



Department  
for Education

# Childcare and early years survey of parents 2018

**Technical Report**  
**December 2018**

**Ipsos MORI**

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# 1 Survey background and history

## 1.1 Aims of the study

This Technical Report describes the methodology of the 2018 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) series.

The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and carried out by Ipsos MORI. The study had 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 Time series of the Childcare and early years survey of parents

The current study is the tenth in the CEYSP series, which began in 2004. The time series in fact stretches back further than 2004, as the current series is the merger of two survey series that preceded it: i) the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services, of which there were six waves between 1997 and 2004, and ii) the Parents' Demand For Childcare Survey, of which there were two waves, the first in 1999 and the second in 2001.

Previous waves of the CEYSP were conducted in 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2014-15, and 2017. For the 2004 to 2009 surveys, fieldwork took place within the survey calendar year. For the 2010-11 to 2014-15 surveys, fieldwork straddled two calendar years; for instance, fieldwork for the 2010-11 survey began in September 2010, and finished in April 2011. From 2017, the survey reverted to fieldwork taking place in the survey calendar year.

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. Questions for which trend data does extend to the beginning of the time series include the use of childcare by families and children, and parents' perceptions of local childcare (the level of information about local childcare, the availability of local childcare, the quality of local childcare, and the affordability of local childcare).

## 2 Overview of the study design

### 2.1 The sample

A total of 5,922 parents in England with children aged 0 to 14 were interviewed face-to-face between January and August 2018.

A probability sample of children aged 0 to 14 in England was drawn from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) maintained by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs which, given its high take-up, provides very high coverage of dependent children in England. Interviews were sought with parents of these children. A small additional sample of parents in England was drawn from respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions, who had consented to be re-contacted for future research<sup>1</sup>.

In order to achieve sufficient interviews with parents of children attending early years provision to enable separate analysis of this group, the number of 2- to 4-year-olds sampled was boosted by increasing their probability of selection by a factor of 3 (this resulted in 2,288 interviews with parents where the selected child was aged 2 to 4).

### 2.2 The interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted a mean of 50 minutes and 8 seconds, and a median of 42 minutes and 37 seconds. The main respondent was a parent or guardian of the sampled child with main or shared responsibility for making childcare decisions, and in most cases (85%) was the child's mother.

In addition, in couple households an interview was sought with the respondent's partner, if he or she was at home. Partners were asked about their employment and other socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Where this was not possible, the main respondent was asked to provide this information by proxy. An interview was conducted with the respondent's partner at 21 per cent of couple households; the main respondent answered by proxy (on their partner's behalf) at 63 per cent of couple households; and at the remaining 16 per cent of couple households no detailed information was collected

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<sup>1</sup> This was necessary because the eligibility criteria for Child Benefit changed in 2013 so that higher-income households (those where one or both partners earn £60,000 or more per year) ceased to gain financially from Child Benefit, resulting in them becoming disproportionately likely to be missing from the CBR. To avoid bias to survey estimates, higher-income households missing from the CBR were sampled from the FRS. For further details see Department for Education (2017) *Childcare and early years survey of parents: Sampling frames investigation* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-sampling-frames>

about the partner's circumstances (because the partner was unavailable or unwilling to be interviewed, and the main respondent refused to provide this information or was insufficiently knowledgeable to be able to answer on their partner's behalf).

The study used an inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. The respondent was asked to include any time their child was not with them (or their current spouse or partner), or at school. This covered both informal childcare (for instance grandparents, a friend or neighbour, and an ex-partners) and formal childcare (for instance nursery schools and classes, childminders, and before- and after-school clubs). Further detail about this definition is provided in section 2.3.

In families with two or more children, broad questions were asked about the childcare arrangements of all children, before more detailed questions were asked about the randomly sampled child (referred to as 'the selected child').

Because childcare arrangements vary between school term-time and school holidays, most of the questions focused on the most recent term-time week (the 'reference week'). Separate questions were asked about the use of childcare during the school holidays.

The interview 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), the use of free hours of childcare, 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.

Among all those parents selected and eligible for interview (in other words, excluding families where the selected child had turned 15 during the fieldwork period) 51 per cent were interviewed. For further details on response see Chapter 6.

## 2.3 Defining childcare

The study uses an 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 here 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. Sessions last up to 4 hours.

Providers were classified according to the service for which they were being used by parents, for example daycare or early years education. Thus, providers were classified and referred to in analysis according to terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than as 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).

This inclusive definition of childcare means that 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. The classifications given by parents were therefore checked with the providers themselves in a separate telephone survey, and edited where necessary. Detail about the provider edits can be found in section 7.3.



## 2.4 Interpreting the data in the Official Statistics Report and Tables

The majority of findings in the Official Statistics Report and Tables 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 analyses carried out for the data tables in Chapters 9 and 10 the data was restructured so that 'all children' in the household were the base of analysis. This was done to increase the sample size and enable the exploration of packages of childcare received by children in different age groups in more detail. This approach is not used for other analyses 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.

