	1	1	94	(998)
School-age only	2	1	*	96	(687)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 5.13: Changes in partners' working patterns as a result of receiving support

5.8 Difficulties with childcare costs

Respondents who paid for childcare in the reference week were asked how easy or difficult they found it to cover this cost given their family income. Just over one in five (22%) found it difficult or very difficult to pay for childcare, compared with just over half (53%) who found it easy or very easy (see Figure 5.5). There has been a fall in the proportion of families finding it difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs between 2012-13 (27%) and 2014-15 (22%) (see Table C5.4 in Appendix C). These findings are consistent with more positive views about the affordability of childcare since the 2012-13 survey (see Section 6.3).



Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week (2,982)

Source: Table C5.4 in Appendix C

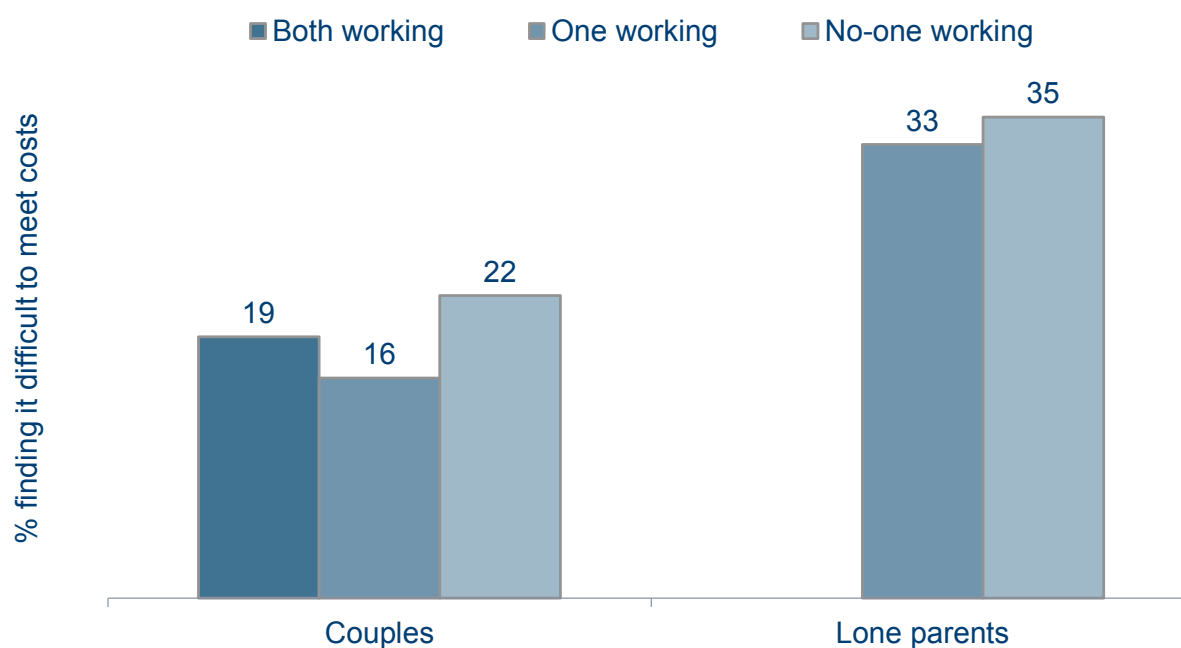
Figure 5.5: Difficulty paying for childcare

The ease or difficulty with which parents could cover their childcare costs was affected by a number of family characteristics. One in three (33%) working lone parents found it difficult or very difficult to cover childcare costs within their family income, compared with one in five (19%) dual-earning couple families (see Figure 5.6). Similarly, non-working lone parents were more likely than non-working couples to report difficulty in paying for childcare (35% and 22% respectively). Since 2012-13, there has been a fall in the proportion finding it difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs among dual-working couple families (23% compared with 19%), among couple families in which one parent works (23% compared with 16%), and among non-working lone parent families (48% compared with 35%).

Difficulty in covering childcare costs also varied by annual family income (see Table C5.4 in Appendix C), with one in three (34%) families earning under £10,000 finding it difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs, compared with 14 per cent of those earning £45,000 or more.

The weekly cost of childcare was also associated with the ease with which parents could cover their childcare costs. Among those families spending £80 or more on childcare per week, 43 per cent found it difficult or very difficult to pay, while among those spending

less than £5 per week, only six per cent found it difficult or very difficult to pay (see Table C5.5 in Appendix C).



Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week (2,982)

Source: Table C5.4 in Appendix C

Figure 5.6: Difficulty paying for childcare, by family work status

5.9 Summary

Three in five (59%) families who used a childcare provider in the reference week reported paying for this childcare. Families were far more likely to pay formal providers (65%) than informal providers (6%). Among formal providers, parents were most likely to pay childminders (93%), nannies or au pairs (79%), and day nurseries (77%), and were least likely to pay nursery classes (29%), nursery schools (58%), and playgroups or pre-schools (56%), reflecting the entitlement to government funded early education among 3- and 4-year-olds. Parents were most likely to pay for childcare fees or wages (59%), followed by education fees or wages (36%), refreshments (26%), and use of equipment (19%).

Families paying for childcare reported spending a median of £23 per week, and a mean of £53, on this provision, although this amount varied by the provider used. This cost is in line with 2012-13; however, this should not be interpreted as a measure of the consistency of providers' standard fees (these cost statistics are subject to a number of caveats, as described in section 5.2).

Weekly payments varied by parents' employment status. Dual-working couples and working lone parents paid the most for childcare (medians of £30 and £28 per week respectively), while non-working lone parents (£8) and non-working couples (£5) paid the least. Families in London paid the most per week on childcare (median of £40), while parents in the North East (£11) and the East Midlands (£17) paid the least. Turning to levels of deprivation, families paying for childcare who lived in the most deprived areas paid a median of £16 per week, while those in the least deprived areas paid a median of almost twice this amount per week (£30).

Costs were also considered at the level of the selected child, to provide estimates for childcare costs on a per child (rather than per family) basis. A median of £15 per week was spent on formal childcare provision for children receiving paid formal childcare in the reference week. This rose to £53 among pre-school children, and fell to £10 for school-age children.

Monthly payment was the most common arrangement, with one in three (32%) parents paying in this way, followed by termly payment (28%) and weekly payment (23%), although this varied widely by provider type. The majority (74%) of parents paid their main formal provider in advance, however few paid an upfront refundable deposit (14%).

Almost one in five (18%) families using childcare for a child in the household reported they had received financial help from others, including the local education authority, social services, their employer, or ex-partner. This is likely to be an underestimate of the scale of the contributions from other sources, as many parents seem not to consider their early education place to be 'paid for'. Parents using formal childcare most commonly reported getting financial assistance from their employer (11%), followed by their local education authority (8%). Help from employers was primarily in the form of childcare vouchers paid for by salary sacrifice.

Among parents receiving support (whether from the entitlement to government funded early education, from tax credits or from an employer), seven per cent reported that this support had enabled them to increase the number of hours they worked, and four per cent reported that it had enabled them to start work.

Just over one in five (22%) families found it difficult or very difficult to pay for childcare, a fall from 2012-13, when 27 per cent reported difficulties. Since 2012-13, there has been a fall in the proportion finding it difficult to cover their childcare costs among dual-working couple families (23% in 2012-13 compared with 19% in 2014-15), among couple families in which one parent works (23% compared with 16%), and among non-working lone parent families (48% compared with 35%). Nevertheless, when asked what changes to childcare would suit their needs better, making childcare more affordable was the most commonly given reason (by 34% of parents).

6. Factors affecting decisions about childcare

Key findings:

- The 2014-15 survey has shown an increase in the proportion of parents who are satisfied with the level of information about childcare that is available to them (from 43% in 2012-13 to 49% in 2014-15). Almost seven in ten (69%) parents accessed at least one source of information about childcare in the last year. Parents were most likely to receive information about childcare via word of mouth (41%) for example from friends or relatives, or at their child(ren)'s school (33%).
- The proportion of parents who had used of Family Information Services has decreased since 2012-13, with around one in ten (11%) parents having used the service (12% in 2012-13). The proportion of parents who are aware of the service has also fallen by two percentage points from 19% in 2012 to 17% in 2014-15. Among those who used the service, nearly nine in ten (89%) said they found the information provided by FIS either quite or very helpful.
- Over two in five (46%) parents said that the right amount of childcare places were provided in their local area; however, three in ten (28%) said there were not enough places. A higher proportion (64%) of parents said the quality of childcare in their local area was good, with only nine per cent of parents saying it was poor.
- Almost two in five (39%) parents said that affordability of childcare in their area was good; although 33 per cent perceived the affordability of childcare to be poor. Parents were positive about the availability of flexible childcare, with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs.
- A higher proportion of parents were satisfied with the quality of childcare than in 2012-13 (64%, up from 58% in 2012-13); likewise, views on availability have improved (46% felt there were the 'right amount' of childcare places locally, up from 42% in 2012-13).
- Only one in three (33%) parents of children with a disability or long-term condition agreed or strongly agreed that there are providers in their area who can cater for their child's condition. Of those who used a provider, around three in five (58%) said that staff were trained in how to deal with their child's condition.
- Generally, parents were positive about the availability of flexible childcare, with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs.
- Around one in five (18%) parents reported being aware of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme when asked. Parents were evenly split between those saying they would probably or definitely apply for Tax-Free Childcare (49%) and those saying they would probably or definitely not (51%).

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

6.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by outlining what information sources were used by parents and how useful they found them (section 6.2). In the 2014-15 survey, parents were asked questions on a number of new topics. The first of these relates to parents' use of and attitudes towards childminder agencies⁷². The second relates to parents' knowledge of the Ofsted ratings of their providers, and whether or not this rating had an influence on their decision about which provider to use. Analyses of both new topic areas are included in section 6.2.

Parents' perceptions of childcare in their local area in relation to availability, quality and affordability are discussed in section 6.3. Further sections then focus on specific sub-groups of parents who reported that they did not use childcare and their reasons for doing so. These sub-groups include families with school-age children who were not using breakfast and after-school clubs (section 6.4); families who did not use any childcare in the last year (section 6.5); parents of children aged 0 to 2 who were not in nursery education (section 6.6); and families with ill or disabled children (section 6.7).

Finally, the chapter ends with parents' perspectives on the flexibility of childcare with reference to how well provision met their needs and whether there were any other providers they wished to use (section 6.8).

Most of the analyses in this chapter are drawn from the experience of families. However, sections 6.6 and 6.7 focus on the randomly selected child in each household. Comparisons are drawn between previous years of the survey series where appropriate.

6.2 Access to information about childcare

Information sources used by parents

More than two in three (69%) parents said that they accessed at least one source of information about childcare in the last year while just over three in ten (31%) said that they had accessed no information at all (see Table 6.1). These proportions have

⁷² Introduced in 2014, childminder agencies are 'one-stop shop' organisations that register childminders, help childminders with training, business support, advice and finding parents. They aim to attract new childminders to the profession and make life easier for childminders who wish to use them by providing a range of services such as marketing, administrative support and training and development opportunities to help further raise the quality of their provision.

remained constant since 2012-13 with no change overall (69% accessed information in 2012-13).

As in 2012-13, parents' most frequently used sources of information were word of mouth (41%), such as from friends or relatives, and schools (33%) (see Table 6.1). Schools were likely to be a common source of information due to the large proportion of families using a breakfast or after-school club, which are often based at schools (see section 2.2).

A smaller proportion of parents used Sure Start/children's centres to source information on childcare (8%). This proportion has fallen since 2012-13, when one in ten (10%) parents used this source, which may reflect the closure of some Sure Start centres since the 2012-13 survey was conducted. There has been, however, an increase in the proportion of parents who have used Local Authorities as a source of information, from 6% in 2012-13 to 7% in 2014-15. Smaller proportions used specific local authority or NHS sources such as health visitors/clinics (5%), Family Information Services (4%) or doctor's surgeries (2%).

Furthermore, relatively few parents accessed other local sources of information such as local advertising (7%), childcare providers (6%), and local libraries (5%). Just over one in ten (12%) used internet sites that are not official Government sources; an increase since 2012-13 when 10 per cent of parents used internet sites for this purpose.

Access to sources of information varied by the type of childcare used. Just over three-quarters (76%) of parents who used formal childcare had accessed at least one source of information, compared with just 58 per cent of parents who only used informal childcare and 56 per cent of parents who did not use any childcare. There were also differences between the type of childcare used and the information sources used by parents. Parents who used formal providers were more likely to access information by word of mouth, schools, Sure Start/children's centres, local authorities and Family Information Services. Websites other than the direct.gov website were also used by 14 per cent of parents. Those using only informal childcare, however, were more likely to access information via the health visitor/clinics.

	Childcare used in reference week			
	Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No provider used	All
Source of information	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,573)</i>	<i>(605)</i>	<i>(1,018)</i>	<i>(6,196)</i>
Word of mouth (for example friends or relatives)	47	29	27	41
School	37	25	23	33
Local Authority/ NHS				
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	9	7	7	8
Local Authority	8	5	5	7
Family Information Service	5	3	2	4
Health visitor/ clinic	5	6	4	5
Doctor's surgery	1	2	2	2
Other National Government Sources				
Jobcentre Plus/ Benefits Office	1	2	2	1
Childcare Link (national helpline/ website) ⁷³	1	1	1	1
Direct.Gov website	4	2	2	4
Other Local Sources				
Local advertising	8	4	4	7
Local library	6	4	3	5
Childcare provider	8	2	2	6
Employer	1	1	1	1
Yellow Pages	*	*	0	*
Other Internet site	14	8	9	12
Other	1	*	1	1
None	24	42	44	31

Table 6.1: Sources of information about childcare used in last year, by childcare use⁷⁴

Parents with pre-school children were more likely to access information about childcare in their local area than other groups (see Table C6.2 in Appendix C), and this is likely to be due to higher childcare usage among this group (see section 2.4). Parents of pre-school children were more likely to access information about childcare by word of mouth, through Sure Start/Children's Centres and Local Authorities. In contrast, parents who had

⁷³ Note that the ChildLink website and helpline are no longer in existence.

⁷⁴ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

either pre-school children and school-aged children or just school-aged children, were more likely to access information about childcare through their child's school.

The sources of information used by parents varied with family income. For example, families with an income of £45,000 or higher (51%) were most likely to use word of mouth to access information about childcare, and the likelihood of using this source of information decreases as families' income reduces (see Table C6.2 in Appendix C). A similar pattern was seen in the use of schools as a source of information. Families with higher incomes however, were less likely to use Sure Start or Children's Centres as a source of information; six per cent of families with an income of £45,000 or more used this source compared with 10 per cent of families with an income of £10,000 or less.

Helpfulness of the sources of information about childcare

When asked to rate information sources they had used, all but one of the information sources were found to be very or quite helpful by at least eight in ten parents. The sources that parents reported finding most helpful included word of mouth (90%), Family Information Services (89%), health visitors (89%), Sure Start/children's centres (88%) and schools (88%). Other information sources such as local authorities (85%) and local advertising (84%) were also rated highly. The proportion of parents who found information from the local authority useful has increased from 78% in 2012-13 to 85% in 2014-15. This increase in usefulness may be reflected in the increased use of local authorities as a source of information, as outlined earlier in this chapter.

Parents were less likely to find the information they had received from Jobcentre Plus helpful (75%) with one in six reporting that the information was not helpful (16%).

Source of information	Very/quite helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Not very/ not at all helpful	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families using particular information source</i>				
Word of mouth	90	8	2	(2,606)
Family Information Service	89	6	5	(299)
Health visitor	89	6	5	(375)
School	88	8	4	(2,099)
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	88	7	5	(614)
Local Authority	85	10	5	(414)
Local Advertising	84	10	6	(408)
Jobcentre Plus	75	9	16	(96)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 6.2: Helpfulness of main childcare information sources

Awareness and use of Family Information Services (FIS)

The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to provide information on childcare (both registered and non-registered) that may benefit parents. This obligation is most commonly fulfilled by Family Information Services (FIS), which are funded by local authorities. Family Information Services act as a central information point for parents by providing information about childcare and early years services in the local area, the entitlement to government funded early years provision, and childcare settings that are suitable for children with disabilities or special educational needs.

Levels of usage and awareness of the Family Information Services among parents are low and have decreased since 2012-13 (see Figure 6.1). Around one in ten (11%) parents reported having used the service in 2014-15, which is lower than the 12 per cent who reported using it in 2012-13. The percentage of parents who are aware of the service, but have not used it, has also fallen two percentage points from 19 per cent in 2012-13 to 17 per cent in 2014-15. The remaining seven in ten (71%) parents said they were not aware of the service.

Despite this fall in reported use and awareness of Family Information Services, satisfaction amongst parents who have used these services remains high. As shown in Table 6.2, nearly nine in ten (89%) parents said they found the information provided by FIS either quite or very helpful.

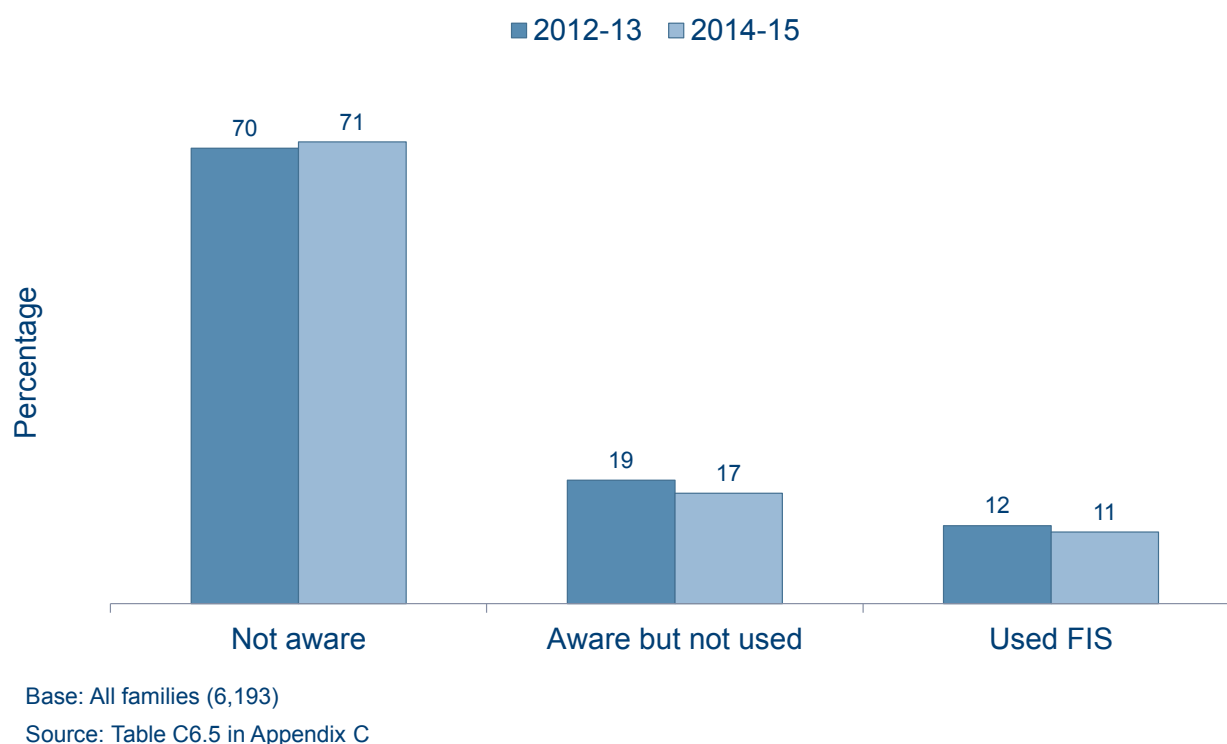


Figure 6.1: Awareness and use of Family Information Services

Childminder agencies

Introduced in 2014, childminder agencies are 'one-stop shop' organisations that register childminders, help childminders with training, business support, advice and finding parents. They aim to attract new childminders to the profession and make life easier for childminders who wish to use them by providing a range of services such as marketing, administrative support and training and development opportunities to help further raise the quality of their provision. Joining an agency is voluntary – childminders can choose to remain independent and register with Ofsted or to register with an agency.

Childminder agencies also aim to provide a valuable service for parents who want to find a high quality childminder. Agencies can help parents to find a childminder, access holiday and sickness cover, and provide regular updates about the quality of their childminder. Agencies are registered and inspected by Ofsted, so parents can be reassured about their quality. Furthermore, agencies will be required to carry out regular quality assurance visits for all childminders registered with them.

Of those parents who used a childminder, 6 per cent of parents hired their childminder through a childminder agency (21 parents out of all those interviewed). Of those parents

who used a childminder they had hired without using a childminder agency, 38 per cent were aware of childminder agencies, while 62 per cent were not⁷⁵.

Awareness	%
<i>Base: Families with a child(ren) aged 12 or younger who did not use a Childminder Agency when hiring their childminder</i>	<i>(5,854)</i>
Yes – aware	38
No – not aware	62

Table 6.3: Awareness of childminder agencies

Having been made aware of childminder agencies, around one in four (27%) of these parents said that they would use them in the future. The majority, however (53%), said that they would not (table not shown).

The reasons parents most frequently cited for not using a childminder agency in the future was the concern that they would lose the personal relationship they had with their current childminder (41%). Around one in four (23%) parents expressed concerns that working through a third party, such as a childminder agency, would be a hassle for them and one in five (17%) thought that there would be an added expense for using a childminder agency. Other, less frequently cited, reasons were that parents preferred a word of mouth recommendation (8%), a childminder recruited through an agency would not be independent (8%) and that the provision might be less flexible (7%).

⁷⁵ Note that as childminder agencies were only introduced in September 2014, just before the start of 2014-15 fieldwork, these results may represent some mis-reporting by parents.

Reasons	%
<i>Base: Families with a child(ren) aged 12 or younger who did not use a childminder agency to hire their childminder, and who would not use a childminder agency</i>	(176)
We might lose the personal relationship with our childminder	41
It's a hassle to go through a third party	23
I'd expect an agency to charge more than an independent childminder would	17
I prefer recommendation / word of mouth	8
Childminder would no longer be an independent provider	8
No need / we already have childcare	8
Provision might be less flexible	7
Ofsted wouldn't directly rate individual agency childminders	4
Other reason	2

Table 6.4: Reasons why parents would not use a childminder agency

Ofsted registration and rating

Parents were asked a series of questions about the Ofsted registration and rating of their main formal childcare provider and the impact this had on their decisions relating to childcare.

Parents were asked of their main provider, "Do you know whether they are registered with a regulator such as Ofsted?". The proportion of childcare providers that parents reported being registered with Ofsted varied by type of provider (see Table 6.5). While the reported level of Ofsted registration was very high among day nurseries (99%), nursery classes (98%), nursery schools (97%), reception classes (97%) and playgroups (97%), it was slightly lower among childminders (90%). Approximately seven in ten (71%) after-school clubs and just 27 per cent of nannies or au pairs were known to be registered with Ofsted.

	Yes, registered	No, not registered	Unweighted Base
Whether registered	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal provider</i>			
Nursery school	97	3	(247)
Nursery class	98	2	(275)
Reception class	97	3	(523)
Day nursery	99	1	(447)
Playgroup	97	4	(220)
Childminder	90	10	(195)
Nanny or au pair	[27]	[73]	(45)
Breakfast club	97	3	(192)
After-school club	71	29	(1,383)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 6.5: Whether parents reported main formal provider was registered with a regulator such as Ofsted⁷⁶

Where a parent reported their provider was registered with Ofsted, the proportion of parents who knew the Ofsted rating varied with the provider type (see Table 6.6). Parents who used a day nursery (65%), nursery school (60%) or reception class (57%) were most likely to know the Ofsted rating of their provider. Parents who used a breakfast club (40%), child-minder (47%), or after-school club (42%) were less likely to know the rating.

	Yes, knew Ofsted rating	No, did not know Ofsted rating	Unweighted Base
Whether knew Ofsted rating	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal provider, registered with Ofsted</i>			
Nursery school	60	40	(240)
Nursery class	51	49	(268)
Reception class	57	43	(507)
Day nursery	65	35	(441)
Playgroup	52	48	(213)
Childminder	47	53	(177)
Breakfast club	40	60	(186)
After school club	42	58	(980)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 6.6: Whether parent knew main formal provider's Ofsted rating when choosing them

⁷⁶ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

The influence that the provider's Ofsted rating (where known) had on choosing a childcare provider varied with the type of provider (see Table 6.7). Parents whose main provider was a nursery school (76%), a day nursery (74%), a nursery class (68%), or a childminder (66%) were most likely to say that the provider's Ofsted rating influenced their choice of provider either a great deal or a fair amount. Those whose main provider was a reception class (64%), an after-school club (59%), a breakfast club (58%), or a playgroup (57%) were least likely to say that the provider's Ofsted rating had either a great deal or a fair amount of influence over their decision of which provider to use.

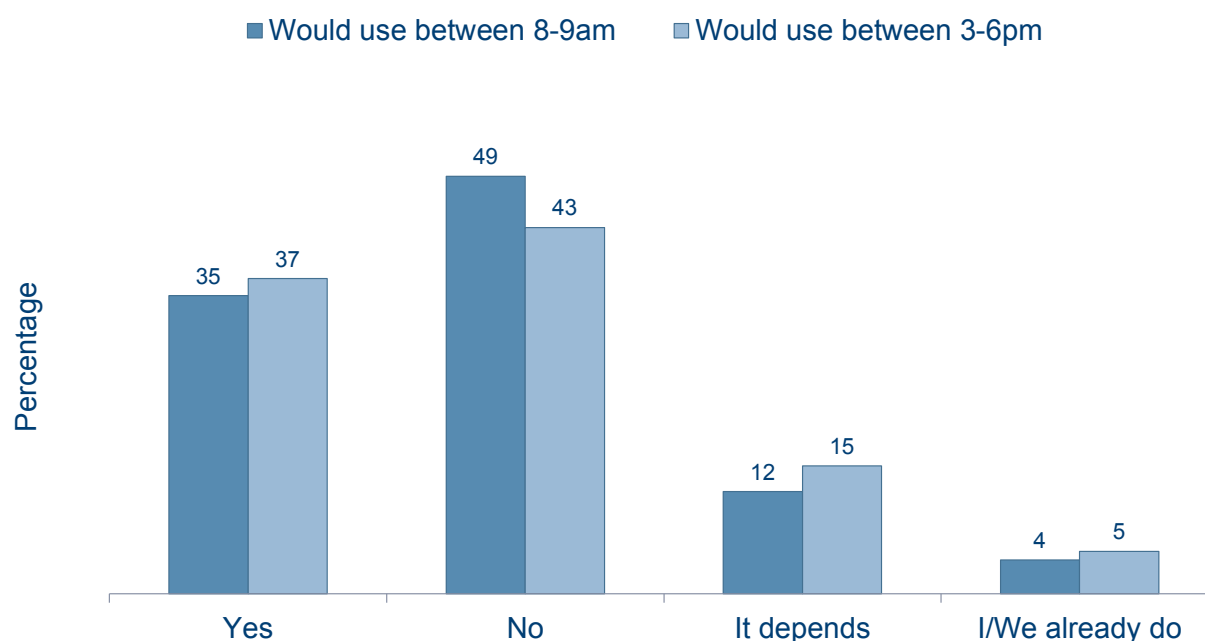
	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Unweighted Base
Extent of influence	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal provider, registered with Ofsted, where parent knew Ofsted rating</i>					
Nursery school	40	36	14	9	(135)
Nursery class	27	41	20	12	(138)
Reception class	28	36	16	21	(290)
Day nursery	32	42	15	11	(282)
Playgroup	24	33	17	26	(111)
Childminder	34	32	17	17	(88)
Breakfast club	34	24	19	24	(74)
After school club	27	32	16	25	(413)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 6.7: Whether main formal provider's Ofsted rating influenced parents' decision to use them

Childcare in a nursery class between 8-9am and 3-6pm

Parents of children aged 2 to 4 were asked whether they would use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infant school or a maintained nursery school between 8-9am or between 3-6pm if it was available. As shown in Figure 6.2 around one in three (35%) parents said they would use morning provision while half (49%) of parents said they would not. Similar to the proportion who said they would use the morning provision, around two in five (37%) parents said they would use evening provision if available and 43 per cent said they would not.



Base: All families where selected child was aged 2 to 4 (8-9am: 1,884, 3-6pm: 1,882)

Source: Table C6.3, C6.4 in Appendix C

Figure 6.2: Whether parent would use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infant school or a maintained nursery school between 8-9am or 3-6pm if it was available

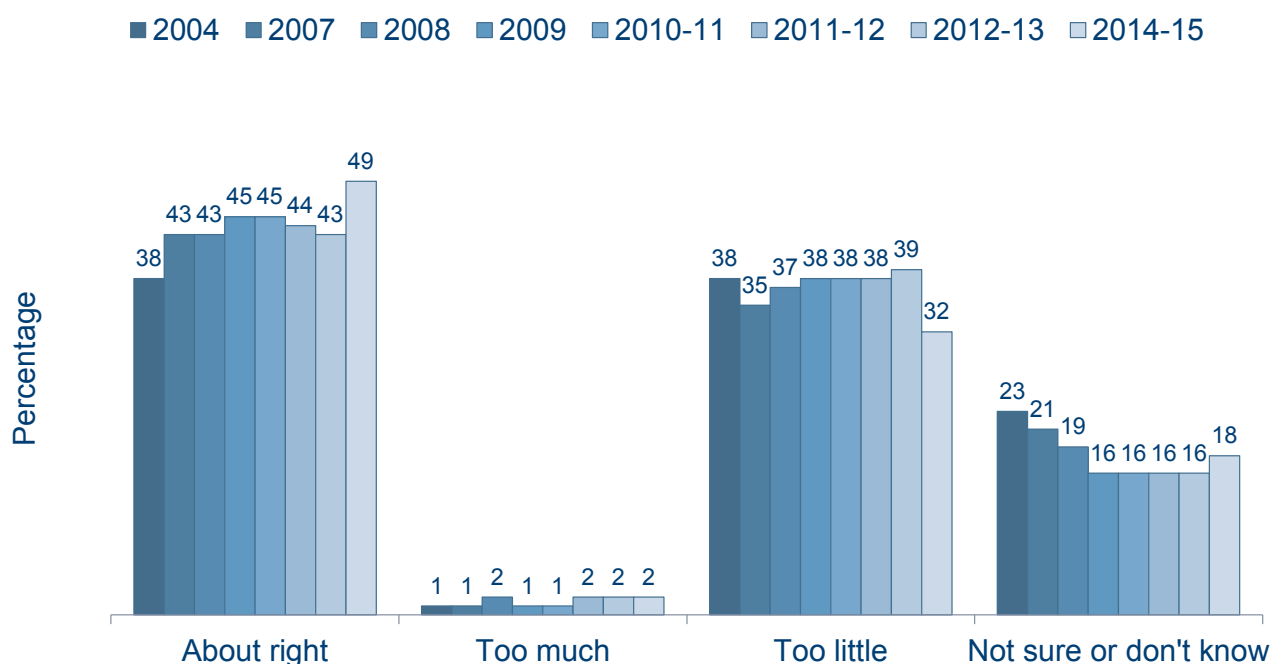
Around two in five (38%) parents who said they would not use the out-of-hours provision said that this was because they did not need childcare during these hours and approaching two in five (17%) said that they or their partner was at home to look after their children (Table 6.7).

	Time(s) parent would not use nursery class			
	8-9am only	3-6pm only	8-9am and 3-6pm	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was aged 2 to 4, where parent would not use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school or a maintained nursery school between 8-9am, or 3-6pm, if available</i>	(246)	(133)	(690)	(1,069)
I do not need childcare	37	34	39	38
Respondent or partner is at home to look after child(ren)	9	19	19	17
I'd rather look after my children myself	6	12	17	14
The hours are not convenient	18	9	4	8
My child(ren) are not at the appropriate age / too young / too old	3	1	8	6
Already have arrangements in place	4	2	6	5
Other family member looks after child(ren)	1	8	5	4
My children's day is busy/long enough as it is	2	8	3	4
It's expensive	3	1	3	2

Table 6.7: Why parent would not use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school or a maintained nursery school between 8am and 9am, or between 3pm and 6pm, if it was available

Levels of information parents receive

Around half (49%) of parents said that the level of information available to them in the local area was about right, 32 per cent felt there was too little information and just two per cent felt there was too much information available to them. The proportion who said the level of information was about right has increased since 2012-13 while the proportion who said that the level of information was too little has fallen (See Figure 6.3).



Base: All families (6,198 in 2014-15)

Source: Table C6.6 in Appendix C

Figure 6.3: Level of information about childcare in local area, 2004 – 2014-15

There was a relationship between parents' satisfaction with the amount of information they were given and the type of childcare used. Parents who had used formal childcare providers were more likely than those who had used informal providers or no providers to say the amount of information they had received was about right (53% compared with 40% and 41% respectively) (see Table C6.7 in Appendix C). As might be expected, those who used informal providers or who had not used providers were more likely than those who had used formal providers to say they were not sure whether they had received enough information (28% each compared with 13%).

There was also an association between parents' satisfaction with the amount of information they were given and the relationship status of the parent. Lone parents were less likely than parents in a couple to say that the amount of information available is

about right (50% compared with 45% respectively). Similarly, lone parents are more likely than coupled parents to say they received too little information (34% compared with 31% respectively).

Parents' satisfaction with the amount of information they received varied by family annual income; 54 per cent of parents with income in the highest income bracket of £45,000 or more said they received the right amount of information compared with 44 per cent of parents with a family income of between £10,000 and £19,000.

Furthermore, how much information parents felt they received was related to the number of children in the family. Parents with two (53%) or three children (52%) were more likely than parents with one child (45%) to feel the amount of information they received was about right.

Analysis (multivariate logistic regression) was used to assess the characteristics that were independently associated with whether or not families had the right level of information about childcare (see Table C6.8 in Appendix C). These were:

- Use of childcare: families who used informal or no childcare were less likely to report that they had the right level of information than families who used formal childcare.
- Family annual income: parents earning between £10,000 and £30,000 per year were less likely than parents earning £45,000 or more per year to report that they had the right level of information.
- Number of children: parents with only one child were less likely than parents with three children or more to say they had the right level of information.
- Ethnicity: families with children from Black African, other White, other Mixed and other Asian backgrounds were more likely to say they didn't know whether they had the right level of information than those with children from White British backgrounds (table not shown).

6.3 Perceptions of provision in the local area

Parents' knowledge of local childcare provision

This section explores parents' perceptions of childcare and early years provision, in relation to availability of places, quality of childcare and the affordability of places in their local area. A minority of parents were not able to answer these questions; 26 per cent were unsure of the availability of childcare places in their area, 28 per cent were unsure of the quality and another 28 per cent were unsure of the affordability of childcare (see Tables C6.13, C6.16 and C6.19 in Appendix C).

As with the views on availability of information, families who used no childcare in the reference week were less likely than those who used formal or informal childcare to be able to answer the questions about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare in their local area.

Regression analysis showed which specific characteristics were independently associated with being unable to form a view about the sufficiency of formal childcare places available locally (see Table C6.9 in Appendix C). These characteristics include:

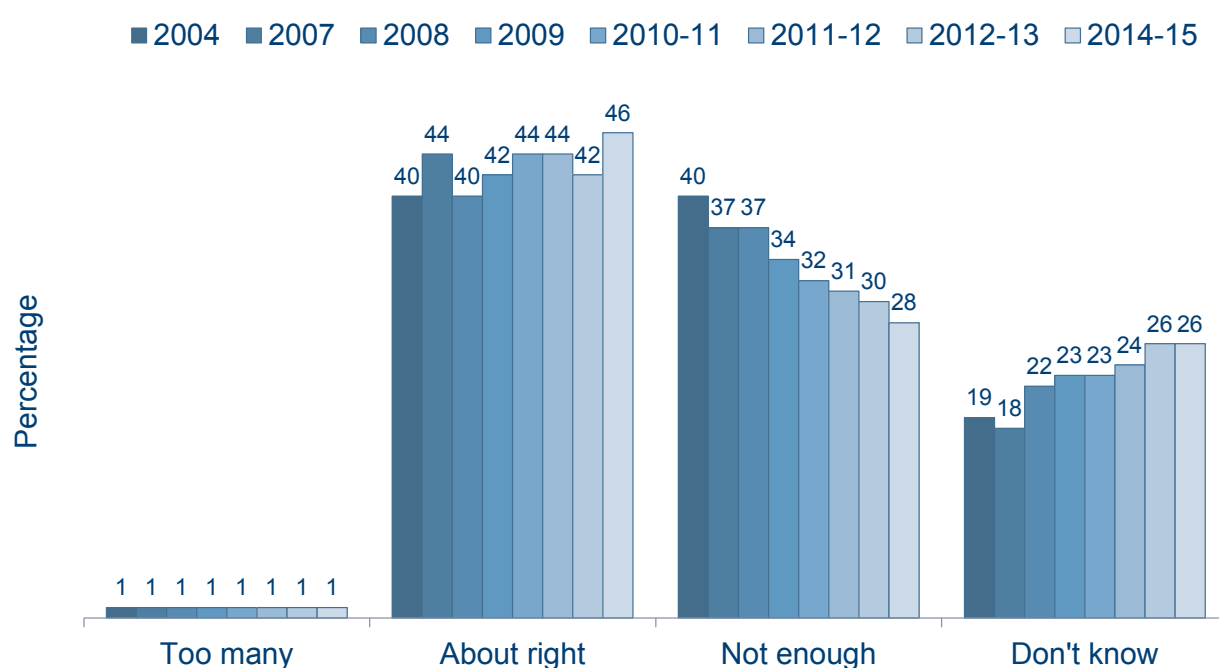
- Use of childcare: those who used formal childcare in the reference week were more likely to have a view than those who used informal or no childcare.
- Number of children: parents with only one child were less likely than parents with three children or more to form a view.
- Age of children: families with only pre-school children, and families with both pre-school children and school-age children were more likely to have a view than families with only school-age children.
- Ethnicity: Children from other white or other Asian backgrounds were less likely to have a view than other ethnicities.
- Income: Those earning less than £10,000 were less likely to have a view than those with higher incomes.

Perceptions of availability

More than two in five (46%) parents believed that the right number of childcare places were provided in their local area, however, almost three in ten (28%) felt there were not enough places (see Figure 6.4), indicating mixed views among parents on the availability of childcare places. Only one per cent of parents said there were too many childcare places and 26 per cent said they did not know.

The proportion of parents who said there were the right number of childcare places in their local area has increased since 2012-13. In 2012-13, 42 per cent of parents in 2012-13 stated that the right amount of childcare places were provided in their local areas, compared with 46 per cent in 2014-15. There was also a decrease in the proportion of parents who said there were not enough childcare places available; from 30 per cent in 2012-13 to 28 per cent in 2014-15.

Parents who did not use any childcare or who only used formal childcare were more likely to suggest that there were insufficient childcare places in their local area (39% and 38%) compared with parents only using informal childcare (32%) (table not shown).



Base: All families (6,198 in 2014-15)

Source: Table C6.13 in Appendix C

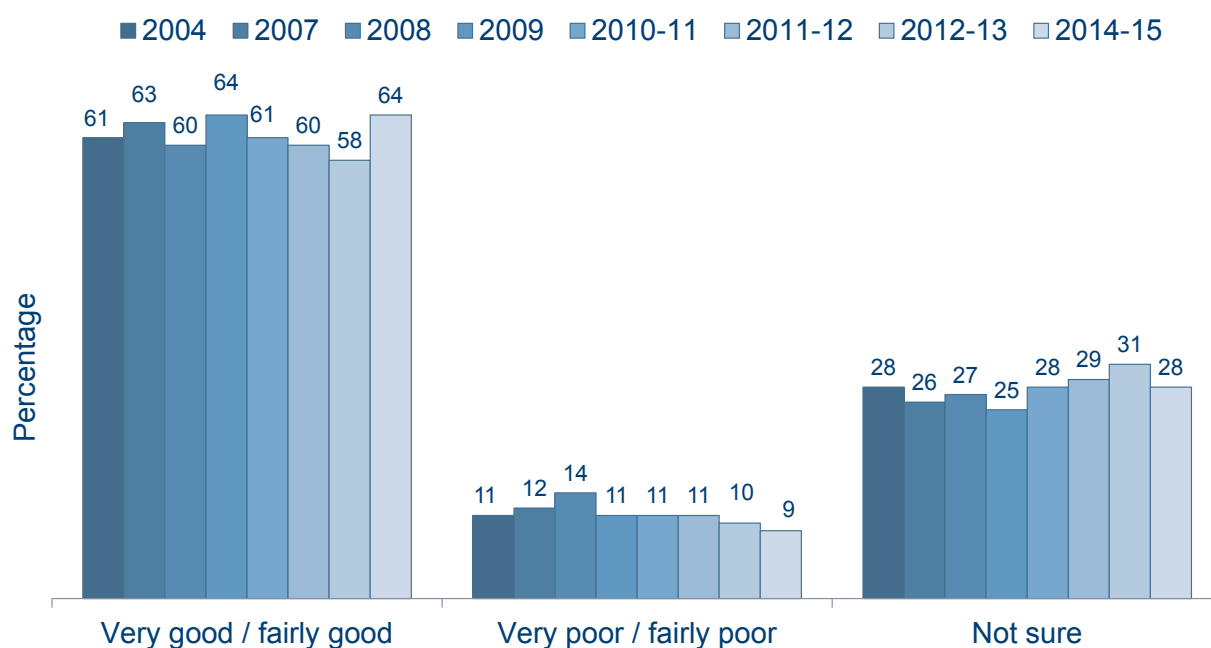
Figure 6.4: Perceptions of availability of local childcare places, 2004 – 2014-15

Regression analysis was conducted to find which characteristics were independently associated with parent's belief that the right amount of childcare places were available locally (see Table C6.10 in Appendix C). The analysis was restricted to families who were able to give an answer with those unable to give a view excluded. The characteristics independently associated with the perception that the right amount of local childcare places were available included:

- Annual income: families with an income under £10,000 per year were more likely than families with a higher income to say there were the right amount of local childcare places available.
- Ethnicity: families in which the selected child was from a Mixed White and Asian, mixed other or a White and Black background were less likely than families where the selected child was from a White British background to say that there was the right amount of local childcare places available.
- Special educational needs: families with children with special educational needs were less likely than families without to feel the right amount of local childcare places were available.

