



Department
for Education

Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2020

Summary of key findings

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Ipsos

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Introduction

- The 2020 wave of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents was conducted between January and March 2020. A total of 1,384 interviews were carried out with parents with children aged 0 to 14 in England.
- Fieldwork was initially scheduled to run until August 2020, with a target of 6,000 interviews, but had to end on 17 March 2020 due to restrictions on face-to-face interviewing arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Although the full target of 6,000 interviews was not achieved, analyses comparing the achieved sample profile with population data show similar distributions for: age of children, region, area deprivation, and rurality. These similarities show the levels of non-response bias are acceptable. Nevertheless, the 2020 data should be interpreted with care, and comparisons against previous survey waves are not included.

Use of childcare and early years provision

- Overall, in 2020 (prior to any government-mandated COVID-related restrictions), 77% of families in England with a child aged 0 to 14 had used some form of childcare during their most recent term-time week, with 64% using formal childcare, and 33% using informal childcare (provided by friends and family) (Table 1.1).
- Among children aged 0 to 14, 64% had used some form of childcare, with 50% using formal childcare, and 27% using informal childcare (Table 1.6). Children receiving formal childcare spent a median of 6.0 hours in formal childcare, with pre-school children spending far longer in formal childcare (20.4 hours) than school-age children (2.5 hours) (Table 1.7).
- Around two in five (41%) families with school-age children used childcare during school holidays, with 20% using formal childcare, and 26% using informal childcare (Table 7.1). Among school-age children, 35% received holiday childcare, with 19% receiving formal childcare, and 24% receiving informal childcare (Table 7.5).

Entitlement to government funded childcare or early education

- 94% of parents with a child aged 0 to 4 were aware of the 15 hours offer (Table 2.2). Among parents with a 2-year-old, just over four in five (82%) were aware that certain 2-year-olds are eligible for some free hours of childcare each week (Table 2.4).
- Among parents with a child aged 0 to 4, around four in five (81%) were aware of the 30 hours offer (Table 3.1). And among parents aware of the 30 hours offer, just over four in five (83%) were aware that providers can charge for certain extra services, such as meals, consumables, and special lessons or activities (Table 3.7).

Paying for childcare

- Among families using formal childcare, 66% reported paying for this childcare (Table 4.1). Only 4% of families using informal provision reported paying for this childcare. Among families paying for childcare, 55% said it was easy to meet their childcare costs, with 20% saying it was difficult (Table 4.3).
- Among children receiving paid formal childcare, the overall median weekly amount paid was £15.00 (Table 4.6). This amount was £51.15 among pre-school children, and £10.50 among school-age children.

Perceptions of local childcare

- Just under two in five (37%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as good, with 36% rating it as poor (Table 5.1).
- Just under half (47%) of parents felt the level of information about childcare locally was 'about right', 45% felt there were 'about the right number' of local childcare places, and 64% felt that the quality of local childcare was good (Table 5.1).

Home learning environment

- The most commonly practiced home learning activity was looking at books or reading, with 68% of parents reporting that someone at home does this with their child aged 0 to 5 at least once a day (Table 6.11). This was followed by learning songs, poems or nursery rhymes (57%), and learning numbers or counting (54%). Around a third (32%) of parents reported that they (themselves) played pretend games, or took turns in fun activities, with their child at least once a day.
- Almost two-thirds of parents (64%) felt that the amount of learning and play activities they did with their child aged 0 to 5 was 'about right', with 35% saying they would like to do more (Table 6.17).

Mothers, work and childcare

- Just over seven in ten (72%) mothers reported that they were in work (Table 8.5).
- Among non-working mothers, half (50%) said that if they could arrange good quality childcare that was convenient, reliable and affordable, they would prefer to go out to work (Table 8.12).



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