### Bases

The data tables show the total number of cases that were analysed (e.g. different types of families, income groups). The total base figures include 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, exclude cases with missing data (codes for 'don't know' or 'not answered'). Thus, while the base description may be the same across several data tables, the base sizes may differ slightly due to the exclusion of cases with missing data.

Unweighted bases are presented throughout. This is the actual number of parents that responded to a given question for family-level questions, and the actual number of children about whom a response was provided by parents for child-level questions.

In some tables, the column or row bases do not add up to the total base size. 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 size 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

Some Official Statistics Tables summarise parents' responses to questions eliciting continuous data; for instance, the number of hours of childcare used per week (see Table 1.10 in the Additional Official Statistics Tables) and the amount paid for childcare per week (see Table 4.5 in the Additional Official Statistics Tables). For these data, both median and mean values are included in the data tables, but median values are reported in the Official Statistics Report 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 24.0, and found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above. This means that the chance that the difference is due to sampling error, rather than reflecting a real difference between the sub-groups or survey years, is 1 in 20 or less. 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 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpreting a difference as real when it is not) is far less likely than if the standard formulae were used.

## **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.

## 3 Questionnaire development

### 3.1 Changes to the questionnaire

A number of changes were made to the 2018 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) questionnaire (from the 2017 survey wave) to reflect changes in policy, and to improve the quality of data captured.

Many of the questionnaire changes reflected the fact that the 30 hours of government funded childcare for working parents of children aged 3 to 4 was not available at the time of the 2017 survey, but was rolled out across the country - on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 - prior to the start of fieldwork for the 2018 survey.

Overall, 31 new questions were added, 18 existing questions were amended, and 63 existing questions were deleted. The amended and deleted questions applied to 22 per cent of the 2017 questionnaire (81 questions out of a total of 364 questions). The questionnaire changes are described in the bullet points that follow, in which question names are provided in brackets.

#### New questions

##### Questions about the government funded entitlement to early education (free hours)

- New questions were added to measure awareness among all parents with a child aged 0 to 4 of the universal 15 hours offer (F15Aw) and the 30 hours offer for working parents of children aged 3 to 4 (F30Aw).
- A question was added (F2yoAw) to measure whether parents with a child aged 2 were aware that some 2-year-olds can get 15 hours of free childcare a week.
- A series of questions were added to gauge parents' understanding of the 30 hours offer (F30SplAw, F30HolAw, F30CmAw, F30TopAw, F30ExAw, F30ExNaw). These questions measured parents' awareness that: children could receive their funded hours from two or more childcare providers; at some providers, funded hours can be taken at any time of the year, not just in term time; children could receive their hours from Ofsted registered childminders; providers cannot charge parents any top-up fees for the funded hours children receive; providers can charge for certain extra services, such as meals, consumables, and special lessons or activities; and that parents can choose not to receive, or pay for, these extra services.
- Questions were added (F30LkWk, F30LkWkS) to ascertain the likelihood that parents, and partners, would try and find paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours offer.

- Questions were added (F30Ap, F30ApWy, F30ApWyN) to ascertain whether parents had applied to the 30 hours offer, and if so why they had done so, and if not, why they had not done so.
- A question was added (FreeHTyp) to ascertain whether children aged 3 or 4 and receiving government funded hours of childcare received these hours under the 15 hours offer, or the 30 hours offer.
- Questions were added (F30ImpSP, F30SpHw) to measure parents' perceptions as to whether the 30 hours offer was making their child better prepared for school, and if so, in what ways.
- A question was added (F30WhyN) to ascertain why children were not receiving hours under the 30 hours offer, where the parent had applied to the offer.
- Questions were added (F30ImpWk, F30ImpHr, F30ImpFx, F30ImpFn, F30ImpFL) to measure the impact of the 30 hours offer on parents' work, and on the family. These questions ascertained whether the parent would be working a different number of hours were the 30 hours offer not available to them; whether the 30 hours offer had given them more flexibility in terms of which jobs they could do; what difference the 30 hours offer was making to their family finances; and what difference the 30 hours offer was making to the overall quality of their family life.

#### **Question about the impact of support received on parents' work**

- Questions were added (SuppImp and SuppImpS) to ascertain what impact government-funded and employer-provided support had had on parents' (and partners') jobs.

#### **Questions about the use of digital technology in the home learning environment**

- Questions were added (HLDDDev, HLDAct, HLDOften, HLDEver) to ascertain which digital electronic devices selected children aged 0 to 5 used at home; whether anyone at home used a digital electronic device to help the child learn, and if so, how often; and the main reasons the child used a digital electronic device at home.