Perceptions of quality

- Overall, 64 per cent of parents thought the quality of childcare in their local area was good, a further nine per cent thought it was poor, and 28 per cent said they were not sure of the quality of local childcare.
- There was a change in parents' perceptions of the quality of childcare in their local area between 2012-13 and 2014-15 (see Figure 6.5). In particular, the proportion of parents who thought the quality of childcare was very good increased from 19 per cent in 2012-13 to 24 per cent in 2014-15. Furthermore, the proportion of parents who were not sure about the quality of childcare in their local area decreased by three percentage points from 31 to 28 per cent.



Base: All families (6,198 in 2014-15)

Source: Table C6.16 in Appendix C

Figure 6.5: Perceptions of quality of local childcare places, 2004 – 2014-15

A multivariate regression, controlling for childcare used and other characteristics, and excluding parents who were unable to give a view, showed that the following characteristics were independently associated with perceptions of the quality of local childcare (see Table C6.11 in Appendix C):

- Family type and work status: lone parents not in work were less likely than working couples to say that there was good quality childcare in their local area.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was from another mixed background were less likely than families with a selected child from a White British background to agree that childcare in their local area was good quality.
- Deprivation level of local area: families living in the 1st quintile (most deprived) area of deprivation and the 2nd quintile were less likely than families living in the least deprived quintile (5th quintile) to say the quality of childcare in the local area was good.

Perceptions of affordability

Two in five (39%) parents thought the affordability of local childcare was either very good or fairly good and one in three (33%) thought that it was very poor or fairly poor.

There have been shifts in parents' opinions since 2012-13 (Figure 6.6). The proportion who felt that the affordability of childcare in their area was very good increased from 5 per cent in 2012-13 to 8 per cent in 2014-15. The proportion of parents who thought affordability was fairly good increased from 27 per cent to 31 per cent. Conversely, the proportion who thought that the affordability of childcare in their area was very poor fell from 18 per cent of parents in 2012-13 to 13 per cent in 2014-15.

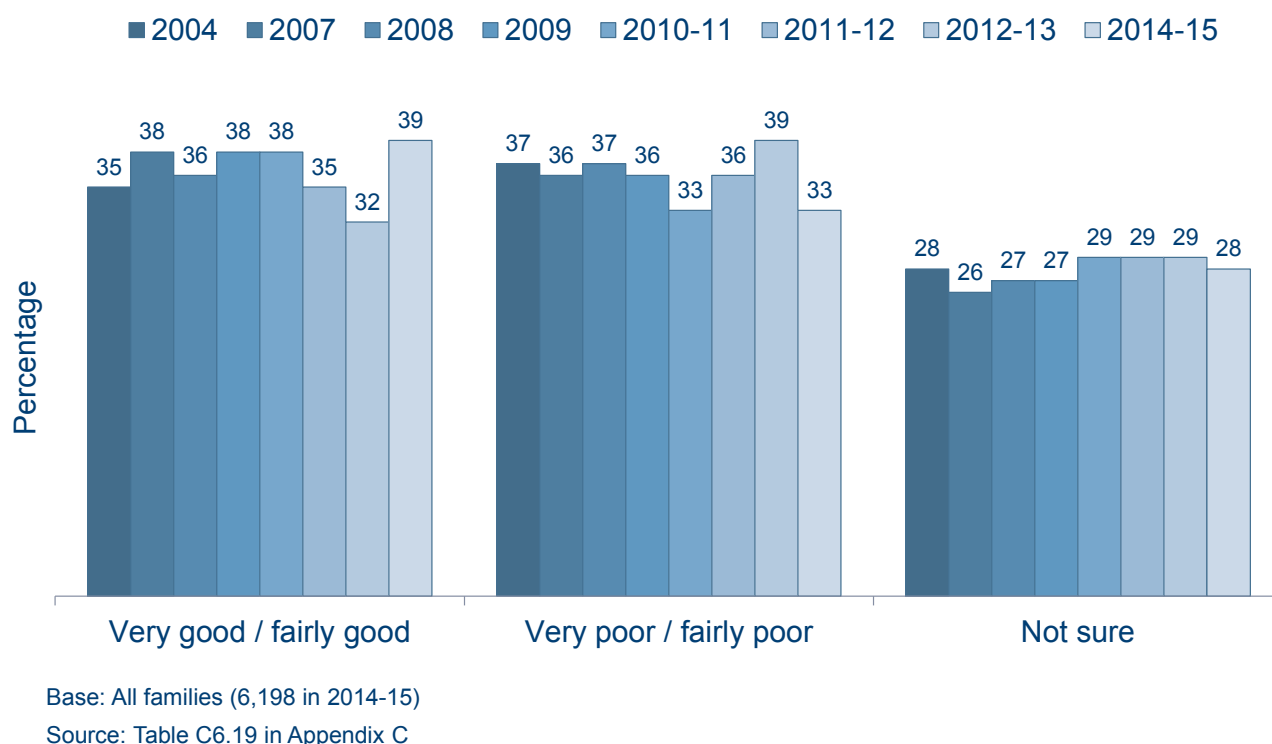


Figure 6.6: Perceptions of affordability of local childcare places, 2004 – 2014-15

Further regression analysis controlling for type of childcare used and other characteristics and excluding parents who were unable to give a view, showed that the following factors were associated with families' perceptions of the affordability of local childcare (see Table C6.12 in Appendix C)⁷⁷:

⁷⁷ It should be noted, if comparing the findings from this regression analysis to the data presented in Table C6.11 in Appendix C, that the regression has treated those who answered 'not sure' to the question on the quality of childcare as missing.

- Use of childcare: parents using informal childcare, or no childcare were less likely to feel that the affordability of local childcare was good than parents who used formal childcare.
- Family type: couple families where only one parent was working were more likely than couple families where both parents were working to feel that the affordability of childcare was good.
- Family annual income: families with an annual household income of £10,000 to £45,000 were less likely to say childcare affordability was good in their local area than families with an income of £45,000 or more.
- Number of children in household: parents with one child or two children were more likely than those with three or more children to say that childcare affordability was good in their local area.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was from a Black Caribbean background were more likely to say that childcare in their area was affordable than those where the selected child was from a White British background.
- Rurality: families who lived in rural areas were more likely than those from urban areas to say that the affordability of childcare in their area was good.

6.4 Demand for childcare outside of school hours

Reasons why families did not use out-of-school clubs

Parents who had not used before- or after-school clubs, despite them being available at the school attended by their child, were asked why they had not used these services.

Table 6.8 lists the reasons given by parents, split by the type of service not used (before- or after-school club).

As in 2012-13, reasons for not using before- and after-school clubs tended to be related to parents' or their child's preference rather than to constraints arising from the childcare provider or elsewhere.

Looking at reasons specifically related to parents' or child's choice, the two most common reasons for not using before-school clubs were parents' preference to look after their child at home during this time and the parent not needing to be away from their child (35% each). The next most commonly cited reason was the child not wanting to go or not liking the before-school club (22%).

In terms of constraints to the use of before-school clubs, the most common issues mentioned were cost (8%), difficulties combining clubs with work (8%). A smaller number of parents cited that before school clubs were not suitable for the child's age (2%), had difficulties with transport (2%) or had found the club to be full (2%).

As with before-school clubs, the main reasons for not using an after-school club tended to be related to the child's or parent's choice rather than external constraints. However, the child seemed to have a greater say in whether or not to attend after-school clubs than before-school clubs: two in five (38%) parents said that they did not use after-school clubs because their child did not want to go or did not like the after-school clubs. Over one in five (23%) said that they preferred to look after their children at home after school and 18 per cent of parents said they had no need to be away from their children.

Again, the most commonly mentioned reason for not using after-school clubs relating to constraints around the nature of care was the cost of after-school clubs (8%).

	Before-school	After-school
Reasons	%	%
<i>Base: Families with child(ren) aged 5 to 14 who did not use a before- or after-school club at school</i>	(2,937)	(1,842)
Reasons related to child or parents' choice		
Child(ren) didn't want to go/ didn't like it	22	38
No need to be away from children	35	18
Prefer to look after children at home	35	23

Attended activities elsewhere	n/a	2
Reasons related to constraints around nature of care		
Too expensive/ cannot afford	8	8
Difficult combining activities with work/ times not suitable	8	5
Not suitable for child's age	2	5
Full/ could not get a place	2	3
Transport difficulties	2	3
Other/ one-off	6	12

Table 6.8: Parents' reasons for not using before/ after-school clubs

Parents who reported that their child's school did not run clubs before-school were asked if the school provided access to any childcare before school, either run by the school itself or by other organisations, and if so whether they were on or off-site. Of those parents, more than three in five (62%) reported that their child's school did not offer any before-school childcare or clubs. Around one in seven (15%) said the school did provide childcare on the school site, one per cent said the school offered childcare off-site and a further two per cent said the school offered childcare, but they were unsure where this was held (table not shown).

The majority (56%) of parents who said their child's school did not provide childcare provision (e.g. clubs or activities) after-school also said that the school did not provide access to other childcare. Around one in six (16%) said the school offered childcare on the school site, one per cent said the school offered the childcare at a different location and a further two per cent said the school offered childcare, but they were not sure where these were held.

6.5 Reasons for not using any childcare in the last year

This section examines the reasons why parents had not used any childcare in the last year and the availability and options for using informal childcare among this group of parents. Factors that would facilitate the use of formal childcare among non-users are also explored in this section.

Over one in ten (11%) parents reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education in the past year (table not shown). Similar to patterns outlined in the previous section, parental preferences and choice were the key factors in deciding whether or not to use childcare, while barriers coming from childcare providers or other constraints were less common. Around two thirds (65%) of parents said they preferred to look after their children themselves rather than to use childcare (see Table 6.9). Other reasons related to parental choice included the children being old enough to look after themselves (21%) and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (18%).

Parents with pre-school children only (73%), or with pre- and school-age children (80%), were more likely to say they would rather look after their child(ren) themselves than parents with only school age children (61%).

The most commonly cited barrier to using childcare, related to constraints, was the cost of childcare, which was mentioned by 12 per cent of all parents who did not use childcare in the last year. Parents with pre-school only (20%) or pre-school and school-age children (16%) were more likely to say that they could not afford childcare than those with school-age children only (10%).

Reasons	Age of children			All
	Pre-school only	Pre- and school-age	School-age only	
<i>Base: Families who had not used any childcare in the last year</i>	(99)	(59)	(421)	(579)
Choices				
I would rather look after my child(ren) myself	73	80	61	65
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	5	8	27	21
I rarely need to be away from my child(ren)	21	12	17	18
No need to use childcare	4	5	1	2
My child(ren) are too young	6	1	1	2
My/ my partner's work hours or conditions fit around child(ren)	0	0	2	1
Constraints				
I cannot afford childcare	20	16	10	12
My child(ren) need special care	0	2	3	3
There are no childcare providers that I could trust	1	3	3	3
I cannot find a childcare place as local providers are full	1	0	2	2
The quality of childcare is not good enough	*	0	1	1
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	0	0	*
I have had a bad experience of using childcare in the past	0	0	*	*

Table 6.9: Reasons for not using childcare in the last year, by age of children

In order to assess whether not using childcare was due to choice, rather than constraints, parents who had not used childcare in the last year were asked if any informal childcare providers would be available to care for their children. Parents were asked about the availability of informal childcare as a one-off and on a regular basis (see Table 6.10).

Overall, the majority (71%) of parents said they were able to find informal childcare as a one-off compared with less than half (46%) of parents who said they were able to find informal childcare on a regular basis. The availability of regular informal childcare differed by region. Parents living in Yorkshire and the Humber (73%), London (67%), South West (65%) and East of England (62%) were less likely to be able to access informal childcare on a regular basis, than those in other regions (see Table C6.20 in Appendix C). There was no variation between rural and urban areas in the proportion of parents who did not have access to regular informal childcare.

Where informal care was available, for both one-offs and regular care, it was most likely to be from grandparents – 35% of those who had not used childcare in the last year said grandparents would be available as a one off; 20% said grandparents would be available for regular childcare. Older siblings, other relatives and friends and neighbours were

more likely to be available for one off childcare rather than for regular childcare (see Table 6.10).

	... as one-off	... for regular childcare
Informal childcare available...	%	%
<i>Base: Families who had not used any childcare in the last year</i>	(450)	(449)
Grandparents	35	20
Older sibling	20	8
Another relative	20	8
Friend/neighbour	18	8
Ex-partner	9	5
None	29	56

Table 6.10: Availability of informal childcare

Parents who had not used any formal childcare in the last year were asked what changes were needed for them to decide to use formal childcare (see Table 6.11). The majority (78%) of parents stated they did not need to use formal childcare. However, a quarter (22%) of parents listed a range of factors which they thought would facilitate them using formal childcare. Affordability of childcare was mentioned most frequently, by one in ten parents (10%).

Change needed to start using formal childcare	%
<i>Base: Families who had not used any formal childcare in the last year</i>	<i>(656)</i>
More affordable childcare	10
More flexibility about when care was available	5
More childcare available in school holidays	5
Childcare provider closer to where I live	3
More information about formal childcare available	3
Higher quality childcare	3
Childcare provider closer to where I work	1
Other	4
None (I don't need to use childcare)	78

Table 6.11: Changes that would facilitate formal childcare use

6.6 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0 to 2 years

This section explores the reasons why parents of children aged 0 to 2 had not used nursery education in the reference week. Nursery education includes the following formal childcare providers: nursery school, nursery class attached to a primary or infant school, reception class, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs and other nursery education provider.

Two-thirds (67%) of children aged between 0 and 2 had not received nursery education during the reference week (table not shown). Of these, three in five (59%) had used no childcare at all and 30 per cent had received informal childcare only. Seven per cent had only received childcare from other formal providers and four per cent had received childcare from both informal and formal providers (table not shown).

Parents most commonly said that their child did not use nursery education because their child was too young (58%) (see Table 6.12). Nearly three in ten (27%) cited 'personal preference for their child not using nursery education, while costs were a barrier for one-fifth of parents (19%). Problems with availability were mentioned by just seven per cent of parents asked this question.

	Couple families			Lone parents		
	Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families where selected child aged 0 to 2 and not using nursery education</i>	(197)	(256)	(31)	(41)	(111)	(636)
Child too young	50	60	[83]	[54]	60	58
Personal preference	25	33	[28]	[16]	22	27
Cost problems	24	16	[10]	[16]	20	19
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	10	5	[3]	[8]	10	7
Other reason	3	1	[0]	[2]	2	2

Table 6.12: Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0 to 2, by family type and work status

Parents' reasons related to personal preference for not using nursery education in the reference week varied by the type of childcare used in the reference week. Over half (58%) said their child was too young (see Table 6.13). Just over one in four (27%) parents who did not use nursery education in the reference week said that they did so out of personal preference. Those who had used a formal provider (other than nursery education) in the reference week, however, were less likely to say they did so out of personal preference (11%) than those that used no childcare (31%) or informal providers (28%). But were more likely than other groups to state that either their child was too young (62%) or that there were availability problems in their area (11%). A greater proportion of those citing 'cost problems' were parents using informal providers only.

	Childcare used by selected child in reference week			
	Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No childcare used	All
<i>Base: Families where selected child aged 0 to 2 and not using nursery education</i>	(75)	(390)	(171)	(636)
Child too young	62	58	56	58
Personal preference	11	28	31	27
Cost problems	10	21	17	19
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	11	6	9	7
Other reason	7	1	2	2

Table 6.13: Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0 to 2, by childcare use

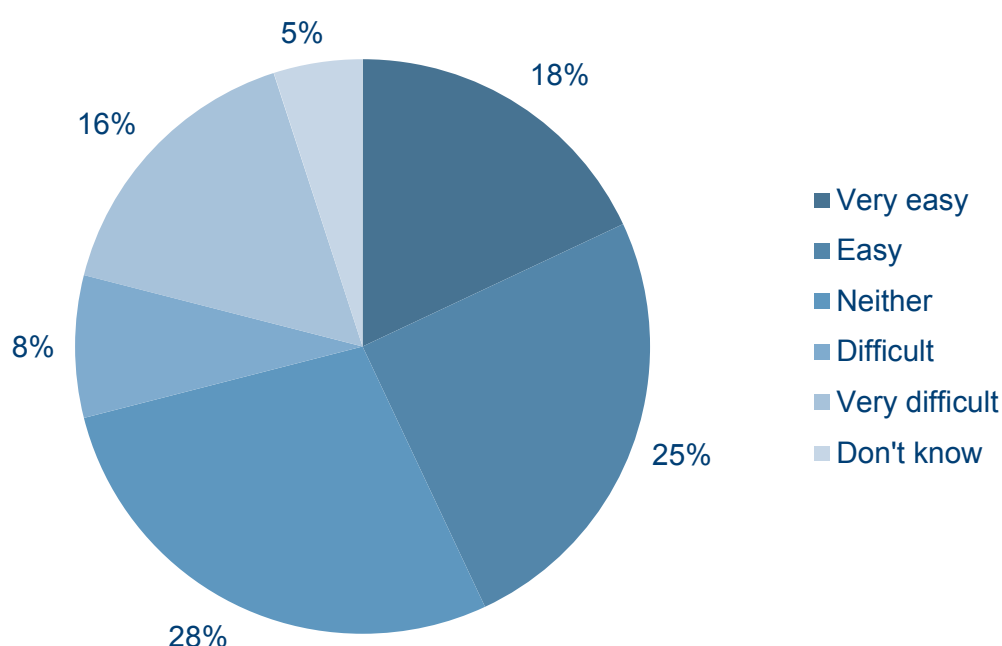
6.7 Parents of disabled children

Parents whose selected child had an illness or disability were asked about their perceptions on the availability of childcare in their local area that could cater for their child's needs. Six per cent of selected children had a long-standing health condition or disability which affected their daily life (3% to a great extent and 2% to a small extent; table not shown).

Among children with an illness or disability, the likelihood of using childcare increased with the severity of their condition. Children with an illness or disability which did not disrupt their daily life at all (78%), children whose disability affected their daily life to a small extent (71%) and those who did not have an illness or disability (70%) were more likely to use any type of childcare than children whose illness or disability disrupted their daily life to a great extent (55%) (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C).

Around two in five (43%) parents found that it was easy or very easy to travel to their nearest suitable provider who could accommodate their child's needs (see Table C6.35 in Appendix C). However, fewer parents were satisfied with other aspects of local childcare. Just one in three (33%) believed there were childcare providers in their local area that could cater for their child's illness or disability (there was no significant change from 2012-13, when this figure was 41%). Three in ten (30%) parents said that providers were available at times to fit around their other daily commitments, while slightly fewer (25%) found it easy to find out about providers that could cater for their child's disability.

It is unclear whether the above perceptions among parents with an ill or disabled child are a reflection of a problem with availability or a problem with awareness of the childcare available locally. Indeed, a noteworthy proportion of parents (between 28 and 35 per cent) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements and between three and six per cent did not know how to answer these questions. This could indicate that their awareness of childcare provision in their area is low. Furthermore, two in five (40%) parents of ill or disabled children disagreed or strongly disagree that it was easy to find out about providers in their area which cater to their children's needs. This also suggests that a high proportion of parents had insufficient knowledge of the childcare available to them or it may reflect a lack of appropriate childcare.

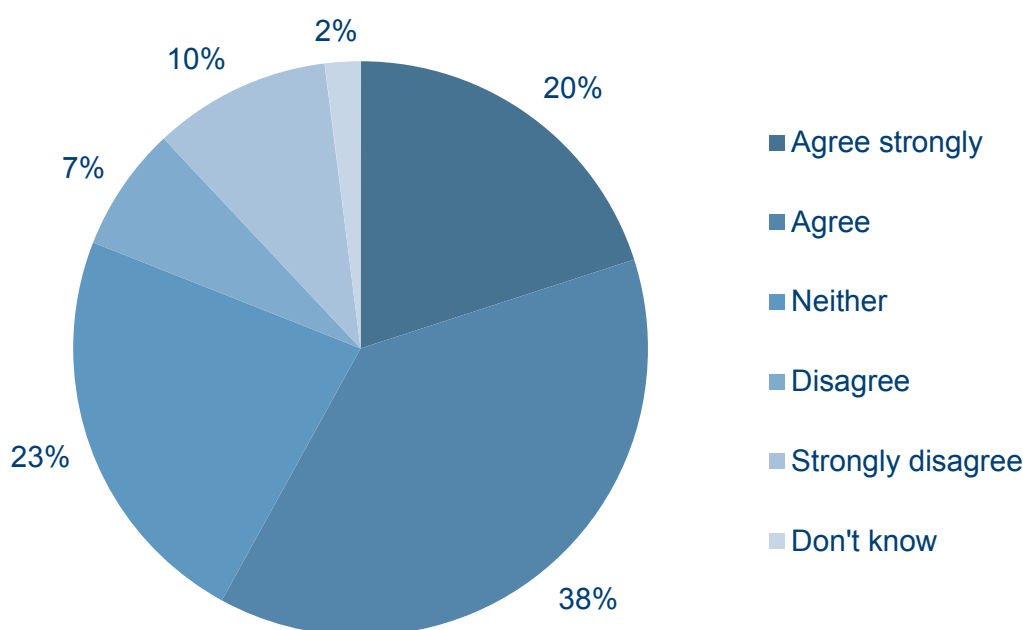


Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life (282)

Source: Table 6.35 in Appendix C

Figure 6.7: Views on ease of travelling to nearest provision able to accommodate children with an illness/ disability

Parents of children with an illness or disability who used a formal provider in the reference week were also asked if they agreed or disagreed that the staff at the formal provider were trained in how to deal with their child's condition. Around three in five (58%) parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff were sufficiently trained to deal with their child's health condition (see Figure 6.8).



Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life and used formal care in reference week (126)

Source: Table 6.36 in Appendix C

Figure 6.8: Parents' views on whether staff at childcare providers caring for children with illness/ disability are trained in dealing with child(ren)'s condition

6.8 Perceptions of flexibility

Generally, parents were positive about the availability of flexible childcare, with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs (see Figure 6.9). Similarly, around half (51%) of parents agreed they were able to find term-time childcare that fitted in with their or their partner's working hours.

Parents' ability to fit childcare around their work varied by family income and region. More than half (52%) of families with an annual income of between £30,000 and £45,000, and 59 per cent of families with an annual income of £45,000 or more were able to find term-time childcare that fitted with their or their partner's working hours, compared with between 39 and 47 per cent of parents in the lower income brackets (see Table C6.27 in Appendix C). Parents who lived in the North West were the most likely to rate positively this aspect of their local childcare while parents in London were the least likely (60% and 36% respectively agreed or strongly agreed with the statement) (see Table C6.28 in Appendix C).

No difference was recorded between working and non-working families in the proportion of parents stating that they had a problem with finding flexible childcare (see Table

C6.275 in Appendix C). Among families with at least one working parent there were differences; parents who worked atypical hours were more likely to agree or strongly agree than those who did not work atypical hours (see Table C6.27 in Appendix C).

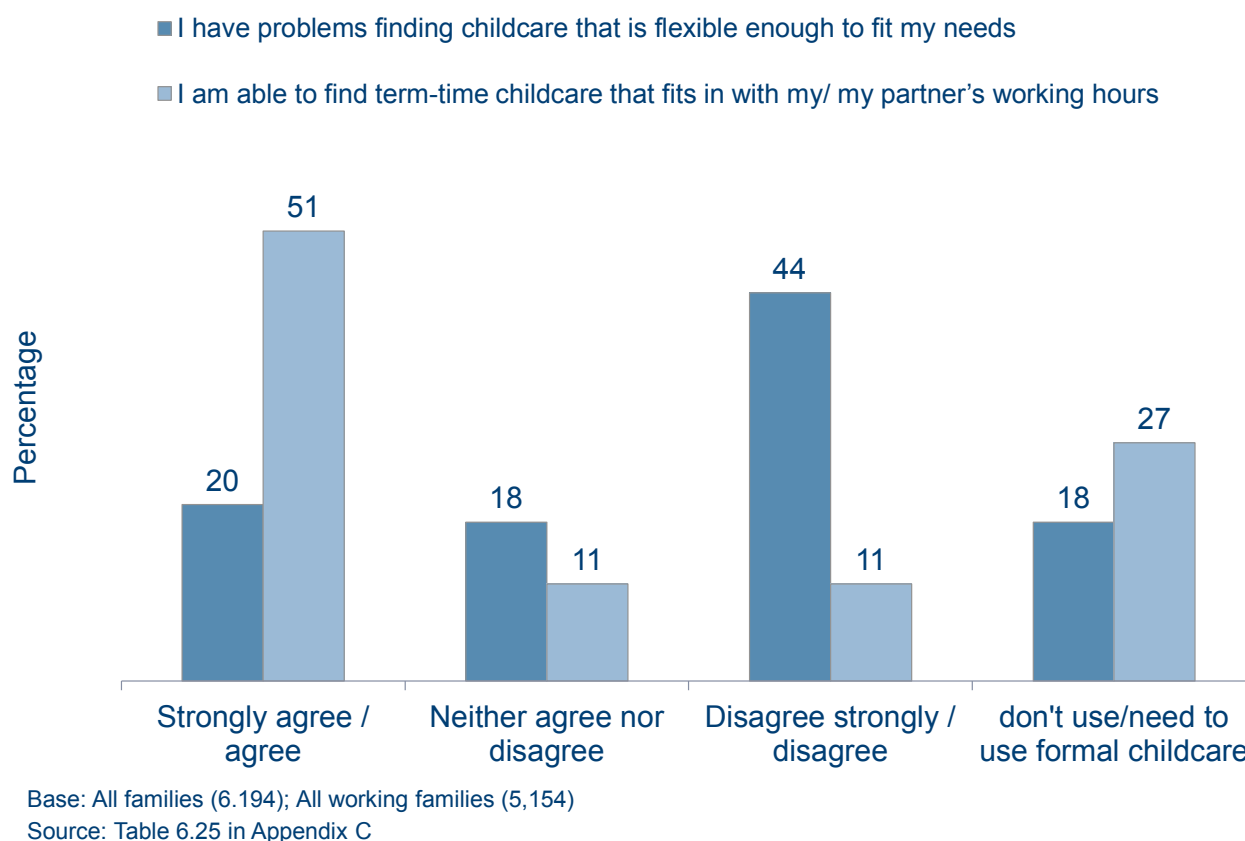


Figure 6.9: The extent to which parents perceive their childcare arrangements as flexible

Analysis (multivariate logistic regression, excluding parents unable to give a view and controlling for childcare used and other characteristics) showed that the following variables were associated with parents' perceptions of the availability of flexible childcare (see Table C6.22 in Appendix C):

- **Ethnicity:** families where the selected child was from an Indian, Black Caribbean or Black African background were more likely to have problems finding flexible childcare than parents with children from White British backgrounds.
- **Special educational needs:** families with children with special educational needs were more likely than families without to say they had problems finding flexible childcare.
- **Family type:** Couple families in which one parent is working are less likely than couple families in which both are working to have problems finding flexible childcare.

- Child age: Households with only pre-school children were more likely than households with only school-age children to have problems finding flexible childcare.

Parents were asked which times of the year they would like childcare provision to be improved in order to meet their needs. Around two in three (65%) parents said they would like improved provision during the summer holidays. Other key times identified for improvement included half-term holidays (37%), weekdays in term time (34%), Easter holidays (34%) and Christmas holidays (30%) (see Table 6.14). Demand for improvements in provision was lowest for weekends during term time (18%) and outside of normal working hours (26%).

Families' requirements for improved childcare in the summer holidays, term time weekends and outside of normal working hours varied by family income. Families with an annual income between £20,000 and £30,000 were most likely to require improved childcare in the summer holidays (69%) followed closely by families with an income of £10,000 to £20,000 (68%). Families with lower incomes were more likely than those with higher incomes to say that provision of childcare during term time weekends should be improved; 23 per cent of families with an income of less than £10,000 reported this, compared with 13 per cent of those with an income of £45,000 or more. In contrast, improved provision outside of normal working hours was in most demand among families with higher incomes; 30 per cent of families with an income of £45,000 or more felt this was required compared with 22 per cent of those with an income of less than £10,000.

Parents' requirements for improved childcare provision during the Easter holidays and Christmas holidays varied by region. Families in the East Midlands (40%) and West Midlands (39%) were more likely than families in the North East (27%) and East of England (26%) to want improved provision during the Easter holidays. Similarly, families in the East Midlands (34%) and West Midlands (34%) were most likely to require improved provision during the Christmas holidays, with families in the North East (23%) and East of England (22%) least likely to mention this (see Table C6.30 in Appendix C).

Requirements for improved childcare did not vary between families living in rural areas and urban areas.

	Family annual income					All
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - £29,999	£30,000 - 44,999	£45,000 or more	
Time	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families saying that childcare provision could be improved</i>	(238)	(902)	(783)	(730)	(1,022)	(3,675)
Summer holidays	66	68	69	63	62	65
Easter holidays	34	35	34	32	35	34
Christmas holidays	33	34	28	29	28	30
Half-term holidays	43	39	38	33	37	37
Term time – weekdays	39	33	32	33	33	34
Term time – weekends	23	21	19	18	13	18
Outside of normal working hours i.e. 8am to 6pm	22	23	23	26	30	26

Table 6.14: Times where parents would like childcare provision improving in order to meet their needs

Parents were also asked what changes would make childcare provision more suited to their needs. More affordable childcare was the most commonly mentioned change (34%), followed by better provision of childcare during the school holidays (19%), more information about what is available (16%) and longer opening hours (16%) (see Table 6.15). Other changes mentioned by at least ten per cent of parents include more childcare places in general (12%) and more flexibility about when childcare is available (12%). However, it is worth noting that just under two in five parents (39%) did not require any changes, suggesting that a large proportion of parents were either happy with the current childcare provision or felt unable to comment.

The type of improvements that parents required varied with family income. Families with incomes of between £20,000 and £45,000 (40%) were more likely than those with incomes in the highest bracket of £45,000 or more (32%), or the lowest brackets of up to £10,000 (31%) or £11,000 - £20,000 (34%), to require more affordable childcare. Those in the highest income bracket, however, were the most likely to require more childcare availability during the school holidays (22%), more flexibility about when childcare is available (16%) and longer opening hours (21%).

The improvements to childcare that parents required also varied across the country. Those in London were more likely than parents in any other region to say that more childcare places in general were needed (17%) and that the quality of childcare needed improving (16%). Parents in London were more positive about the affordability of childcare however; only a third (34%) said this needed improving compared with 40 per cent of parents in the North West, 39 per cent in the West Midlands and 38 per cent in the South West (see Table C6.26).

There were no differences between parents living in rural or urban areas with respect to changes needed to childcare provision.

	Family annual income					Rurality		
	Up to £9,999	£10,999 - £19,999	£20,000 - £29,999	£30,000 - £44,999	£45,000 or more	Rural	Urban	
Change	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(429)	(1,422)	(1,211)	(1,088)	(1,608)	(720)	(5,478)	(6,198)
More affordable childcare	31	34	40	40	32	26	36	34
More childcare available during school holidays	14	18	21	20	22	21	19	19
More information about what is available	14	17	17	18	14	13	16	16
Longer opening hours	11	13	16	16	21	14	16	16
More flexibility about when childcare is available	8	10	12	14	16	11	12	12
More childcare places – general	12	11	13	11	11	7	12	12
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	9	8	9	11	10	9	9	9
Higher quality childcare	10	9	9	7	9	5	9	9
More convenient/accessible locations	6	8	8	7	7	7	8	7
More childcare available during term time	6	7	7	8	7	7	7	7
Making childcare available closer to where I live	6	8	8	7	6	8	7	7
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	5	5	5	4	2	4	4	4
Making childcare available closer to where I work	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2
Other	3	2	4	4	3	3	3	3
Nothing	47	39	35	35	38	41	39	39

Table 6.15: Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs

When asked whether there were types of formal childcare that they would like to use or make more use of, three in five (59%) parents said they were happy with their current use of formal childcare (see Table 6.15). However, around two in five (41%) stated that they would like to make more use of formal childcare; one in five (20%) said they would like to make more use of after-school clubs, one in six (16%) said they would like to make more use of holiday clubs or schemes and 7 per cent said they would like to make more use of breakfast clubs. Relatively small proportions of parents mentioned other providers.

The providers which parents wanted to make more use of varied with income. Parents with lower incomes were more likely than those with higher incomes to say that they would like to use more holiday clubs or schemes (20% of parents with a household income of £10,000 to £20,000 compared with 13% of those with an income of £45,000 or higher). Families with higher incomes were more likely than those with lower incomes to say that they would like to use more nannies or au pairs. Parents with higher incomes were the most likely to say they were happy with their current arrangements and did not wish to use any additional providers (63% of those with a household income of £45,000 or more compared with 59% overall).

There was also regional variation in the providers parents wished to use (see Table C6.30 in Appendix C). The regions in which parents were most likely to report wishing to use additional forms of childcare included London, the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber. The providers that parents wished to use did not vary with rurality (see Table C6.31 in Appendix C).

	Family annual income					Rurality		
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - 29,999	£30,000 - £44,999	£45,000 or more	Rural	Urban	All
Formal childcare provider	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(429)	(1,422)	(1,211)	(1,088)	(1,608)	(720)	(5,478)	(6,198)
After-school club and activity	20	21	23	20	18	17	20	20
Holiday club/scheme	16	20	19	15	13	13	16	16
Breakfast club	6	6	7	7	7	6	7	7
Playgroup or pre-school	6	5	6	4	3	3	5	4
Nursery school	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	3
Day nursery	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
Childminder	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
Baby-sitter who come to home	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	1	1	1	*	*	*	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	*	1	1	1	*	*	1	1
Nanny or au pair	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other childcare provider	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Other nursery education provider	*	0	*	0	*	0	*	0
None – happy with current arrangements	58	57	54	57	63	63	58	59

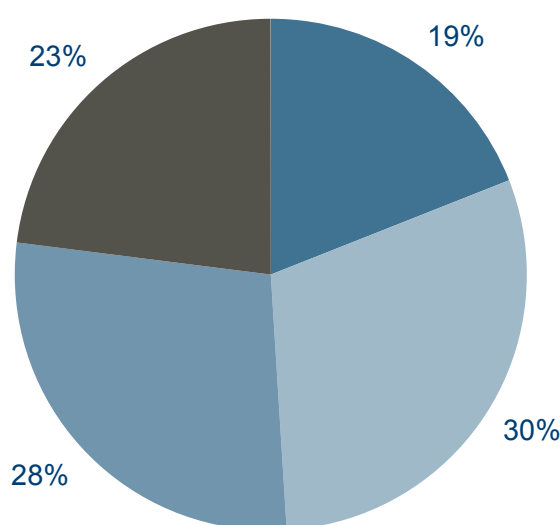
Table 6.16: Types of formal childcare provision that parents wanted to use/ use more of

6.9 Tax-Free Childcare

New questions were asked about parents' awareness of and likelihood of applying for the new Tax-Free Childcare scheme when it becomes available (currently scheduled to start in 2017 – see section 1.2 for further details).

Parents were given a short description of the Tax-Free Childcare offer. Following this, around one in five (18%) parents reported being aware of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme when asked (table not shown). Parents were evenly split between those saying they would probably or definitely apply for Tax-Free Childcare (49%) and those saying they would probably or definitely not (51%). Around one in five (19%) parents said they would definitely apply for Tax-Free Childcare while one in four (23%) said that they would definitely not (see Figure 6.10).

■ Yes - definitely ■ Yes - probably ■ No - probably not ■ No - definitely not



Base: All families (5,488)

Source: Table C6.34 in Appendix C

Figure 6.10: Likelihood of applying for Tax-Free Childcare when available

Parents who said that they would probably or definitely not apply for Tax-Free Childcare were asked what influenced their answer (see Table 6.17). The most frequently mentioned reasons were practical; either that the parent would not apply for Tax-Free Childcare because they have alternative support, such as employer-supported childcare (30%), did not use formal childcare (28%), that they or their partner were not working

(10%), that they thought they wouldn't be eligible (8%) or they thought they earned too much (7%).

Reasons	%
<i>Base: Families who definitely/probably won't apply for Tax-Free Childcare</i>	<i>(2,892)</i>
I claim tax credits/Universal Credit/Employer-Supported Childcare/childcare vouchers	30
I don't use formal childcare	28
I am/my partner is not working	10
I wouldn't be eligible (reason not specified)	8
I think my income is too high	7
My child/ren will be too old/ won't be eligible by the time it's introduced	6
I don't think I earn enough	5
I want to be able to choose my childcare provider/ this will limit my choice of provider	4
I don't think the payments are worth my while/too much hassle	3
I don't think it will be easy to confirm my eligibility each quarter	2
I don't trust the scheme	2
I do not need childcare	1
I don't think I can use an online childcare account	1
It doesn't cover enough / is still expensive	*

Table 6.17: Reasons parents definitely/probably won't apply for Tax-Free Childcare

6.10 Summary

The 2014-15 survey has shown an increase in the proportion of parents who are satisfied with the level of information about childcare that is available to them (from 43% in 2014-15 from 49% in 2014). Almost seven in ten (69%) parents accessed at least one source of information about childcare in the last year. Parents were most likely to receive information about childcare via word of mouth (41%) for example from friends or relatives or at their child(ren)'s school (33%).

Access to sources of information about childcare varied depending on the type of childcare used; parents who used formal childcare were more likely to access information than parents who only used informal childcare or who did not use childcare at all.

The proportion of parents who had used of Family Information Services has decreased since 2012-13, with around one in ten (11%) parents having used the service (12% in 2012-13). The proportion of parents who are aware of the service has also fallen by two percentage points from 19% in 2012 to 17% in 2014-15.

Childminder agencies, which were introduced in 2014, were reportedly used by six per cent of those parents who used a childminder. Three in five (62%) of those who did not use a childminder agency to hire their childminder were unaware of childminder agencies.

The proportion of parents who knew their childcare provider's Ofsted rating varied by type of provider, with parents most likely to know the ratings of pre-school providers such as nursery schools and day nurseries. The influence that the rating had on parents'

decision to use the provider followed a similar pattern, with greatest impact on decisions to use nursery schools and day nurseries.

Over two in five (46%) parents said that the right amount of childcare places were provided in their local area; however, three in ten (28%) said there were not enough places. A higher proportion (64%) of parents said the quality of childcare in their local area was good, with only nine per cent of parents saying it was poor. Almost two in five (39%) parents said that affordability of childcare in their area was good; although 33 per cent perceived the affordability of childcare to be poor. Parents were positive about the availability of flexible childcare, with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs (see Figure 6.9). Similarly, around half (51%) of parents agreed they were able to find term time childcare that fitted in with their or their partner's working hours. A higher proportion of parents were satisfied with the quality of childcare than in 2012-13 (64%, up from 58% in 2012-13); likewise, views on availability have also improved (46% felt there were the 'right amount' of places, up from 42%).

Generally, parents were positive about childcare being flexible enough to meet their needs with only one in five (20%) parents reporting problems.

Around one in three (35%) parents of children aged 2 to 4 said that they would use childcare provided by a nursery class or infant school between 8am and 9am if it were available. A similar proportion (37%) said that they would use evening provision between 3pm and 6pm if it were available.

Over one in ten (11%) parents reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education in the past year. Two in three (65%) of these parents said that this was because they would rather look after their children themselves. The cost of childcare (12%) was cited by fewer parents. Looking specifically at parents of children aged 0 to 2, the most common reason for not using nursery education in the reference week was that parents felt that their child was too young (58%).

Two in five (43%) parents of children with a disability said they found it easy to travel to the nearest childcare provider who could accommodate their child's condition. However, fewer parents agreed that there are providers in their area who can cater for their child's condition (33%) or that the hours available fitted with their commitments (30%). Of those who used a provider, around three in five (58%) said that staff were trained in how to deal with their child's condition.

The majority (71%) of parents who did not use childcare were confident they could find an informal provider as a one-off if needed. The likelihood of finding informal providers for regular childcare was lower, with less than half (46%) of parents who had not used childcare in the last year stating that they would not be able to get any informal childcare on a regular basis. Grandparents were most commonly cited as being available for both regular childcare and as a one-off.

Parents were asked which times of the year they would like childcare provision to be improved in order to meet their needs. Parents were most likely to say they would like improved provision during the summer holidays (65%), followed by the half-term holidays (37%) and the Easter holidays (34%).

Making childcare more affordable (34%), followed by more childcare being available during the school holidays (19%), receiving more information about what childcare is available (16%) and longer provider opening hours (16%) were the most common changes to childcare that parents said would suit their needs better.

When asked whether there were types of formal childcare that they would like to use or use more, 59 per cent of parents said they were happy with their current use of formal childcare. However, one in five stated after-school clubs or activities (20%) or holiday clubs or schemes (16%) would be the formal providers they would like to use or use more of in the future.

New questions were added to the survey about parent's likelihood of applying for the new Tax-Free Childcare scheme when it becomes available from 2017. Around one in five (18%) parents reported being aware of the scheme. Around half of parents (49%) said they would probably or definitely apply and a similar proportion said they probably or definitely would not. Among those who would not apply, the most frequently given reasons were that they have alternative support, such as employer-supported childcare (30%), did not use formal childcare (28%), that they or their partner were not working (10%), that they thought they wouldn't be eligible (8%) or they thought they earned too much (7%).

7. Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

Key findings:

- The survey found that when choosing a formal childcare provider parents had taken into account a range of factors. The two most common factors, for both pre-school and school-age children, were the provider's reputation (62%) and convenience (59%). Compared with the last survey in 2012-13, fewer parents said they chose their formal provider because there were no other options available to them (1%), suggesting that most parents were able to choose from a range of providers.
- The great majority of parents reported that their main formal childcare provider encouraged their child to develop a range of academic and social skills. The most commonly encouraged academic skills among pre-school children were enjoying books and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes. Playing with other children, and good behaviour, were the most commonly encouraged social skills by both pre-school providers (97% and 94% respectively) and school-age providers (76% and 75% respectively).
- Most parents (66%) of children aged 2 to 5 felt they spent enough time with their children on learning and play activities; however, a third of parents said they would like to do more with their children.
- Informal social networks, such as friends or relatives (61%) and other parents (42%), were more likely to be used as sources of information for parents about learning and play activities than were official sources, such as FIS (9%), local authorities (7%) or other national organisations (1%).
- Awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage was high; nearly four in five (78%) of parents with children aged 2 to 5 said they had heard of the framework.

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the views of parents on their choices of formal childcare and early years provision, and considers the role of providers and parents in the child's learning and development.

The chapter begins with parents' main considerations when choosing their main formal childcare and early years provider. It then moves on to explore what parents think are the important factors for high quality childcare (section 7.3), and their preferred learning approach for provision for pre-school children, which are new questions in the 2014-15 survey. The chapter also examines specific academic and social skills fostered by these providers (section 7.4). Later the chapter explores a range of early home learning activities parents engage in, as well as who parents usually turn to for ideas and information about learning and play activities (section 7.5).

Finally, this chapter explores parents' awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) (section 7.6). For information on EYFS, see section 1.2.

All analyses in this chapter draw on data for the selected child and is broken-down by the age of the child: pre-school (aged 0 to 4), and school-age (aged 5 to 14). This is because these two groups have different childcare and educational needs. Formal childcare providers (registered organisations or individuals, rather than relatives and friends) are the focus of this chapter. Section 7.4 makes reference to formal group providers (childcare provided to a large group of children rather than an individual child, for example through a nursery school, nursery class or playgroup).

Where possible, findings are compared with the 2012-13 survey to demonstrate changes over time.

7.2 Reasons for choosing formal childcare providers

This section explores the common reasons among parents for choosing formal childcare providers.⁷⁸ We first look at the reasons among parents of pre-school children, before turning to the reasons among parents of school-age children. The results are also analysed by the age of the child, the type of provider used, and family type and work status.

Pre-school children

Among parents of pre-school children the provider's reputation (62%) was the most common reason for choosing a formal childcare provider, closely followed by convenience (59%) (see Table 7.1). Around half of parents said they chose the provider because of the care given (53%) or because they wanted their child to mix with other children (52%). Fewer parents mentioned their child's education (45%) or trust (37%) as the reasons for choosing a provider.

⁷⁸ Before 2009 analysis in Chapter 7 was focused on the main reason given for selecting a provider, but for the 2009, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2014-15 surveys this has been broadened to all reasons reported by parents.

Only one per cent of parents said that their choice of formal childcare provider was because there was no other option available, lower than the proportion in 2012-13 (3%).

While the provider's reputation and convenience were the top two concerns for parents of older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4), for parents of younger children (aged 0 to 2) the care given at the provider was mentioned most often. Other reasons also varied according to the age of the child. Parents of younger pre-school children were more likely than parents of older pre-school children to mention the opportunity for the child to mix with other children, trust in the provider, and economic factors (such as cost, employer subsidies or fitting around working hours) as the reasons for choosing their formal provider. Parents of older pre-school children were more likely than parents of younger pre-school children to choose a formal provider because an older sibling also went to the provider.

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Reasons	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(464)	(1,169)	(1,633)
Provider's reputation	62	62	62
Convenience	64	57	59
Concern with care given	65	48	53
Child could mix	59	49	52
Child could be educated	40	47	45
Trust	46	33	37
Older sibling went there	18	25	23
Economic factors	24	17	19
No other option	2	1	1
Child's choice	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	5	3	3

Table 7.1: Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children, by age of child

Reasons for using a provider bore a relationship with the type of formal provider used (Table 7.2). The reputation of the provider and convenience were most likely to be cited by parents using day nurseries. Concern with care given as well as trust and convenience were most likely to be mentioned by parents using childminders. Opportunities for mixing with other children were most often mentioned by parents using day nurseries and playgroups, while education of the child was most likely to be mentioned in relation to reception classes, nursery schools, and day nurseries. Economic factors were most common for parents whose children received childcare from childminders.

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(239)	(256)	(312)	(440)	(222)	(107)	(1.633)
Provider's reputation	63	57	60	70	64	53	62
Convenience	55	55	49	70	58	60	59
Concern with care given	52	41	40	63	54	72	53
Child could mix	52	44	40	62	69	49	52
Child could be educated	48	46	51	48	42	26	45
Trust	37	28	28	41	36	60	37
Older sibling went there	17	29	30	19	27	20	23
Economic factors	16	15	13	22	24	29	19
No other option	1	1	2	1	4	2	1
Child's choice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	1	1	3	1	2	15	3

Table 7.2: Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children by provider type

Parents' reasons for choosing a childcare provider was also associated with family type and work status (see Table 7.3).

Looking at family composition only, couple parents were more likely than lone parents to give reasons related to the provider's reputation, the care given, the child mixing with other children, and trust. On the other hand, lone parents were more likely than couple parents to consider economic factors when choosing a formal provider.

Dual-working couples and working lone parents were equally likely to choose a formal provider for one of the top three reasons: the provider's reputation, convenience, or because of the care given. Working lone parents were more likely than any other group however, to cite economic factors as a reason for choosing a formal provider.

	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(1,282)	(756)	(456)	(70)	(351)	(158)	(193)
Provider's reputation	64	67	61	56	53	64	44
Convenience	61	67	52	40	55	65	47
Concern with care given	55	59	51	37	45	55	37
Child could mix	54	54	55	43	47	51	44
Child could be educated	45	47	43	41	42	43	42
Trust	39	44	34	24	30	33	27
Economic factors	18	19	16	20	23	28	20
Older sibling went there	24	23	25	31	20	20	20
No other option	1	1	1	0	3	3	2
Child's choice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	4	5	2	0	3	3	2

Table 7.3: Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children, by family type and work status

School-age children

This section explores the reasons for choosing a formal provider among parents of school-age children (aged 5 to 14). As with parents of pre-school children, convenience (49%) and the provider's reputation (47%) were the two most important factors for parents of school-age children (see Table 7.4). Two in five (40%) parents also took into account the opportunity for the child to mix, and the care given, when choosing a formal provider.

Three per cent of parents said that they had no other option when selecting a formal provider, a decrease since 2012-13 when the proportion was five per cent.

Parents of younger school-age children (aged 5 to 7) were more likely than parents of older school-age children (aged 8 to 14) to choose a formal provider because of convenience, the care given, and economic factors.

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)</i>	(545)	(695)	(277)	(1,517)
Provider's reputation	47	46	45	47
Convenience	58	49	36	49
Concern with care given	44	40	33	40
Child could mix	40	39	44	40
Trust	35	35	32	34
Child could be educated	21	24	20	22
Economic factors	22	21	14	20
Older sibling went there	18	15	11	15
Child's choice	*	1	1	1
No other option	3	3	2	3
Other (e.g. family ties)	4	4	5	4

Table 7.4: Reasons for choosing formal provider for school-age children, by age of child⁷⁹

The reasons for choosing a formal provider also varied by provider type (see Table 7.5). Those who were using a childminder were the most likely to base their decision on the care given, the convenience, the provider's reputation, and trustworthiness. Those using childminders, however, were also the least likely to say they had no other option when choosing a formal provider.

Economic reasons, and an older sibling attending the provider, were more likely to be mentioned by parents choosing breakfast clubs or childminders than for parents using after-school clubs. After-school clubs, on the other hand, were more likely than breakfast clubs and childminders to be chosen so the child could mix or could be educated.

⁷⁹ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast club	After-school club	Childminder	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)</i>	(179)	(1,168)	(87)	(1,517)
Provider's reputation	31	48	60	47
Convenience	79	44	69	49
Concern with care given	45	36	77	40
Child could mix	26	44	36	40
Trust	38	31	63	34
Child could be educated	15	24	13	22
Economic factors	28	18	27	20
Older sibling went there	21	14	17	15
Child's choice	0	1	0	1
No other option	5	3	0	3
Other (e.g. family ties)	4	2	16	4

Table 7.5: Reasons for choosing main formal provider for school-age children, by provider type

Table 7.6 shows the variations in the reasons for choosing a formal provider for school-age children by family type and work status. Convenience and concern with the care given were most likely to be mentioned by dual-working couple families and working lone-parent families. Trust was most likely to be a concern for dual-working couples, while economic factors were most likely to be considered by working lone parents.

Overall, lone-parent families were more likely than couple families to choose their main formal provider based on economic considerations, but couple families were more likely than lone-parent families to consider the trust they had in the provider.

	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(1,167)	(823)	(293)	(51)	(350)	(236)	(114)
Provider's reputation	47	48	44	49	44	43	47
Concern with care given	40	44	32	30	39	43	33
Child could mix	40	40	40	44	41	41	41
Convenience	49	55	33	37	52	59	38
Child could be educated	21	19	26	28	24	22	28
Trust	36	38	31	31	28	32	22
Older sibling went there	16	17	13	17	13	11	16
Economic factors	19	18	19	30	25	31	13
No other option	3	3	4	6	2	3	1
Child's choice	1	*	2	2	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	4	4	2	2	6	8	2

Table 7.6: Reasons for choosing main formal provider for school-age children, by family type and work status

7.3 Factors important for high quality pre-school childcare

A new question was introduced in the 2014-15 survey to find out which factors parents of pre-school children associate with high quality childcare. The most important factor for high quality childcare were activities that encourage the child to socialise with other children (62%), followed by each staff member having a small number of children to look after (56%) (see Table 7.7). Other factors, mentioned less often, included beginning to learn writing, reading and maths (42%) and having regular feedback on the child's progress (39%).

Parents' views varied by the age of the child. Socialising with other children was the most important factor for both parents of 0- to 2-year-olds and 3- to 4-year-olds. A smaller ratio of children to staff was more important for parents of younger children (aged 0 to 2) than for parents of older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4). On the other hand, learning was more likely to be mentioned by parents of older pre-school children than parents of younger pre-school children. This is likely to be a reflection of parents' expectations that pre-school childcare should prepare children for school. Having regular feedback on the child's progress was more important for parents of younger pre-school children than for parents of older pre-school children.

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Factors	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children</i>	<i>(1,034)</i>	<i>(1,319)</i>	<i>(2,353)</i>
Activities that encourage my child to socialise with other children	61	64	62
Each staff member has a small number of children to look after	60	51	56
Beginning to learn writing, reading and maths	31	55	42
Regular feedback on child's progress	42	36	39
Physical development activities	29	27	28
The right support for those who find it hard to learn	23	26	25
All staff qualified at A level/equivalent or higher	15	13	14
The quality of food and drink provided	14	8	11
Other	1	*	1

Table 7.7: Factors important for high quality childcare for pre-school children, by age of child

Parents of pre-school children were also asked about which early learning approach they think childcare providers should adopt (see Table 7.8). Over two in five (45%) parents said that an approach which allows children to choose between learning activities should be the main learning approach taken by the provider, closely followed by adults choosing the learning activities, where these are flexible and are adapted to each child (41%). Only 15 per cent of parents selected an approach to learning in which adults choose structured activities for the group or class.

Parents' preferences for learning approaches varied by the child's age. Parents of younger pre-school children (aged 0 to 2) were more likely to select an approach where the children could choose the learning activities, while parents of older pre-school children (aged 3 to 4) were more likely to say more structured learning activities should constitute the main approach to learning. Again, this may reflect parents' expectations that pre-school childcare should prepare children for school.

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
Approach	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children</i>	<i>(1,034)</i>	<i>(1,319)</i>	<i>(2,353)</i>
Children can choose between learning activities - adults help them learn when they show an interest or have questions	48	43	45
Adults choose learning activities – these are flexible and are adapted to suit each child's individual interests	40	42	41
Adults choose more structured learning activities - children are taught as part of a group or class	12	17	15

Table 7.8: Preferred approach to help pre-school children learn, by age of child

7.4 Parents' views on the skills encouraged by their main formal provider

This section reports on parents' perceptions of the academic skills (such as reading and recognising letters, numbers and shapes) and social skills (including interacting with other children and adults) encouraged by their main formal provider. During the survey, respondents were presented with a list of skills and asked to identify if any were encouraged at the selected child's main formal provider. Childminders and formal group providers are the focus of this section.

Academic skills

The questions about academic skills were asked of respondents with pre-school children. These questions were not asked of respondents with school-age children because there was an expectation that at this age children would develop most of these skills at school.

Table 7.9 shows the proportion of parents who felt their main formal childcare provider encouraged their child to learn and develop a range of academic skills. The data is broken down by the type of formal provider used. Around nine in ten parents felt that their provider encouraged each of the five different academic skills asked about, with enjoying books (93%) and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (91%) being the skills most commonly mentioned. Only two per cent of parents thought their provider did not encourage any of the academic skills asked about.

The proportions of parents saying their provider encouraged each of the five academic skills listed in Table 7.9 are in line with the proportions recorded in 2012-13.

The skills parents reported as being encouraged by their main childcare provider varied by the type of provider. Parents who used reception classes were the most likely to report that the provider encouraged each of the five academic skills (likely to reflect a more formal learning structure), closely followed by nursery classes and day nurseries. Parents who used childminders were generally the least likely to say that each academic skill was encouraged by the provider; however, the overwhelming majority (94%) of parents using childminders still felt that the childminder encouraged at least one of the academic skills asked about.

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(237)	(261)	(311)	(450)	(228)	(108)	(1,632)
Enjoying books	91	95	96	94	90	89	93
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	90	95	96	91	87	83	91
Finding out about health or hygiene	85	92	91	88	85	84	88
Finding out about animals or plants	85	90	92	88	84	85	87
Finding out about people or places around the world	79	83	87	78	71	75	79
Not sure	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
None of these	3	1	*	1	3	5	2

Table 7.9: Academic skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type [1]

[1] Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, holiday club/scheme, or other nursery education provider; however, these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

Social skills

Parents of both pre-school and school-age children were asked about their main providers' role in the development of specific social skills (see Table 7.10). Among parents of pre-school children, almost all (98%) felt their provider encouraged at least one of these skills, while among parents of school-age children, this proportion, while still high, was lower (87%). Among parents of both pre-school and school-age children, playing with other children (84%) and good behaviour (82%) were the most commonly encouraged social skills, followed by listening to others and adults (80%) and being independent and making choices (75%).

Across all six social skills, parents of pre-school children were more likely than parents of school-age children to feel the skills were encouraged by their provider.

	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)</i>	(1,632)	(1,707)	(3,339)
Playing with other children	97	76	84
Good behaviour	94	75	82
Listening to others and adults	93	71	80
Being independent and making choices	89	66	75
Expressing thoughts and feelings	88	53	66
Tackling everyday tasks	88	48	64
Not sure	1	5	4
None of these	1	8	5

Table 7.10: Social skills that parents believed were encouraged at their main formal provider, by age of child

The social skills which parents of pre-school children reported as being encouraged by their main childcare provider varied by the type of provider. As with academic skills, parents of children in reception classes were the most likely to feel their child was encouraged to develop these social skills, while parents using childminders were less likely than average to say that their child was encouraged to develop these skills (see Table 7.11).

Compared with 2012-13, parents of pre-school children were more likely to feel that formal providers were good at encouraging the expression of thoughts and feelings (88% in 2014-15 compared with 84% in 2012-13), and were also more likely feel that their provider encouraged their children to be independent (89% in 2014-15 compared with 86% in 2012-13). The proportions mentioning that their provider encouraged the other social skills asked about were in line with 2012-13 figures.

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(237)	(261)	(311)	(450)	(228)	(108)	(1,632)
Playing with other children	97	98	99	98	97	95	97
Good behaviour	94	97	96	92	94	91	94
Listening to others and adults	93	97	97	94	91	88	93
Being independent and making choices	88	92	94	87	87	85	89
Expressing thoughts and feelings	88	93	95	86	83	80	88
Tackling everyday tasks	88	93	93	88	85	83	88
Not sure	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
None of these	1	1	0	*	1	2	1

Table 7.11: Social skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type[1]

[1]Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, breakfast club, or after-school club; however these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

Table 7.12 shows how the social skills encouraged by childcare providers of school-age children varied by provider type. Playing with other children (76%) and good behaviour (75%) were the social skills parents most commonly reported as being encouraged by formal providers for school-age children, followed by listening to others and adults (71%) and being independent (66%).

For four of the six social skills asked about (all except for 'playing with other children' and 'being independent'), parents using childminders were more likely to say that the provider encouraged these skills than parents using after-school and breakfast clubs.

Compared with 2012-13, parents were more likely to say their provider encouraged each of the six social skills asked about. The proportion of parents mentioning playing with other children, good behaviour, and expressing thoughts and feelings has increased by six percentage points. Listening to others and adults has increased by seven percentage points while being independent and tackling everyday tasks has increased by eight percentage points.

	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast club	After-school club	Child-minder	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children whose main provider was formal (excluding reception class)</i>	(192)	(1,389)	(87)	(1,707)
Playing with other children	76	75	87	76
Good behaviour	69	74	93	75
Listening to others and adults	64	71	81	71
Being independent and making choices	64	66	74	66
Expressing thoughts and feelings	50	51	70	53
Tackling everyday tasks	57	45	84	48
Not sure	7	5	5	5
None of these	9	8	0	8

Table 7.12: Social skills encouraged at main provider for school-aged children, by provider type

7.5 Home learning activities for children aged 2 to 5

This section focuses on home learning for children aged 2 to 5. Parents of children in this age group were asked a number of questions about the types and frequency of home learning activities they engaged in, such as reading, reciting nursery rhymes, painting, playing games and using computers. They were also asked how much time they spent undertaking these activities with the selected child and what factors, if any, would allow them to spend more time doing these activities. This section also looks at the sources of information parents used to find out about their child's learning and development.

Table 7.13 shows the frequency with which parents engage their children in different types of home learning activities. The most frequent home learning activity was looking at books or reading stories (85% did this every day or on most days), followed by playing at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (75%), reciting nursery rhymes or singing songs (74%) and playing indoor or outdoor games (66%). Painting or drawing together (49%) and using a computer (42%) were less likely to be performed every day or on most days; however, these activities were the most likely to be engaged at least once a fortnight (46% and 38% respectively).

Half (50%) of parents took their child to the library once every 6 months or more often, however, just under half (46%) of parents said that they never took their child to the library.

There has been an increase since 2012-13 in the proportion of parents who used a computer with their child every day or on most days (36% in 2012-13 compared with 42%

in 2014-15), who played indoor and outdoor games with their child (61% compared with 66%) and who painted or drew together with their child (45% compared with 49%).

Home learning activities	Frequency						Unweighted base
	Every day/ most days	At least once a fortnight	At least once every 6 months	Once every year or less often	Varies too much to say	Never	
<i>Base: All children aged 2 to 5</i>							
Look at books or read stories	85	14	*	0	*	1	(2,351)
Play at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	75	22	*	0	1	2	(2,351)
Recite nursery rhymes or sing songs	74	20	2	*	1	3	(2,351)
Play indoor or outdoor games	66	32	1	0	*	1	(2,351)
Paint or draw together	49	46	2	0	1	3	(2,351)
Use a computer	42	38	3	*	1	16	(2,351)
Take child to the library	4	21	25	2	2	46	(2,351)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 7.13: Frequency with which parents engage in home learning activities with their children

Time spent on learning and play activities

Parents of children aged 2 to 5 were asked whether the amount of time they spent with their child on learning and play activities was about right, or whether they would like to do more or less of it. Table 7.14 presents parents' responses to this question broken down by family type and work status. Two-thirds (66%) of parents said they spent about the right amount of time on these activities, although a third (33%) said they would like to do more. While couple families and lone parent families were similarly likely to feel they spent the right amount of time on learning and play activities, there was variation within work status by family type. Working lone parents (58%) and dual-working couples (63%), were less likely to feel they spent the right amount of time on these activities than were couples in which only one parent worked (71%), non-working couples (73%), and non-working lone parents (68%).

	Couples				Lone parents			
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working	All
Amount of time	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was 2- to 5-years-old</i>	(1,817)	(986)	(734)	(97)	(533)	(235)	(300)	(2,352)
It's about right	67	63	71	73	64	58	68	66
I'd like to do more	32	36	28	25	35	41	31	33
I'd like to do less	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 7.14: Parents' perspectives on the amount of learning and play activities they do with their child, by family type and work status

Parents of children aged 2 to 5 who said they would like to spend more time on learning and play activities with their children were asked what factors would help them to achieve this. The two most frequently reported factors were more free time to spend with their child (45%) and working fewer hours (37%) (see Table 7.15). This suggests that a lack of time is the main barrier to home learning. Other factors were of less importance.

There were variations in the proportions of parents citing certain factors by family type and working status.

Looking at the results by family type, lone-parent families were more likely than couple families to say that more money to spend on activities (16% compared with 9%) and more toys and materials (8% compared with 2%) were important factors.

Turning to working status, as might be expected, dual-working couples (59%) and working lone parents (54%) were more likely than other parents to cite working fewer hours as an important factor. Couple families where one parent was working (5%) and non-working lone-parent families (6%) were more likely than other groups to say that more support from their partner would be an important factor. Dual-working couple families (59%) and working lone-parents families (54%) were more likely than couple families where one parent was working (11%) or non-working lone-parent families (3%) to say that working fewer hours would enable them to spend more time on learning and play activities.

	Couple families				Lone parents			
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working	All
Factors	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was 2- to 5-years-old</i>	(584)	(354)	(208)	(22)	(191)	(99)	(92)	(775)
More free time to spend with child	46	42	53	[53]	40	38	43	45
Working fewer hours	40	59	11	[0]	29	54	3	37
Someone to look after other children	13	9	19	[26]	10	8	13	13
More money to spend on activities	9	7	11	[22]	16	15	17	11
More information or ideas about what to do	10	8	15	[16]	10	7	14	10
More toys/materials	2	1	3	[11]	8	9	7	4
More support/help from partner	4	3	5	[0]	5	4	6	4
More places to go/local activities	2	1	4	[0]	3	1	6	3
If I had more energy/was less tired	1	1	1	[0]	1	1	1	1
If my health was better	1	*	1	[5]	0	0	0	1
Other	4	3	5	[5]	6	5	7	4
Nothing	2	1	4	[0]	6	4	7	3

Table 7.15: Factors which would increase time spent on learning and play activities, by family type and work status⁸⁰

Additional analysis of the data (see Table C7.2 in Appendix C) shows an association between the level of deprivation of the area in which parents lived and parents reporting that they would like to work fewer hours. Families living in the least deprived areas were the most likely to cite working fewer hours as a factor which would increase time spent on learning and play activities (50%), while families living in the most deprived areas were the least likely to mention this (24%). This link may be explained in part by demographic associations.⁸¹ There were no other associations between the level of deprivation of the area and the other factors listed in Table 7.15.

⁸⁰ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

⁸¹ As shown in section 2.6, employment is higher in the least deprived areas and lower in the most deprived areas (71% of families in the most deprived areas were in work compared with 94% of those in the least deprived areas).

Information about learning and play activities

Parents of 2- to 5-year-old children were asked which sources they accessed to find out about learning and play activities, excluding their formal childcare provider.

The full range of sources covered in this survey is listed in Table 7.16. Informal networks such as friends or relatives (61%) and other parents (42%) were the most commonly used sources. These were followed by internet sites (39%), children's TV programmes (32%), schools (30%) and Sure Start/children's centres (25%). Other sources, which comprised mainly official sources of information (such as FIS, local authorities and other national organisations) were mentioned by very few parents, highlighting the predominance of informal over formal sources when it comes to sharing ideas about children's learning and play activities among parents. This is in line with the finding that parents also favour informal networks in relation to information on childcare, as described in section 6.2.

Parents in couple families were more likely than lone parents to have received information about learning and play activities from a number of sources, including from friends and relatives, other parents, children's TV programmes, internet sites, their school, their playgroup, and their childcare provider.

	Couples				Lone parents			All
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working	
Source	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was 2- to 5-years-old</i>	(1,817)	(986)	(734)	(97)	(535)	(235)	(300)	(2,352)
Friends or relatives	64	69	59	54	53	59	48	61
Other parents	46	50	42	31	31	38	25	42
Internet site	42	46	38	30	31	33	29	39
Children's TV programmes	34	38	31	26	25	27	24	32
School	31	33	29	31	27	33	23	30
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	24	24	24	30	26	24	28	25
Playgroup	18	19	17	10	8	6	9	15
Childcare provider	15	18	12	10	9	14	5	14
Children's Information Services/ Family Information Services	10	10	9	11	8	9	7	9
Local Authority	7	8	7	10	7	8	6	7
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and website) ⁸²	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, Citizens' Advice Bureau)	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1
Other	4	4	5	8	6	6	5	5
None of these	8	7	10	7	11	10	12	9

Table 7.16: Sources of information/ideas used about learning and play activities

Additional analysis found a relationship between the sources of information used and area deprivation (see Table C7.3 in Appendix C). Parents living in the least deprived areas were the most likely to obtain information from a number of sources, including friends and relatives, other parents, children's TV programmes, internet sites, their playgroup and their childcare provider. For example, 71 per cent of parents living in the least deprived areas said they received information from friends or relatives, compared with 51 per cent among parents living in the most deprived areas. Among parents living in the least deprived areas, 94 per cent had got information or ideas from at least one of the sources listed, compared with 87 per cent of parents living in the most deprived areas.

⁸² Note that the ChildLink website and helpline are no longer in existence.

This pattern can in part be explained by the association between area deprivation and levels of employment (see section 2.6); working parents are more likely to have access to a variety of sources and they are also more likely to live in the least deprived areas, compared with non-working parents who have less access to sources of information and generally tend to live in more deprived areas.

Table 7.17 shows the organisations or people that parents of children aged 2 to 5 contacted in the last six months about their child's learning and development. Parents were more likely to use informal sources of information than formal sources when it came to obtaining information about their child's learning and development, in line with findings from the previous section. Parents had most commonly contacted their partner (73%), followed by friends or relatives (63%). Around half of parents (49%) had contacted their child's school or teacher, and over two in five (43%) had contacted other parents. Fewer parents had contacted their childcare provider (31%), work colleagues (19%), healthcare professionals (17%), and only two per cent had contacted their local authority.

Parents in couple families were more likely than lone parents to have contacted other parents (47% compared with 30%), their childcare provider (33% compared with 26%), and work colleagues (21% compared with 11%). They were also more likely to have contacted at least one person or organisation about their child's learning and development (97%, compared with 93% of lone parents).

Dual-working couple families were more likely than couples where one or both partners were not working to have spoken with their husband, wife or partner, friends or relatives, other parents, their childcare provider, and unsurprisingly, to their work colleagues. Working lone parents were more likely than non-working lone parents to have contacted each of these sources. Parents in non-working couples were more likely than working couples to have contacted a school teacher.

Lone parents who were not working were the most likely to say they had not contacted any of the people or organisations (9%, compared with between 1% and 4% for other parents).

	Couples				Lone parents			All
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working	
People/ organisations	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was 2- to 5-years-old</i>	(1,817)	(986)	(734)	(97)	(535)	(235)	(300)	(2,352)
My husband/ wife/ partner	87	89	85	77	24	29	20	73
Friends/ relatives	63	68	58	52	61	66	57	63
School/ teacher	48	51	43	63	49	55	44	49
Other parents	47	52	42	34	30	36	26	43
Childcare provider	33	40	25	20	26	32	20	31
Work colleagues	21	33	7	3	11	24	1	19
Healthcare professional	17	17	18	20	17	17	18	17
Local authority	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	2
Other	1	1	1	3	5	7	4	2
None of these	2	1	3	1	7	4	9	3

Table 7.17: People/organisations contacted about child's learning and development

Further analysis showed that the proportion of parents who contacted a number of people or organisations about their child's learning and development varied by the level of deprivation in the local area (See Table C7.4 in Appendix C). Reflecting patterns described in the previous two sections, parents living in the least deprived areas were the most likely to have spoken to their partner, friends and relatives, work colleagues, other parents, and childcare provider, while parents living in the most deprived areas were the least likely to have done so.

7.6 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Parents whose selected child was aged 2 to 5 were asked whether they were aware of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS). Analysis in this section refers to providers to whom the framework applies, including nursery classes, reception classes, day nurseries, playgroups, childminders, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

Nearly four in five (78%) parents with children aged 2 to 5 said they had heard of the EYFS, in line with 2012-13 (76%) (see Table 7.18). Over three in five (63%) said they knew at least a little about it, while 15 per cent had heard of it but knew nothing about it.

Awareness	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was 2- to 5-years-old</i>	<i>(2,351)</i>
Know a lot	26
Know a little	37
Heard of, but know nothing about	15
Not heard of it	21

Table 7.18: Level of knowledge about the Early Years Foundation Stage

7.7 Summary

The survey found that when choosing a formal childcare provider parents had taken into account a range of factors. The two most common factors, for both pre-school and school-age children, were the provider's reputation and convenience. Other important factors included the quality of the care given and the opportunity for the child to mix with other children. Compared with the last survey in 2012-13, fewer parents said they chose their formal provider because there were no other options available to them, suggesting that most parents were able to choose from a range of providers.

Parents of pre-school children felt that the most important factor for high quality childcare was the provision of activities that encourage the children to socialise with other children (62%), followed by each member of staff having a small number of children to look after (56%). Furthermore, parents' generally favoured children choosing learning activities themselves (45%) over adults choosing structured approaches to learning (15%).

The great majority of parents reported that their main formal childcare provider encouraged their child to develop a range of academic and social skills. The most commonly encouraged academic skills (asked of parents of pre-school children only) were enjoying books (encouraged by 93% providers), and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (encouraged by 91%). Playing with other children, and good behaviour, were the most commonly encouraged social skills by both pre-school providers (97% and 94% respectively) and school-age providers (76% and 75% respectively). Reception classes were most likely to be seen as encouraging both academic and social skills, while childminders were the least likely.

Most parents (66%) of children aged 2 to 5 felt they spent enough time with their children on learning and play activities; however, a third of parents said they would like to do more with their children. The survey measured parents' involvement with their child's learning and development through seven types of early home learning activities. Looking at books or reading stories was the most frequent home learning activity that parents engaged their children in, followed by playing at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes, reciting nursery rhymes or songs, and playing indoor or outdoor games. Fewer parents used a computer with their child; however, there was a rise in the proportion of parents using a computer with their child every day or on most days (42% in 2014-15, compared

with 36% in 2012-13). Over a third (36%) of parents took their child to the library between once a week and once every two months, however, over two in five (46%) parents said that they never took their child to the library.

Informal social networks, such as friends or relatives (61%) and other parents (42%), were more likely to be used as sources of information for parents about learning and play activities than were official sources, such as FIS (9%), local authorities (7%) or other national organisations (1%).

Awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage was high; nearly four in five (78%) of parents with children aged 2 to 5 said they had heard of the framework.

8. Use of childcare during school holidays

Key findings:

- Just under half (47%) of families with school-age children used childcare during the school holidays. As has been seen in previous surveys in this series, families were more likely to use informal childcare during the school holidays than formal childcare.
- Families' use of childcare during the school holidays was linked to their use of childcare during term time. Among families who used term-time childcare for their school-age children, half (52%) used childcare during the holidays. Among those who did not use childcare during the term-time however, only around one in four (27%) used childcare during the holidays.
- Children in families with higher household incomes and those living in less deprived areas were more likely to have received both formal and informal childcare during the school holidays than children from lower-income households and those living in more deprived areas.
- While the majority (58%) of parents were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available, one in five (20%) said they had trouble finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs, and over a quarter (27%) said they had difficulty finding childcare they could afford. Most parents (62%) who worked during the school holidays said that it was easy to arrange childcare for these periods (in line with 2012-13).
- Over half (53%) of families with school-age children did not use any childcare in the holidays. The most commonly cited reasons for this were that they preferred to look after their children themselves (50%), that they or their partner was at home during the holidays (20%), and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (19%).

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores families' use of childcare during school holidays. It focuses on families with school-age children as it is these families where alternative arrangements would need to be made during school holiday periods.⁸³

The chapter examines the forms of holiday provision that families used over the year, how this compares to provider use during term time, and whether there have been any changes since 2012-13 (section 8.2). We then look at the difference in the use of holiday childcare between children with different characteristics, and between families in different circumstances (section 8.3).

We consider how much families paid for holiday provision (section 8.4) and the ease of finding and organising holiday childcare (section 8.5). Finally, we look at parents' opinions on the holiday childcare available to them (section 8.6) and why some families decided not to use it (section 8.7).

Questions on childcare used during school holidays were first included in the 2008 survey. However, the majority of year-on-year comparisons, as reported in this chapter, are between 2012-13 and 2014-15.

8.2 Families' use of childcare during school holidays

As illustrated in Figure 8.1, just under half (47%) of families with school-age children used some type of childcare during the school holidays in 2014-15. This compares to 79 per cent of families with school-age children using a childcare provider during the reference term-time week. The proportion of families using any type of childcare during the school holidays, as well as the proportions using formal or informal childcare during the school holidays, are in line with 2012-13 levels. In line with previous findings from the survey series, more parents used informal childcare (34%) than formal childcare (24%) during school holidays.

⁸³ The standard definition of school-age children in this report is children aged 5 to 14, regardless of school attendance. However, given the focus of this chapter, school-age children are defined as children aged 6 to 14, and children aged 4 to 5 attending primary school full time or part time.

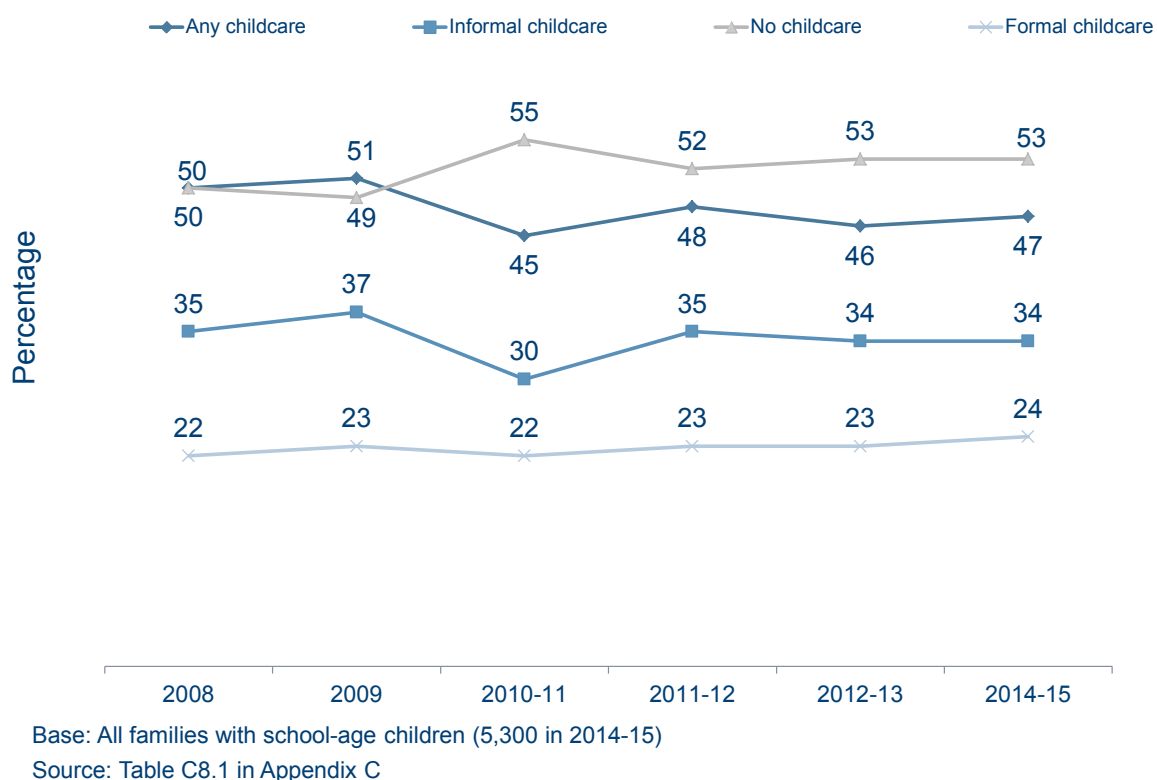


Figure 8.1: Use of childcare during school holidays, 2008 to 2014-15

Respondents who were in employment and who had school-age children were asked whether their job allowed them to work during school term time only. The data show that one in five (21%) respondents had a job that allowed them to do so (table not shown), in line with the proportion recorded in 2012-13.

Respondents with working partners were not asked if their partner was in a job that enabled them to work during term time only. As such, it is not possible to estimate the proportion of families where one or both parents could work during school term time only.

Table 8.1 illustrates that where employment was possible during term time only, over a third (35%) of working parents used childcare during the holidays, with 18 per cent using formal childcare and 21 per cent using informal childcare.

Parents who had a job allowing them to work during term time only were less likely to use holiday childcare, both formal and informal, than those whose job required them to work during term time and holidays.

	Respondent work status		
	Working respondents allowed to work term time only	All working respondents	All families
Use of childcare during school holidays	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who used childcare in the last year</i>	(705)	(3,313)	(5,298)
Any childcare	35	53	47
Formal childcare	18	28	24
Informal childcare	21	38	34
No childcare used	66	47	53

Table 8.1: Use of childcare during school holidays, by respondent work status

Table 8.2 shows the types of holiday childcare families used by each type of term-time childcare. Over half (52%) of families using term-time childcare also used some form of childcare during the school holiday period. On the other hand, almost three-quarters (73%) of families who did not use term-time childcare did not use any form of childcare during the school holidays either. Regardless of whether term-time childcare was formal or informal, the use of informal types of childcare during holiday periods was more extensive than the use of formal types of childcare during holiday periods.

Other noticeable differences in patterns of childcare arrangements used by families in term time and school holidays include:

- Over three in ten (31%) families using a formal childcare provider in term time also used formal childcare during the school holidays.
- Over half (53%) of families who used an informal provider during term time also used some informal childcare during holiday periods. Just over a quarter (27%) of families who used informal childcare during term time used a formal childcare provider during school holidays.
- Just over a quarter (27%) of families who did not use childcare during the school term used some form of childcare during the school holidays, which suggests that some families required childcare for holiday periods only.

	Use of childcare during term time			
	Any childcare during term time	Formal childcare during term time	Informal childcare during term time	No childcare during term time
Use of childcare during school holidays	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>	(4,430)	(3,951)	(1,980)	(880)
Any childcare during school holidays	52	53	61	27
Formal childcare during school holidays	28	31	27	9
Informal childcare during school holidays	37	36	53	19
No childcare used during school holidays	47	47	39	73

Table 8.2: Use of childcare during school holidays compared with use of childcare during term time

Use of childcare in different holiday periods

Parents who used childcare during school holidays were asked in which holiday period they used the provision (table not shown). Holiday childcare was most likely to be used by families during the summer holiday (88%) and during the Easter break (62%). Just over half of parents used a holiday childcare provider for the October half-term (56%), the May half-term (55%) and the February half-term (54%). Use of childcare providers was at its lowest during the Christmas break, with 48 per cent of parents using childcare during this holiday period. This lower level of use may reflect the fact that many parents are able to take annual leave from work during the festive period (which may not be possible during the much longer summer holidays), and that many formal childcare providers are closed at this time.