#### **Question about parents' preferences for receiving information**

- A question was added (LrnPref) to ascertain from where parents would like to get information and ideas about learning and play activities they could do with their child aged 0 to 5.

### **Amended questions**

#### **Question about providers used in the last year**

- (CareLik) This question asked parents who were not using formal childcare, what would lead them to start using formal childcare. The first answer option was changed from "More flexibility about when childcare is available" to "More flexibility in the times of day that childcare is available" so that it was clear that

this answer option related to the time of day, and was distinct from the second answer option ('More childcare available during school holidays') which related to the time of year.

### **Questions about the government funded entitlement to early education (free hours)**

- (FreeSati) This question asked (in 2017) how satisfied parents were with the times they were able to use their free hours. For 2018, the question wording was amended to ask how satisfied parents were with the way they were able to use their free hours.
- (FreeDis) This question asked parents who were dissatisfied with their free hours (in 2017) in what ways they would want to change the times they were able to use their free hours. In 2018, the question wording was changed to ask parents how they would like to change the way that they could their free hours.
- (FrSplWhy) This question asked parents who received government funded hours from more than one provider why they split these hours across more than one provider. The answer code "The providers meet different needs" was changed to "The providers meet different needs for the child" in 2018.

### **Questions about payments to childcare providers**

- (AnyPay) This question asked, for each childcare provider used in the reference week, whether the parent paid the provider any money for a specific set of services. The services specified in 2017 were: Education fees/wages; Childcare fees/wages; Refreshments/meals; Use of equipment; Travel costs; Trips/outings; Other. In 2018 the set of services was amended to: Education or childcare fees/wages; Meals, Snacks; Other consumables (e.g. nappies or suncream); Extra regular activities such as music classes; Extra one-off activities such as special outings; Unarranged late pick-ups; Use of equipment; Travel costs; Registration or other administration charges; Other.

### **Questions about Tax-Free Childcare**

- (TaxFCSAw, TaxFCSAp, TaxFCSAy, TaxFCSWy) These questions ascertained parents awareness of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, whether they had applied to the scheme, if not whether they intended to apply, and for those not intending to apply, the reasons why. In 2017 fieldwork took place during roll-out of the scheme, and these questions were phrased appropriately. In 2018, question wording was changed where relevant to reflect the fact that the scheme had been fully rolled out.

### **Question about why parents chose the selected child's main formal provider**

- (WhyCA) This question asked parents the reason(s) why they chose their main formal childcare provider for their selected child. In 2018 a new response code was added "I could use the 30 hours of free childcare at this provider".

### **Question about sources of information for local childcare**

- (Sources) This question asked from where in their local area parents had obtained information about childcare. The following codes were deleted: “ChildcareLink/ Family Information Direct/ Parent Know How Directory (the national helpline and web site)”, “Direct.Gov website”; and the following codes were added: “Childcare Choices Website”, “GOV.UK Website”.

### **Question about why pre-school children don’t receive nursery education**

- (NoNEB) This question asked parents why their pre-school child did not receive any nursery education. In 2018, the following code was added: “Can’t find a provider that can cater for my child’s special educational or disability needs”.

### **Questions about parents work**

- (CWrkCar, LWrkCar) This question asked parents which childcare arrangements helped them to work. The following code was deleted: “We have free/cheap childcare”; and the following codes were added: “We use free hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds (under the 15 free hours scheme)”, “We use free hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds (under the 30 free hours scheme)”.
- (RetWk1, RftWk1) These questions asked parents why they had entered employment, or increased their working hours. The following code was added: “To become eligible for 30 hours of free childcare”.

### **Question about special educational needs**

- (SenST) This question asked parents whose child had a special educational need whether their child had a statement of special educational needs, or was going through certain stages. The stages were updated in 2018 to refer to Education, Health and Care plans.

### **Question about data linkage**

- (DataLink) This question asked parents for their consent to link their answers with information about their child held by the Department for Education. In 2017, the National Pupil Database alone was cited as information held by the Department for Education. In 2018, the Early Years Census and Schools Census was also specified.

## **Deleted questions**

### **Questions about providers used in the reference week**

- (ProvExt) This question asked whether any children in the household did any activities organised by the school, either before the school day started, or after the school day ended.

- (BCSchN, ASSchN) These questions recorded whether breakfast clubs, and after school clubs, were on a school or nursery site, or provided by a school or nursery.
- (CMAgency) This question recorded whether childminders were hired through a Childminder Agency.
- (RegOfs4) This question asked those parents for whom the Ofsted quality rating of their provider did not influence their decision to use the provider, why this was the case.
- (B4Aft2) This question asked those parents with a child or children who used an after school club whether the after school activities were mainly before 6pm, after 6pm, or both.
- (B4Offer, WhyNB4) These questions asked those parents with a school age child or children who did not use a breakfast club whether their child's school ran any activities before the school day started, and if so, why the parent had not sent their child or children to any of these activities.
- (AftOffer, AftOffer2, WhyNaft) These questions asked those parents with a school age child or children who did not use an after school club whether their child's school ran any activities after school before 6pm, or in the evening after 6pm, and if so, why the parent had not sent their child or children to any of these activities.