8.3 Type of childcare during school holidays

This section looks at how the use of childcare providers differs between term time and the school holidays. It considers the possible impact of children's characteristics upon their receipt of holiday childcare, such as their age, ethnicity, and whether they have a special educational need or a disability. It then examines the differences in the use of childcare providers by family circumstances, such as parental working status and household income. The following analyses explore the proportion of children receiving childcare in holiday periods, rather than the proportion of families.

As illustrated in Table 8.3, seven in ten (69%) school-age children attended some form of childcare in term time, compared with around two in five (39%) during holiday periods. As seen in 2012-13, the variation in childcare attendance between term time and holiday periods was more pronounced for formal childcare providers than for informal ones: while 55 per cent of children attended formal childcare during term time, this fell to 21 per cent for the school holiday period. This difference can be attributed in part to the considerable reduction in the usage of after-school clubs during the school holidays (8% compared with 40% in the term time) when these are closed. Despite this, after-school clubs and

holiday club schemes remained the most frequently received type of formal childcare during the holidays reflecting the fact that some continue to operate during school holidays.

As with formal childcare, children were also less likely to have used informal childcare during the holidays than during term time. Table 8.3 illustrates that the usage of some types of informal childcare remained broadly consistent throughout the year. Regardless of the time of year, children were far more likely to have been cared for by grandparents than by any other type of informal childcare provider.

	Term time	Holiday
Use of childcare	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>	<i>(4,431)</i>	<i>(2,006)</i>
Any childcare	69	39
Formal provider	55	21
Breakfast club	8	1
After-school club	40	8
Holiday club	*	8
Childminder	3	2
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Informal provider	31	24
Ex-partner	6	3
Grandparent	18	16
Older sibling	3	2
Another relative	3	4
Friend or neighbour	5	4
Other		
Leisure/ sport activity	3	*
Other childcare provider	2	1
No childcare used	31	61

Table 8.3: Use of childcare in term time and school holidays⁸⁴

⁸⁴ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

Use of holiday childcare by children's age, ethnicity and special educational needs

This section looks at the patterns of childcare usage by different age categories of school-age children. As Table 8.4 shows, the use of childcare varied by the age of the child. Holiday childcare was most likely to be used by children aged 5 to 7 (40%) and aged 8 to 11 (43%), while children aged 12 to 14 were less likely to use it (35%). While the proportion of children using informal childcare providers was similar across the different age categories, formal childcare was more likely to be used by 5- to 11-year-olds (24%) than by 12- to 14- year olds (14%).

Grandparents were the most frequently used informal provider across all age categories, while after-school and holiday club programmes were the most commonly used formal providers, with usage highest among children aged between 8 and 11.

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>	<i>(1,302)</i>	<i>(1,496)</i>	<i>(1,040)</i>	<i>(4,431)</i>
Any childcare	40	43	35	39
Formal provider	25	23	14	21
Breakfast club	3	1	0	1
After-school club	8	10	9	8
Holiday club	9	11	5	8
Childminder	3	2	*	2
Nanny or au pair	1	*	*	1
Informal provider	23	26	24	24
Ex-partner	2	3	3	3
Grandparent	17	18	15	16
Older sibling	2	2	4	2
Another relative	4	4	4	4
Friend or neighbour	4	5	5	4
No childcare used	52	52	58	54

Table 8.4: Use of holiday childcare providers, by age of child

Table 8.5 shows the use of holiday childcare by characteristics of the child, including ethnic background, special educational needs, and disability. The use of childcare varied by the child's ethnic background. Children from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other Asian and Black African backgrounds were least likely to receive childcare during holiday periods (between 9% and 22%), while children from White British, White and Black, Black

Caribbean, White and Asian, and other Mixed backgrounds were the most likely to receive holiday childcare (between 38% and 46%).

Children with special educational needs were more likely to use an informal childcare provider during school holidays than those without (30% compared with 23%). Similarly, children with a disability were more likely to use an informal childcare provider than those without (29% compared with 23%).

	Use of childcare			
Child characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	39	21	24	(4,431)
Ethnicity of child, grouped				
White				
White British	45	24	28	(3,135)
Other White	27	17	12	(262)
Mixed				
White and Black	38	25	18	(99)
White and Asian	44	25	19	(59)
Other Mixed	[46]	[30]	[17]	(30)
Asian or Asian British				
Indian	29	14	15	(142)
Pakistani	19	8	10	(166)
Bangladeshi	9	3	4	(70)
Other Asian	6	3	5	(90)
Black or Black British				
Black Caribbean	44	28	24	(65)
Black African	22	12	12	(190)
Other	14	7	8	(119)
Whether child has SEN				
Yes	43	20	30	(400)
No	39	21	23	(4,028)
Whether child has a disability				
Yes	44	19	29	(290)
No	39	21	23	(4,141)

Table 8.5: Use of holiday childcare, by child characteristics⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Use of holiday childcare by families' circumstances

Table 8.6 looks at whether children's use of holiday childcare varied by their family circumstances.

Table 8.6 shows there was very little difference in how couple families and lone-parent families used any form of childcare during holiday periods. However, the use of formal and informal childcare during school holidays was higher among dual-working couple households, and working lone-parent households, and lower among couple families in which one or both partners were not working, and non-working lone-parent households.

	Use of holiday childcare			
Family characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	39	21	24	(4,431)
Family type				
Couple	39	22	22	(3,277)
Lone parent	41	19	28	(1,154)
Family working status				
Couple – both working	47	28	27	(1,992)
Couple – one working	27	13	15	(1,073)
Couple – neither working	21	8	12	(212)
Lone parent – working	51	26	34	(660)
Lone parent – not working	26	8	19	(494)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	26	9	19	(278)
£10,000-£19,999	32	14	21	(1,019)
£20,000-£29,999	34	16	21	(879)
£30,000-£44,999	46	23	29	(761)
£45,000+	52	33	29	(1,164)
Number of children				
1	48	24	35	(1,076)
2	43	24	24	(2,040)
3+	26	14	14	(1,315)

NB: Row percentages.

Table 8.6: Use of childcare during school holidays by family characteristics

The above results illustrate that family annual income was closely linked to children's receipt of formal and informal childcare, with childcare usage steadily increasing with income level. This may reflect both the greater ability to afford childcare, and an

increased requirement for childcare among families with higher incomes (who are more likely to be in work). Moreover, it may be the case that higher-income families are more prepared to pay for other benefits, such as more leisure time, or opportunities for their children to socialise outside of school. The regression model predicting childcare use during term time showed that both family annual income and work status were independently associated with formal childcare use (see Chapter 2).

Table 8.6 shows that childcare usage was also related to the number of children in the household. Children with no siblings, or with one sibling, were far more likely than children with two or more siblings to use some form of holiday childcare. This finding may be linked to higher rates of employment among families with fewer children: for example, 85 per cent of families with one child had at least one parent in work, compared with 77 per cent of families with three or more children (table not shown).

Use of holiday childcare by region and area deprivation

Table 8.7 shows the variation in children's use of holiday childcare by region, area deprivation and rurality. The use of any childcare provider varied by region. Children in the South West and the South East (51% and 48% respectively) were the most likely to have received any type of childcare during the holidays, while children in London were the least likely to have done so (22%), consistent with the findings from previous surveys in the series.

	Use of holiday childcare			
Area characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	39	21	24	(4,431)
Region				
North East	43	23	25	(192)
North West	39	21	22	(582)
Yorkshire and the Humber	44	22	29	(505)
East Midlands	33	18	20	(414)
West Midlands	37	16	24	(446)
East of England	44	24	26	(451)
London	22	15	10	(702)
South East	48	27	30	(735)
South West	51	26	34	(404)
Area deprivation				
1 st quintile – most deprived	27	13	17	(1,137)
2 nd quintile	37	18	23	(1,030)
3 rd quintile	42	22	26	(791)
4 th quintile	43	26	23	(574)
5 th quintile – least deprived	51	31	30	(899)
Rurality				
Rural	50	25	33	(528)
Urban	38	21	22	(3,903)

NB: Row percentages

Table 8.7: Use of childcare during school holidays, by area characteristic

The use of formal and informal holiday childcare also varied by the level of deprivation in the local area. Use of holiday childcare was highest in the least deprived areas and lowest in the most deprived areas of England. This reflects the findings discussed in Chapter 2, where more deprived areas were found to have lower rates of childcare take-up during term time, as well as lower rates of employment.

Children from rural areas were more likely than those from urban areas to have used informal childcare, but were no more likely to have used formal childcare.

8.4 Paying for holiday childcare

Parents who had used childcare during the school holidays were asked whether they were charged for the service. Table 8.8 shows that parents were considerably more likely to pay for formal than informal provision.

Use of holiday childcare	Paid for holiday care	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of holiday childcare</i>		
Formal providers		
Breakfast club	[47]	(25)
After-school club	48	(347)
Holiday club/ scheme	71	(600)
Childminders	62	(154)
Informal providers		
Grandparent(s)	5	(1,245)
Older sibling	4	(146)
Another relative	7	(351)
Friend or neighbour	4	(379)

Table 8.8: Whether payment made for holiday childcare, by provider type⁸⁶

Parents were asked whether their childcare provider cost more during the holidays than during term time, and whether or not they had to pay for each type of holiday provision. Table 8.9 shows that among parents using after-school clubs in the holidays, the majority (52%) reported that they did not pay, with one in three (34%) saying they paid no more during the holidays than term time, and just seven per cent saying they paid more during the holidays. A similar pattern pertained to childminders, with almost two in five (38%) reporting that they did not pay, over two in five saying they paid no more during the holidays (43%), and just one in ten (10%) saying they paid more during the holidays. With respect to holiday clubs, the majority of parents (52%) did not use holiday clubs in term time, 29 per cent used a holiday club but did not pay, and seven per cent reported that they paid more for this provision in the holidays, compared with 12 per cent who reported that they did not pay more.

⁸⁶ The use of square brackets around percentage denotes that it is based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

	Breakfast club	After-school club	Holiday club	Child-minder
Use of holiday childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of holiday childcare</i>	(25)	(347)	(600)	(154)
Paid more for all carers of this type in holidays	[21]	7	7	10
Paid more for some carers of this provider type in holidays	[0]	1	*	0
Did not pay more for this provider type in holidays	[12]	34	12	43
Used and paid for holiday provider but did not use in term time	[14]	5	52	9
Used a holiday provider but did not pay	[53]	52	29	38

Table 8.9: Relative use and payment of holiday childcare, by provider type

Table 8.10 outlines the daily cost of holiday childcare to parents by the type of childcare provider they used (note that the amount paid per family may cover more than one child). Parents reported that they spent the greatest amount per day on childminders, paying a daily median of £33.55, and paid the lowest amount per day on after-school clubs that continued to run during the holidays, paying a daily median of £12.27.⁸⁷ Holiday clubs fell in the middle of this range, with a median daily expenditure of £20.00. These pricing ranges of formal providers mirror the patterns found in 2012-13.

It is not possible to make direct comparisons of childcare costs in the holidays with those incurred during term time. This is due to questions about term-time childcare being based on the reference term-time week, and questions about holiday childcare being based on the whole of the previous holiday period.

	Amount paid per day			
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted Base
Use of holiday childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare</i>				
Formal providers				
Childminder	33.55	38.42	2.55	(82)
Holiday club/ scheme	20.00	25.52	1.59	(394)
Breakfast club	[20.00]	[22.97]	[4.92]	(12)
After-school club	12.27	21.47	2.75	(142)

Table 8.10: Amount paid for holiday childcare per day, by provider type

⁸⁷ For information about the conventions followed when presenting mean and median values of continuous data, see Section 1.5. For further information about the collection and analysis of cost data in the survey, see Section 5.2.

Table 8.11 provides some additional context for these figures by showing the number of hours per day that each type of childcare provider was typically used for during the school holidays. Childminders and holiday clubs/schemes were used for the longest (median of 8.0 hours and 6.2 hours respectively). After-school clubs were used for a shorter period of time (5.0 hours per day). These time periods are in line with those recorded in 2012-13.

	Hours per day			
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted Base
Use of holiday childcare	Hrs	Hrs		
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare</i>				
Formal providers				
Childminder	8.0	7.7	0.28	(88)
Holiday club/ scheme	6.2	7.2	0.27	(392)
Breakfast club	[8.0]	[7.0]	[0.75]	(13)
After-school club	5.0	5.2	0.48	(156)

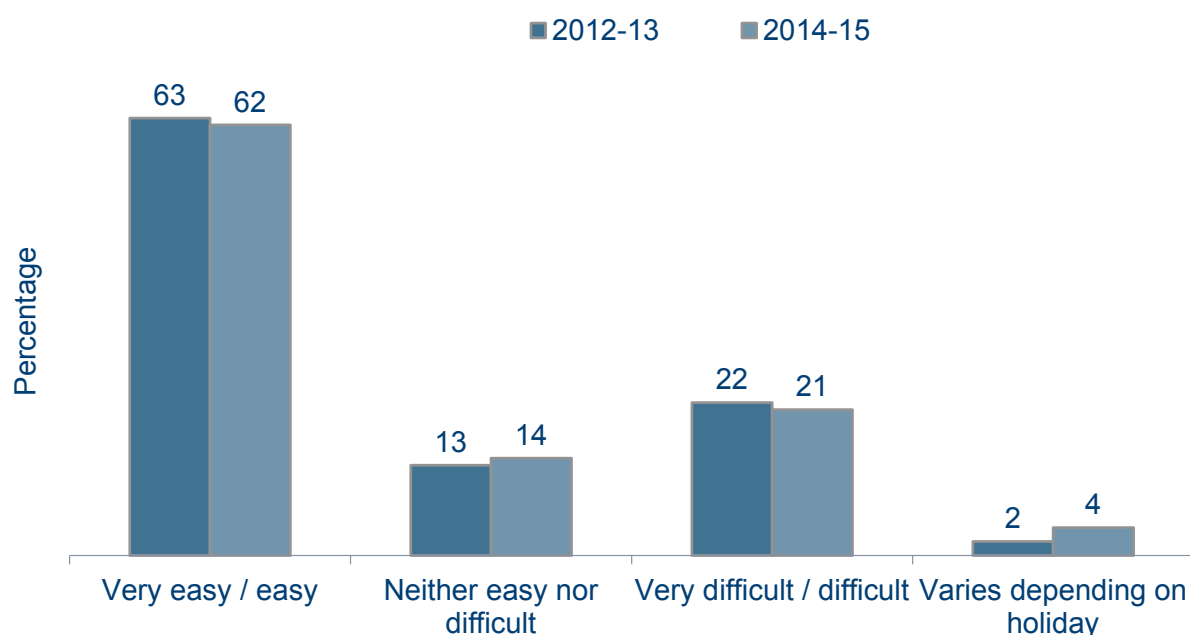
Table 8.11: Hours of holiday childcare used per day, by provider type

The average (median) hourly cost of holiday childcare was £4.46 for childminders, and £3.13 for after-school clubs, similar to the hourly costs incurred during term-time of £4.50 and £3.12 respectively (see Table 5.4).

8.5 Availability of holiday childcare

Ease of finding holiday childcare for working parents

As discussed in section 8.2, 21 per cent of working parents with school-age children reported that their job enabled them to work during term time only. Parents who worked during the school holidays and had school-age children were asked about the ease or difficulty of organising childcare in the school holidays. Over three in five (62%) parents reported that it was very easy or easy to arrange childcare during the holiday periods, with 21 per cent reporting it was difficult or very difficult (see Figure 8.2). The proportion of parents who found it easy to organise childcare in the school holidays is in line with that recorded in 2012-13.



Base: All families of school-age children who had used holiday childcare and where the parent(s) did not report being able to work in term-time only (2012: 1,146, 2014: 1,134)

Source: Table C8.3 in Appendix C

Figure 8.2: Ease/difficulty of arranging childcare in the school holidays

Those parents who found it difficult or very difficult to arrange childcare during the school holidays were asked why they found it difficult. Table 8.12 shows that just over half (51%) said that it was due to friends or family being unavailable to help with childcare. Other reasons included affordability (36%), holiday clubs not offering times that fitted with parents' working hours (22%) and not many places/ providers being in their local area (21%).

Reasons for difficulties	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday care and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/very difficult</i>	(360)
Friends/ Family not always available to help	51
Difficult to afford	36
Holiday clubs do not fit with working hours	22
Not many places/ providers in my area	21
Difficult to find out what childcare/ holiday clubs are available in my area	17
Quality of some childcare/ clubs is not good	5
My children need special care	5
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/ clubs	5
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/ clubs in the past	2
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I need	1
Other reason	3

Table 8.12: Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare

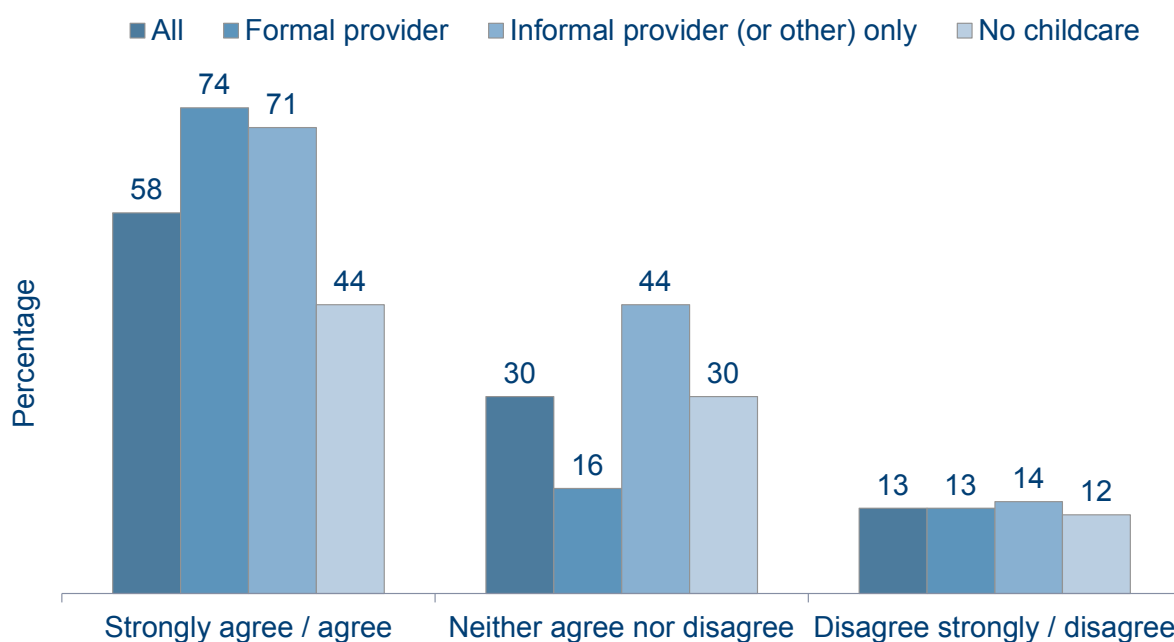
Table C8.5 (in Appendix C) explores the reasons why families had experienced difficulties in arranging holiday childcare by rurality. Families living in urban areas were more likely to mention affordability as a reason than those in rural areas (38% and 19% respectively).

8.6 Parents' views of childcare used during school holidays

Parents were asked for their views on the quality, flexibility, and affordability of childcare available during the school holidays (see Figures 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5). Parents' opinions are also analysed by whether they used formal provision, informal provision (or another type of provision) only, or no childcare during the holidays.

Nearly three in five (58%) parents were happy with the quality of childcare available to them during the holidays (Figure 8.3), just over half (52%) said they didn't have problems finding holiday childcare flexible enough to meet their needs (Figure 8.4), and 44 per cent said that they did not have any difficulties finding childcare they could afford during school holidays (Figure 8.5).

I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays

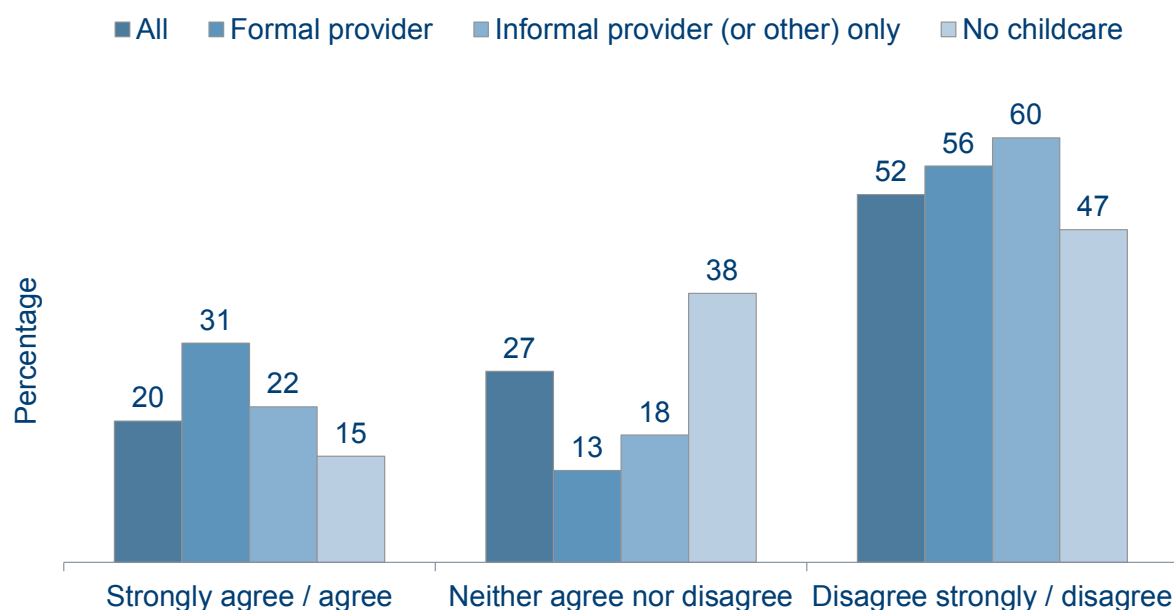


Base: All families with school-age children (5,295)

Source: Table C8.6 in Appendix C

Figure 8.3: Views about quality of holiday childcare, by use of holiday childcare

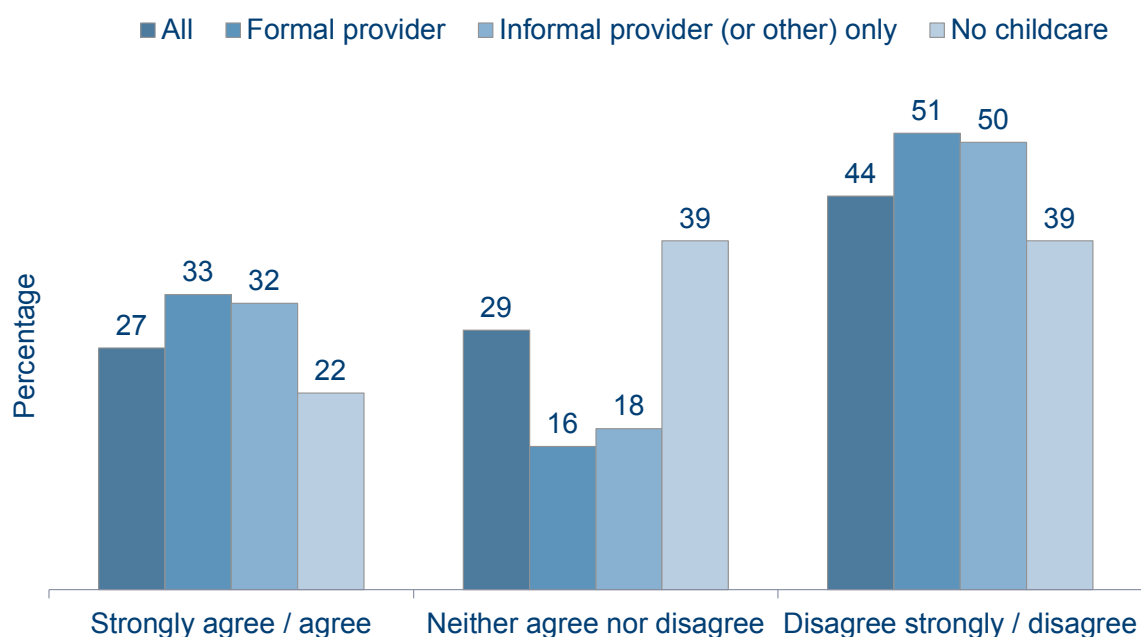
I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs



Base: All families with school-age children (5,295)

Source: Table 8.6 in Appendix C

Figure 8.4: Views about flexibility of holiday childcare, by use of holiday childcare

I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays

Base: All families with school-age children (5,295)

Source: Table 8.18 in Appendix C

Figure 8.5: Views about affordability of holiday childcare, by use of holiday childcare

Nevertheless, a small proportion of parents reported difficulties with these three aspects of childcare provision during the holidays. Around one in eight (13%) parents were not happy with the quality of childcare available during the school holidays, 20 per cent said they had problems finding holiday childcare that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 27 per cent said they had difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays.

Since 2012-13, there has been a fall in the proportion of parents experiencing difficulties finding affordable childcare during the school holidays (32% in 2012-13 compared with 27% in 2014-15). Overall, however, and as seen in previous years, the data suggests that the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday childcare continue to pose problems for some parents.

Parents who did not use any form of childcare during the holidays were (understandably) less likely to express an opinion about the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday childcare. Indeed, around two in five parents who used no holiday childcare said they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with any of the three statements. It is important to bear in mind, however, that some of those not using childcare in holiday periods may not have had a need for such a service during this time, and were therefore less likely to have encountered any issues with flexibility and affordability. For example, while 22 per cent of parents who had not used childcare reported having difficulties finding affordable childcare during the school holidays, this proportion increased to 33 per cent among

parents using formal childcare provision during the holidays, and to 32 per cent among those using informal provision only. Similarly, 15 per cent of parents using no holiday childcare felt that the flexibility of childcare was problematic compared with 31 per cent of parents using formal providers, and 22 per cent of those using informal childcare.

The findings suggest that there is an unmet demand among parents who did not use any holiday childcare, as a minority of these parents had experienced problems with quality, flexibility and affordability.

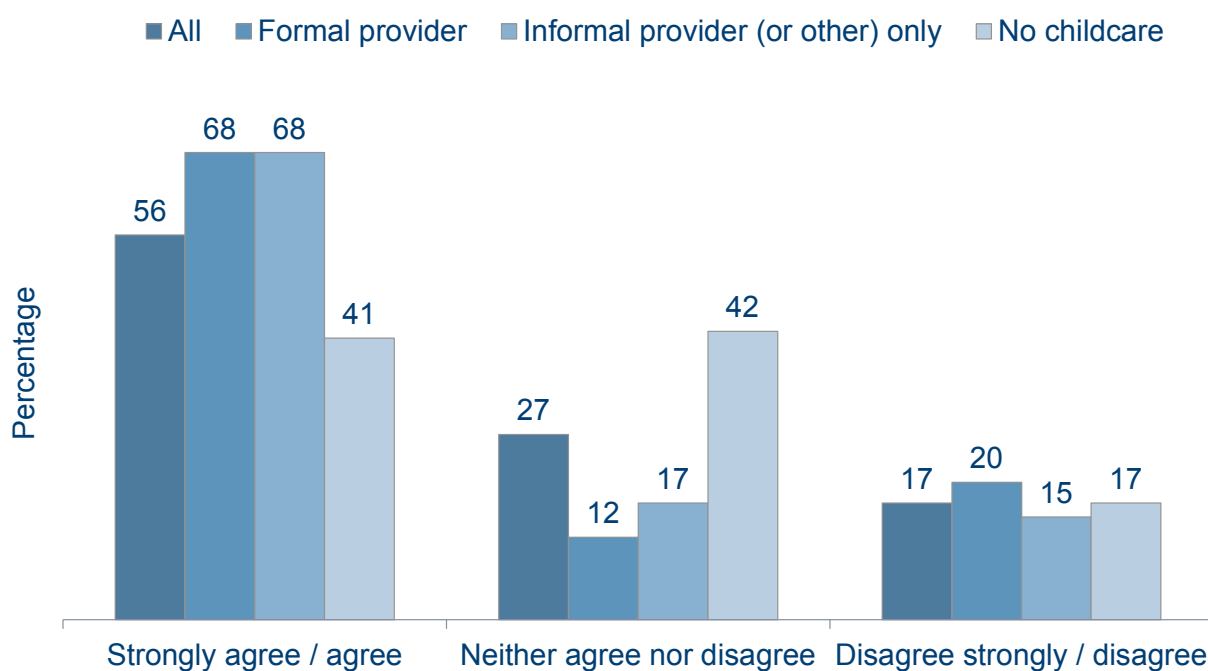
Among dual-working couples, over three in five (63%) were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available during the school holiday (Table C8.7 in Appendix C). Similarly, 61 per cent of working lone parent families were happy with the quality of holiday childcare provision. However, levels of satisfaction dropped for couples where only one parent worked (50%) and fell further for both non-working couples and non-working lone-parent families (46% each). This may reflect a lack of demand among families where one or both parents were not working, and indeed the proportions not expressing an opinion were higher among couples where one parent worked (39%) than dual-working couple families (25%).

Working lone-parent families and families where both parents worked were also more likely to report that they had problems finding childcare that was flexible during the school holidays (24% and 23% respectively) (Table C8.7 in Appendix C). Couples where one parent worked were less likely to have had difficulties finding childcare that was flexible during the school holidays (14%), as was also the case with non-working couple families (11%) and non-working lone-parent families (17%).

Around a third (34 per cent) of working lone-parent families, and just under a third (30%) of non-working lone-parent families, said cost was problematic (Table C8.7 in Appendix C). Among dual-working couple families this proportion was 26 per cent, and among couple families with one partner in work this proportion was 23 per cent. The results indicate that affordability posed a particular difficulty for lone parents, and that this may have acted as a barrier to accessing holiday childcare.

Parents in employment were asked about their ability to find childcare during holiday periods that fitted with their (and their partner's) working hours. Figure 8.6 shows that over half (56%) of parents were able to find holiday childcare that fitted their working hours. This compares with 51 per cent of families that said they could find term-time childcare that fitted their working hours (see Figure 6.9).

I am able to find holiday care that fits in with my/ (mine and my partner's working hours)



Base: All families with school-age children where respondent worked (3,277)

Source: Table 8.18 in Appendix C

Figure 8.6: Views about holiday childcare fitting with working hours, by use of holiday childcare

Working parents were asked if they would increase the number of hours they worked if holiday childcare was cheaper, or was available for more hours per day.

Around one in four (23%) parents said they would increase their working hours if childcare was more affordable, and almost one in five (18%) said they would increase their working hours if holiday childcare was available for more hours per day (table not shown).

8.7 Families who did not use holiday childcare

This section focuses on families who did not use any childcare during school holidays, and the reasons for this. As shown in section 8.2, just over half (53%) of families with school-age children did not use any childcare in the school holidays. Parents who were not using any holiday childcare were asked if they would be likely to use it if suitable childcare could be found. Two in five (39%) said that this would make them likely to use holiday childcare (table not shown).

Table 8.2 showed that only 31 per cent of families who used formal childcare during term time also used formal childcare in the holidays. Over one in four (27%) parents who used formal providers during term time said that their provider(s) remained open during the holidays. Four per cent said that this was the case for some formal providers, but the majority (60%) said that none of their formal term-time provider(s) was open during school holiday periods (table not shown).

Almost two in five (37%) of families whose formal term-time providers were not open during the school holidays said they would be likely to use formal holiday childcare were it available (table not shown). This suggests there was a considerable level of unmet demand for childcare during the holidays among those families who used formal providers during term time but not in the holidays.

Parents who used formal providers during term time but not in the holidays, and whose term-time providers were open during the holidays, were asked why they had not used childcare in the school holidays in the last year. Table 8.13 suggests that these parents were most likely not to use holiday childcare because they did not need to: half (50%) of parents preferred to look after their children themselves, one in five (20%) were at home or their partner was available, and a similar proportion (19%) said they rarely needed to be away from their children. One in ten (10%) mentioned that it was too expensive.

Reasons	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who used formal childcare in term time but not in school holidays, and whose term-time provider was open during school holidays</i>	(502)
Preferred to look after children myself	50
Respondent/ partner is at home during school holidays	20
Rarely needed to be away from children	19
Too expensive/ cost	10
Children old enough to look after themselves	3
Did not fit my/ partner's working hours	2
Children need special care	3
Had a bad childcare experience in past	0
Would have had transport difficulties	*
No providers available I could trust	1
Couldn't find a place/ local providers full	2
Quality not good enough	1
My child(ren) do not want to go/no interest	*
Other	9

Table 8.13: Reasons for not using holiday childcare

8.8 Summary

In line with the findings from the 2012-13 survey, just under half (47%) of families with school-age children used childcare during the school holidays. Consistent with previous surveys in the series, families were more likely to use informal childcare in the holidays (34%) than formal childcare (24%).

The use of childcare during holiday periods varied both by parents' working status and their patterns of work. Parents in employment were more likely than those who were not working to use both formal and informal childcare. Parents whose job allowed them to work during term time only were less likely to use holiday childcare, both formal and informal, than those whose job required them to work during term time and holidays.

Families' use of childcare during the school holidays was linked to their use of childcare during term time. Over half (52%) of families with school-age children who used any form of term-time childcare also used childcare during the holiday. On the other hand, nearly three-quarters (73%) of families who did not use childcare during term time also did not use childcare in the holidays.

School-age children were more likely to have received formal care during term time than during the school holidays (55% compared with 21%, respectively), and this pattern also pertained to informal childcare (31% and 24% respectively). Looking more closely at the variation in childcare provision between term time and holidays, after-school clubs were the provider with the greatest fluctuation in use. Across both term time and holiday

periods, grandparents were the most commonly used informal provider (18% and 16%, respectively).

The use of childcare in the holidays varied by family circumstance and by children's characteristics. Children in families with higher household incomes and those living in less deprived areas were more likely to have received both formal and informal childcare than children from lower-income households and those living in more deprived areas. Children aged 5 to 11 were more likely than older school-age children to have received formal holiday childcare. Children's ethnic background was also related to their receipt of childcare: children from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other Asian and Black African backgrounds were less likely than children from other ethnic groups to receive either formal or informal holiday childcare provision. Children with special educational needs, and those with a disability, were more likely than those without to use an informal childcare provider.

The average cost of holiday childcare varied considerably by provider type. Parents paid a median of £12.27 per day for after-school clubs that remained open during the school holidays, rising to £20.00 for holiday clubs/ schemes, and £33.55 for childminders. It is important to bear in mind that children attended childminders for longer than any other formal provider, which is reflected in the higher cost. The number of hours per day for which families used formal providers in the holidays is in line with 2012-13.

Most parents (62%) who worked during the school holidays said that it was easy to arrange childcare for these periods (in line with 2012-13); however, 21 per cent felt it was difficult to do so. Similarly, while the majority (58%) of parents were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available, one in five (20%) said they had trouble finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs, and over a quarter (27%) said they had difficulty finding childcare they could afford.

Over half (53%) of families with school-age children did not use any childcare in the holidays. The most commonly cited reasons for this (among families that used formal providers during term time that were open during holidays) were that they preferred to look after their children themselves (50%), that they or their partner was at home during the holidays (20%), and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (19%).

9. Mothers, childcare and work

Key findings:

- Two thirds of mothers (66%) were in employment, in line with the proportion recorded in 2012-13 (64%).
- Overall, 31 per cent of mothers worked atypical hours (defined as working before 8am or after 6pm on at least three days every week, or working every Saturday or every Sunday). The most common atypical working patterns were working after 6pm on at least three days every week, and working before 8am on at least three days every week
- Mothers who had returned to work in the previous two years were most likely to say that finding a job which enabled them to combine work and childcare had influenced their return to work (mentioned by 30%). Mothers who had transitioned from part-time to full-time work in the previous two years most commonly reported that a job opportunity/promotion (36%) or their financial situation (28%) had influenced them to make the transition.
- Almost half (46%) of working mothers said that having reliable childcare helped them to go out to work. Relatives helping with childcare (42%) and children being at school (38%) were also helpful factors for many.
- Around a third (34%) of mothers were not working at the time of the survey, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (36%). Around half (53%) of non-working mothers agreed or strongly agreed that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable. On the other hand, more than a third of working mothers (36%) agreed that if they could afford to give up work, they would prefer to stay at home and look after their children

Interpreting the data: For an explanation of the methodology used in the study and the conventions followed in the tables, figures and commentary in this report, please refer to Sections 1.4 and 1.5.

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter we explore the relationship between childcare and work, focusing primarily on mothers who were in paid work at the time of the survey. The chapter starts with an overview of mothers' working patterns and a discussion of the prevalence of mothers working atypical hours (section 9.2). The following sections discuss the influences on transition into the labour market (section 9.3) and movement from part-time to full-time work (section 9.4). Section 9.5 explores the factors which enabled mothers to go out to work, after which we discuss mothers' ideal working arrangements, including whether they would prefer to give up work, or to work a greater or lesser number of hours (section 9.6). The experiences of self-employed mothers are detailed in section 9.7. The final section of the chapter (section 9.8) focuses on the reasons why mothers who were not in employment at the time of the survey were not working.

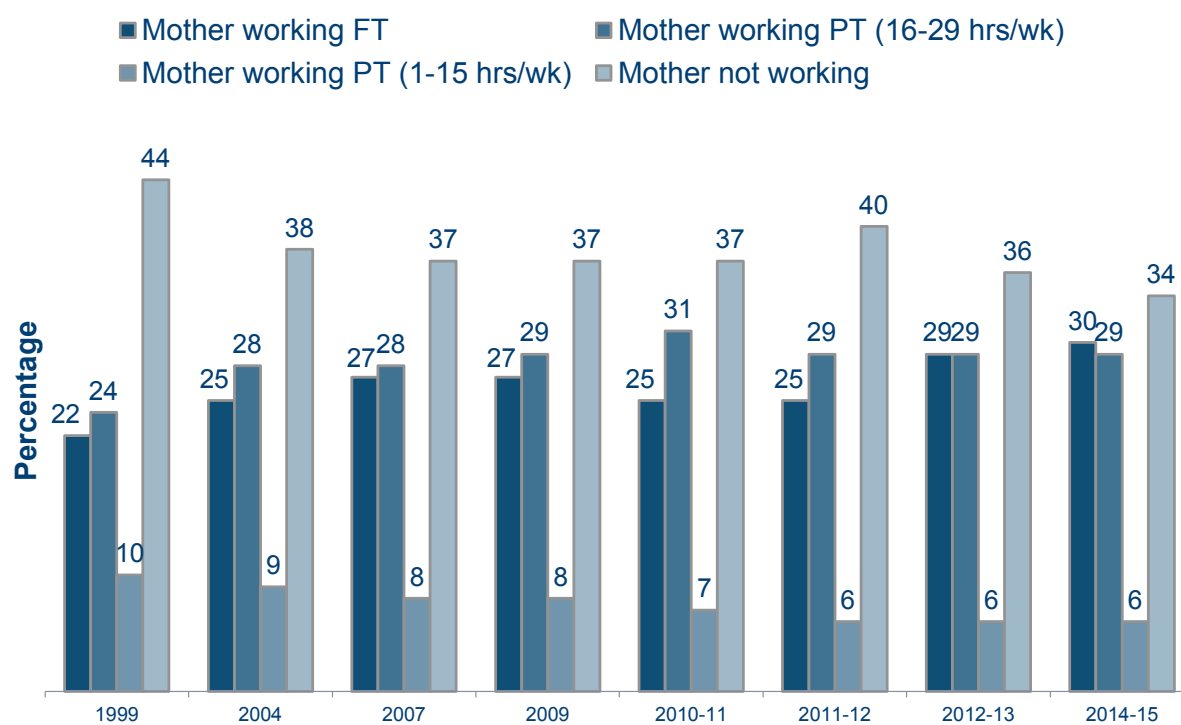
The experiences of partnered mothers and lone mothers are compared throughout the analysis. This is because whether a mother has a partner or not is likely to affect the affordability of childcare and the availability of the child's father to provide childcare. These factors affect the choices open to mothers, as well as their opportunities to work. Variations in mothers' employment choices and experiences are also discussed in relation to their educational attainment and occupational level, with further analysis provided in Appendix C.

As the experience of mothers is central to the chapter, lone fathers (1% of the sample, 65 unweighted cases) and two parent families where the father was the respondent (11% of the sample, 668 cases) have been excluded from the analysis. The exception to this is the analysis of family work patterns (Figures 9.3 and 9.4 and Table 9.4), for which these respondents are included.

9.2 Overview of work patterns

Maternal work patterns

Two-thirds (66%) of mothers were in employment, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (64%), as shown in Figure 9.1.