### **Questions about holiday childcare for school age children**

A number of questions about the use of holiday childcare for school-age children were removed from the questionnaire, both to make space for new questions, and to reduce the overall questionnaire length to accommodate the fact that 2- to 4-year-olds were boosted to a greater degree in 2018 than in 2017, and the interview length is longer for parents with children in this age range (see Section 5.3 'Interviewing' for further details).

- (HolDay) This question asked parents who had used holiday childcare how often (in the last year) they needed childcare in the school holidays that lasted for a whole day (i.e. 7 hours).
- (HolEas, HolPIa) These questions asked parents who used holiday childcare how easy they found it to arrange suitable childcare during the school holidays for the times when their child(ren) would usually be at school, and if they found it difficult, why this was.
- (OpenHol) This question asked parents who had not used holiday childcare whether any of the childcare providers they had used in the past year were available during the school holidays.
- (Noholcar) This question asked parents who had not used holiday childcare for their child(ren) why this was.



- (AcadFree) These question asked whether nursery and reception classes were part of, or linked to, an academy or a free school.
- (Hol1 to Hol7) These were a series of attitudinal questions asked of parents with a school age child or children to ascertain parents' perceptions of: the quality of childcare available during the holidays; the flexibility of holiday childcare; the affordability of holiday childcare; whether holiday childcare fitted with their (and their partner's) working hours; whether they would increase their working hours if holiday childcare was more affordable; whether they would increase their working hours if holiday childcare was available for more hours per day; and (for parents not using holiday childcare) the likelihood that, if they could find suitable holiday childcare, they would use it.

### **Questions about the government funded entitlement to early education**

- (FreeAw, Free30aw, FreeAw2y) These questions measured parents awareness of the universal 15 hours offer, the 15 hours offer for 2-year-olds, and the forthcoming 30 hours offer for working parents of children aged 3 to 4.
- (F30LkWk, F30LkWkS) These questions measured the likelihood that non-working parents, and partners, would to try and find paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours offer, were the offer available at the time of the interview.
- (Free30De, Free30SP, Free30GO, F30SW, F30SpINW, Free30Em, Free30ES, Free30Fn, Free30Wy) These questions asked working parents how many funded hours of childcare they would use for their child were the 30 hours offer available to them at the time of the interview. Among those who would use more than 15 hours, parents were asked for the expected impact of the additional hours on their child's preparedness for school, and on how well the child gets on with other children and adults, whether they would split the hours across more than one provider should their current provider be unable to offer the additional hours at the times they needed them, whether they (and their partner) would try to change their job(s) as a result of the additional hours, and what difference the additional hours would make to their family finances. Those parents who would use more than 15 hours were asked why they would not do so.
- (Free30L3, Free30L4) These questions asked all parents with a child aged 3 (and separately, a child aged 4) whether 30 hours per week is too long, too short, or about the right amount of time for a 3-year-old (4-year-old) to spend with a formal childcare provider.

### **Questions about the impact of support received on parents' work**

- (SuppHrs, SuppHrs2, SuppHrs3) These questions ascertained 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 about the home learning environment**

- (HLRead, HLReadOf, HLabc, HLabcOf, HNum, HNumOf, HLPoem, HLPoemOf, HLPaint, HLPaintO) These questions measured how often anyone at home did the following home learning activities with the selected child (if aged 0 to 5): looking at books or reading, learning the ABC or recognising words, learning numbers or to count, learning songs, poems or nursery rhymes; painting or drawing.
- (HLBooks) This question asked parents how many books they had in their home aimed at children aged 5 or under.
- (Flearn, Whatlearn) These questions asked parents how they felt about the amount of learning and play activities they did with their selected child (if aged 0 to 5), and what would help them do more such activities with their child.
- (HLCCen, HLCCenO) These questions ascertained whether anyone at home took the selected child (if aged 0 to 5) to a Children's Centre, and if so, how often.
- (TV, Game) These questions ascertained how much time each day the selected child (if aged 0 to 5) spent watching television, and playing computer games.
- (Learninfo, Talklearn) These questions asked from where parents got information and ideas about learning and play activities they could do with their child, and to whom they had spoken, in the last six months, about their child's learning and development.
- (AwareEYFS) This question asked parents much they knew about the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### **Questions about perception of local childcare**

- (QualFact) This question asked what factors parents felt were important for high quality childcare and early years education for pre-school children.

### **Questions about the reasons for patterns of childcare provision**

- (WPartB) This question asked parents whose child went to a pre-school provider on at least one week-day, but not every week-day, why they did not send their child to a pre-school provider every week-day.