Base: All mothers (6118 in 2014-15)

Source: Table C9.1 in Appendix C

Figure 9.1: Changes in maternal employment 1999 to 2014-15

Working patterns varied by family type, with partnered mothers being more likely to be in employment than lone mothers (68% compared with 59% respectively, see Table 9.1). This pattern is particularly salient when examining the figures for full-time work: 32 per cent of partnered mothers worked full time compared with 26 per cent of lone mothers.

The proportions of mothers working full time or working part time are in line with 2012-13 for both partnered and lone mothers.

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Maternal employment	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(4,636)	(1,482)	(6,118)
Mother working FT	32	26	30
Mother working PT (16-29 hrs/ wk)	29	29	29
Mother working PT (1-15 hrs/ wk)	7	4	6
Mother not working	32	41	34

Table 9.1: Maternal employment, by family type

Mothers were asked whether they worked atypical hours. Working atypical hours is defined as working before 8am or after 6am on at least three days every week, or working every Saturday or every Sunday.⁸⁸

Overall, 31 per cent of mothers worked atypical hours. The most common atypical working patterns were working after 6pm on at least three days every week, and working before 8am on at least three days every week (see Table 9.2). Atypical working patterns were similar between partnered and lone mothers, although lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to work every Saturday (12% compared with 9%).

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Atypical working hours	%	%	%
<i>Base: All working mothers</i>	(2,699)	(742)	(3,441)
Any atypical hours	30	32	31
Before 8am at least three days every week	13	13	13
After 6pm at least three days every week	16	15	15
Every Saturday	9	12	10
Every Sunday	6	7	6

Table 9.2: Atypical working hours, by family type

Table 9.3 shows the atypical hours worked by mothers with different working arrangements. Almost two in five (38%) mothers working full time worked atypical hours, compared with one in four (25%) among mothers working part time for 16 to 29 hours, and one in five (18%) among mothers working part time for 1 to 15 hours.

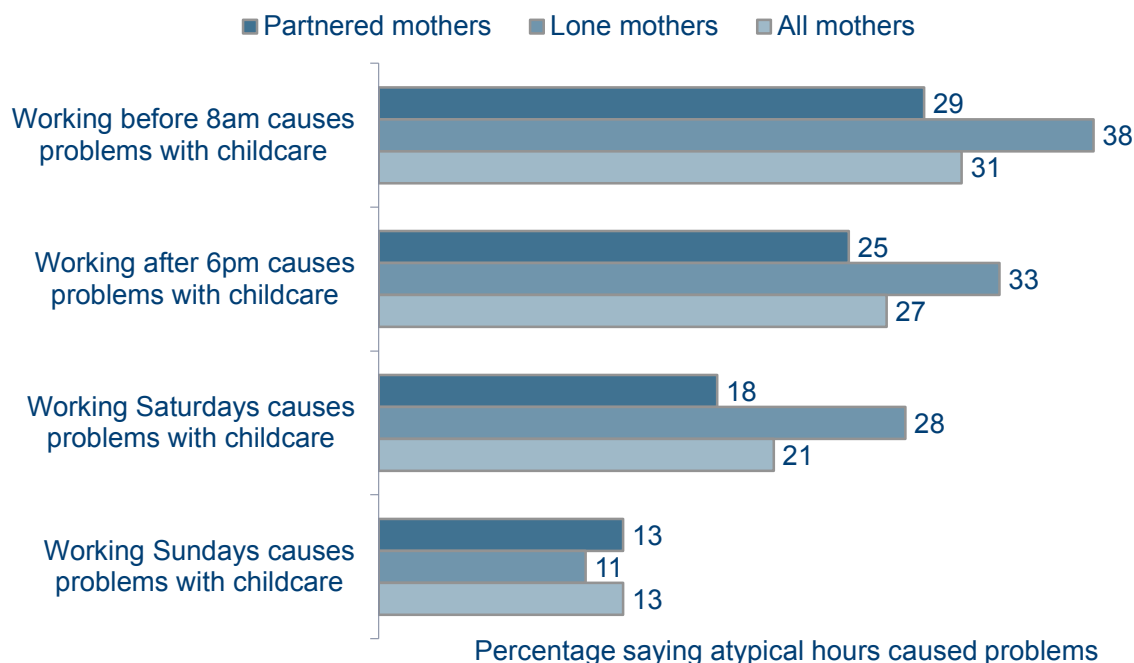
Mothers in full-time employment were more likely to have worked before 8am (21%) or after 6pm (22%) on at least three days every week than those working part time. In relation to early morning work, there was also a difference between mothers working a longer part-time week and those working fewer part-time hours. Those working 16 to 29 hours were far more likely to work before 8am than those working fewer hours (8% compared with 1%).

⁸⁸ This differs from the definition used in the 2011-12 survey, in which atypical hours were defined as usually working before 8am, after 6am, or on Saturdays or on Sundays. The definition was changed in the 2012-13 survey in order to make it more specific.

	Mothers' work status			
	Working full time	Working part time 16-29 hrs/wk	Working part time 1-15 hrs/wk	All mothers
Atypical working hours	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All working mothers</i>	(1,455)	(362)	(1,624)	(3,441)
Any atypical hours	38	25	18	31
Before 8am at least three days every week	21	8	1	13
After 6pm at least three days every week	22	10	9	15
Every Saturday	10	10	8	10
Every Sunday	6	7	7	6

Table 9.3: Atypical working hours, by mothers' work status

Mothers who worked atypical hours were asked whether this caused difficulties with their childcare arrangements (Figure 9.2). The atypical working arrangements most likely to cause problems were working before 8am (31%) or after 6pm (27%) at least three days a week. There were no major differences between partnered and lone mothers in the proportion reporting that working atypical hours caused problems with childcare.



Base: All mothers working respective arrangements of atypical hours
Source: Table C9.3 in Appendix C

Figure 9.2: Whether atypical working hours caused problems with childcare, by family type

Family work patterns

The two most common employment patterns for couple families were for both parents to be in full-time employment (28%), and for one partner to be in full-time employment and the other in part-time employment of 16 to 29 hours per week (also 28%) (Figure 9.3). This was followed by couple families with one parent working full time, and the other not in employment (26%).

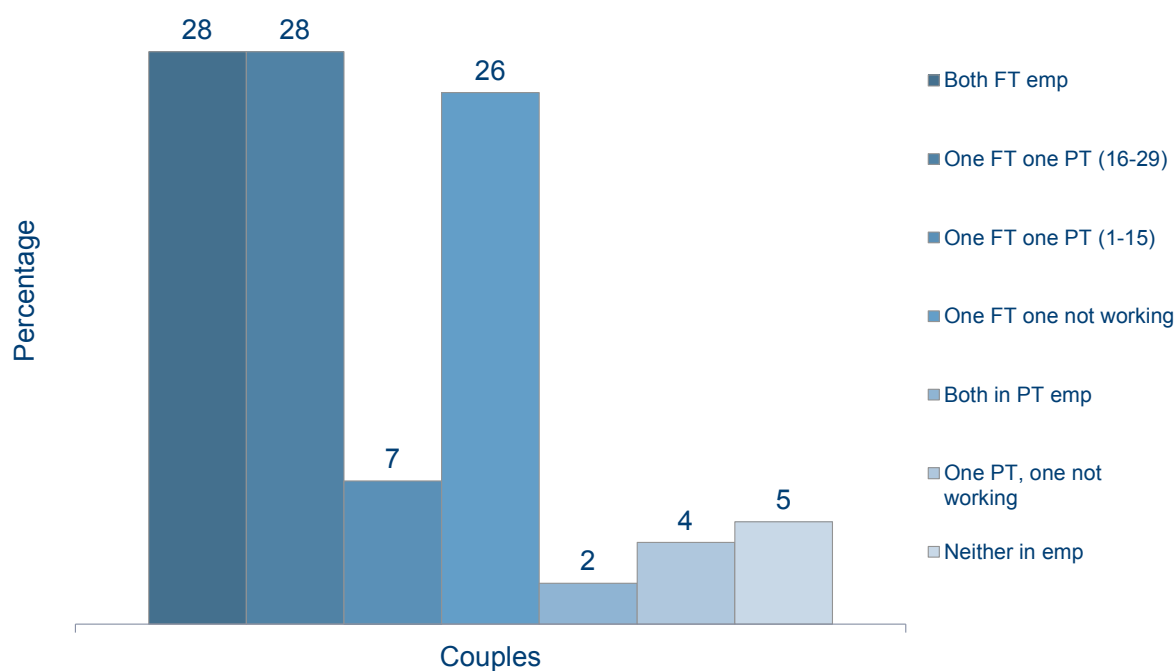


Figure 9.3: Employment status among couple families

Among lone parent families, two in five (41%) were not in employment, over one quarter (28%) worked full time, and the same proportion (28%) were working part time for 16 to 29 hours per week (Figure 9.4).

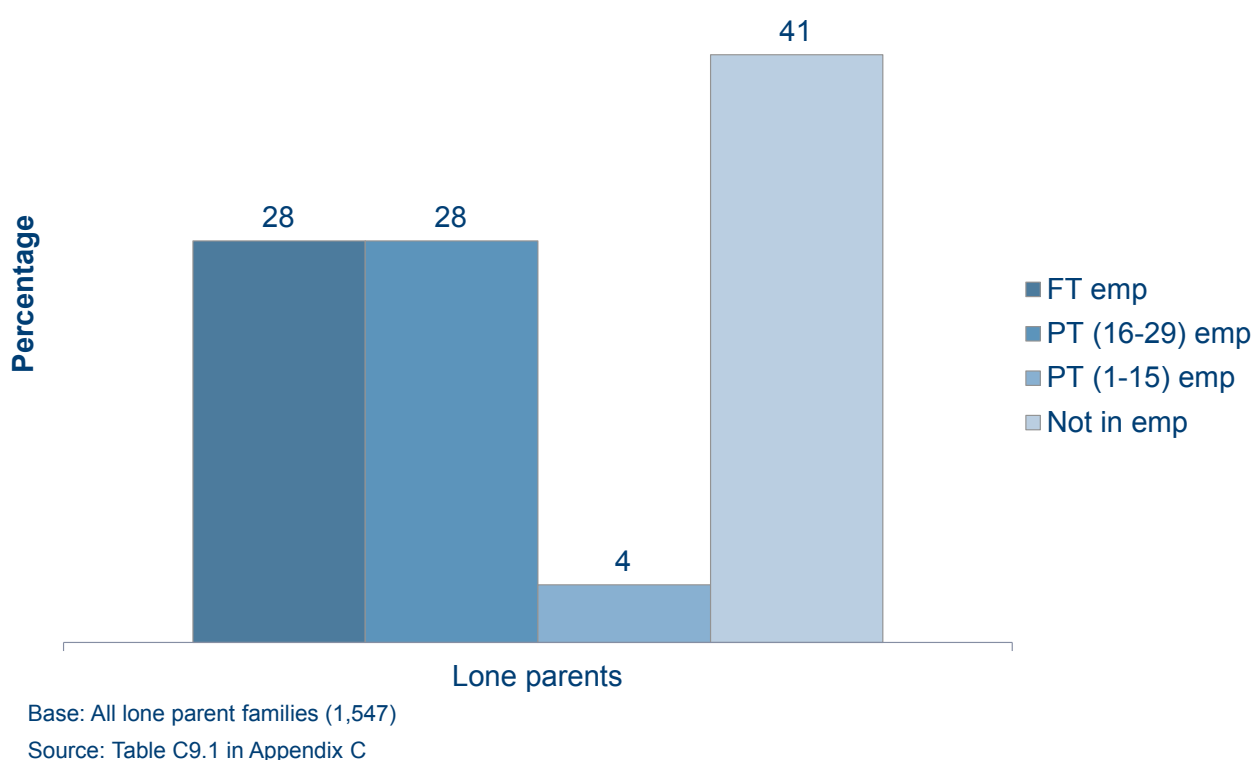


Figure 9.4: Employment status among lone parent families

Table 9.4 shows how atypical working patterns vary by family type. Over half (52%) of all working families worked some atypical hours. The majority (57%) of couple families included a partner who worked some atypical hours. The proportion of lone parents working atypical hours was lower, at just under a third (32%).

Among couples, the most common atypical working arrangements were working before 8am or after 6pm at least three days a week (37% and 34% respectively). Lone parents were equally likely (all 14%) to undertake work before 8am, work after 6pm, or work every Saturday or Sunday.

	Family type		
	Couple families	Lone parents	All
Atypical working hours	%	%	%
<i>Base: All working families</i>	(4,356)	(802)	(5,158)
Any atypical hours	57	32	52
Before 8am at least three days a week	37	14	28
After 6pm at least three days a week	34	14	30
Every Saturday or Sunday	19	14	18

Table 9.4: Atypical working hours, by family type

9.3 Transition into work

Mothers who had entered work within the last two years were asked about the influences behind this. Table 9.5 shows that the most common reason for taking up work was finding a job that enabled them to combine work and childcare, mentioned by 30 per cent of mothers.

Other influences were children starting school (15%), wanting financial independence (13%), wanting to get out the house (12%), feeling that children were old enough to use childcare (12%), and their financial situation (11%).

Partnered mothers were more likely than lone mothers to mention their financial situation as a reason for entering work (14% compared with 6%), whereas lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to mention becoming eligible for tax credits as a reason for entering work (four per cent, compared with less than half of one per cent of partnered mothers).

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Influences	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers who entered work in past two years</i>	(250)	(159)	(409)
Found job that enabled me to combine work and children	31	30	30
Children started school	13	17	15
Wanted financial independence	11	17	13
Wanted to get out of the house	10	15	12
Children old enough to use childcare	14	10	12
Financial situation	14	6	11
Family became available/willing to help with childcare	7	7	7
Finished studying/training/education	6	7	6
Children old enough to look after themselves	5	4	5
Job opportunity arose	3	1	3
My health improved	2	5	3
End of maternity leave	3	1	2
Became eligible for tax credits	*	4	2
Appropriate childcare became available	2	0	1
Became eligible for other financial help with childcare cost	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1

Table 9.5: Influences for entering paid work, by family type⁸⁹

9.4 Transition from part-time to full-time work

Three per cent of mothers who took part in the survey had moved from part-time to full-time employment in the last two years, thereby increasing their working hours. These mothers were asked why they had made this transition. The responses are presented in Table 9.6. The two most common reasons were a job opportunity or promotion (36%) and a change in their financial situation (28%), for example their partner losing their job. One in ten mothers mentioned that the transition was because they felt their children were old enough to use childcare (11%), or were old enough to look after themselves (10%).

⁸⁹ The use of an asterisk in a table denotes that a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

Reasons	%
<i>Base: Mothers who moved from part-time to full-time work in the past two years</i>	<i>(150)</i>
Job opportunity/promotion	36
Financial situation (for example partner lost job)	28
Children old enough to use childcare	11
Children old enough to look after themselves	10
Children started school	9
Employer enforced/demanded full-time hours	8
Found job that enabled me to combine work and children	7
Family became available/willing to help with childcare	6
Wanted financial independence	6
Appropriate childcare became available	3
Self-employed and business required FT hours	2
Wanted to get out of the house	1
Finished studying/training/education	1
Became eligible for financial help with childcare cost	0
Became eligible for Tax Credits or Family Credit	0
My health improved	0
Other	2

Table 9.6: Reasons for moving from part-time to full-time work, by family type

Mothers who worked part time were asked whether they would like to increase the hours that they worked, or move into full-time employment if there were no barriers to doing so. Around one in three (32%) mothers said that they would increase their hours, while still working part time (see Table 9.7). Fifteen per cent said that they would switch to full-time employment. The majority (53%), however, said that they would not wish to make any changes to their current working hours.

Mothers working part time 1 to 15 hours per week were more likely than those working 16 to 29 hours per week to say they would like to increase the hours they worked, while still working part time (41% compared with 29%). Mothers working 16 to 29 hours were more likely than those working fewer hours to say they would not change their working hours.

	Mothers' work status		
	Working part time 16-29 hrs/wk	Working part time 1-15 hrs/wk	All
Changes to working hours if there were no barrier to doing so	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers working part time</i>	(1,523)	(341)	(1,864)
Would increase hours	29	41	32
Would work full time	14	17	15
Would not change working hours	57	41	53

Table 9.7: Changes to working hours, by mothers' work status

The desire to increase working hours varied by family type. Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to say they would like to increase their hours but stay part-time (39% compared with 29%) (see Table 9.8). They were also more likely to say that they would work full time (22% compared with 12%). Conversely, mothers in couples were more likely to say they would not make any changes to their working hours.

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Changes to working hours if there were no barrier to doing so	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers working part time</i>	(1,479)	(451)	(1,930)
Would increase hours	29	39	32
Would work full time	12	22	15
Would not change working hours	58	40	53

Table 9.8: Changes to working hours, by family type

Mothers who said they would like to work full time or to increase their hours were asked what changes would help them to make this transition (Table 9.9). The most common response, given by two in five (40%) mothers, was being able to afford suitable childcare. One in four (25%) mothers said that the ability to work flexi-time would help, and a similar proportion mentioned being given the option to work more hours by their employer (23%). Around one in five (21%) mothers said that help from relatives or friends with childcare would help while 18 per cent said more good quality local childcare being available would help.

Factors	%
<i>Base: All mothers working part time who would like to increase their hours, or work full time</i>	(908)
If I was able to afford suitable childcare	40
If I was able to work flexi-time	25
If my employer gave me the option of working more hours/working full-time	23
If relatives or friends were able to help with childcare	21
If there was good quality local childcare available	18
If my partner was able to change their working arrangements	10
Other	21
None of these reasons	1

Table 9.9: Factors that would help mothers change their working hours

9.5 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work

Employed mothers reported a variety of childcare arrangements which helped them to go out to work, as shown in Table 9.10. Having reliable childcare was the most frequently cited arrangement, mentioned by almost half (46%) of mothers, followed by having relatives who could help with childcare (42%). Other factors included having all children at school (38%), or having childcare that fits with their working hours (34%).

There were a number of differences between partnered mothers and lone mothers in the childcare arrangements that helped them go out to work (see Table 9.10):

- Lone mothers (56%) were more likely to cite reliable childcare than partnered mothers (43%).
- Forty-six per cent of lone mothers cited children being at school as a factor that helped, compared with 35 per cent of partnered mothers.
- Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to cite help with childcare from relatives (53% compared with 39%).
- Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to mention free or cheap childcare (34% compared with 23%) or tax credits (16% compared with 2%).

Turning to reasons relevant to partnered mothers only, 17 per cent reported that they were helped in going to work because their childcare fitted with their partner's working hours, and 15 per cent because their partner helped with childcare. One in ten (10%) said that they were able to work when their partner was not working. Among lone mothers in work, one in five (19%) were able to work because their child's father helped with childcare.

Compared with 2012-13, employed mothers were less likely to cite having reliable childcare (46% in 2014-15 compared with 50% in 2012-13), having childcare that fitted with their working hours (34% compared with 38%), having good quality childcare (30%

compared with 34%) or having childcare that fitted with their partner's working hours (17% compared with 20%) as childcare arrangements that helped them go out to work.

As seen in previous waves of the survey, the proportion of employed mothers who reported that reliable childcare helped them go out to work varied according to their highest qualification. Mothers with A levels and above (49%) were more likely to report that reliable childcare helped them to work than those with O levels or GCSEs (40%), or those with lower or no academic qualifications (42%) (table not shown).

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Reason	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,467)	(666)	(3,133)
All mothers			
Have reliable childcare	43	56	46
Relatives help with childcare	39	53	42
Children at school	35	46	38
Childcare fits with working hours	32	38	34
Have good quality childcare	29	33	30
Have free/cheap childcare	23	34	25
Friends help with childcare	10	13	11
Children old enough to look after themselves	11	13	11
Help with childcare costs through tax credits	2	16	5
Employer provides/pays for childcare	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1
None of these	11	0	8
Partnered mothers			
Childcare fits partner's working hours	17	n/a	n/a
Partner helps with childcare	15	n/a	n/a
Mother works when partner does not work	10	n/a	n/a
Partner's employer provides/pays for childcare	1	n/a	n/a
Lone mothers			
Child(ren)'s father helps with childcare	n/a	19	n/a

Table 9.10: Childcare arrangements that helped mother to go out to work, by family type

In addition to the childcare arrangements that helped mothers enter employment, mothers in paid work were also asked about other factors that influenced their decision to work. These are presented in Table 9.11 and can be grouped into three categories: financial, work orientated (i.e. mothers' attitudes towards working) and flexible working.

The most frequently mentioned financial reason was that mothers needed the money (66%), followed by mothers liking to have their own money (46%). One in four (24%) mothers reported that they needed to keep contributing to their pension. There were differences in the financial influences by family type, with lone mothers more likely to report that they needed the money than partnered mothers (76% compared with 62%). Partnered mothers were more likely to say they needed to keep contributing to their pension (27% compared with 17%).

In terms of work orientated reasons, enjoyment of work was the most commonly mentioned influence (64%). A quarter (26%) of mothers said that wanting to get out of the

house was an influence, and a similar proportion said they would feel useless without a job (25%). A further 17 per cent of mothers said they continued working as their career would suffer if they took a break. Again, there were differences by family type. Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to say they would feel useless if they did not have a job (32% compared with 22%) and mothers in couples were more likely than lone mothers to say their career would suffer if they took a break (19% compared with 13%).

Smaller proportions of mothers referred to flexible working when describing the reasons they worked. Around one in seven (15%) mentioned that they could work because their job allowed them to work flexi-time, 12 per cent mentioned that they did not have to work during the school holidays, and 10 per cent mentioned that they could work at home some of the time. A smaller proportion (5%) mentioned that they could work from home most or all of the time. Partnered mothers were more likely than lone mothers to report that they did not have to work during the school holidays (13% compared with 10%), or that they could work from home some of the time (11% compared with 5%).

The proportions of mothers reporting the various influences on their decisions to go out to work are in line with the proportions recorded in 2012-13.

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Influences	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,364)	(742)	(3,106)
All mothers			
I need the money	62	76	66
I enjoy working	65	63	64
I like to have my own money	47	44	46
I want to get out of the house	26	27	26
I would feel useless without a job	22	32	25
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	27	17	24
My career would suffer if I took a break	19	13	17
I can work flexi-time	15	14	15
I don't have to work during school holidays	13	10	12
Childcare arrangements	10	13	11
I can work from home some of the time	11	5	10
I can work from home most/all of the time	5	4	5
Partnered mothers			
Partner can work flexi-time	4	n/a	n/a
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	2	n/a	n/a
Partner can work from home some of the time	6	n/a	n/a
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	2	n/a	n/a
Other	1	2	1
None of these	1	1	1

Table 9.11: Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by family type

There was variation in mothers' reasons for going out to work by their educational attainment (see Table C9.4 in Appendix C). Considering financial reasons, mothers with A levels or above (29%) were more likely than those with O-Levels/GCSEs (21%) or those with lower or no qualifications (19%) to say they needed to keep contributing to their pension.

The proportion of mothers reporting work orientated reasons also differed by educational attainment. One in four (25%) mothers with A levels or above said their career would suffer if they took a break, compared with less than one in ten mothers with O-levels/GCSEs (9%) or with lower or no qualifications (8%).

Mothers with A levels or higher were more likely than those with lower qualifications to say that being able to work from home some of the time helped them to work (13% of those with A levels or higher, compared with 5% of those with O-levels/GCSEs, and 6% of those with lower or no qualifications). Mothers with A levels or higher were also more

likely to mention their partner being able to work from home some of the time as a reason (8%, compared with 4% and 2%).

There were also differences between mothers in different socio-economic groups in terms of the influences on their decision to work (see Table 9.5 in Appendix C).⁹⁰ For instance, mothers in modern professional occupations and in traditional occupations were most likely to mention the need to keep contributing to their pension as an influence (39% and 34% respectively), while members of routine manual occupations and technical and craft occupations were the least likely to (6% and 11% respectively). Mothers in traditional professional occupations (43%) were also most likely to mention their career suffering if they took a break as an influence on their decision to work, while those in routine (1%), semi-routine (4%) or clerical occupations (8%) were least likely to provide this reason. Mothers in technical and craft occupations (75%) were most likely to say that their enjoyment of work was an influential factor on their decision to work, while mothers in routine manual occupations (48%) were the least likely to cite this reason.

⁹⁰ For detailed definitions of the socio-economic groups see Appendix B, section B12.

9.6 Ideal working arrangements

Mothers who were in work were asked for their views on different working arrangements: giving up work in order to look after their children, working fewer hours to spend more time looking after their children, or working more hours if they could arrange high quality childcare.

More than a third of mothers (36%) agreed that if they could afford to give up work, they would prefer to stay at home and look after their children (see Figure 9.5).

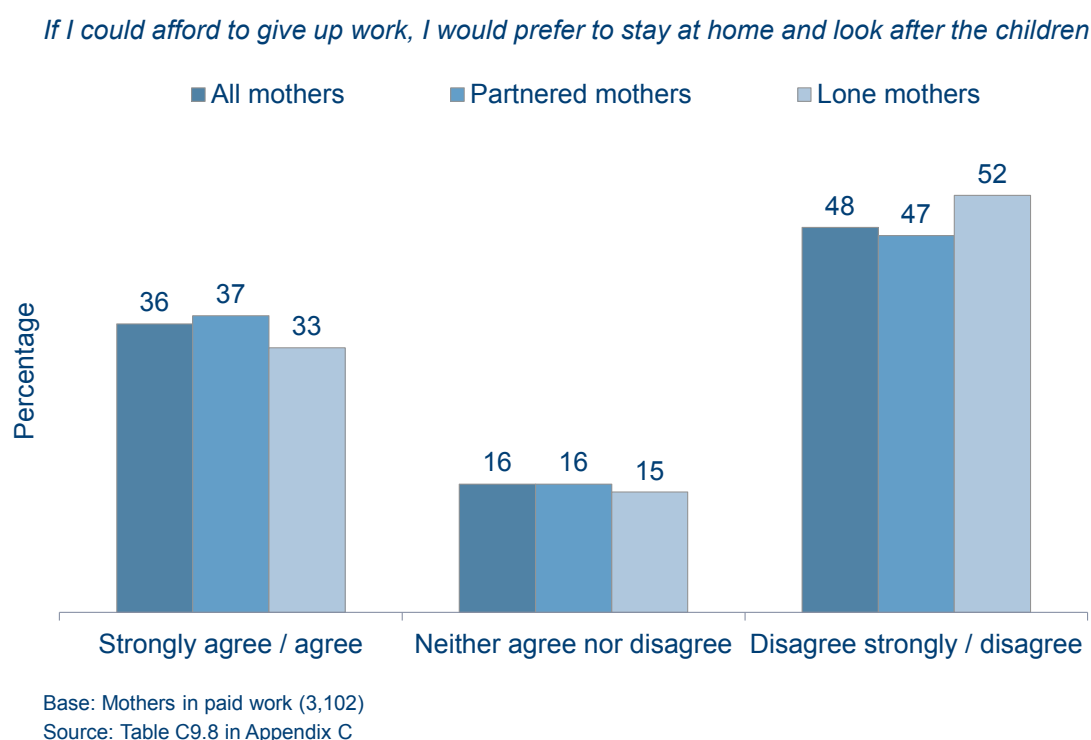
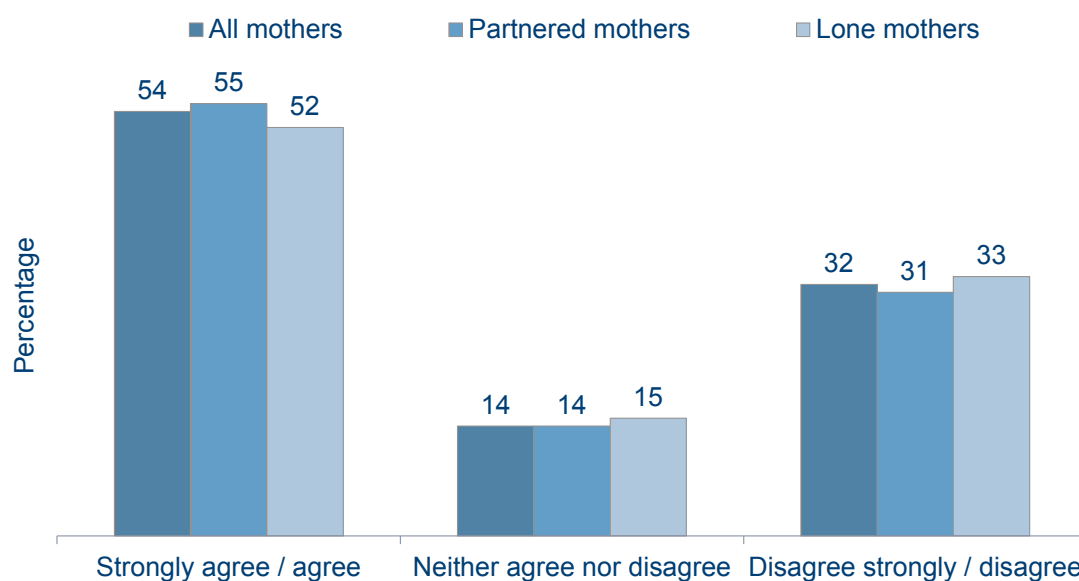


Figure 9.5: Views on giving up work, by family type

Just over half of mothers (54%) said they would like to work less and spend more time looking after their children if they could afford it (see Figure 9.6).

If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children



Base: Mothers in paid work (3,102)
Source: Table C9.8 in Appendix C

Figure 9.6: Views on working fewer hours, by family type

Almost a quarter of mothers (23%) said they would increase their working hours if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable (see Figure 9.7). By family type, lone mothers (31%) were more likely than partnered mothers (20%) to say that they would work more hours if they could find high quality, reliable and affordable childcare.

Mothers' views on all three of the working arrangements asked about (giving up work in order to look after their children, working fewer hours to spend more time looking after their children, and working more hours if they could arrange high quality childcare) were in line with their views in 2012-13.

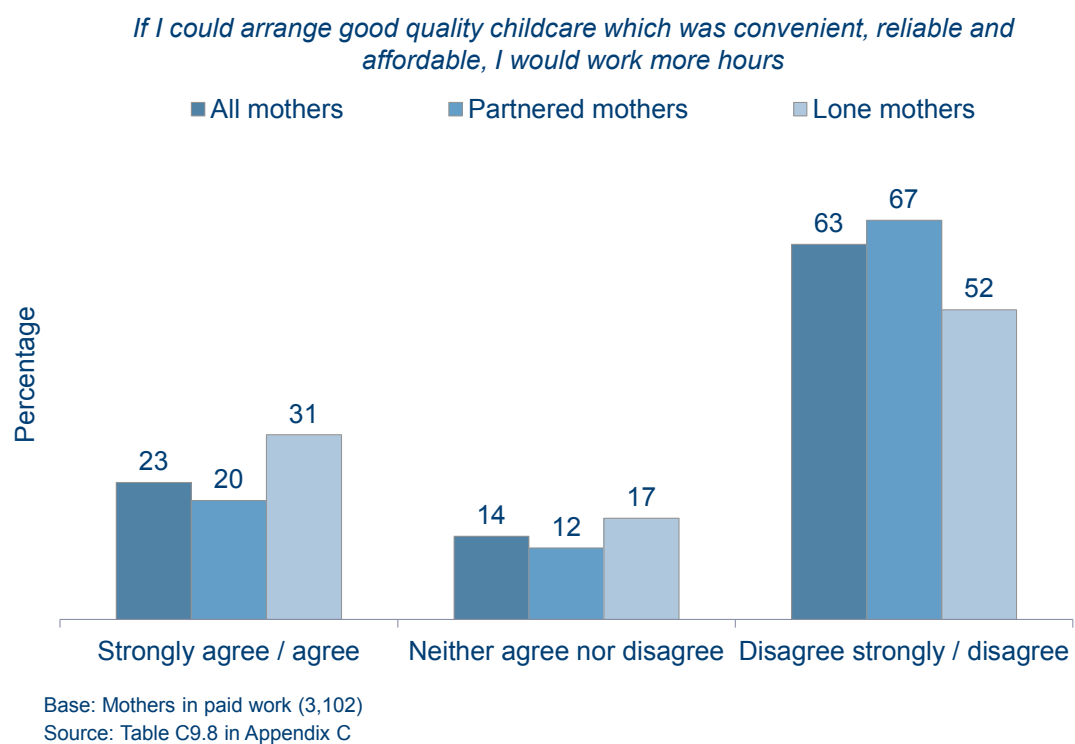


Figure 9.7: Views on working more hours, by family type

Mothers' views on working fewer hours differed according to their education status (see Table C9.8 in Appendix C). Mothers with A levels (57%) and those with O-levels/GCSEs (55%) were more likely than those with lower or no academic qualifications (45%) to want to work fewer hours if they could afford it.

Furthermore, there were differences in views on ideal working arrangements by socio-economic status. Mothers in higher socio-economic groups were more likely to say they would prefer to work fewer hours in order to spend more time looking after their children, if they could afford it (table not shown). Two in three (65%) mothers who worked in middle or junior management positions, and a similar proportion of mothers (63%) in traditional professional occupations, agreed that if they could afford it they would work fewer hours. In contrast, just 43 per cent of mothers in technical and craft occupations agreed with this statement (see Table C9.10 in Appendix C).

Mothers in higher socio-economic groups were also less likely to prefer to work more hours if they could arrange good quality childcare. Around one in five (19%) mothers in traditional professional occupations or in middle or junior management (20%) agreed they would like to increase their hours if they could arrange good quality childcare, compared with a third (33%) of those in routine manual and semi-routine manual occupations.

9.7 Mothers and self-employment

Previous waves of the survey have investigated the flexibility that self-employment offers in terms of combining work and looking after children, with reference to the ability to control the number of hours or particular days worked (Smith et al, 2010).

Twelve per cent of mothers surveyed were self-employed, an increase from the ten per cent recorded in 2012-13 (table not shown).

Self-employed mothers were as likely as employed mothers to have used childcare in the reference week (80% and 83% respectively) (table not shown). Furthermore, the proportions of self-employed and employed mothers using formal childcare were similar (66% and 68% respectively). However, employed mothers were more likely than self-employed mothers to have used informal childcare (49% and 40% respectively).

9.8 Mothers who were not in paid employment

Around a third (34%) of mothers were not working at the time of the survey, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (36%). All mothers who were not in paid employment were asked a series of questions about their attitudes towards work, their reasons for not working and if there were any personal circumstances which prevented them from working.

Over half (53%) of non-working mothers agreed that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, while 29 per cent disagreed (table not shown). These responses are in line with the 2012-13 survey.

The factors that influenced mothers' decisions not to work are shown in Table 9.12. Having childcare issues was the most commonly mentioned reason by mothers who were not in paid employment (21%). This was followed by mothers saying they could not earn enough to make work worthwhile (17%) and a lack of jobs with suitable hours (16%).

Some reasons for not working were more likely to be mentioned by lone mothers than by partnered mothers: childcare issues (24% for lone mothers compared to 19% for mothers in couples), a longstanding illness or disability (15% and 8%), not being well qualified (11% and 6%), studying or training (10% and 5%), and losing benefits (7% compared to 3%).

A number of reasons for not working were more likely to be mentioned by partnered mothers than lone mothers. These included a concern that they would not earn enough to make working worthwhile (19% for partnered mothers compared to 13% for lone mothers), already having enough money (12% compared to 2%), the job being too demanding to combine with bringing up children (11% and 7%), wanting to look after their children themselves (4% and 1%), and feeling that having a job was not very important to them (4% and 1% respectively).

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Reasons	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers not in paid work</i>	(1,558)	(723)	(2,281)
All mothers			
Childcare issues	19	24	21
Would not earn enough	19	13	17
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	16	17	16
Caring for disabled person	12	12	12
Illness or disability (longstanding)	8	15	11
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up children	11	7	10
Have enough money already	12	2	9
Not very well-qualified	6	11	7
Lack of job opportunities	7	7	7
Studying/training	5	10	7
On maternity leave	8	2	6
Would lose benefits	3	7	5
Been out of work for too long	4	6	5
Cannot work unsocial hours/at weekends	3	4	4
Having a job is not very important to me	4	1	3
Want to look after my child(ren) myself	4	1	3
Illness or disability (temporary)	1	1	1
Children are too young	1	2	1
Starting work soon	*	1	1
Retired	*	1	1
I am pregnant	*	*	*
<i>Base: Partnered mothers not in paid work</i>			
Partnered mothers			
My partner's job is too demanding	13	n/a	n/a
Other	3	*	2
None of these	9	9	9

Table 9.12: Reasons for not working, by family type

9.9 Summary

The survey explored the relationship between childcare and work, focusing mainly on mothers who were in paid work at the time of the survey.

Two thirds of mothers (66%) were in employment, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (64%). Both the proportion of mothers in work, and mothers' working patterns, varied by family type. Partnered mothers (32%) were more likely than lone mothers (26%) to work full time. While similar proportions of partnered mothers and lone mothers worked part time, lone mothers (41%) were more likely than partnered mothers (32%) to be workless.

Almost a third (31%) of mothers reported working atypical hours. Atypical working patterns were similar between partnered and lone mothers, although lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to work every Saturday (12% compared with 9%). Working patterns were also related to atypical hours; mothers in full-time employment were more likely to work atypical hours than those working part time (38% of those in full-time employment compared to 25% of those working 16-29 hours and 18% of those working 1-15 hours per week).

Among mothers who worked atypical hours, the types of atypical working arrangements that were most frequently reported to have caused problems with childcare were working before 8am (31% finding this a problem) and working after 6pm (27%) at least three days every week.

Considering working patterns at the family level, the most common employment patterns for couple families were both parents in full-time employment (28%), and one partner in full-time employment and the other in part-time employment of 16 to 29 hours per week (28%). A quarter of couple families (26%) consisted of one parent working full time and one non-working parent.

Mothers who had entered employment in the previous two years were asked what had influenced their decision to do so. The most common influence (30%) was finding a job that enabled them to combine work and childcare. Mothers who had transitioned from part-time to full-time work within the previous two years were asked what had influenced this decision. The most common influences were a promotion or job opportunity (36%) or their financial situation (28%).

When asked whether they would like to increase their working hours if there were no barriers to doing so, the majority of mothers who worked part time (53%) said that they would not change their working hours. One in three (32%) said that they would increase their hours but stay part time and 15% said they would like to work full time. Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to say they would like to increase their hours, or that they would like to work full time. The changes that were most frequently mentioned as factors that would support mothers to work full time or increase their

working hours were being able to afford suitable childcare (40%) and the option to work flexi-time (25%).

Employed mothers were asked what childcare arrangements helped them go out to work. Having reliable childcare was most frequently cited (mentioned by 46%), followed by having relatives who could help with childcare (42%), having all children at school (38%), and having childcare that fits with their working hours (34%). Employed mothers were also asked what other factors influenced their decision to work. Two in three (66%) said they needed the money, almost half (46%) said having their own money was important and one in four (24%) said that they needed to maintain pension contributions. Of the non-financial reasons, enjoying work was the most frequently mentioned reason (64%), followed by a desire to get out of the house (26%), and feeling useless without a job (25%).

Working mothers were asked for their views on different working arrangements. Over half (54%) said that if they could afford it, they would work fewer hours to spend more time looking after their children, and over a third (36%) said that if they could afford to give up work altogether, they would prefer to stay at home and look after their children. Almost one in four (23%) said they would increase their working hours if they could arrange good quality childcare.

Around a third (34%) of mothers were not working at the time of the survey, in line with the proportion in 2012-13 (36%). Around half (53%) of non-working mothers agreed that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable.

Appendix A Socio-demographic profile

Respondent characteristics

Gender

As in 2012/13, the majority of parents who responded to the survey were female (88%).

Age

The average age of a respondent was 38, and of their partners, 39. Table A.1 shows the age bands of respondents by family type. It shows that respondents in couple families ended to be slightly older than lone parent respondents.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of respondent	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
20 and under	*	2	1
21 to 30	14	27	18
31 to 40	42	35	40
41 to 50	37	31	35
51+	6	5	6
Mean	39	37	38

Table A.15: Age of respondent, by family type

Marital status

Seven in ten respondents (68%) were married and living with their partners (Table A.2). The majority of the rest were single without ever having being married (20%), including persons who were cohabiting).

	All
Marital status	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,198)
Married and living with husband/wife	68
Single (never married)	20
Divorced	7
Married and separated from husband/wife	4
Widowed	1

Table A.16: Marital status

Qualifications

We asked respondents about the highest academic qualification they had received, and found that respondents in lone families tended to have lower qualifications than respondents in couple families (Table A.3). Fewer lone parents had achieved Honours and Masters degrees than respondents in couple families. More lone parents than respondents in couple families had no academic qualifications.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Qualifications	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(4,581)	(1,529)	(6,110)
GCSE grade D-G/CSE grade 2-5/SCE O Grades (D-E)/SCE	9	17	11
GCSE grade A-C/GCE O-level passes/CSE grade 1/SCE O	27	33	28
GCE A-level/SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	15	16	15
Certificate of Higher Education	7	7	7
Foundation degree	4	4	4
Honours degree (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd)	23	13	21
Masters degree (e.g. MA, PGDip)	12	6	11
Doctorates (e.g. PhD)	2	1	2
Other academic qualifications	1	1	1
None	*	1	*

Table A.17: Qualifications, by family type

Family characteristics

Size of the family

The average number of people in a family was four, the minimum was two people, and the largest was twelve people.

Number of children aged 0 to 14 in the family

Just over half (52%) of families had one child aged 0 to 14 (Table A.4). Thirty six per cent had two children, and 13 per cent had three or more children. Lone parents tended to have fewer children than couple families.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Number of children	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
1	48	62	52
2	39	27	36
3+	14	11	13

Table A.18: Number of children in the household, by family type

Almost three in five (58%) families had school-age children only (Table A.5). One in five (19%) had both pre-school and school-age children and nearly a quarter (23%) had only pre-school children.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of children in family	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Only pre-school children (0 to 4 years)	24	20	23
Both pre-school and school-age children	20	16	19
Only school-age children	56	64	58

Table A.19: Number of pre-school and school-age children in the family, by family type

Family annual income

Table A.6 shows family annual income, and demonstrates that lone parents in the survey tended to have lower family income compared with couple families.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Family annual income	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(4,293)	(1,465)	(5,758)
Up to £9,999	3	20	8
£10,000 - £19,999	15	49	24
£20,000 - £29,999	19	19	19
£30,000 - £44,999	23	8	19
£45,000 or more	39	4	30

Table A.20: Family annual income by family type

Family type and work status

Table A.7 shows family type and work status. A large proportion of respondents were from couple families where both parents worked (47%) or where one parent was working (22%). However, in 15 per cent of families no-one was working (11% were non-working lone parent families and 4% were couple families where neither parent was in work).

	All
Family work status	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,198)
Couple – both working	47
Couple – one working	22
Couple – neither working	4
Lone parent working	16
Lone parent not working	11

Table A.21: Family work status

Tenure

The tenure of the respondents' families is shown in Table A.8. Overall the two most common tenures were buying the property with a mortgage or loan (48%) and renting the property (42%). The majority of couple families were in the process of buying their home with the help of a mortgage or loan (59%), while the majority of lone parents were renting (72%).

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Tenure status	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,643)</i>	<i>(1,544)</i>	<i>(6,187)</i>
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	59	19	48
Rent it	30	72	42
Own it outright	10	5	8
Live rent-free (in relative's/friend's property)	1	2	1
Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)	1	1	1

Table A.22: Tenure status, by family type

Access to a car

Four in five respondents had access to a car (81%). This was much higher among couple families where 89 per cent had a car available, than among lone parent families where 59 per cent had a car available.

Selected child characteristics

Gender

There was a roughly even split of selected boys and girls (53% boys; 47% girls).

Age

The age of the selected child was spread across all age categories (Table A.9).

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
0 to 2	17	16	17
3 to 4	16	13	15
5 to 7	22	21	22
8 to 11	26	29	27
12 to 14	19	20	19

Table A.23: Age of selected child, by family type

Ethnic group

The majority of selected children in the survey were White British (71%) (Table A.10).

Children from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to come from lone parent families.

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Ethnicity of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,648)</i>	<i>(1,546)</i>	<i>(6,194)</i>
White			
White British	72	68	71
White Irish	*	*	*
Other White	7	5	6
Mixed			
White and Caribbean	1	4	2
White and Black African	*	1	1
White and Asian	1	2	2
Other mixed	1	1	1
Asian or Asian British			
Indian	4	1	3
Pakistani	4	2	4
Bangladeshi	2	1	1
Other Asian	2	1	2
Black or Black British			
Caribbean	1	4	1
African	3	8	4
Other Black	*	1	*
Chinese	*	*	*
Other	2	2	2

Table A.24: Ethnicity of selected child, by family type

Special education needs and disabilities

Seven per cent of selected children had a special educational need⁹¹, and six per cent of children had a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability. Children in lone parent families were more likely to have a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability (8%), or a special education need (10%) compared with children in couple families (5% and 6% respectively, see Table A.11).

⁹¹ The selected child was categorised as having a special educational need (or not) during the interview via the parent's response to the question "Does [child's name] have any special educational needs or other special needs? [yes/no/don't know/refused]"

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Child has SEN	6	10	7
Child has long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability	5	8	6

Table A.25: Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child, by family type**Region, area deprivation and rurality**

Table A.12 shows the geographical spread of the surveyed families according to region.

	All
Region	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
North East	5
North West	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
East Midlands	8
West Midlands	11
East of England	11
London	16
South East	16
South West	10

Table A.26: Region

Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation we can see that areas the sample came from varied in affluence.

	All
Area deprivation	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,198)
1 st quintile – least deprived	20
2 nd quintile	14
3 rd quintile	20
4 th quintile	24
5 th quintile – most deprived	23

Table A.27: Area deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

Table A.14 shows the rurality of the sample. Overall, 88 per cent of the families responding to the survey lived in urban areas, with the other 12 per cent living in rural areas.

	All
Rurality	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,198)
Rural	12
Urban	88
Major conurbation	37
Minor conurbation	2
City and town	48
City and town in sparse setting	*
Town and fringe	8
Town and fringe in a sparse setting	*
Village	3
Hamlets and isolated dwellings	1

Table A.28: Rurality

Appendix B Technical Appendix

B.1 Background and history

This appendix describes the methodology of the 2013-14 Childcare and early years survey of parents. The study was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Education. This report marks the seventh time the survey has been run.

B.2 Questionnaire development

The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents was first conducted in 2004 by the National Centre for Social Research. It was conducted subsequently by the National Centre for Social Research in 2007, 2008 and 2009, and by Ipsos MORI in 2010. Prior to the 2010 survey the fieldwork period fell into the survey calendar year, while for the 2010-2013/14 surveys the fieldwork straddled two calendar years, beginning in the autumn of the survey year, and continuing until the spring/summer of the following year.

This series of surveys is a combination of two previous survey series – the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services series (1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004) and the Parents' Demand for Childcare studies (baseline in 1999, repeated in 2001) (hereafter referred to as the Early Years series and the Childcare series respectively). The Early Years series focused on children aged 2 to 5, while the Childcare series focused on children aged 0 to 14. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents has undergone a number of amendments between 2004 and 2010, particularly in terms of content, in order to reflect the changing policy landscape and developments in the objectives of the survey.

The interviews in the 2014-15 survey lasted an average of 45 minutes and consisted of questions on the family's use of childcare and early years provision in the reference term-time week (which was the most recent term-time week) and during school holidays. The interviews also included questions about the details of the payments for this childcare, and generated a complete attendance diary for one 'selected' child in the family. The selected child was chosen at random at the sampling stage (except in cases where a child had been born in the household since the sample was drawn – see section B.3 for more detail on child selection). Parents were asked to provide detailed information about the main childcare provider used for the selected child. Parents were also asked about their general views on childcare and reasons for using particular providers. The questionnaire gathered information about the respondent's economic activity, as well as their partner's if applicable. Questions regarding the partner's economic activity were addressed to the partner wherever possible. If the partner was not available at the time of the interview, or was unwilling to participate in the interview, the respondent could answer as their proxy. Demographic information was also collected.

In 2013/14 a number of changes were made to the questionnaire to improve the quality of data captured and reflect changes in policy:

A question was added (QualFact) to ascertain what factors parents felt were important for high quality childcare and early years education for pre-school children.

Questions were added (Nur8to9, Nur3to6, Nurwhy, Nurwhy2) to ascertain whether parents of 2- to 4-year-olds would use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school or a maintained nursery school between 8am and 9am were it available, or between 3pm and 6pm were it available. Those parents saying they would not be interested in this provision, or that it would depend, were asked why they would not wish to use it, or what it would depend on.

Questions were added (FreePay and FreePay2) asking those parents who used some hours of the government funded entitlement to early education how many of these hours (if any) they would you have paid for themselves, had these hours not been available.

Questions were added (TaxFCS and TaxFCS2) to measure awareness of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, and parents intent to apply for this scheme.

Questions were added (RegOfs, RegOfs2, RegOfs3, RegOfs4) to ascertain, for each formal childcare provider used, whether parents knew if the provider was registered with a regulator such as Ofsted; if so, whether they were aware of the provider's Ofsted quality rating; if so, whether this rating influenced their decision to use the provider; and if not, why not.

Questions were added (BCSchN, ASSchN, AcadFree) to ascertain whether breakfast-clubs parents used were on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery, whether after-school clubs parents used were on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery, and whether nursery classes or reception classes parents used were part of, or linked to, an academy or a free school.

Questions were added (SuppHrs, AcadFree, SuppHrs2, SuppHrs3) to ascertain whether any support parents had received (via the entitlement to government funded hours, tax credits , or employer supported childcare) had enabled the parent, or their partner, to change the number of hours they worked.

Questions were added (CMAaware, CMAgency, CMAAware2, CMAaware3) to ascertain awareness of Childminder Agencies, whether those parents using a childminder hired the childminder through a Childminder Agency, whether those who didn't use a Childminder Agency would use one, and if not, why not.

Questions were added (PayFreq, PayFreq2, PayFreq3) to ascertain the frequency with which parents paid their providers, whether payments were made in advance or in arrears, whether parents gave providers an upfront refundable deposit.

Questions were added (PrefInc and PrefInc2) to ascertain whether those parents working part time would increase the number of hours they worked, or work full time, if there were no barriers to doing so, and if so, what would help them to work more hours, or work full time.

Existing questions were removed (ProvEYFS, XtatEYFS, InfEYFS) relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Existing questions were removed (Bringb, ImfrmB, Infota) relating to details of the main provider.

Existing questions were removed (PservB, Psevc, Pservd, Pserif, PserifX) relating to the services parents used at their providers.

Existing questions were removed (Rstuf17, Rstud18, Rstud19, Rstud19a, Rstud20) relating to childcare arrangements that helped those parents who were studying to study.

An existing question was removed (WhyHol) asking parents the reasons they used the provider(s) they did to look after their child(ren) during the school holidays.

Existing questions were removed (Openhb, Nomore) asking parents about their holiday childcare arrangements.

An existing question was removed (DiscntB) asking whether parents received a discount because more than one of their children was cared for by a given provider.

An existing question was removed (FlexEmp) asking about how flexible parents' employers were regarding their childcare needs

Existing questions were removed (HowDif, HowfarB) asking about travelling to providers from home.

An existing questions was removed (LAAware) asking whether parents were aware that their your Local Authority has a duty to provide sufficient childcare in your local area?

Existing questions were removed (MatL2, MatL3b, MatL4, MatL5, MatL6) asking about details of parents' maternity leave.

Existing questions were removed (SchHol, WheSch) asking whether the child(ren)'s school runs any activities during school holidays, and whether the children have attended these activities in the last 12 months.

Existing questions were removed (WhMultA1, WhMultb1) asking about the reasons for using multiple providers for the selected child.

Existing questions were removed (WkCmPre1, WkLAPre1) asking for parents estimations of the cost of a registered childminder, and of a day nursery.

Existing questions were removed (Disab, Limit, Disab2, Limitv) asking whether the parent, or their partner, had a disability.

While the 2012 and 2011 questionnaires were identical to the 2010 questionnaire in terms of content, the 2010 questionnaire differed from the 2009 questionnaire in a number of ways, and these changes should be borne in mind when making time series comparisons. For example, the 2010 questionnaire expanded the section on learning and play activities that parents do with their children and introduced more questions on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (which were subsequently changed in 2012 as noted above). Other changes made in 2010, and retained in 2011, included reducing the number of questions about tax credits and after-school activities, and using a shortened version of the questions used to create the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). This was done to help reduce the interview length so additional questions could be accommodated.

A further change made in 2010 relates to the section of the questionnaire that asks parents about their use of childcare in the reference term time week. An additional check question was added to ensure that the results capture all parents who did use both formal and informal childcare, and improve the reliability of the estimates of the use of different types of providers. Full details of this change, along with its impact on survey estimates, are included in the Technical Appendix of the 2010 report.

The method used to establish the usage of breakfast and after-school clubs was also amended in 2010, and retained thereafter. From 2010 the showcard used at the relevant question separated out breakfast and after-school clubs, so the data were collected in separate categories. In 2009 the showcard combined breakfast/after-school clubs so the data were collected in one category. In all three survey years (2009-2011) if respondents did not mention breakfast or after-school clubs, they were asked a follow-up question about whether their children attended activities before or after-school. From 2010 the questionnaire instructed interviewers to 'probe' at this point, which it did not in 2009. We believe that this change accounts for the difference observed between 2009 and 2010 in the proportion of parents using formal providers, as once breakfast and after-school clubs are excluded from the calculations, the proportion of families using formal childcare was unchanged between 2009 and 2010 (at 32%).

The interview covered the following topic areas:

For all families:

- use of childcare in the reference term-time week and the past year;

- types of providers used for all children, and costs;

- use of and availability of breakfast and after-school clubs (for families with school-age children);

use of and satisfaction with provision of childcare during school holidays in the past year (for families with school-age children);

awareness and take-up of entitlement to free early years provision for three- and four-year olds;

awareness and receipt of tax credits and subsidies, and awareness of Tax-Free Childcare;

sources of information about local childcare;

views on affordability, availability, flexibility and quality of childcare in the local area; and

childcare and working arrangements.

For one randomly selected child:

detailed record of childcare attendance in the reference week;

details of main provider for selected child;

reasons for choosing the main provider;

impact of provider on child development and well-being and influence on home learning environment;

parental involvement with the selected child (if selected child aged 2 to 5); and

details of parental awareness of EYFS (if selected child aged 2 to 5).

Classification details for all families:

household composition;

demographic characteristics (for example ethnicity, qualifications, income);

parents' work history over the last two years (including any atypical working hours and whether this caused childcare problems);

classification of children according to SEN and disability or long-standing illness;

housing tenure; and

contact details for childcare providers and admin questions.

B.3 Sampling

The target population for the survey was parents of children under the age of 15 at the start of fieldwork. The sample was selected from the Child Benefit records by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Child Benefit is a universal benefit with a high

rate of take up, which makes the Child Benefit records a comprehensive sampling frame⁹². The Child Benefit records contain information about the child for whom the claim is being made; this allows eligible households to be identified at the stage of sampling, which makes fieldwork more cost-effective. The sample was selected from all recipients claiming benefit for a child aged 0 to 14 years and included a boost sample of parents of two- to four-year-olds.

A small number of Child Benefit recipients were excluded from the sampling frame before selection took place. The exclusions were made according to HMRC procedures and reasons include: death of a child, cases where the child has been taken into care or put up for adoption, cases where the child does not live at the same address as the claimant and cases where there has been any correspondence by the recipient with the Child Benefit Centre (because the reason for correspondence cannot be ascertained and may be sensitive). These exclusions amounted to approximately one half of one percent of the sampling frame and were compensated for by weighting the data prior to analysis.

In the 2010-2014/15 surveys, the sampling approach was slightly different to that employed in previous years. For these surveys, the sample that was selected from the Child Benefit records was a **sample of children** rather than recipients. The children were the 'units' of the sample and an appropriate adult was identified as a respondent to answer questions about the selected child. In previous years, the sample design was more complicated with children being selected from Child Benefit Records, their parent/guardian (the benefit recipient) identified as the sampling unit, and then children being re-selected for the focus of the interview at the fieldwork stage. Both approaches achieve a sample of interviews that is primarily representative of the population of children aged 0 to 14 (and can be made representative of their parents by weighting) but the more direct design used for the 2010-2014-15 surveys means that less weighting is required to achieve this (indeed the 'sampling efficiency' for the child-level data has improved from 88% in 2009 to 93% in 2014-15. This reduction in the degree of corrective weighting reduces loss of precision, resulting in more reliable survey estimates).

As the children were the units of the sample in 2014-15, the interviews were only conducted in households where the sampled child lived. In 2009 and before, where the sample units were Child Benefit recipients, when interviewers visited an address they were trying to interview a specific recipient. They would have checked whether any children aged 0 to 14 lived in the household but would have not checked whether the specific child identified at the sampling stage lived in the household. An interview could have been conducted at an address where the selected child no longer lived. For the child-specific questions, the CAPI programme would have randomly selected a child to

⁹² It should be noted that from 7 January 2013, the eligibility criteria for receipt of child benefit changed to exclude parents where one or both had an adjusted net income of over £60,000 per year, and to limit the amount provided to those parents where one or both had an adjusted net income of between £50,000 and £60,000 per year. These changes are expected to progressively lead to under-coverage of higher earning families in the sample frame over time, as newborn babies to higher earning families are not added to the register.

be the focus of these questions, regardless of the specific child identified at the sampling stage. With the approach used in 2010-2014-15, the selected child was followed through from sample to interview and therefore the CAPI programme did not usually need to re-select for the child-specific questions.

There were two exceptions to this:

- i. Where a child had been born between the date that the sample was drawn and the date of the interview. As there was approximately a five month gap between the sample being drawn and the start of fieldwork, children that were born during this time, that is all children around five months old or younger, were not represented in the sample of children drawn from Child Benefit records. To account for this, in households where a child had been born since the sample was drawn, the CAPI programme re-selected the child that was to be the focus of the child-specific questions from all children (including the newborn child) in the household. As at the sampling stage, children aged 2 to 4 were given a higher probability of selection. For the child specific questions where no other children had been born since the sample was drawn, the child that was selected during sampling remained the focus of the questions.
- ii. Where the number of children in the household was found to be greater than the number of children recorded on the child benefit database, excluding new births, and child benefit was found to be received for some, but not all children in the household. In these instances, a non-new-born child in the household did not have a chance of selection at the sampling stage, as said child was not on the child benefit database. Such instances may reflect a child in the household for whom the parents had decided not to claim, and error on the child benefit database, or a family event such as adoption. In these households, the CAPI programme re-selected the child that was to be the focus of the child-specific questions from all children in the household. As at the sampling stage, children aged 2 to 4 were given a higher probability of selection. This re-selection stage was implemented as an improvement to the sampling strategy in the 2014-15 survey, and was not carried out in previous survey years.

The sample of children was selected in two stages: selection of Primary Sample Units (PSUs) and selection of individual children within each PSU. Ipsos MORI randomly selected 431 PSUs plus an additional 431 PSUs that could be used as a reserve sample if needed. The PSUs were based on postcode sectors. HMRC provided a full list of postcode sectors in England with counts for each of the number of children on Child Benefit records aged 0 to 14 and number of children aged 2 to 4 rounded to the nearest five. In order to reduce clustering, postcode sectors containing fewer than 250 children were grouped with neighbouring postcode sectors. The list of grouped postcode sectors was stratified by GOR, population density, proportion of households in managerial professional and intermediate occupations, and, proportion of the population that were unemployed. A size measure was calculated for each PSU based on the population of

children in each size group. Sample points were selected with probability proportionate to size (random start and fixed interval using cumulative total of the size measure).

At the second stage, prior to the start of fieldwork 26 children per PSU were selected by HMRC from the selected PSUs (both the 431 main PSUs and 431 reserve PSUs). A list of all eligible children aged 0 to 14 in the PSU was created and was sorted by postcode and child benefit number to help to avoid children from the same household being selected. A weighted design was used to increase the number of children aged 2 to 4 in the sample. Each child aged 2 to 4 on the Child Benefit records on the first day of fieldwork was given a weighted chance value of 1.728 and all other children had a value of 1.

The mainstage sample was drawn from the May 2014 extract of Child Benefit data.

B.4 Contacting respondents

Given that the sample was drawn from Child Benefit records, interviewers had the contact details for named individuals. The named individual from the sample was the person listed as the recipient of Child Benefit in that household. While the interviewers were asked to trace the named individual, this person was not necessarily the person who needed to be interviewed. Respondents eligible to be interviewed were those who had 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare'. Although in the majority of cases this definition included the benefit recipient, in some cases another member of the family needed to be interviewed. All interviews were conducted by Ipsos MORI interviewers.

Each sampled individual received an opt-out letter introducing the survey in September 2014. This meant they had at least two weeks to respond to refuse to take part before they received further contact regarding the survey. Only cases where the respondent did not opt-out at this stage were issued for interview. Interviewers sent advance letters to sampled individuals in their area, and visited their addresses a few days later.

Interviewers were given instructions on the procedures for tracing people who had moved house since the Child Benefit records were last updated (May 2014). If interviewers were able to establish the new address of the named individual, and that person still lived in the area, then the interviewer was asked to follow-up at the new address. If the new address was no longer local to the interviewer, the case was allocated to another interviewer where possible.

B.5 Briefings

Prior to the start of fieldwork, all interviewers who had not worked on the 2012-13 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents attended a full day briefing led by the Ipsos MORI research team. The briefings covered an introduction to the study and its aims, an

explanation of the sample and procedures for contacting respondents, full definitions of formal and informal childcare, and a dummy interviewer exercise which was designed to familiarise interviewers with the questions and flow of the questionnaire. All briefing sessions covered discussion on conducting research with parents, issues of sensitivities and practical information, and gave interviewers the opportunity to ask any questions.

Those interviewers who had worked on the 2012-13 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents participated in a refresher telephone briefing, which lasted approximately one hour. This briefing served as a reminder of the key aspects of the survey, and also gave interviewers the opportunity to ask questions.

B.6 The interview

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with laptop computers, using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI was programmed using Quancept for Windows software. A set of showcards were provided as an aid to interviewing.

In situations where respondents could not speak English well enough to complete the interview, interviewers were able to use another household member to assist as an interpreter or another interviewer in the area who was able to speak their language was asked to conduct the interview. If this was not possible, the interview was not carried out.

B.7 Fieldwork response rates

Fieldwork took place between 20 October 2014 and 13 July 2015, with a break between 23 December 2014 and 11 January 2015 inclusive to take account of the Christmas holiday period. Therefore, fieldwork covered, at least in part, all three school terms: the autumn term, the spring term, and the summer term.

At the start 11,206 addresses were drawn for the main sample – 26 addresses for each of 431 PSUs. Opt-out letters were sent to these addresses, leading 326 respondents to opt out. These addresses were removed from the sample, and a total of 10,880 addresses were issued to interviewers and advance letters were sent.

In order to ensure that final response rates are calculated using consistent definitions, Ipsos MORI has used the Standard Outcome Codes (SOC) used by NatCen in 2009 (Table B.1). The overall response rate for the 2014/15 survey in the field using SOCs was 57 per cent. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews across all eligible addresses. The different rates of response to the survey in the field are summarised in Table B.2.

		Population in scope of study	Population in scope of fieldwork

	N	%	%
Full sample pre opt-out (FS)	11,206		
Ineligible (I)	309		
No children of relevant age	115		
Child deceased	1		
Other ineligible	193		
Eligible sample (ES)	10,898	100	
Opt-outs before fieldwork started (OO)	326	3	
Eligible sample – issued to interviewers (EI)	10,572	97	100
Non-contact (N)	2,082	19	20
Respondent moved	1,267		
Other non-contact	815		
Refusals (R)	2,086	19	20
Office refusal	105		
Refusal to interviewer	1,902		
Information about eligibility refused	79		
Other unproductive (OU)	205	2	2
Ill at home during survey period	23		
Language difficulties	41		
Other unproductive	141		
Productive interviews (P)	6,198	57	59
Full interview – lone parent	1,547		
Full interview – partner interview in person	989		
Full interview – partner interview by proxy	2,980		
Full interview – unproductive partner	682		

Table B.1: Survey response figures

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
	%	%	%	%	%
Overall response rate (P/ES)	52	57	58	59	57
Co-operation rate (P/(P+OU+R+OO))	67	76	72	73	70
Contact rate ((R+OU+P)/EI)	77	77	80	80	80
Refusal rate ((R+OO)/(EI+OU))	24	17	22	20	22
Eligibility rate (ES/FS)	98	97	98	97	97

Table B.2: Fieldwork response figures

Ipsos MORI's standard quality control procedures were used for this survey.

B.8 Coding and editing of data

The CAPI script ensured that the correct routing is followed throughout the questionnaire and applies range checks, which prevented invalid values from being entered in the programme. It also allowed consistency checks, which prompted interviewers to check answers that were inconsistent with information provided earlier in the interview. These checks allowed interviewers to clarify and query any data discrepancies directly with the respondent and were used extensively in the questionnaire.

The data collected during interviews was coded and edited. The main task was the back-coding of 'other' answers. This was carried out when over 10 per cent of respondents at a particular question provided an alternative answer to those that were pre-coded; this answer was recorded verbatim during the interview and was coded during the coding stage using the original list of pre-coded responses and sometimes additional codes available to coders only.

Coding was completed by a team of Ipsos MORI coders who were briefed on the survey. If the coder could not resolve a query, this was referred to the research team.

After the dataset was cleaned, the analysis file of question-based and derived variables was set up in SPSS and all questions and answer codes labelled.

B.9 Analysis and significance testing

Tables used in analysis were generated in SPSS and significance testing was undertaken using SPSS 19.0. We replicated the method of significance testing carried out in 2009 and 2010, which used the complex samples module in SPSS to take into account the impact of stratification, clustering and non-response on the survey estimates. The complex samples module allows us to take into account sample stratification, clustering, and weighting to correct for non-response bias when conducting significance testing. This means that we are much less likely to obtain 'false positive' results to

significance tests (in other words interpret a difference as real when it is not) than if we used the standard formulae.

B.10 Provider checks

In all eight surveys in the series (2004, and 2007-2014-15), checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the childcare providers they used in order to improve the accuracy of the classifications. During the main survey, parents were asked to classify the childcare providers they used for their children into types (for example nursery school, playgroup and so on). Given that some parents may have misclassified the providers they used we contacted providers by telephone, where possible, and asked them to classify the type of provision they offered to children of different ages. In the 2010-2014/15 surveys these checks were restricted to pre-school providers used in the reference term-time week (rather than the whole year) as previous year's results had shown that parents were more likely to incorrectly classify these types of providers.

The providers that were contacted were as follows:

- nursery school
- nursery class
- reception class
- special day school or nursery unit
- day nursery
- playgroup or pre-school

The process of checking providers started with extracting data from the CAPI interview regarding the providers used and the parents' classification of them. This was only done in cases where parents agreed to Ipsos MORI contacting their providers. Each provider remained linked to the parent interview so that they could be compared and later merged to the parent interview data.

We received information on 2,454 providers from the interview data. Because different parents may have used the same provider, the contact information for that provider was potentially repeated. As such, we de-duplicated the list of providers, which was done both manually and automatically. 514 providers were duplicates and were therefore removed from the checks. 54 providers were removed from the provider checks because of incomplete or invalid phone numbers.

A full list of 1,886 providers with valid phone numbers was generated, and telephone interviewers were briefed. Interviews with providers were approximately five minutes long, and covered the services provided and the age range of the children who attended

each service. We achieved productive interviews with 1,542 providers, which constitutes a response rate of 82 per cent.

The data from the telephone checks and the parents' interviews were then compared. While a substantial proportion of these checks were completed automatically, some cases were looked into manually. A new variable was then created showing the final provider classification. To ensure consistency, the guidance from previous years as how to decide on the final provider classification using the parent's answer and the provider's answer was used. Table B.3 shows the parents' classification of providers compared with the final classification of providers after all checks.

	Parents' classification	Final classification after all checks
	%	%
<i>Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents</i>	(3,066)	(3,066)
Nursery school	25	14
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	14	16
Reception class	33	32
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with SEN	1	1
Day nursery	13	23
Playgroup or pre-school	14	14

Table B.3: Classification of providers before and after provider checks

While these tables illustrate the gross change in provider classifications before and after the provider edits, they do not show the net changes, i.e. how exactly each provider as classified by parents is ultimately reclassified after the provider edits are complete. This is shown for those provider mentions which were subjected to the provider edits (i.e. where provider contact details were provided and an interview with the provider was sought) in Table B.4.

This table shows that where parent(s) classified providers as either reception classes or day nurseries, in the great majority of cases (94% and 89% respectively) they were correct. Parents were least accurate where they classified a provider as a nursery school – only 21 per cent of the time did this prove to be correct, with 51 per cent of these classifications ultimately proving to be a day nursery, and 15 per cent a nursery class.

	N	Per provider %	Of total %
Nursery school	512	100	27
Nursery school	109	21	6
Nursery Class	76	15	4
Reception Class	14	3	1
Special day school/nursery	3	1	0
Day Nursery	262	51	14
Playgroup or pre-school	48	9	3
Nursery Class	242	100	13
Nursery school	17	7	1
Nursery Class	182	75	10
Reception Class	14	6	1
Day Nursery	17	7	1
Playgroup or pre-school	12	5	1
Reception Class	607	100	32
Nursery school	4	1	0
Nursery Class	24	4	1
Reception Class	569	94	30
Special day school/nursery	1	0	0
Day Nursery	6	0	0
Playgroup or pre-school	4	1	0
Special day school/nursery	9	100	0
Special day school/nursery	9	100	0
Day Nursery	285	100	15
Nursery school	15	5	1
Nursery Class	6	2	0
Reception Class	3	1	0
Day Nursery	253	89	13
Playgroup or pre-school	9	3	0
Playgroup or pre-school	231	100	12
Nursery school	14	6	1
Nursery Class	12	5	1
Reception Class	6	3	0
Special day school/nursery	1	0	0
Day Nursery	30	13	2
Playgroup or pre-school	167	73	9
GRAND TOTAL	1,886		100

Table B.4: Classification of providers before and after provider checks. Parents' classifications (bold) and final classifications (not bold)

B.11 Weighting

Reasons for weighting

There were three stages to the weighting procedure; the first was to remove biases resulting from the sample design, and the second and third were to remove biases caused by differential non-response and non-coverage.

The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children of parents receiving Child Benefit, rather than the population of adults receiving Child Benefit. This design feature means the sample is biased towards larger families; hence the data needed to be weighted before any analyses can be carried out on family-level data. In addition, children aged 2 to 4 were selected with a higher probability. These children needed to be down-weighted so they could be included in the core data analysis. The selection weights also corrected the selection probabilities for cases where the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the family at interview.

A second stage of weighting was used to correct for recipient non-response and a final stage of weighting (called calibration weighting) was used to correct for differences due to exclusions from the sample frame, and random chance in the selection process.

The sample is analysed at both family and child-level, and hence there are two final weights; a family weight for the family-level analyses and a child weight for analyses of data collected about the randomly selected child.

Selection weights

Household selection weight

The sample design means families that contain either a large number of eligible children, or children aged 2 to 4, were more likely to be included in the sample. The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children of adults receiving Child Benefit and is not representative of Child Benefit recipients or all families. To make the sample representative of all families a weight needs to be applied, which should be used for all family-level analyses.

The family selection weight is the inverse of the family's selection probability, so larger households and those containing children aged 2 to 4 are weighted down:

$$W1 = 1/PR(F)$$

Pre-calibration family weight

A logistic regression model was used to model non-response. The probability that a recipient responded to the survey was found to depend on:

region;

number of children aged 0 to 14 in the family;

a measure of area deprivation (IMD); and

the proportion of households in the PSU in NS-SEC categories higher and intermediate occupations.

A non-response weight (WNR) was calculated as the reciprocal of the modelled response probability. The family weight (WH) was then simply the product of the non-response weight (WNR) and the family selection weight (W1):

$$WH = WNR * W1$$

Child selection weight

At each sampled address a single child was selected at random at the sampling stage. Where children had been born to the responding parent after the sampling stage, a single child was randomly selected during the interview process. This selected child was the focus of the detailed childcare section of the questionnaire. Each child aged 2 to 4 on the Child Benefit records was given a weighted chance of selection of 1.728 compared with a selection weight of 1.0 for all children aged 0 to 1 and 5 to 14.

The child selection weight (W2) is the inverse of the child selection probabilities:

$$W2 = 1/PR(C)$$

Pre-calibration child weight

A child weight (WC) was then calculated as the product of the household weight (WH) and the child selection weight (W2):

$$WC = WH * W2$$

Calibration

The final stage of the weighting procedure was to adjust the weights using calibration weighting. The aim of calibration weighting was to correct for differences between the (weighted) achieved sample and the population profile caused by excluding cases from the sample frame before sampling and random chance in the selection process.

Calibration weighting requires a set of population estimates to which the sample can be weighted, known as control totals. HMRC provided Ipsos MORI with a breakdown of the sampling frame (before exclusions) for different variables at recipient- and child-level. The sample (weighted by the selection weights) and population distributions for these variables are shown in Tables B.5 and B.6.

	Population	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only	Sample weighted by final weights
	N	%	%	%
<i>Base: All recipients of Child Benefit</i>				
Number of children in household				
1	2,822,630	51.6	43.3	51.6
2	1,943,505	35.5	40.6	35.6
3	534,155	9.8	12.1	9.8
4+	167,064	3.1	4.0	3.1

Table B.5: Comparison of recipient-level population figures to weighted sample

	Population	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only	Sample weighted by final weights
	N	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible children</i>				
Region				
North East	413,678	4.6	4.2	4.6
North West	1,199,173	13.3	13.0	13.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	902,080	10.0	11.7	10.0
East Midlands	758,837	8.4	9.3	8.4
West Midlands	986,278	10.9	10.4	10.9
South West	834,519	9.2	9.4	9.3
East of England	998,780	11.1	10.4	11.1
London	1,488,714	16.5	15.5	16.5
South East	1,443,586	16.0	16.0	16.0
Selected child's age				
0-1	872,805	9.7	9.3	9.7
2-4	2,003,460	22.2	21.3	22.2
5-7	1,965,720	21.8	22.9	21.8
8-11	2,446,200	27.1	27.5	27.1
12-14	1,737,460	19.3	19.0	19.3
Selected child's gender				
Male	4,619,065	51.2	52.9	51.2
Female	4,406,580	48.8	47.1	48.8

Table B.6: Comparison of child-level population figures to weighted sample

Calibration weighting adjusts the original sampling design weights to make the weighted survey estimates of the control totals exactly match those of the population. The adjustments are made under the restriction that the initial selection weights must be altered by as small amount as possible, so their original properties are retained.

This means the final calibrated weights are as close as possible to the selection weights while giving survey estimates for the control totals that match the population distribution exactly.

The calibration was run twice; once to calibrate the family weight and once to calibrate the child weight. Analysis of data weighted by the family weight will match the population of Child Benefit recipients in terms of the variables used as control totals. Similarly, analysis of data weighted by the child weight will match the population of children on the Child Benefit records in terms of the variables used in weighting.

The control totals for the family weight (WH) were the number of children in family.

The control totals for the child weight (WC) were Government Office Region; age of child; and gender of child.

The distribution of the sample weighted by the calibration weights matches that of the population (see Tables B.5 and B.6).

Effective sample size

Disproportionate sampling and sample clustering often result in estimates with a larger variance. More variance means standard errors are larger and confidence intervals wider than they would be with a simple random sample, so there is less certainty over how close our estimates are to the true population value.

The effect of the sample design on the precision of survey estimates is indicated by the effective sample size (neff). The effective sample size measures the size of an (unweighted) simple random sample that would have provided the same precision (standard error) as the design being implemented. If the effective sample size is close to the actual sample size then we have an efficient design with a good level of precision. The lower the effective sample size, the lower the level of precision. The efficiency of a sample is given by the ratio of the effective sample size to the actual sample size. The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children; hence the child weight is more efficient than the household weight. The effective sample size and sample efficiency was calculated for both weights and are given in Table B.7. As in previous years, we have calculated the efficiency of the weighting. This is defined as:

$$1/(1 + \text{cov}(W)^2);$$

where $\text{cov}(W)$ is the coefficient of variation of the weights. The effective sample size is then the product of the achieved sample size and the efficiency. (Note that this calculation includes only the effects of the weighting; it does not include clustering effects, which will be question-specific).

	All
<i>Base: All cases</i>	<i>(6198)</i>
Child weight	
Effective sample size	5,741
Sample efficiency	92.6%
Family weight	
Effective sample size	4,167
Sample efficiency	67.2%

Table B.7: Effective sample size and weighting efficiency

Confidence intervals

We have calculated confidence intervals (95% level) for key estimates in the survey in Table B.8. We have used standard errors calculated using complex samples formulae to generate the confidence intervals.

	Estimate	Base size	Standard error	Lower	Upper
Use of any childcare	79.2%	6,198	0.0079	77.6%	80.7%
Use of formal childcare	65.7%	6,198	0.0092	63.9%	67.5%
Use of informal childcare	40.3%	6,198	0.0092	38.5%	42.1%
Hours of childcare used (all)	15.6	4,144	0.2532	15.1	16.1
Hours of childcare used (pre-school children)	24.1	1,774	0.3961	23.4	24.9
Hours of childcare used (school-age children)	10.9	2,370	0.2909	10.3	11.5
Take-up of free entitlement	86.8%	1,332	0.0110	84.7%	89.0%
Weekly amount paid for childcare	£53.13	3,016	1.7774	£49.64	£56.61
Use of any holiday childcare	47.0%	5,310	0.0120	44.7%	49.4%

Table B.8: Confidence intervals for key estimates

B.12 Socio-economic classification

The report includes sub-group analysis by socio-economic classification. The classification is based on respondents coding themselves into one of the categories based on their current or most recent job. A detailed definition of each socio-economic group is provided below:

modern professional occupations – teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, welfare officer, artist, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer;

clerical and intermediate occupations – secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, office clerk, call centre agent, nursing auxiliary, nursery nurse;

senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and co-ordinating work, and for finance) – finance manager, chief executive;

technical and craft occupations – motor mechanic, fitter, inspector, plumber, printer, tool maker, electrician, gardener, train driver;

semi-routine manual and service occupations – postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, receptionist, sales assistant;

routine manual and service occupations – HGV driver, van driver, cleaner, porter, packer, sewing machinist, messenger, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff;

middle or junior managers – office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager, publican; and

traditional professional occupations – accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil/mechanical engineer.