## **3.2 Questionnaire content**

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Household composition (and identification of the selected child in FRS households)
- Household's use of childcare in the reference week, and the past year.

- Household's childcare costs, for providers used in the reference week.
- Household's awareness and use of the 15 and 30 hours offers, and their understanding of the 30 hours offer.
- Household's receipt of Tax Credits, awareness of Universal Credit, and awareness and use of Tax-Free Childcare.
- The impact of support received on employment, family finances, and family life.
- Selected child's attendance record (the day-by-day 'diary' of childcare use in the reference week).
- Selected child's experiences at their main provider, reasons for choosing the main provider, and reasons for the patterns of provision used.
- Selected child's use of digital electronic devices in the context of the home learning environment.
- Respondent's attitudes towards childcare in the local area.
- Respondent's and child(ren)'s demographic characteristics.
- Respondent's employment history.
- Consent to data linkage; consent for follow-up research; contact details for pre-school providers.
- Partner's employment status and details (partner interviewed directly).

## 4 Sampling

### 4.1 Survey population

The survey population was children aged 0 to 14 living in private residential accommodation<sup>2</sup> in England. Although the sampling units were children, the interview for each selected child was conducted with an appropriate adult (defined as an adult within the child's household with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about the child's childcare').

### 4.2 Sample frames

In earlier waves of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, up to and including the 2014-15 wave, children were sampled exclusively from the Child Benefit Register (CBR). This was a highly efficient approach given the near universal take-up of Child Benefit among parents of children aged 0 to 14 in England, and hence the near total coverage of the sample population by the sample frame. In 2013 this coverage was damaged by the introduction of the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC), the effect of which has been to decrease the likelihood that children born since 2013 to higher income parents (those where one or both partners earn £60,000 or more per year) are listed on the CBR.

DfE commissioned Ipsos MORI to write a report investigating the potential impact of this change, and to explore potential solutions.<sup>3</sup> The report found that persisting with the CBR as the sole sampling frame would introduce non-coverage bias that would reduce both the accuracy of survey estimates, and the ability to compare changes in estimates over time. The report recommended that a sample of children should be drawn from the CBR, as per previous survey waves, but should be supplemented with a sample of respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) with children for whom a claim for Child Benefit had not been made, or had been made but where the family had subsequently opted-out of receiving Child Benefit due to having a high income. These families would have little or no chance of being selected in the CBR sample.

From the 2017 wave, the survey has used a dual-frame approach, sampling from both the CBR and the FRS.

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<sup>2</sup> Children living in communal establishments such as children's homes are excluded.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-sampling-frames>

## Selection of the CBR sample

The sample of children from the CBR was selected by HMRC from all children in England that would be aged 0 to 14 on the first day of fieldwork (15 January 2018) for whom a Child Benefit claim had been made.

A small number of children were excluded from the sampling frame before selection took place. The exclusions were made according to HMRC procedures and reasons included: 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).

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 458 PSUs, plus an additional 458 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 Region, 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 age group, and sample points were selected with probability proportionate to this 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 458 main PSUs and 458 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 3 and all other children had a value of 1.

The mainstage sample was drawn from the August 2017 extract of Child Benefit data.

Each sampled child was the 'selected child' about whom detailed child-specific questions in the Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) interview was asked. In a small number of cases, the CAPI programme re-selected this child, from among all children in the household, at the start of the interview. This occurred in the following instances:

- 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 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. This re-selection occurred at 287 households.

- ii. Where the number of children in the household (excluding children born since the sample was drawn) was found to be greater than the number of children living in the household according to the child benefit database, and where child benefit was received by some but not all children in the household. In these instances, there was a (non-newborn) child in the household that 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, an 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. This re-selection occurred at 30 households.

### **Selection of the FRS sample**

The sample of FRS respondents (n = 86) was selected by DWP from households who had taken part in the 2016/17 FRS survey, who had consented to be re-contacted for the purposes of further research at the time of their FRS interview, and who had a child (or children) born since 1st January 2013 (that is, since the HICBC was introduced) for whom they either:

- had not made a claim for Child Benefit, or
- had opted out of receiving Child Benefit payments due to having a high income.

Those opting out were included to ensure that all children in FRS households that could not be covered via the CBR were captured. Specifically, while families opting out of receiving Child Benefit remain listed on the CBR and are therefore available to be sampled, their contact details are more likely to be out of date as these families have little reason to inform HMRC of a change of address if they move, and as a result, they are likely to be under-represented in the CBR achieved sample. The FRS sample therefore boosts the sample of households that have opted-out of Child Benefit as they would otherwise be under-represented in a sample selected from the CBR alone.