Appendix C. Additional tables

Family characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6,198)
Family type				
Couple	69	57	29	(4,651)
Lone parent	70	50	39	(1,547)
Family work status				
Couple – both working	79	65	38	(2,690)
Couple – one working	58	47	17	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	51	42	15	(293)
Lone parent – working	79	56	51	(802)
Lone parent – not working	59	44	26	(745)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	60	45	26	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	62	46	28	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	66	51	31	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	76	59	38	(1,088)
£45,000+	80	69	37	(1,608)
Number of children				
1	73	56	40	(1,603)
2	73	59	33	(2,792)
3+	61	49	23	(1,803)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.1 : Use of childcare, by family characteristics

	2012-13	2014-15
Use of childcare	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(587)</i>	<i>(565)</i>
Any childcare	67	76
Formal providers	52	61
Nursery school	10	9
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	2	2
Reception class	0	0
Day nursery	25	29
Playgroup or pre-school	10	13
Breakfast club	*	*
After-school club	1	2
Childminder	7	8
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Informal providers	33	39
Ex-partner	3	4
Grandparent	26	30
Older sibling	1	1
Another relative	5	6
Friend or neighbour	2	2
No childcare used	33	24

Table C2.2 : Use of childcare providers by two-year-olds, 2012-2014

Family characteristics	2012-13	2014-15	Unweighted base 2012-13	Unweighted base 2014-15
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Any childcare				
Couple – both working	79	79	(2,762)	(2,690)
Couple – one working	57	58	(1,732)	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	48	51	(396)	(293)
Lone parent – working	79	79	(716)	(802)
Lone parent – not working	55	59	(787)	(745)
Formal childcare				
Couple – both working	62	65	(2,762)	(2,690)
Couple – one working	45	47	(1,732)	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	38	42	(396)	(293)
Lone parent – working	57	56	(716)	(802)
Lone parent – not working	40	44	(787)	(745)
Informal childcare				
Couple – both working	38	38	(2,762)	(2,690)
Couple – one working	18	17	(1,732)	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	14	15	(396)	(293)
Lone parent – working	51	51	(716)	(802)
Lone parent – not working	25	26	(787)	(745)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.3: Use of childcare, by family type and work status, 2012-2014

Use of childcare	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6,198)
No disability	70	56	32	(5,859)
Disability – does not disrupt daily living	78	61	43	(66)
Disability – disrupts daily living to a small extent	71	52	35	(122)
Disability – disrupts daily living to a great extent	55	38	23	(150)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.4: Use of childcare, by disability of selected child

Family characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6,198)
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	84	63	52	(276)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	77	51	49	(335)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[70]	[46]	[54]	(40)
Lone parent not in paid employment	59	44	26	(472)
Couple - both in full-time employment	82	70	39	(900)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	79	65	40	(978)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	72	54	38	(238)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	58	47	18	(881)
Couple - both in part-time employment	56	49	22	(55)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	55	44	13	(154)
Couple - neither in paid employment	51	42	15	(166)
Family socio-economic classification				
Modern professional	80	69	34	(522)
Clerical and intermediate	74	57	35	(491)
Senior manager or administrator	79	66	38	(536)
Technical and craft	69	56	35	(488)
Semi-routine, manual and service	63	48	31	(543)
Routine manual and service	61	46	26	(809)
Middle or junior manager	74	59	35	(382)
Traditional professional	79	70	34	(335)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.5: Use of childcare, by family socio-economic classification and detailed family work status

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children</i>	<i>(4,651)</i>	<i>(2,690)</i>	<i>(1,668)</i>	<i>(293)</i>	<i>(1,547)</i>	<i>(802)</i>	<i>(745)</i>
Formal providers							
Nursery school	3	3	3	3	3	2	4
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	3	2	5	5	3	2	4
Reception class	6	6	6	5	6	6	7
Day nursery	6	8	4	3	5	5	5
Playgroup or pre-school	4	3	4	2	2	1	3
Breakfast club	5	8	2	4	7	9	4
After-school club	32	39	23	21	26	32	19
Childminder	4	6	1	*	4	7	1
Nanny or au pair	1	1	*	0	1	1	*
Informal providers							
Ex-partner	1	1	1	2	16	21	11
Grandparent	21	29	11	8	20	26	13
Older sibling	2	3	2	2	4	6	2
Another relative	3	4	2	2	5	6	3
Friend or neighbour	4	6	2	2	4	6	2

Table C2.6: Use of childcare providers, by family type and work status

Area deprivation	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	70	55	32	(6,198)
1 st quintile – most deprived	63	49	26	(1,560)
2 nd quintile	66	50	32	(1,481)
3 rd quintile	72	57	36	(1,143)
4 th quintile	73	60	32	(805)
5 th quintile – least deprived	78	65	35	(1,209)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.7: Use of childcare, by area deprivation

Area deprivation	2012-13	2014-15	Unweighted base 2012-13	Unweighted base 2014-15
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Any childcare				
1st quintile – most deprived	60	63	(1,278)	(1,560)
2nd quintile	61	66	(1,270)	(1,481)
3rd quintile	71	72	(1,282)	(1,143)
4th quintile	74	73	(1,273)	(805)
5th quintile – least deprived	74	78	(1,290)	(1,209)
Formal childcare				
1st quintile – most deprived	44	49	(1,278)	(1,560)
2nd quintile	46	50	(1,270)	(1,481)
3rd quintile	54	57	(1,282)	(1,143)
4th quintile	58	60	(1,273)	(805)
5th quintile – least deprived	60	65	(1,290)	(1,209)
Informal childcare				
1st quintile – most deprived	26	26	(1,278)	(1,560)
2nd quintile	26	32	(1,270)	(1,481)
3rd quintile	36	36	(1,282)	(1,143)
4th quintile	36	32	(1,273)	(805)
5th quintile – least deprived	31	35	(1,290)	(1,209)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.8: Use of childcare, by area deprivation, 2012-2014

Area characteristics	Breakfast club on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Children who used a breakfast club</i>		
Region		
North East	[100]	(17)
North West	93	(57)
Yorkshire and the Humber	92	(72)
East Midlands	[93]	(30)
West Midlands	[97]	(33)
East of England	[97]	(36)
London	[97]	(34)
South East	92	(63)
South West	[100]	(29)
Rurality		
Rural	[100]	(41)
Urban	94	(330)

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.9: Whether breakfast club was on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	After school club on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Children who used an after school club</i>		
Region		
North East	76	(73)
North West	76	(254)
Yorkshire and the Humber	74	(188)
East Midlands	77	(122)
West Midlands	79	(173)
East of England	73	(224)
London	77	(229)
South East	72	(354)
South West	69	(204)
Rurality		
Rural	74	(262)
Urban	77	(1,559)

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.10: Whether after school club was on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Nursery class part of an academy or free school	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Children who used a nursery class</i>		
Region		
North East	[44]	(24)
North West	[57]	(38)
Yorkshire and the Humber	[48]	(40)
East Midlands	[45]	(16)
West Midlands	[62]	(35)
East of England	[38]	(17)
London	67	(54)
South East	[25]	(18)
South West	[60]	(14)
Rurality		
Rural	[46]	(17)
Urban	55	(239)

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.11: Whether nursery class was part of an academy or free school, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Reception class part of an academy or free school	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Children who used a reception class</i>		
Region		
North East	[45]	(33)
North West	57	(63)
Yorkshire and the Humber	57	(78)
East Midlands	[50]	(26)
West Midlands	[50]	(49)
East of England	[50]	(28)
London	67	(87)
South East	[19]	(30)
South West	[50]	(25)
Rurality		
Rural	[52]	(28)
Urban	53	(391)

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.12: Whether reception class was part of an academy or free school, by area characteristics

	Use of formal childcare	
	Pre-school Odds ratio	School-age Odds ratio
Child, family and area characteristics		
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children</i>	(2,351)	(3,841)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	***17.07	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	*0.82
12 to 14	n/a	***0.33
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.32	***0.62
Couple – neither working	***0.34	**0.62
Lone parent – working	0.76	0.92
Lone parent – not working	***0.34	***0.65
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	0.72	***0.43
£10,000-£19,999	**0.54	***0.55
£20,000-£29,999	**0.58	***0.64
£30,000-£44,999	*0.66	*0.77
Income unknown	0.58	***0.59
Number of children (3+)		
1	*1.56	1.13
2	1.11	1.12
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	***0.45	1.04
Black Caribbean	1.99	*2.16
Black African	0.88	0.80
Asian Indian	**0.40	*0.64
Asian Pakistani	*0.49	0.82
Asian Bangladeshi	0.42	*0.54
Other Asian	0.60	*0.58
White and Black	1.17	1.18
White and Asian	0.66	1.01
Other mixed	0.46	*2.94
Other	0.57	0.78
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	0.89	*0.76
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	0.88	0.90
3 rd quintile	0.97	*0.75
2 nd quintile	0.88	***0.58
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.97	**0.65
Rurality (urban)		
Rural	0.98	1.12

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.13: Logistic regression models for use of formal childcare

	Use of informal childcare	
	Pre-school Odds ratio	School-age Odds ratio
Child, family and area characteristics		
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children</i>	(2,351)	(3,841)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	***0.71	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	0.95
12 to 14	n/a	***0.65
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.26	***0.52
Couple – neither working	***0.22	***0.47
Lone parent – working	**1.68	***2.45
Lone parent – not working	**0.54	0.89
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	0.72	**0.58
£10,000-£19,999	0.86	*0.73
£20,000-£29,999	0.92	0.91
£30,000-£44,999	1.00	1.09
Income unknown	0.91	***0.37
Number of children (3+)		
1	***1.83	***1.54
2	*1.32	**1.27
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	***0.23	***0.32
Black Caribbean	**0.19	***0.22
Black African	***0.10	***0.26
Asian Indian	***0.25	***0.34
Asian Pakistani	*0.47	0.73
Asian Bangladeshi	0.59	**0.16
Other Asian	**0.22	**0.33
White and Black	*0.42	**0.45
White and Asian	0.58	**0.33
Other mixed	0.43	1.12
Other	**0.29	0.62
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	1.26	0.88
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	1.16	0.90
3 rd quintile	*1.42	1.07
2 nd quintile	1.35	1.09
1 st quintile – most deprived	1.20	1.02
Rurality (urban)		
Rural	1.21	1.00

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.14: Logistic regression models for use of informal childcare

	Pre-school children			School-age children		
Use of childcare	Median	Mean	Un-weighted base	Median	Mean	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving care from provider types</i>						
Any provider	21.0	24.1	(1,774)	5.8	10.9	(2,370)
Formal providers						
Childminder	16.3	19.8	(134)	6.0	9.6	(95)
Nanny or au pair	[20.6]	[22.8]	(17)	[10.1]	[11.8]	(32)
Informal providers						
Ex-partner	14.0	20.8	(90)	17.0	21.1	(205)
Grandparent	9.5	12.3	(578)	4.8	8.5	(666)
Older sibling	[4.0]	[5.5]	(13)	3.0	5.3	(137)
Another relative	8.0	10.1	(91)	4.0	10.2	(102)
Friend or neighbour	3.0	6.1	(53)	3.0	5.3	(190)

Table C2.15: Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type and age

Any childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	16.7	22.2	1.2	(252)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	14.0	19.0	1.0	(308)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[12.4]	[16.1]	[2.1]	(39)
Lone parent not in paid employment	14.0	17.9	1.0	(432)
Couple - both in full-time employment	11.9	17.9	0.6	(821)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	8.5	13.8	0.4	(906)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	5.6	10.0	0.6	(214)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	8.0	12.6	0.5	(826)
Couple - both in part-time employment	[14.1]	[18.0]	[2.5]	(45)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	11.8	13.1	1.0	(148)
Couple - neither in paid employment	8.0	11.9	1.0	(153)

Table C2.16: Hours of any childcare used per week, by detailed family work status

Formal childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving formal childcare</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	7.0	12.5	0.9	(192)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	6.9	12.6	0.9	(212)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[2.5]	[8.6]	[1.9]	(27)
Lone parent not in paid employment	10.5	13.0	0.7	(333)
Couple - both in full-time employment	8.0	14.1	0.5	(708)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	6.0	11.0	0.4	(764)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	3.9	9.1	0.8	(159)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	7.3	11.5	0.4	(690)
Couple - both in part-time employment	[7.5]	[11.3]	[1.7]	(40)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	11.4	12.8	1.1	(123)
Couple - neither in paid employment	5.0	9.7	0.9	(130)

Table C2.17: Hours of formal childcare used per week, by detailed family working status

	Age of selected child			
Informal childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving informal childcare</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	16.1	20.2	1.5	(155)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	11.7	16.8	1.1	(192)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[9.9]	[13.4]	[1.7]	(30)
Lone parent not in paid employment	9.5	17.8	1.8	(181)
Couple - both in full-time employment	8.0	11.6	0.6	(391)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	6.0	8.9	0.4	(462)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	3.5	5.8	0.5	(108)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	5.0	9.4	0.8	(242)
Couple - both in part-time employment	[12.1]	[18.6]	[4.3]	(20)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	[7.3]	[10.6]	[1.8]	(34)
Couple - neither in paid employment	[10.4]	[13.0]	[2.4]	(38)

Table C2.18: Hours of informal childcare used per week, by detailed family working status

Child, family and area characteristics	Received Government funded hours (or attended school)	Received early years provision but not Government funded hours	Received early years provision but not sure about Government funded hours	Did not receive any early years provision	Un-weighted base
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds</i>					
All	87	4	1	8	(1,332)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	80	6	0	14	(121)
£10,000 - £19,999	82	3	*	14	(342)
£20,000 - £29,999	88	3	1	8	(249)
£30,000 - £44,999	91	4	0	5	(206)
£45,000+	94	2	2	2	(328)
Ethnicity of child, grouped					
White British	90	3	*	6	(892)
Other White	82	5	1	12	(116)
Black Caribbean	[80]	[0]	[0]	[20]	(20)
Black African	77	9	2	13	(64)
Asian Indian	[84]	[3]	[0]	[13]	(47)
Asian Pakistani	[71]	[10]	[3]	[16]	(44)
Asian Bangladeshi	[75]	[13]	[0]	[13]	(21)
Other Asian	[79]	[4]	[0]	[17]	(33)
White and Black	[82]	[9]	[5]	[5]	(30)
White and Asian	[80]	[0]	[0]	[20]	(14)
Other mixed	[86]	[0]	[0]	[14]	(10)
Other	[82]	[4]	[4]	[11]	(40)
Region					
North East	89	4	0	7	(62)
North West	81	8	3	9	(164)
Yorkshire and the Humber	93	2	0	4	(152)
East Midlands	89	4	0	8	(120)
West Midlands	88	4	0	8	(139)
East of England	90	2	0	9	(135)
London	76	8	2	14	(241)
South East	90	1	0	9	(197)
South West	94	2	0	4	(122)
Rurality					
Rural	85	7	0	7	(114)
Urban	87	4	1	9	(1,218)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.19: Receipt of the entitlement to Government funded early education, by family annual income, ethnicity of child (grouped), region and rurality

	Age of child			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	All
Number of hours	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to Government funded early education, except those who received Government funded hours through attending school</i>	(63)	(395)	(237)	(695)
Less than 12.5 hours	22	19	15	18
12.5 to 14.9 hours	3	9	5	7
15 hours or more	76	72	80	75
Median	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
Mean	15.9	14.5	15.1	14.8
Standard Error	1.6	0.2	0.3	0.2

Table C2.20: Number of Government funded hours per week, by age of child

	Age of child			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- and 4-year-olds who received less than 15 Government funded hours</i>	(14)	(112)	(46)	(172)
More hours would have to be paid for	[27]	43	[34]	39
Didn't need childcare for the child for longer	[18]	27	[32]	27
The child is too young to go for longer	[18]	10	[9]	11
The setting had no extra sessions available	[33]	6	[13]	11
One-off circumstance (e.g. holiday, sickness)	[0]	8	[9]	7
The child would be unhappy going for longer	[0]	4	[3]	3
The setting had extra sessions available but not at convenient times	[0]	0	[3]	1
The setting is difficult to get to	[0]	1	[0]	1
Other reason	[8]	8	[6]	7

Table C2.21: Reasons for receiving less than 15 government funded hours, by age of child

	Hours of formal childcare used	
	Pre-school (17.501+ hours)	School-age (3.001+ hours)
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children who used formal childcare</i>	(1,545)	(1,829)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	***1.95	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	***0.57
12 to 14	n/a	**0.65
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.45	**0.66
Couple – neither working	**0.45	0.82
Lone parent – working	**1.98	*1.46
Lone parent – not working	0.64	0.87
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	***0.26	1.05
£10,000-£19,999	***0.29	*0.68
£20,000-£29,999	***0.43	0.75
£30,000-£44,999	***0.46	**0.67
Income unknown	*0.52	0.96
Number of children (3+)		
1	***1.85	0.93
2	***1.75	1.02
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	0.89	0.97
Black Caribbean	2.62	1.88
Black African	*1.92	1.32
Asian Indian	1.08	1.10
Asian Pakistani	0.94	1.64
Asian Bangladeshi	1.21	1.41
Other Asian	0.51	0.85
White and Black	0.73	1.14
White and Asian	1.97	0.94
Other mixed	2.24	1.00
Other	1.16	0.91
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	1.93	0.95
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	0.74	*0.71
3 rd quintile	0.90	0.88
2 nd quintile	0.75	0.95
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.91	0.86

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.22: Logistic regression models for hours of formal childcare used

	Hours of informal childcare used	
	Pre-school (10.01+ hours)	School-age (6.01+ hours)
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children who used informal childcare</i>	(744)	(1,108)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	0.76	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	0.96
12 to 14	n/a	1.06
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.28	1.20
Couple – neither working	1.61	1.49
Lone parent – working	1.60	***3.68
Lone parent – not working	0.79	***2.76
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	1.08	1.23
£10,000-£19,999	0.79	1.10
£20,000-£29,999	0.73	1.20
£30,000-£44,999	0.97	1.27
Income unknown	0.94	0.97
Number of children (3+)		
1	*1.57	1.16
2	0.94	1.07
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	Not included	Not included
Black Caribbean	Not included	Not included
Black African	Not included	Not included
Asian Indian	Not included	Not included
Asian Pakistani	Not included	Not included
Asian Bangladeshi	Not included	Not included
Other Asian	Not included	Not included
White and Black	Not included	Not included
White and Asian	Not included	Not included
Other mixed	Not included	Not included
Other	Not included	Not included
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	1.09	0.93
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	1.06	0.86
3 rd quintile	0.74	1.03
2 nd quintile	0.97	0.94
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.96	1.23

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Ethnicity was excluded from the school-age children model, due to small base sizes for individual categories.

Table C2.23: Logistic regression models for hours of informal childcare used

	Age of child			
	2 years	3 years	4 years	Total
Satisfaction	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible 2- to 4-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to Government funded early education, except those who received Government funded hours through attending school</i>	(67)	(434)	(255)	(756)
Very satisfied	60	66	64	65
Fairly satisfied	27	23	23	24
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	5	4	4
Fairly dissatisfied	6	4	5	5
Very dissatisfied	2	2	3	2

Table C2.24: Whether parents satisfied with the number of Government funded hours, by age of child

	2012-13								2014-15							
	Age of child								Age of child							
Use of childcare	0-2	3-4	All pre-school	5-7	8-11	12-14	All school-age	All	0-2	3-4	All pre-school	5-7	8-11	12-14	All school-age	All
<i>Base: All children</i>	(674)	(1,162)	(1,836)	(893)	(995)	(622)	(2,510)	(4,346)	(646)	(1,128)	(1,774)	(881)	(960)	(529)	(2,370)	(4,144)
Any childcare																
Median	18.0	23.8	21.0	7.5	5.5	5.0	6.0	10.0	18.0	25.0	21.0	7.8	5.0	5.0	5.8	10.8
Mean	20.6	24.9	23.0	14.3	9.5	9.4	11.1	15.2	21.4	26.2	24.1	13.7	9.4	9.4	10.9	15.6
Standard error	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3
<i>Base: All children receiving formal childcare</i>	(460)	(1,127)	(1,587)	(718)	(747)	(416)	(1,881)	(3,468)	(453)	(1,094)	(1,547)	(744)	(746)	(341)	(1,831)	(3,378)
Formal childcare																
Median	16.0	18.0	17.0	5.0	3.0	3.2	3.3	7.0	16.0	18.8	17.5	4.3	2.6	3.0	3.0	7.0
Mean	18.1	21.6	20.4	11.9	4.8	4.6	7.3	12.1	18.5	22.5	21.1	10.4	4.7	4.2	6.7	12.1
Standard error	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<i>Base: All children receiving informal childcare</i>	(385)	(393)	(778)	(393)	(441)	(289)	(1,123)	(1,901)	(382)	(362)	(744)	(396)	(452)	(261)	(1,109)	(1,853)
Informal childcare																
Median	10.0	8.0	9.5	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.0	7.0	11.0	9.0	10.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.0	7.5
Mean	14.8	11.2	13.3	10.4	11.7	11.6	11.2	12.0	14.2	13.4	13.9	10.5	11.6	12.8	11.5	12.3
Standard error	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.3

Table C2.25: Hours of childcare used per week, by age of child

	Centre-based providers				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received centre-based childcare</i>	(452)	(489)	(593)	(754)	(467)
1	51	55	44	47	44
2	38	31	32	39	36
3+	11	14	23	14	20

Table C3.11: Number of providers, by specific centre-based provider types

	Informal providers			
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Number of providers	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(186)	(1,121)	(176)	(115)
1	18	27	18	15
2	44	50	46	48
3+	38	23	37	37

Table C3.12: Number of providers, by informal provider types

	Age of child and package of childcare					
	0-2			3-4		
	Formal: Centre-based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-based and informal	Formal: Centre-based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-based and informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(201)	(190)	(156)	(626)	(30)	(264)
Days per week						
1	14	31	1	3	[32]	0
2	25	32	13	9	[18]	1
3	31	16	27	18	[14]	14
4	8	13	30	12	[18]	17
5	22	6	24	58	[9]	49
6	0	2	4	*	[5]	12

7	0	1	2	1	[5]	6
Median hours per day	5.0	5.0	8.3	5.2	[6.0]	6.7
Median hours per week	15.0	11.2	29.3	16.5	[15.6]	30.0

Table C3.9: Patterns of childcare use, by age of child and package of childcare

	Centre-based providers				
Hours of centre-based care received	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received centre-based childcare</i>	(233)	(261)	(292)	(443)	(246)
Median hours per day	4.8	3.0	6.3	7.6	3.6
Median hours per week	15.0	15.0	31.3	18.0	14.5

Table C3.10: Hours of centre-based childcare received, by specific centre-based provider types

	Informal providers			
Hours of informal care received	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received informal childcare</i>	(90)	(578)	(91)	(53)
Median hours per day	7.0	5.6	5.0	3.0
Median hours per week	21.3	10.5	11.5	4.0

Table C3.11: Hours of informal childcare received, by informal provider types

	Age of child	
	0-2	3-4
Whether attended more than one provider on same day	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received a package of centre-based and informal childcare</i>	(168)	(304)
Never	64	43
Sometimes	29	49
Always	7	8

Table C3.12: Whether pre-school children attended more than one provider on the same day, by age of child

	Number of children			
	1	2	3+	All
Package of care	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with pre-school children only</i>	(646)	(514)	(61)	(1,221)
All children used				
Informal only	17	5	0	14
Formal: Centre-Based only	28	13	11	24
All children used either				
Formal: Centre-Based OR Informal	25	8	0	20
No childcare OR Formal: Centre-Based only	0	27	48	8
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal OR Informal only	*	10	11	3
Some other arrangement	14	26	26	17
Used any childcare	84	89	96	86
No childcare used	16	11	4	14

Table C3.13: Childcare packages for families with pre-school children only, by number of children

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Reasons/combinations	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,262)	(2,079)	(3,341)
Economic only	43	19	30
Child-related only	13	30	22
Parental time only	11	4	7
Economic and child-related	17	28	23
Economic and parental time	4	3	3
Child-related and parental time	6	9	8
Economic, child-related and parental time	6	6	6
Other	1	1	1

Table C3.14: Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Reasons	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,262)	(2,079)	(3,341)
Economic	70	57	62
Child-related	42	73	59
Parental time	26	21	24

Table C3.15: Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Centre-based providers				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received centre-based childcare</i>	(403)	(425)	(406)	(685)	(387)
Economic	59	37	31	76	40
Child-related	62	74	80	46	78
Parental time	15	16	13	14	20

Table C3.16: Reasons for using centre-based providers, by specific centre-based provider types

	Informal providers				
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(462)	(1,608)	(270)	(274)	(431)
1	25	29	33	27	21
2	35	35	34	29	30
3	23	22	24	25	27
4+	17	13	9	19	22

Table C4.9: Number of providers, by specific informal provider types

	Age of child and package of childcare								
	5-7			8-11			12-14		
	Formal Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	Formal Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	Formal Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(265)	(117)	(168)	(413)	(171)	(230)	(221)	(161)	(81)
Days per week									
1	35	28	1	34	31	1	39	33	0
2	24	33	16	24	21	19	26	25	20
3	14	14	28	14	21	23	16	19	24
4	10	10	20	10	10	19	10	8	20
5	14	12	20	15	13	22	6	10	22
6	1	2	13	1	2	14	2	1	14
7	1	2	2	*	1	2	0	5	0
Median hours per day	1.0	3.5	2.5	1.0	3.0	2.5	1.5	3.0	2.5
Median hours per week	2.3	7.7	10.1	2.5	7.6	10.0	3.0	7.0	9.3

Table C4.10: Use of childcare providers, by age of child and package of childcare

	Informal providers				
Hours of informal childcare received	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
<i>Base: All school-age children who received informal childcare</i>	(205)	(667)	(137)	(102)	(190)
Median hours per day	7.5	2.9	2.0	2.7	2.9
Median hours per week	20.5	6.0	4.5	6.5	5.8

Table C4.11: Hours of informal childcare received, by specific informal provider types

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Reasons/combinations	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,120)	(2,355)	(1,078)	(5,553)
Economic only	27	20	17	22
Child-related only	31	38	50	38
Parental time only	4	4	6	5
Economic and child-related	25	23	15	22
Economic and parental time	2	2	1	2
Child-related and parental time	6	7	7	6
Economic, child-related and parental time	4	5	3	4
Other	1	1	1	1

Table C4.12: Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Number of children			
	1	2	3+	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children only</i>	(951)	(1,331)	(525)	(2,807)
All children used				
Informal only	17	8	6	13
Formal: Out-of-School only	22	17	13	19
All children used either				
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	18	12	2	15
No childcare or Formal: Out-of-School only	*	12	19	5
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal or Informal only	0	5	7	2
Some other arrangement	13	25	30	18
No childcare used	30	20	24	27

Table C4.13: Childcare packages for families with school-age children only, by number of children

	Number of children		
	2	3+	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with pre-school and school-age children</i>	(947)	(1,217)	(2,164)
All children used			
Informal only	2	3	2
Formal: Centre-Based only	2	1	2
All children used either			
No childcare or Informal only	3	2	2
No childcare or Formal: Centre-Based only	18	22	20
No childcare or Formal: Out-of-School only	6	6	6
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal or Informal only	9	4	7
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal or Informal only	3	2	2
Formal: Out-of-School only or Formal: Centre-Based only	9	5	7
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal or Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	5	2	4
Some other arrangement	33	43	37
No childcare used	11	12	11

Table C4.14: Childcare packages for families with pre-school and school-age children, by number of children

	2012-13	2014-15
Reasons	%	%
All school age children		
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(5,530)	(5,553)
Economic	47	49
Child-related	72	71
Parental time	17	17
5-7		
<i>Base: All five- to seven-year-old children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,074)	(2,120)
Economic	55	58
Child-related	69	66
Parental time	18	16
8-11		
<i>Base: All eight- to eleven-year-old children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,297)	(2,355)
Economic	49	50
Child-related	72	73
Parental time	16	18
12-14		
<i>Base: All twelve- to fourteen-year-old children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,159)	(1,078)
Economic	34	36
Child-related	78	75
Parental time	15	17

Table C4.15: Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child 2012-2014

	Informal providers				
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(399)	(1,322)	(244)	(238)	(362)
Economic	33	69	67	66	57
Child-related	75	38	25	30	43
Parental time	24	21	35	31	21

Table C4.16: Reasons for using informal providers, by specific informal provider type

	Family paid provider for Education/ Childcare		Family paid provider for other services only	
Provider type	Median	Unweighted base	Median	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families who paid provider type</i>				
Formal providers				
Nursery school	73	(159)	[4]	(44)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	36	(56)	4	(58)
Day nursery	99	(446)	[6]	(35)
Playgroup or pre-school	24	(194)	[2]	(35)
Breakfast club	10	(284)	8	(102)
After-school club	12	(1,400)	6	(301)
Informal providers				
Grandparents	36	(24)	[10]	(39)

Table C5.6: Weekly payment for childcare, by service paid for

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>				
All	23	53	1.90	(3,016)
Family type				
Couple	24	55	2.23	(2,402)
Lone parent	20	45	3.44	(614)
Family work status				
Couple – both working	30	63	2.62	(1,650)
Couple – one working	13	36	2.83	(672)
Couple – neither working	5	19	4.99	(80)
Lone parent – working	28	51	3.73	(408)
Lone parent – not working	8	29	7.01	(206)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	10	51	12.25	(120)
£10,000 - £19,999	12	33	3.28	(473)
£20,000 - £29,999	15	38	2.75	(543)
£30,000 - £44,999	20	47	3.06	(610)
£45,000+	40	70	3.18	(1,102)
Number of children				
1	24	51	2.79	(682)
2	25	57	2.63	(1,507)
3+	20	48	3.06	(827)
Age of children				
Pre-school child(ren) only	64	93	4.80	(582)
Pre-school and school-age children	30	66	3.31	(1,101)
School-age child(ren) only	15	31	1.75	(1,333)

Table C5.7: Weekly payment for childcare, by family characteristics

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Area characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>				
Region				
North East	11	30	4.88	(130)
North West	25	47	3.04	(400)
Yorkshire and the Humber	20	43	4.14	(332)
East Midlands	17	39	4.22	(247)
West Midlands	25	54	5.32	(299)
East of England	25	54	4.75	(369)
London	40	87	8.89	(356)
South East	25	54	4.02	(555)
South West	19	41	4.09	(328)
Area deprivation				
1 st quintile – most deprived	16	51	4.56	(557)
2 nd quintile	20	47	4.44	(643)
3 rd quintile	25	53	3.96	(607)
4 th quintile	20	48	5.06	(453)
5 th quintile – least deprived	30	62	3.34	(756)
2 nd - 5 th quintile – least deprived	24	53	2.08	(2,459)
Rurality				
Rural	22	49	4.88	(421)
Urban	24	53	2.07	(2,595)

Table C5.8: Weekly payment for childcare, by area characteristics

	Difficulty paying for childcare					
Family characteristics	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>						
All	21	32	25	17	5	(2,982)
Family type						
Couple	23	34	24	15	3	(2,371)
Lone parent	14	27	26	24	9	(611)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	22	33	25	16	3	(1,627)
Couple – one working	26	35	23	14	2	(665)
Couple – neither working	27	33	17	19	3	(79)
Lone parent – working	12	26	29	24	10	(406)
Lone parent – not working	19	30	16	26	9	(205)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	15	26	25	26	8	(119)
£10,000 - £19,999	16	34	22	21	7	(472)
£20,000 - £29,999	19	30	21	22	8	(536)
£30,000 - £44,999	20	32	25	20	4	(601)
£45,000+	26	34	25	12	2	(1,092)
Number of children						
1	22	34	22	17	5	(675)
2	22	30	28	16	4	(1,489)
3+	18	32	25	20	6	(818)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	13	23	30	25	9	(575)
Pre-school and school-age children	17	27	29	21	6	(1,089)
School-age child(ren) only	26	38	21	13	2	(1,318)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C5.9: Difficulty paying for childcare, by family characteristics

	Difficulty paying for childcare					
Weekly payment	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>						
Less than £5	54	31	9	5	1	(437)
£5 to £14.99	31	43	17	8	1	(699)
£15 to £29.99	16	40	25	16	3	(484)
£30 to £79.99	10	30	33	22	6	(701)
£80 or more	5	17	35	32	11	(656)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C5.10: Difficulty paying for childcare, by weekly family payment (quintiles)

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Use of childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: Children receiving paid care for provider type</i>				
All	15	42.3	1.74	(2,125)
Formal provider				
Nursery school	43	78.9	9.55	(109)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	10	43.4	13.09	(63)
Day nursery	82	107.7	5.79	(304)
Playgroup or pre-school	15	25.7	3.00	(122)
Childminder	50	67.7	4.87	(188)
Nanny or au pair	90	107.9	13.98	(37)
Babysitter who came to home	10	14.2	2.47	(29)
Breakfast club	8	15.1	2.49	(212)
After-school club or activity	8	18.5	1.55	(1,074)
Informal provider				
Grandparents	15	30.4	6.48	(38)

Table C5.6 : Weekly payment for childcare, by provider type

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Children receiving paid care for provider type</i>				
All	15	42	1.75	(2,125)
Family type				
Couple	15	43	2.05	(1,690)
Lone parent	19	38	3.12	(435)
Family work status				
Couple – both working	20	48	2.37	(1,216)
Couple – one working	9	34	3.75	(425)
Couple – neither working	[5]	[15]	[2.79]	(49)
Lone parent – working	25	44	3.60	(316)
Lone parent – not working	6	21	5.15	(119)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	10	46	10.18	(90)
£10,000 - £19,999	8	28	3.85	(297)
£20,000 - £29,999	10	30	2.46	(353)
£30,000 - £44,999	13	37	3.14	(440)
£45,000+	22	55	3.01	(821)
Number of children				
1	25	56	3.20	(688)
2	13	40	2.32	(1,007)
3+	9	25	2.70	(430)
Age of children				
Pre-school child(ren) only	60	89	5.03	(482)
Pre-school and school-age children	13	44	3.40	(619)
School-age child(ren) only	10	25	1.47	(1,024)

Table C5.6: Weekly payment for childcare, by family characteristics

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Area characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Children receiving paid care for provider type</i>				
Region				
North East	8	21	5.70	(82)
North West	19	37	3.60	(288)
Yorkshire and the Humber	12	33	3.39	(231)
East Midlands	11	31	4.90	(169)
West Midlands	13	42	4.71	(204)
East of England	14	44	4.51	(260)
London	28	80	8.00	(265)
South East	17	39	3.06	(392)
South West	12	31	3.66	(234)
Area deprivation				
1 st quintile – most deprived	11	45	5.00	(379)
2 nd quintile	15	39	3.97	(444)
3 rd quintile	18	42	3.24	(436)
4 th quintile	17	41	2.20	(321)
5 th quintile – least deprived	16	44	3.17	(545)
2 nd - 5 th quintile – least deprived	16	42	1.84	(1,746)
Rurality				
Rural	13	36	4.43	(293)
Urban	16	43	1.92	(1,832)

Table C5.7: Weekly payment for childcare, by area characteristics

	Main formal provider								
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	Break-fast club	After school club	All
How often	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All children whose main provider was a paid formal group provider or childminder	(147)	(117)	(241)	(354)	(146)	(188)	(153)	(1,148)	(2,516)
Daily	6	7	5	7	6	5	23	5	7
Weekly	21	22	15	17	20	35	27	24	23
Monthly	49	10	9	72	27	58	24	24	32
Termly	19	37	28	3	41	2	22	38	28
Other arrangement	4	17	36	1	6	1	3	8	8
Don't know	1	7	6	0	1	0	1	2	2

Table C5.8: How often main formal provider was paid, by provider type [1]

[1] Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, holiday club/scheme, or other nursery education provider; however, these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

	Main formal provider								
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	Break-fast club	After school club	All
How often	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All children whose main provider was a paid formal group provider or childminder	(148)	(117)	(243)	(354)	(146)	(188)	(152)	(1,147)	(2,517)
In advance	77	71	63	75	66	46	79	79	74
In arrears	21	14	18	24	30	54	19	17	22
Don't know	2	14	19	1	4	0	2	4	5

Table C5.9: Whether main formal provider was paid in advance, or in arrears [1]

[1] Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, holiday club/scheme, or other nursery education provider; however, these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

	Main formal provider								
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	Break-fast club	After school club	All
How often	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All children whose main provider was a paid formal group provider or childminder	(148)	(117)	(247)	(354)	(147)	(188)	(153)	(1,149)	(2,525)
Yes	34	12	7	46	13	15	5	8	14
No	65	86	87	54	85	85	95	91	84
Don't know	1	2	6	1	3	0	0	1	1

Table C5.10: Whether main formal provider was paid an upfront refundable deposit [1]

[1] Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, holiday club/scheme, or other nursery education provider; however, these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Tax credits received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All families	(7,691)	(7,054)	(7,004)	(6,667)	(6,675)	(6,317)	(6,362)	(6,167)
None	36	34	32	29	31	36	47	48
Child Tax Credit only	38	42	43	46	41	38	29	27
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	27	25	25	25	28	27	24	25
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, and Child Tax Credit only	65	67	68	71	69	64	53	52

Table C5.11: Receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, 2004 to 2014-15

	Main sources of information									
	Word of mouth	School	Sure Start/ Children's Centre	Local Authority	Local Adverts	Jobcentre Plus	Health Visitors	All other sources	None	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<i>Base: All families</i>										
All	41	33	8	7	7	1	5	27	31	(6,196)
Childcare used										
Formal provider	47	37	9	8	8	1	5	31	24	(4,573)
Informal provider/ other only	29	25	7	5	4	2	6	18	42	(605)
No childcare	27	23	7	5	4	2	4	21	44	(1,018)
Family type										
Couple	44	34	8	7	8	*	5	29	29	(4,650)
Lone parent	32	29	9	6	4	4	6	23	34	(1,546)
Family work status										
Couple – both working	47	36	6	8	9	*	4	30	29	(2,690)
Couple – one working	41	30	11	6	7	*	8	27	30	(1,667)
Couple – neither working	28	31	13	4	4	2	9	18	36	(293)
Lone parent – working	34	31	7	6	5	1	3	23	34	(801)
Lone parent – not working	28	26	12	6	4	8	9	23	33	(745)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.6: Main information sources, by family characteristics

	Main sources of information									
	Word of mouth	School	Sure Start/ Children's Centre	Local Authority	Local Adverts	Jobcentre Plus	Health Visitors	All other sources	None	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>										
Family annual income										
Under £10,000	28	22	10	5	3	6	8	19	39	(429)
£10,000-£19,999	33	27	9	6	5	3	7	23	35	(1,422)
£20,000-£29,999	36	35	10	7	5	1	6	27	29	(1,210)
£30,000-£44,999	45	36	9	8	9	*	5	31	25	(1,088)
£45,000+	51	37	6	8	10	1	3	33	28	(1,608)
Number of children										
1	38	28	7	7	6	2	5	27	34	(1,603)
2	45	38	9	7	9	1	5	28	26	(2,792)
3+	39	37	12	6	5	2	8	24	29	(1,801)
Age of children										
Pre-school only	56	11	17	10	5	2	15	40	20	(1,221)
Pre- and school age	45	34	14	7	6	2	8	30	25	(2,168)
School age only	34	41	3	6	8	1	1	21	36	(2,807)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.7: Main information sources, by family characteristics

	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was aged 2 to 4</i>	(1,884)
Yes	35
No	49
It depends	12
I/we already do	4

Table C6.3: Whether parent would use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school or a maintained nursery school between 8-9am, if it was available

	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was aged 2 to 4</i>	(1,882)
Yes	37
No	43
It depends	15
I/we already do	5

Table C6.4: Whether parent would use childcare provided in a nursery class attached to a primary or infants school or a maintained nursery school between 3-6pm, if it was available

	Survey year						
	2004	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014
Awareness and use of FIS	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,802)	(7,059)	(6,694)	(6,723)	(6,359)	(6,393)	(6,193)
Not aware	78	68	69	68	68	70	71
Aware but not used	12	17	18	20	20	19	17
Used FIS	10	15	13	13	12	12	11

Table C6.5: Awareness and use of Family Information Services, 2004-2014

	Survey year							
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Level of information	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,797)	(7,136)	(7,074)	(6,708)	(6,722)	(6,359)	(6,393)	(6,198)
About right	38	43	43	45	45	44	43	49
Too much	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2
Too little	38	35	37	38	38	38	39	32
Not sure or don't know	23	21	19	16	16	16	16	18

Table C6.6: Level of information about childcare in local area, 2004 – 2014-15

	Level of information about childcare				
Family characteristics	About right	Too much	Too little	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	49	2	32	18	(6,198)
Childcare used					
Formal provider	53	2	32	13	(4,575)
Informal provider/ other only	40	1	32	28	(605)
No childcare	41	2	30	28	(1,018)
Family type					
Couple	50	2	31	17	(4,651)
Lone parent	45	2	34	19	(1,547)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	50	2	32	16	(2,690)
Couple – one working	50	2	29	20	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	45	1	32	21	(293)
Lone parent – working	44	2	36	18	(802)
Lone parent – not working	46	3	32	20	(745)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	47	4	26	23	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	44	2	34	20	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	45	2	36	18	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	50	1	34	14	(1,088)
£45,000+	54	1	30	15	(1,608)
Number of children					
1	45	2	33	20	(1,603)
2	53	2	31	15	(2,792)
3+	52	2	30	16	(1,803)
Age of children					
Pre-school child(ren) only	52	2	31	15	(1,221)
Pre-school and school-age children	54	1	31	14	(2,170)
School-age child(ren) only	45	2	33	20	(2,807)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.7: Level of information about childcare, by family characteristics

	Amount of information about local childcare 'about right'
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	***0.67
Did not use any childcare	***0.68
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	1.03
Couple – neither working	1.00
Lone parent – working	0.96
Lone parent – not working	1.04
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	0.89
£10,000-£19,999	*0.79
£20,000-£29,999	*0.79
£30,000-£44,999	0.94
Income unknown	0.91
Number of children (3+)	
1	*0.82
2	1.00
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	*1.22
Both pre-school and school-age	1.13
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	1.00
Black Caribbean	0.68
Black African	1.37
Asian Indian	1.00
Asian Pakistani	1.17
Asian Bangladeshi	0.79
Other Asian	0.85
White and Black	0.79
White and Asian	1.00
Other mixed	0.77
Other	0.96
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	***0.56
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	0.91
3 rd quintile	0.91
2 nd quintile	*0.76
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.82
Rurality (urban)	
Rural	1.10

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of saying that the amount of information about local childcare is 'about right', and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C6.8: Logistic regression model for amount of information about local childcare

	Having a view on the availability of formal childcare places
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	***0.48
Did not use any childcare	***0.51
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	0.88
Couple – neither working	0.96
Lone parent – working	1.12
Lone parent – not working	1.00
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	*0.62
£10,000-£19,999	0.84
£20,000-£29,999	0.93
£30,000-£44,999	0.95
Income unknown	0.71
Number of children (3+)	
1	***0.69
2	0.96
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	***1.67
Both pre-school and school-age	**1.27
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	***0.51
Black Caribbean	0.87
Black African	0.68
Asian Indian	0.94
Asian Pakistani	1.12
Asian Bangladeshi	0.67
Other Asian	**0.47
White and Black	0.69
White and Asian	1.58
Other mixed	0.71
Other	0.81
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	1.00
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	1.07
3 rd quintile	0.97
2 nd quintile	1.06
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.85
Rurality (urban)	
Rural	0.97

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of providing a view about the number of places at local childcare providers (that is, saying there are 'too many', 'about the right number', or 'not enough', as opposed to saying 'not sure') and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C6.9: Logistic regression model for having a view on the availability of formal childcare places

	'About the right' number of formal childcare places locally
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,770)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	*1.33
Did not use any childcare	0.93
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	1.13
Couple – neither working	1.21
Lone parent – working	0.85
Lone parent – not working	0.86
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	*1.51
£10,000-£19,999	1.26
£20,000-£29,999	1.10
£30,000-£44,999	1.12
Income unknown	1.11
Number of children (3+)	
1	0.92
2	1.01
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	1.10
Both pre-school and school-age	0.88
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	0.98
Black Caribbean	0.86
Black African	1.00
Asian Indian	1.08
Asian Pakistani	1.17
Asian Bangladeshi	1.26
Other Asian	0.97
White and Black	**0.53
White and Asian	*0.51
Other mixed	**0.31
Other	0.92
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	***0.57
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	0.94
3 rd quintile	0.89
2 nd quintile	0.79
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.85
Rurality (urban)	
Rural	1.32

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of saying there are 'about the right number' of formal childcare places locally, and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Families who were 'not sure' about whether there were a sufficient number of formal childcare places locally were excluded from the analysis.

Table C6.10: Logistic regression model for availability of formal childcare places

	Quality of local childcare is 'good'
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,655)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	0.74
Did not use any childcare	*0.69
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	1.00
Couple – neither working	0.89
Lone parent – working	0.82
Lone parent – not working	*0.62
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	1.07
£10,000-£19,999	1.18
£20,000-£29,999	1.01
£30,000-£44,999	1.18
Income unknown	1.08
Number of children (3+)	
1	1.16
2	1.27
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	1.22
Both pre-school and school-age	1.24
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	0.82
Black Caribbean	0.88
Black African	1.14
Asian Indian	1.30
Asian Pakistani	2.04
Asian Bangladeshi	1.16
Other Asian	1.07
White and Black	0.59
White and Asian	1.04
Other mixed	**0.31
Other	0.60
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	***0.48
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	0.80
3 rd quintile	0.71
2 nd quintile	**0.49
1 st quintile – most deprived	***0.41
Rurality (urban)	
Rural	0.95

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of saying the overall quality of local childcare is very good or fairly good, and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Families who were 'not sure' about the quality of local childcare were excluded from the analysis.

Table C6.11: Logistic regression model for quality of local childcare

	Affordability of local childcare is 'good'
Child, family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,604)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	***0.56
Did not use any childcare	**0.70
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	*1.24
Couple – neither working	1.26
Lone parent – working	1.03
Lone parent – not working	0.97
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	0.69
£10,000-£19,999	**0.71
£20,000-£29,999	***0.61
£30,000-£44,999	**0.69
Income unknown	1.33
Number of children (3+)	
1	**1.36
2	**1.29
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	1.04
Both pre-school and school-age	0.92
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	1.09
Black Caribbean	*0.56
Black African	1.34
Asian Indian	1.42
Asian Pakistani	1.66
Asian Bangladeshi	1.49
Other Asian	1.75
White and Black	0.65
White and Asian	1.14
Other mixed	1.57
Other	0.76
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	0.78
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	1.02
3 rd quintile	1.01
2 nd quintile	0.86
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.86
Rurality (urban)	
Rural	**1.51

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of saying the affordability of local childcare is good or very good, and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Families who were 'not sure' about the quality of local childcare were excluded from the analysis.

Table C6.12: Logistic regression model for affordability of local childcare

	Survey year							
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Perceptions of availability	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,797)	(7,135)	(7,074)	(6,707)	(6,723)	(6,359)	(6,393)	(6,198)
Too many	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
About the right number	40	44	40	42	44	44	42	46
Not enough	40	37	37	34	32	31	30	28
Not sure	19	18	22	23	23	24	26	26

Table C6.83: Perceptions of availability of local childcare places, 2004-2014

	Perceptions of local childcare availability				
	Too many	About right	Not enough	Not sure	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	1	46	28	26	(6,198)
Childcare used					
Formal provider	1	49	31	20	(4,575)
Informal provider/ other only	1	42	20	37	(605)
No childcare	1	38	24	37	(1,018)
Family type					
Couple	1	47	28	25	(4,651)
Lone parent	1	43	29	28	(1,547)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	1	46	29	24	(2,690)
Couple – one working	1	47	25	27	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	0	47	24	29	(293)
Lone parent – working	1	43	29	27	(802)
Lone parent – not working	*	42	28	29	(745)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	*	44	22	34	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	1	44	26	29	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	1	45	28	26	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	1	47	28	24	(1,088)
£45,000+	*	47	31	21	(1,608)
Number of children					
1	1	43	27	30	(1,603)
2	1	49	29	21	(2,792)
3+	1	48	29	21	(1,803)
Age of children					
Pre-school child(ren) only	1	51	27	21	(1,221)
Pre-school and school-age children	1	48	31	20	(2,170)
School-age child(ren) only	1	43	27	30	(2,807)
Family working arrangements					
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	1	45	29	25	(2,526)
Working family - no one works atypical hours	1	47	26	26	(1,965)
Non-working family	*	43	27	29	(1,038)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.14: Perceptions of local childcare availability, by family characteristics

Area characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare availability				
	Too many	About right	Not enough	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	1	46	28	26	(6,198)
Region					
North East	1	52	25	22	(267)
North West	1	44	28	27	(794)
Yorkshire and the Humber	1	38	28	33	(736)
East Midlands	*	39	25	35	(570)
West Midlands	1	44	29	26	(645)
East of England	1	46	31	23	(637)
London	1	50	26	23	(981)
South East	*	50	27	23	(985)
South West	1	46	31	23	(583)
Area deprivation					
1 st quintile – most deprived	1	42	25	31	(1,560)
2 nd quintile	1	46	29	24	(1,481)
3 rd quintile	1	46	28	25	(1,143)
4 th quintile	*	48	29	23	(805)
5 th quintile – least deprived	*	48	28	24	(1,209)
Rurality					
Rural	*	43	32	25	(720)
Urban	1	46	27	26	(5,478)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.15: Perceptions of local childcare availability, by area characteristics

	Survey year							
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Perceptions of quality	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(7,796)</i>	<i>(7,134)</i>	<i>(7,074)</i>	<i>(6,707)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>	<i>(6,359)</i>	<i>(6,393)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Very good	19	20	19	21	20	20	19	24
Fairly good	42	43	41	43	41	39	39	39
Fairly poor	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	6
Very poor	2	3	5	4	4	4	3	3
Not sure	28	26	27	25	28	29	31	28

Table C6.16: Perceptions of local childcare quality, 2004-2014

Family characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare quality					
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	24	39	6	3	28	(6,198)
Childcare used						
Formal provider	29	43	6	3	19	(4,575)
Informal provider/ other only	18	33	7	1	40	(605)
No childcare	13	33	6	4	45	(1,018)
Family type						
Couple	26	40	6	2	26	(4,651)
Lone parent	19	37	8	4	32	(1,547)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	27	41	6	2	24	(2,690)
Couple – one working	23	40	6	2	28	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	24	31	5	4	36	(293)
Lone parent – working	21	39	7	3	30	(802)
Lone parent – not working	17	35	9	4	35	(745)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	21	33	6	5	36	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	19	37	7	3	33	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	23	40	7	3	28	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	23	44	6	2	24	(1,088)
£45,000+	32	40	6	2	20	(1,608)
Number of children						
1	23	37	6	3	31	(1,603)
2	27	42	6	2	23	(2,792)
3+	22	42	7	3	26	(1,803)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	27	43	7	2	21	(1,221)
Pre-school and school-age children	27	44	7	2	21	(2,170)
School-age child(ren) only	22	36	6	3	32	(2,807)
Family working arrangements						
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	25	39	7	2	26	(2,526)
Working family - no one works atypical hours	25	42	5	2	26	(1,965)
Non-working family	19	34	8	4	35	(1,038)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.17: Perceptions of local childcare quality, by family characteristics

	Perceptions of local childcare quality					
Area characteristics	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	24	39	6	3	28	(6,198)
Region						
North East	32	42	5	2	19	(267)
North West	27	38	8	1	25	(794)
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	35	6	2	32	(736)
East Midlands	18	36	4	5	36	(570)
West Midlands	23	37	8	5	28	(645)
East of England	30	41	6	1	21	(637)
London	12	47	6	4	30	(981)
South East	26	41	5	1	27	(985)
South West	30	35	7	2	26	(583)
Area deprivation						
1 st quintile – most deprived	17	37	9	3	34	(1,560)
2 nd quintile	18	42	7	4	30	(1,481)
3 rd quintile	28	39	6	2	25	(1,143)
4 th quintile	28	40	5	2	25	(805)
5 th quintile – least deprived	33	39	4	2	22	(1,209)
Rurality						
Rural	31	38	4	3	24	(720)
Urban	23	40	7	3	28	(5,478)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.18: Perceptions of local childcare quality, by area characteristics

	Survey year							
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Perceptions of quality	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,796)	(7,136)	(7,074)	(6,707)	(6,723)	(6,359)	(6,393)	(6,198)
Very good	6	7	6	7	6	6	5	8
Fairly good	29	31	30	31	32	29	27	31
Fairly poor	25	24	22	22	20	19	21	20
Very poor	12	12	15	14	13	16	18	13
Not sure	28	26	27	27	29	29	29	28

Table C6.19: Perceptions of local childcare affordability, 2004-2014

Area characteristics	No informal childcare available...		Unweighted base
	...as a one-off	...for regular childcare	
<i>Base: Families who had not used any childcare in last year</i>			
Region			
North East	[10]	[44]	(7)
North West	[24]	[36]	(50)
Yorkshire and the Humber	[30]	[73]	(27)
East Midlands	16	49	(63)
West Midlands	[25]	[41]	(41)
East of England	[12]	[62]	(22)
London	46	67	(165)
South East	22	57	(62)
South West	[5]	[65]	(13)
Rurality			
Rural	[11]	[57]	(34)
Urban	30	56	(416)
NB: Row percentages			
* Base size shown is for "as a one-off". Base size for "for regular childcare" is 1 less than base shown.			

Table C6.20: Availability of informal childcare by area characteristics

	Perceptions of local childcare affordability					
Family characteristics	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	8	31	20	13	28	(6,198)
Childcare used						
Formal provider	10	35	21	13	21	(4,575)
Informal provider/ other only	4	22	21	15	38	(605)
No childcare	4	23	15	12	45	(1,018)
Family type						
Couple	9	32	20	12	27	(4,651)
Lone parent	6	29	19	16	31	(1,547)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	8	34	22	12	23	(2,690)
Couple – one working	10	29	17	12	32	(1,668)
Couple – neither working	10	23	14	13	40	(293)
Lone parent – working	6	30	19	16	28	(802)
Lone parent – not working	5	26	18	16	35	(745)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	6	28	19	15	32	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	6	27	16	16	35	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	8	26	20	17	30	(1,211)
£30,000 - £44,999	9	31	24	14	22	(1,088)
£45,000+	10	39	22	9	21	(1,608)
Number of children						
1	8	29	19	12	32	(1,603)
2	9	34	20	13	23	(2,792)
3+	7	30	21	17	26	(1,803)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	10	36	21	14	19	(1,221)
Pre-school and school-age children	8	33	22	15	22	(2,170)
School-age child(ren) only	8	28	18	12	34	(2,807)
Family working arrangements						
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	9	30	22	13	26	(2,526)
Working family - no one works atypical hours	8	34	18	12	27	(1,965)
Non-working family	6	26	17	15	36	(1,038)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.21: Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by family characteristics

	Have problems finding childcare flexible enough to meet needs
Family and area characteristics	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,164)</i>
Use of childcare (used formal provider)	
Used childcare but no formal provider	1.17
Did not use any childcare	0.95
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)	
Couple – one working	**0.71
Couple – neither working	0.64
Lone parent – working	1.17
Lone parent – not working	0.97
Family annual income (£45,000+)	
Under £10,000	0.90
£10,000-£19,999	0.84
£20,000-£29,999	0.96
£30,000-£44,999	0.86
Income unknown	0.73
Number of children (3+)	
1	0.82
2	1.02
Age of children (only school age children)	
Only pre-school age	*1.32
Both pre-school and school-age	1.12
Ethnicity (White British)	
Other White	*1.37
Black Caribbean	1.62
Black African	1.20
Asian Indian	**1.84
Asian Pakistani	0.75
Asian Bangladeshi	0.67
Other Asian	1.12
White and Black	***2.45
White and Asian	1.26
Other mixed	1.14
Other	1.47
Special educational needs (No)	
Yes	***2.01
Area deprivation (least deprived)	
4 th quintile	1.29
3 rd quintile	1.22
2 nd quintile	1.29
1 st quintile – most deprived	1.19

Rurality (urban)	
Rural	0.98

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Odds ratio > 1 indicates higher odds of having problems finding childcare flexible enough to meet needs, and odds ratio < 1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Families who said they did not know, or who didn't use or need formal childcare, were excluded from the analysis.

Table C6.22: Logistic regression model for flexibility of local childcare

Area characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare affordability					Unweighted base
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All						(6,198)
Region						
North East	13	25	23	15	24	(267)
North West	10	28	20	16	26	(794)
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	27	22	10	35	(736)
East Midlands	8	24	13	15	40	(570)
West Midlands	8	29	21	14	28	(645)
East of England	10	36	20	14	20	(637)
London	4	39	14	12	30	(981)
South East	9	34	22	11	24	(985)
South West	9	28	23	13	27	(583)
Area deprivation						
1 st quintile – most deprived	7	25	17	14	36	(1,560)
2 nd quintile	6	31	20	15	28	(1,481)
3 rd quintile	11	31	20	14	25	(1,143)
4 th quintile	8	35	21	11	26	(805)
5 th quintile – least deprived	10	35	21	10	24	(1,209)
Rurality						
Rural	12	35	18	10	26	(720)
Urban	8	31	20	14	28	(5,478)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.93: Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by area characteristics

Family annual income and working arrangements	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>							
All	7	14	17	30	14	18	(5,756)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	5	13	18	23	15	26	(429)
£10,000 - £19,999	7	12	17	29	14	21	(1,422)
£20,000 - £29,999	7	13	18	29	12	20	(1,210)
£30,000 - £44,999	7	14	17	33	13	17	(1,088)
£45,000+	8	15	16	33	16	12	(1,607)
Family working arrangements							
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	8	14	17	30	14	18	(2,524)
Working family - no one works atypical hours	6	13	16	34	14	16	(1,963)
Non-working family	7	11	20	24	14	24	(1,038)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.24: Extent to which parents have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to meet their needs, by family annual income and working arrangements

		%
Base: All families		(6,194)
I have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to fit my needs	Agree strongly	7
	Agree	13
	Neither agree nor disagree	18
	Disagree	30
	Strongly disagree	14
	Don't use/need to use formal childcare	18
Base: All working families		(5,154)
I am able to find term-time childcare that fits in with my/ my partner's working hours	Agree strongly	15
	Agree	36
	Neither agree nor disagree	11
	Disagree	8
	Strongly disagree	4
	Don't use/need to use formal childcare	27

Table C6.25: The extent to which parents' perceive their childcare arrangements as flexible

Area characteristics	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>							
All	7	13	18	30	14	18	(6,194)
Region							
North East	6	14	15	39	19	7	(267)
North West	6	13	17	35	15	15	(794)
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	13	15	29	18	16	(735)
East Midlands	7	14	10	28	19	21	(570)
West Midlands	8	13	13	31	14	19	(645)
East of England	8	12	16	31	17	16	(636)
London	6	14	30	25	7	18	(980)
South East	6	14	16	28	14	21	(984)
South West	6	14	19	29	12	20	(583)
Rurality							
Rural	5	14	19	29	14	18	(719)
Urban	7	13	17	30	14	18	(5,475)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.26: Extent to which parents have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to meet their needs, by region and rurality

Family annual income and working arrangements	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All working families</i>							
All	15	36	11	8	4	26	(4,786)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	11	28	12	8	4	38	(202)
£10,000 - £19,999	12	35	11	7	5	30	(889)
£20,000 - £29,999	12	35	11	8	4	31	(1,059)
£30,000 - £44,999	16	36	13	7	4	25	(1,046)
£45,000+	20	39	9	9	4	20	(1,590)
Family working arrangements							
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	14	34	11	9	4	28	(2,523)
Working family - no one works atypical hours	14	38	11	7	3	27	(1,964)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.27: The extent to which parents are able to find term time childcare that fits in with their or their partner's working hours, by family annual income and working arrangements

Area characteristics	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All working families</i>							
All	15	36	11	8	4	27	(5,154)
Region							
North East	16	39	13	8	6	19	(208)
North West	19	41	9	7	3	21	(637)
Yorkshire and the Humber	17	34	10	11	3	25	(591)
East Midlands	15	36	6	9	4	30	(481)
West Midlands	20	33	10	6	4	26	(517)
East of England	20	35	8	8	4	25	(554)
London	4	31	18	7	5	35	(787)
South East	14	36	12	7	4	27	(871)
South West	15	38	12	7	3	25	(508)
Rurality							
Rural	17	34	11	8	3	27	(649)
Urban	14	36	11	8	4	27	(4,505)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.28: Extent to which parents are able to find term time childcare that fits in with their or their partner's working hours, by region and rurality

Area characteristics	Time							Unweighted base
	Summer holidays	Easter holidays	Christmas holidays	Half-term holidays	Term-time weekdays	Term-time weekends	Outside of normal working hours i.e. 8am to 6pm	
<i>Base: All families</i>								
All	65	34	30	37	33	18	25	(3,894)
Region								
North East	62	27	23	32	26	17	27	(164)
North West	67	34	30	38	30	17	25	(500)
Yorkshire and the Humber	66	36	34	37	37	20	26	(436)
East Midlands	70	40	34	41	38	24	30	(352)
West Midlands	65	39	34	43	33	20	29	(452)
East of England	62	26	22	29	27	14	30	(378)
London	66	29	25	37	35	17	15	(604)
South East	64	34	32	36	32	14	23	(626)
South West	64	39	34	39	38	20	29	(382)
Rurality								
Rural	67	29	24	31	30	15	26	(441)
Urban	65	34	31	38	34	18	25	(3,453)

Table C6.29: Times where parents would like childcare provision improving in order to meet their needs, by area characteristics

	Region									
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	All
Changes to childcare provision	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(267)	(794)	(736)	(570)	(645)	(637)	(981)	(985)	(583)	(6,198)
More childcare places – general	9	9	11	10	11	13	17	11	9	12
Higher quality childcare	5	8	8	11	9	6	16	6	6	9
More convenient/ accessible locations	6	6	5	7	6	9	11	7	7	7
More affordable childcare	28	40	30	35	39	31	34	32	38	34
More childcare available during term-time	7	7	8	7	8	5	7	6	5	7
More childcare available during school holidays	19	21	19	18	23	19	15	21	21	19
More information about what is available	17	16	15	20	19	16	16	13	15	16
More flexibility about when childcare is available	13	14	11	12	11	13	9	14	13	12
Longer opening hours	16	15	19	14	15	17	17	15	15	16
Making childcare available closer to where I live	5	8	6	8	8	5	6	7	9	7
Making childcare available closer to where I work	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	4	5	4
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	11	8	8	9	12	8	7	11	9	9
Other	4	1	1	4	3	5	3	4	5	3
Nothing	39	39	43	40	32	40	40	40	36	39

Table C6.30: Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs, by Region

	Rurality		
	Rural	Urban	All
Changes to childcare provision	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(720)</i>	<i>(5,478)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
More childcare places – general	7	12	12
Higher quality childcare	5	9	9
More convenient/accessible locations	7	8	8
More affordable childcare	26	36	34
More childcare available during term-time	7	7	7
More childcare available during school holidays	21	19	19
More information about what is available	13	16	16
More flexibility about when childcare is available	11	12	12
Longer opening hours	14	16	16
Making childcare available closer to where I live	8	7	7
Making childcare available closer to where I work	1	2	2
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	4	4	4
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	9	9	9
Other	3	3	3
Nothing	41	39	39

Table C6.31: Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs, by rurality

	Region									All
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	
Types of formal childcare provision	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(267)	(794)	(736)	(570)	(645)	(637)	(981)	(985)	(583)	(6,198)
Nursery school	2	3	4	3	5	3	4	3	3	4
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	3	4	2	3	4	3	4	1	2	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	*	*	1	1	*	*	1	*	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	0	*	*	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Day nursery	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3
Playgroup or pre-school	4	6	4	5	5	5	4	3	5	4
Childminder	4	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
Nanny or au pair	0	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1	1
Baby-sitter who come to home	2	3	3	2	3	5	3	3	5	3
Breakfast club	7	5	6	9	7	7	6	7	7	7
After-school club/activities	22	18	18	25	19	20	18	21	20	20
Holiday club/scheme	15	17	15	22	20	12	16	15	12	16
Other nursery education provider	0	0	0	*	0	0	*	*	0	*
Other childcare provider	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1
None – happy with current arrangements	55	59	59	57	54	57	63	59	62	59

Table C6.32: Types of formal childcare provision that parents would like to use/use more of, by Region

	Rurality		
	Rural	Urban	All
Types of formal childcare provision	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(720)</i>	<i>(5,478)</i>	<i>(6,198)</i>
Nursery school	3	4	4
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	2	3	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	*	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	*	1	1
Day nursery	3	3	3
Playgroup or pre-school	3	5	4
Childminder	2	3	3
Nanny or au pair	1	1	1
Baby-sitter who come to home	3	3	3
Breakfast club	6	7	7
After-school club/activities	17	20	20
Holiday club/scheme	13	16	16
Other nursery education provider	*	*	*
Other childcare provider	2	1	1
None – happy with current arrangements	63	58	59

Table C6.33: Types of formal childcare provision that parents would like to use/use more of, by rurality

Whether would apply for tax free childcare	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,488)</i>
Yes – definitely	47
Yes – probably	26
No – probably not	5
No – definitely not	8

Table C6.3410: Likelihood of applying for Tax Free Childcare when available

		Childcare used by selected child in reference week			
		Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No childcare used	All
Parents' views		%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life</i>		(126)	(83)	(63)	(272)
<i>There are childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability</i>	Agree strongly	16	9	6	11
	Agree	24	21	18	22
	Neither agree or disagree	33	29	28	30
	Disagree	14	14	16	15
	Strongly disagree	11	21	27	18
	Don't know	2	7	4	4
<i>Hours available at childcare providers that can cater for my child's illness or disability fit with my other daily commitments</i>	Agree strongly	14	7	3	9
	Agree	25	16	18	21
	Neither agree or disagree	35	32	40	35
	Disagree	14	18	11	14
	Strongly disagree	9	18	20	14
	Don't know	3	10	8	6
<i>How easy to travel to nearest childcare provider who can accommodate health condition or impairment</i>	Very easy	30	13	3	18
	Easy	26	22	28	25
	Neither easy nor difficult	27	31	28	28
	Difficult	5	11	9	8
	Very difficult	10	14	28	16
	Don't know	3	9	3	5
<i>It is easy to find out about childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability</i>	Agree strongly	10	4	4	7
	Agree	21	22	21	21
	Neither agree or disagree	29	28	30	29
	Disagree	20	19	15	19
	Strongly disagree	19	21	25	21
	Don't know	1	6	4	3

Table C6.35: Views on available provision for children with an illness/ disability

		%
<i>Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life and used formal care in reference week</i>		(126)
<i>Staff at childcare providers I use for my child with an illness/ disability are trained in how to deal with this condition</i>	<i>Agree strongly</i>	20
	<i>Agree</i>	38
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	23
	<i>Disagree</i>	7
	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	10
	<i>Don't know</i>	2

Table C6.36: Parents' views on training for childcare for children with illness/ disability

	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
How often	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)</i>	(1,630)	(1,699)	(3,329)
Every day/most days	47	11	26
Once or twice a week	26	19	22
Once a fortnight	5	4	4
Once every month or 2 months	8	9	9
Once every 3 or 4 months	7	8	7
Once every 6 months	1	2	1
Once every year or less often	*	2	1
Varies too much to say	2	6	4
Never	4	40	25

Table C7.5: How often providers give parents information about the activities their children have taken part in, by age of child

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	All
Factors	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(196)	(194)	(137)	(87)	(161)	(775)
More free time to spend with child	42	42	44	48	50	45
Working less hours	24	34	40	43	50	37
More information or ideas about what to do	15	10	9	6	9	10
More money to spend on activities	13	13	8	3	12	11
Someone to look after other children	9	12	12	7	20	12
More toys/materials	6	4	3	1	2	4
More support/help from partner	3	4	7	1	4	4
If I had more energy/was less tired	1	1	1	0	1	1
More places to go/local activities	4	3	1	3	1	3
If my health was better	1	2	0	0	1	1
Other	6	4	6	3	2	5
No answer	4	4	2	4	2	3

Table C7.6: Factors which parents believe would increase time spent on learning and play activities, by area deprivation

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	All
People/organisations	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(606)	(601)	(439)	(277)	(429)	(2,352)
Friends or relatives	51	59	64	66	71	61
Other parents	32	37	42	51	58	42
Children's TV programmes	23	29	38	38	40	32
Internet site	31	34	43	46	51	39
School	27	30	30	35	33	30
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	23	28	26	27	19	25
Playgroup	9	13	19	21	20	15
Childcare provider	7	12	16	16	23	14
Children's Information Services/ Family Information Services	9	11	9	9	8	9
Local Authority	7	6	9	7	7	7
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and website)	2	2	2	*	1	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, Citizens' Advice Bureau)	*	1	2	*	1	1
Other	4	4	4	5	7	5
No answer	13	9	9	5	6	9

Table C7.7: Sources of information/ideas used about learning and play activities, by area deprivation

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	Total
People/organisations	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was two-to five-years-old</i>	(606)	(601)	(439)	(277)	(429)	(2,352)
My husband/ wife/ partner	56	68	77	86	87	73
Friends/ relatives	49	61	67	71	71	63
School/ teacher	51	47	48	53	46	49
Other parents	31	41	42	54	59	43
Childcare provider	20	27	38	36	44	31
Work colleagues	11	17	20	25	25	19
Healthcare professional	16	14	22	20	16	17
Local authority	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other	2	2	2	2	2	2
No answer	4	4	2	1	3	3

Table C7.8: People/organisations contacted about child's learning and development, by area deprivation

Survey year						
	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Use of childcare during school holidays	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: All families with school-age children	(5,798)	(5,797)	(5,639)	(5,289)	(5,439)	(5,300)
Any childcare	50	51	45	48	46	47
Formal childcare	22	23	22	23	23	24
Informal childcare	35	37	30	35	34	34
No childcare used	50	49	55	52	53	53

Table C8.1: Use of childcare during school holidays, 2008 to 2014-15

	2012-13				2014-15			
Age of child	5-7	8-11	12-14	All	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who had used holiday childcare and where the parent(s) did not report being able to work in term-time only</i>	(404)	(448)	(294)	(1,146)	(405)	(455)	(274)	(1,134)
Very easy	20	22	25	22	17	21	28	22
Easy	43	37	44	41	44	39	40	41
Neither easy nor difficult	10	14	13	13	12	14	14	14
Difficult	13	15	8	12	18	13	9	14
Very difficult	13	10	7	10	6	9	4	7
Varies depending on holiday	*	3	3	2	2	4	5	4

Table C8.2: Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare, by age of child, 2011-2014

	Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare						
Family work status and annual income	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very difficult	Varies	Un-weighted base
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who had used holiday childcare and where the parent(s) did not report being able to work in term-time only</i>							
Family work status							
Couple – both working	22	40	14	14	7	3	(1,054)
Couple – one working	33	33	21	7	7	0	(61)
Lone parent – working	21	43	11	13	8	4	(357)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	[14]	[43]	[14]	[16]	[12]	[0]	(35)
£10,000 - £19,999	26	39	9	14	8	3	(201)
£20,000 - £29,999	22	44	12	10	9	3	(254)
£30,000 - £44,999	22	41	12	14	7	4	(325)
£45,000+	21	40	14	15	7	3	(583)

NB: Row percentages

Table C8.3: Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare, by family work status and annual income

	Family type	
	Couples	Lone parents
Reasons	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare was difficult/very difficult</i>		
	(268)	(92)
Difficult to find childcare/holiday clubs in my area	16	21
Not many places/providers in my area	21	21
Friends/Family not always available to help	50	54
Difficult to afford	33	41
Quality of some childcare/clubs is not good	5	4
My children need special care	5	7
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/clubs in the past	2	2
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/clubs	5	3
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I work/need	2	0
Other reasons	3	3

Table C8.4: Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare, by family type

	Rurality	
	Rural	Urban
Reasons for difficulties	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/very difficult</i>	(52)	(308)
Friends/ Family not always available to help	38	53
Difficult to afford	19	38
Not many places/ providers in my area	29	20
Difficult to find out what childcare/ holiday clubs are available in my area	12	18
Quality of some childcare/ clubs is not good	2	5
My children need special care	0	6
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/ clubs	5	5
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/ clubs in the past	0	2
Holiday clubs do not fit with working hours	29	21
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I need	2	1
Other reason	2	3

Table C8.5: Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare, by rurality

		Holiday childcare used			
		Formal provider	Informal provider (or other) only	No child-care used	All
Parents' views		%	%	%	%
Base: All families with school-age children		(1,274)	(1,082)	(2,939)	(5,295)
I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays	Strongly agree	27	35	18	24
	Agree	47	36	26	33
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	16	44	30
	Disagree	10	11	8	9
	Disagree strongly	3	3	4	4
I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs	Strongly agree	12	8	5	8
	Agree	19	14	9	13
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	18	38	27
	Disagree	37	36	27	31
	Disagree strongly	18	24	21	21
I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays	Strongly agree	14	16	11	13
	Agree	19	16	11	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	18	39	29
	Disagree	37	28	22	27
	Disagree strongly	15	22	17	17

Table C8.6: Views of parents about childcare during school holidays, by use of holiday childcare

		Family work status					
		Couples			Lone parents		
		Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	All
Parents' views		%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>		(2,291)	(1,409)	(265)	(715)	(630)	(5,310)
<i>I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	27	21	16	28	18	24
	Agree	37	29	30	33	28	33
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	39	39	24	39	30
	Disagree	9	7	9	10	9	9
	Strongly disagree	3	4	7	6	6	4
<i>I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs</i>	Strongly agree	8	5	7	10	7	8
	Agree	15	9	4	14	10	13
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	34	35	21	40	27
	Disagree	32	29	28	36	27	31
	Strongly disagree	21	23	26	19	16	21
<i>I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	11	11	15	19	15	13
	Agree	14	12	10	15	14	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	34	36	25	36	29
	Disagree	31	24	16	26	20	27
	Strongly disagree	18	18	24	15	15	17

Table C8.7: Views of parents about childcare during school holiday, by family work status

		Whether used holiday childcare			
		Formal provider	Informal provider (or other) only	No holiday provider used	All
Working parents' views		%	%	%	%
Base: All families with school-age children where respondent worked		(973)	(754)	(1,550)	(3,277)
I am able to find holiday care that fits in with my/ (mine and my partner's working hours)	Strongly agree	20	26	18	20
	Agree	48	43	23	35
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	17	42	27
	Disagree	15	9	11	12
	Disagree strongly	5	5	6	5

Table C8.8: Views of working parents on holiday childcare hours, by use of holiday childcare

	Family type		
	Couple families	Lone parents	All
Family employment	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(4,651)	(1,547)	(6,198)
Couples			
Both in full-time employment	28	n/a	20
One in full-time, one in part-time (16 to 29 hours) employment	28	n/a	20
One in full-time, one in part-time (1 to 15 hours) employment	7	n/a	5
One in full-time employment, one not in employment	26	n/a	19
Both in part-time employment	2	n/a	1
One in part-time employment, one not in employment	4	n/a	3
Neither in employment	5	n/a	4
Lone parents			
In full-time employment	n/a	28	8
In part-time (16 to 29 hours) employment	n/a	28	8
In part-time (1 to 15 hours) employment	n/a	4	1
Not in employment	n/a	41	11

Table C9.1: Family employment, by family type

	Survey year							
	1999	2004	2007	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15
Maternal employment	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(4,779)	(7,696)	(7,044)	(6,640)	(6,630)	(6,258)	(6,302)	(6,118)
Mother working FT	22	25	27	27	25	25	29	30
Mother working PT (1 to 15 hrs/wk)	10	9	8	8	7	6	6	6
Mother working PT (16 to 29 hrs/wk)	24	28	28	29	31	29	29	29
Mother not working	44	38	37	37	37	40	36	34

Table C9.2: Changes in maternal employment, 1999-2014

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Whether atypical hours caused problems with childcare	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers who worked before 8am at least three days every week</i>	(275)	(82)	(357)
Working before 8am caused problems with childcare	29	38	31
<i>Base: Mothers who worked after 6pm at least three days every week</i>	(320)	(100)	(420)
Working after 6pm caused problems with childcare	25	33	27
<i>Base: Mothers who worked every Saturday</i>	(184)	(79)	(263)
Working Saturdays caused problems with childcare	18	28	21
<i>Base: Mothers who worked every Sunday</i>	(126)	(44)	(170)
Working Sundays caused problems with childcare	13	[11]	13

Table C9.3: Whether usually working atypical hours caused problems with childcare, by family type

	Mothers' highest qualification			All
	A level and above	O-levels/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualification	
Influences	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(1,758)	(759)	(237)	(3,106)
All mothers				
I need the money	65	68	67	66
I enjoy working	65	66	70	64
I like to have my own money	47	46	45	46
I want to get out of the house	25	27	33	26
I would feel useless without a job	24	26	29	25
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	29	21	19	24
My career would suffer if I took a break	25	9	8	17
I can work flexi-time	16	15	12	15
I don't have to work during school holidays	13	12	14	12
Childcare arrangements	11	12	13	11
I can work from home some of the time	13	5	6	10
I can work from home most/all of the time	6	4	6	5
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	(1,445)	(553)	(151)	(2,364)
Partnered mothers				
Partner can work from home some of the time	8	4	2	6
Partner can work flexi-time (couple only)	4	4	4	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	3	1	3	2
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	2	2	1	2
Other	1	2	0	1
None of these	1	*	1	1

Table C9.4: Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

[illegible]

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Influences	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>									
I can work from home most/all of the time	5	5	10	14	1	2	9	7	5
Other	1	1	0	2	1	*	2	1	1
None of these	1	*	*	0	1	0	1	0	1
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	(669)	(627)	(251)	(52)	(254)	(202)	(124)	(129)	(2,364)
Partnered mothers									
Partner can work from home some of the time	8	4	10	2	1	2	12	13	6
Partner can work flexi-time	4	3	5	0	2	2	11	6	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	3	2	2	0	*	1	4	5	2
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	2	2	4	0	*	1	1	7	2

Table C9.5: Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O-level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All [1]
Childcare arrangements that enabled mothers to go out to work	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(1,781)</i>	<i>(775)</i>	<i>(242)</i>	<i>(3,133)</i>
All mothers				
Have reliable childcare	50	41	43	46
Children are at school	40	38	35	38
Relatives help with childcare	41	50	44	42
Have childcare which fits with my working hours	39	30	27	34
Have good quality childcare	35	26	21	30
Have free/cheap childcare	23	31	27	25
Friends help with the childcare	11	12	12	11
My child(ren) is/are old enough to look after themselves	10	12	16	11
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	5	6	6	5
My employer provides/pays for some/all of my childcare	1	1	0	1
Other	1	1	*	1
None of these	6	9	14	8
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(1,501)</i>	<i>(586)</i>	<i>(161)</i>	<i>(2,467)</i>
Partnered mothers				
Childcare fits partner's working hours	20	14	7	17
Partner helps with childcare	15	15	8	15
Mother works when partner does not work	10	11	7	10
Partner's employer provides/pays for childcare	1	1	0	1
<i>Base: Lone mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(321)</i>	<i>(209)</i>	<i>(90)</i>	<i>(759)</i>
Lone mothers				
Children's father is able to help with childcare	16	20	16	16

[1] Total includes mothers who reported 'other' academic qualifications.

Table C9.6: Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Childcare arrangements that helped mothers go out to work	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: Mothers in paid work	(784)	(799)	(299)	(81)	(374)	(318)	(154)	(152)	(3,133)
All mothers									
Have reliable childcare	57	42	50	52	40	39	52	54	46
Child(ren) are at school	44	37	46	32	31	30	39	53	38
Relatives help with childcare	46	42	47	49	46	37	52	37	42
Have childcare which fits my working hours	41	31	40	32	27	25	43	48	34
Have good quality childcare	39	29	37	28	22	20	38	40	30
Have free/cheap childcare	26	26	20	30	27	29	38	20	25
Friends help with the childcare	14	9	14	14	12	7	10	8	11
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/herself /themselves	11	14	13	5	12	8	8	12	11
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	4	6	5	9	7	5	5	6	5
My employer provides/pays for some/all of my childcare	1	1	3	0	1	*	5	3	1
Other	1	1	0	4	1	2	0	1	1
None of these	10	10	3	7	8	9	9	3	8

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Childcare arrangements that helped mothers go out to work	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base: Partnered mothers in paid work	(669)	(627)	(251)	(52)	(254)	(202)	(124)	(129)	(2,467)
Partnered mothers									
Childcare fits partner's working hours	21	13	17	21	14	13	23	27	17
Partner helps with childcare	17	13	10	16	17	18	16	19	15
Mother works when partner does not work	10	8	6	8	15	18	14	9	10
Partner's employer provides/pays for childcare	2	1	1	0	2	*	2	6	1
Base: Lone mothers	(128)	(186)	(50)	(32)	(138)	(134)	(33)	(24)	(759)
Lone mothers									
Child(ren)'s father is able to help with childcare	22	15	[23]	[23]	9	15	[21]	[22]	16

Table C9.7: Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O-level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All [1]
Views on ideal working arrangements	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(1,756)	(758)	(237)	(3,102)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home</i>				
Agree strongly	19	20	17	19
Agree	17	17	17	17
Neither agree nor disagree	15	17	14	16
Disagree	34	35	38	35
Disagree strongly	14	12	14	13
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>	(1,756)	(759)	(237)	(3,103)
Agree strongly	27	24	20	25
Agree	31	31	25	30
Neither agree nor disagree	13	12	17	14
Disagree	23	26	26	24
Disagree strongly	7	7	12	7
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>	(1,756)	(759)	(237)	(3,103)
Agree strongly	5	5	9	6
Agree	17	18	21	18
Neither agree nor disagree	12	14	14	14
Disagree	42	43	33	40
Disagree strongly	24	21	23	23

[1] Total includes mothers who reported 'other' academic qualifications.

Table C9.8: Views on ideal working arrangements, by mothers' highest qualification

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Views	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,361)	(741)	(3,102)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home and look after the children</i>			
Agree strongly	20	15	19
Agree	17	18	17
Neither agree nor disagree	16	15	16
Disagree	34	36	35
Disagree strongly	13	15	13
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>			
Agree strongly	25	24	25
Agree	30	28	30
Neither agree nor disagree	14	15	14
Disagree	24	24	24
Disagree strongly	7	9	7
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>			
Agree strongly	5	8	6
Agree	16	23	18
Neither agree nor disagree	12	17	14
Disagree	43	31	40
Disagree strongly	24	20	23

Table C9.9: Views on ideal working arrangements, by family type

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Views on ideal working arrangements	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(796)	(812)	(301)	(84)	(392)	(334)	(157)	(153)	(3,102)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home</i>									
Agree strongly	20	16	19	18	25	15	17	19	19
Agree	16	20	15	21	14	19	15	16	17
Neither agree nor disagree	14	18	16	13	14	18	15	19	16
Disagree	34	33	38	37	36	35	36	38	35
Disagree strongly	17	13	12	11	11	13	17	8	13
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>	(796)	(812)	(301)	(84)	(392)	(335)	(157)	(153)	(3,103)
Agree strongly	27	20	31	19	28	19	30	28	25
Agree	30	31	27	24	25	30	35	35	30
Neither agree nor disagree	11	15	13	14	15	18	8	17	14
Disagree	23	27	23	31	25	24	19	16	24
Disagree strongly	8	8	6	13	6	10	8	4	8
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>	(796)	(813)	(301)	(84)	(391)	(335)	(157)	(153)	(3,103)
Agree strongly	4	5	4	6	9	8	6	5	6
Agree	14	18	17	24	20	25	15	15	18
Neither agree nor disagree	11	16	8	13	14	17	12	13	14
Disagree	44	44	42	36	35	31	35	49	40
Disagree strongly	27	18	29	22	22	18	32	18	23

Table C9.10: Views on ideal working arrangements, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O-level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All
Reasons for not working	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers not in paid work</i>	(781)	(511)	(273)	(2,225)
All mothers				
Would not earn enough	18	22	22	17
Enough money	15	7	6	9
Would lose benefits	2	6	11	5
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	18	22	14	17
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up children	13	9	6	10
Cannot work unsocial hours/at weekends	5	4	2	4
Not very well-qualified	3	5	14	7
Lack of job opportunities	5	8	5	7
Having a job is not very important to me	5	2	1	3
Been out of work for too long	6	3	5	5
On maternity leave	10	6	5	6
Caring for disabled person	8	13	13	12
Studying/training	10	5	4	7
Illness or disability (longstanding)	7	11	14	10
Illness or disability (temporary)	1	1	1	1
Childcare issues	19	25	20	21
Want to look after my child(ren) myself	4	2	2	3
Children are too young	1	1	2	1
I am pregnant	*	1	0	*
Starting work soon	*	1	0	1
Retired	*	0	0	*
Other	4	2	9	4
None of these	8	10	11	9
Base: Partnered mothers not in paid work				
Partnered mothers	(562)	(285)	(118)	(1,265)
My partner's job is too demanding	17	13	9	13

Table C9.11: Reasons for not working, by mothers' highest qualification



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