## 5 Fieldwork

### 5.1 Briefings

Prior to the start of fieldwork, all interviewers who had not worked on the 2017 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) attended a full day briefing led by the Ipsos MORI research team. In order to maximise fieldwork capacity, Ipsos MORI partnered with the research agency GfK, who provided additional interviewers to deliver the fieldwork. All GfK interviewers attended a full day briefing, as they had not worked on the survey before.

The briefings covered an introduction to the study and its aims (including a section from DfE that explained the importance of the survey, along with examples of how the survey data has been used to develop and understand the impact of childcare and early years policies), an explanation of the samples and procedures for contacting respondents, full definitions of formal and informal childcare, and a section on securing participation. 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.

Ipsos MORI interviewers who had worked on the 2017 CEYSP participated in a refresher telephone briefing, which lasted approximately one hour. This briefing served as a reminder of the key aspects of the survey, explained the new procedures relating to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) sample, and gave interviewers the opportunity to ask questions.

### 5.2 Contact procedures

#### **Opt-out letter, advance letter, and leaflet**

An 'opt-out letter' introducing the survey was mailed prior to the start of fieldwork, in January 2018, addressed to (for the CBR sample) the named benefit recipient of the child sampled from the CBR, and (for the FRS sample) the adult who had taken part in the FRS survey and had consented to be recontacted for further research.

The opt-out letter provided details about how the household could opt-out of the survey, should they not wish to participate. Those households that did not opt-out were issued for interview.

Interviewers sent a separate 'advance letter' to each household in their assignment shortly prior to making their calls. Enclosed with the advance letter was a 'survey leaflet', which provided further details about the study.

## Interviewer visits

For the CBR sample, interviewers were provided with the selected child's name, address, and the name of the person in the household listed as the recipient of Child Benefit for that child. An interview could be conducted with an adult with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for the selected child'. This adult did not have to be the Child Benefit recipient.

In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, interviewers attempted to trace the child's new address. If the new address was local the interviewer visited the new address and attempted to conduct an interview there. If the new address was no longer local to the interviewer, the case was allocated to another interviewer where possible.

For the FRS sample, interviewers were provided with the FRS respondent's name, address, telephone number (if available), and the name of a second adult in the household who have carried out the FRS interview (if available). An interview could be conducted with an adult with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for the child or children aged 0 to 5 in the household'.

Interviewers were provided with an 'Impact Card' to use, at their discretion, to maximise co-operation across all issued addresses. This Impact Card laid out some of the ways in which the data from the survey series has been used to improve the services the Government provides to parents.

## 5.3 Interviewing

Interviews were conducted face-to-face using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI script 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 translation was not possible, the interview was not carried out.

The interviews lasted for a mean of 50 minutes and 8 seconds, and a median of 42 minutes and 37 seconds. Interviews were relatively longer for parents where the selected child was of pre-school age (aged 0 to 4): mean of 56 minutes and 3 seconds, median of 47 minutes and 31 seconds, and were relatively shorter for parents where the selected child was of school age (aged 5 to 14): mean of 47 minutes and 13 seconds, median of 40 minutes and 1 second.



## 6 Response

### 6.1 Outcomes and response for CBR sample

11,908 children were sampled from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) – 26 for each of 458 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). Opt-out letters were sent to these addresses, leading 445 respondents to opt out. These addresses were removed from the sample, and a total of 11,091 addresses were issued to interviewers, who sent advance letters before starting their calls.

The overall response rate for the CBR sample was 51 per cent. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews across all eligible addresses. The full fieldwork outcomes are shown in Table A.1 overleaf. Table A.2 then presents various response metrics for the CBR sample, showing trend data since the 2009 survey.

**Table A.1 Survey response figures, Child Benefit Register sample**

		Population in scope of study	Population in scope of fieldwork
	N	%	%
<b>Full sample pre opt-out (FS)</b>	<b>11,908</b>		
<b>Ineligible (I)</b>	<b>372</b>		
No children of relevant age	112		
Child deceased	1		
Other ineligible	259		
<b>Eligible sample (ES)</b>	<b>11,536</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Opt-outs before fieldwork started (OO)</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>Eligible sample – issued to interviewers (EI)</b>	<b>11,091</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Non-contact (N)</b>	<b>3,074</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
Respondent moved	2,143	19	
Other non-contact	931	18	
<b>Refusals (R)</b>	<b>1,967</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
Office refusal	44		
Refusal to interviewer	1,864		
Information about eligibility refused	59		
<b>Other unproductive (OU)</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Ill at home during survey period	18		
Language difficulties	40		
Other unproductive	115		
<b>Productive interviews (P)</b>	<b>5,877</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>53</b>
Full interview – lone parent	1,406		
Full interview – partner interview in person	928		
Full interview – partner interview by proxy	2,820		
Full interview – unproductive partner	723		

**Figure A.2 Survey response metrics, Child Benefit Register sample**

	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2014-15	2017	2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Overall response rate (P/ES)	52	57	58	59	57	52	51
Co-operation rate (P/(P+OU+R+OO))	67	76	72	73	70	68	71
Contact rate ((R+OU+P)/EI)	77	77	80	80	80	75	72
Refusal rate ((R+OO)/EI)	24	18	22	21	23	24	22
Eligibility rate (ES/FS)	98	97	98	97	97	97	97

## 6.2 Outcomes and response for FRS sample

86 valid addresses were sampled from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). Opt-out letters were sent to these addresses, leading 4 respondents to opt out. These addresses were removed from the sample, and a total of 82 addresses were issued to interviewers, who sent advance letters before starting their calls.

The overall response rate for the FRS sample was 52 per cent. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews across all eligible addresses. The full fieldwork outcomes are shown in Table A.3. Table A.4 then presents various response metrics for the FRS sample, showing trend data against the 2017 survey.

**Table A.3 Survey response figures, Family Resources Survey sample**

		Population in scope of study	Population in scope of fieldwork
	N	%	%
<b>Full sample pre opt-out (FS)</b>	<b>86</b>		
<b>Ineligible (I)</b>	<b>0</b>		
No children of relevant age	0		
Child deceased	0		
Other ineligible	0		
<b>Eligible sample (ES)</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Opt-outs before fieldwork started (OO)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Eligible sample – issued to interviewers (EI)</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Non-contact (N)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
Respondent moved	8	9	
Other non-contact	10	12	
<b>Refusals (R)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
Office refusal	0		
Refusal to interviewer	16		
Information about eligibility refused	1		
<b>Other unproductive (OU)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
Ill at home during survey period	0		
Language difficulties	0		
Other unproductive	2		
<b>Productive interviews (P)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>55</b>
Full interview – lone parent	0		
Full interview – partner interview in person	10		
Full interview – partner interview by proxy	31		
Full interview – unproductive partner	4		

**Table A.4 Survey response metrics, Family Resources Survey sample**

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Overall response rate (P/ES)	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>
Co-operation rate (P/(P+OU+R+OO))	55	66
Contact rate ((R+OU+P)/EI)	69	78
Refusal rate ((R+OO)/(EI+OU))	31	23
Eligibility rate (ES/FS)	100	100

## 7 Data processing

### 7.1 Coding and editing of the data

The CAPI script ensured that the correct routing was followed throughout the questionnaire and applied range checks, which prevented invalid values from being entered. It also included 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 throughout 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.

### 7.2 Analysis and significance testing

Data tables showing survey results were created. These were generated in SPSS, and significance testing was undertaken using SPSS version 24. The complex samples module in SPSS was used to take into account the impact of stratification, clustering and non-response on the survey estimates. This means that 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpreting a difference as real when it is not) is far less likely than if the standard formulae were used.

### 7.3 Provider edits

Checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the pre-school 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 pre-school providers they used, Ipsos MORI contacted providers by telephone, where possible, and asked them to classify the type of provision they offered to children of different ages. Telephone interviews with providers

were carried out in three separate batches, the first two during the face-to-face fieldwork period, and the third and final batch immediately after face-to-face fieldwork had finished.

The following provider types (as classified by parents) were contacted:

- Nursery school
- Nursery class
- Reception class
- Special day school or nursery unit
- Day nursery
- Playgroup or pre-school

The process of checking providers started by extracting data from the CAPI interview regarding the providers used and the parents' classification of them. This was only done in cases where parents had 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.

Ipsos MORI received information on 2,537 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, Ipsos MORI de-duplicated the list of providers, which was done both manually and automatically. 571 providers were duplicates and were therefore removed from the checks.

A full list of 1,966 providers was generated, and telephone interviewers were briefed. Interviews with providers were approximately three minutes long, and covered the services provided and the age range of the children who attended each service. Interviews were achieved with 1,549 providers, which constitutes a response rate of 79 per cent.

The classification of pre-school providers was compared between the parent face-to-face interviews and the provider checks telephone interviews, and final classifications were derived by following pre-agreed editing rules. Table A.5 compares parents' classification of providers with the final classification of providers after the edits had been carried out.

**Table A.5 Summary classification of providers before and after provider checks**

	<b>Parents' classification</b>	<b>Final classification after all checks</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents and for whom contact details were provided by parents</i>	2,537	2,537
Nursery school	24	24
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	16	15
Reception class	28	27
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with SEN	1	1
Day nursery	18	25
Playgroup or pre-school	13	9

While these data illustrate the gross change in provider classifications before and after the provider edits, they do not show the net changes; that is, 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 A.6.

This table shows that where parent(s) classified providers as either reception classes or day nurseries, in the great majority of cases (94%) they were correct. Parents were least accurate where they classified a provider as a nursery school – only 23 per cent of the time did this prove to be correct, with 49 per cent of these classifications ultimately proving to be a day nursery, and 16 per cent a nursery class.



**Table A.6 Detailed classification of providers before and after provider checks. Parents' classifications (bold) and final classifications (not bold)**

		Per provider	Of total
	N	%	%
<b>Nursery school</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>
Nursery school	408	66	16
Nursery Class	53	9	2
Reception Class	7	1	*
Special day school/nursery	0	0	0
Day Nursery	132	21	5
Playgroup or pre-school	18	4	*
Other	0	0	0
<b>Nursery Class</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>
Nursery school	48	12	2
Nursery Class	318	77	13
Reception Class	14	3	*
Special day school/nursery	0	0	0
Day Nursery	15	4	1
Playgroup or pre-school	16	4	1
Other	0	0	0
<b>Reception Class</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>
Nursery school	15	2	1
Nursery Class	3	*	*
Reception Class	673	95	26
Special day school/nursery	8	1	*
Day Nursery	5	1	*
Playgroup or pre-school	8	1	*
Other	0	0	0
<b>Special day school/nursery</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>
Special day school/nursery	15	88	1
Day nursery	2	12	*
<b>Day Nursery</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>
Nursery school	17	3	1
Nursery Class	0	0	0
Reception Class	1	*	*
Special day school/nursery	0	0	0
Day Nursery	436	95	17
Playgroup or pre-school	3	1	*
Other	0	0	0
<b>Playgroup or pre-school</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>
Nursery school	118	37	5
Nursery Class	11	3	*
Reception Class	0	0	0
Special day school/nursery	0	0	0
Day Nursery	16	5	1
Playgroup or pre-school	177	55	7
Other	0	0	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,537</b>		<b>100</b>

## 7.4 Weighting

### Summary of the weighting

The sample was selected from two sources: the main component was sampled from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) as for previous years of the survey, with an additional sample from respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) that were identified as not receiving Child Benefit because of the introduction of the High Income Benefit Charge. These two components of the survey were weighted separately.

The sample is analysed at both the family and child-level, and hence there are two final weights; a family weight for family-level analyses, and a child weight for analyses of data collected about the selected child.

### Child Benefit sample: Family weights

#### Family selection weight

The Child Benefit sample was designed to be representative of the population of children of parents receiving Child Benefit, rather than the population of parents or families themselves. This design feature means that larger families are over-represented in the sample<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the sampling was designed so that the sample of children aged 2 to 4 was boosted by a factor of three. The first stage of the weighting for the family weights corrects for these design features by calculating the appropriate selection weights. These selection weights also corrected for families for which the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the family at interview.

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:

$W1 = 1/\text{Pr}(F)$ ; where

$\text{Pr}(F) = (\# \text{ children not aged 2 to 4}) + 3 \times (\# \text{ children aged 2 to 4})$

The counts of the children were based on the sampling frame information, but were adjusted up (or down) if more (or fewer) children were found in the family at interview – this adjustment was trimmed to reduce the variance of the child weights.

#### Family calibration weight

The next stage of the weighting adjusted the sample using calibration weighting, so that the weighted distribution for region and the number of children in the household at the family level matched the family-level Child Benefit counts, and the weighted distribution

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<sup>4</sup> This follows from children in England having an equal chance of selection, meaning that a family with two children has twice the chance of having a child selected as a family with one child, a family with four children has four times the chance of having a child selected as a family with one child, and so on.

for age groups at the child level matched child-level Child Benefit counts (Table A.7). HMRC provided Ipsos MORI with a breakdown of the sampling frame (before exclusions) for different variables at family and child level (see Tables A.7 and A.8).

The family selection weights (W1) were used as the starting weights for the calibration weighting stage.

**Table A.7 Control totals for the family calibration weights**

	Population	Population	Selection weight (W1)	Final weight (W2)
	N	%	%	%
<b>Region (families)</b>				
North East	258,184	4.6	4.9	4.6
North West	740,946	13.3	14.4	13.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	552,666	9.9	11.3	9.9
East Midlands	474,121	8.5	7.6	8.5
West Midlands	600,420	10.8	11.4	10.8
East of England	619,335	11.1	13.0	11.1
London	914,595	16.4	13.6	16.4
South East	886,855	15.9	14.8	15.9
South West	515,699	9.3	9.1	9.3
TOTAL	5,562,821			
<b>Children's age (children)</b>				
0-1	827,418	9.0	10.4	9.1
2-4	1,806,447	19.7	20.1	19.7
5-7	2,029,705	22.2	21.4	22.1
8-11	2,650,819	28.9	28.3	28.9
12-14	1,847,894	20.2	19.8	20.2
TOTAL	9,162,283			
<b>Number of children in household (families)</b>				
1	2,875,171	51.7	41.2	51.7
2	1,987,748	35.7	41.8	35.7
3	534,255	9.6	12.7	9.6
4+	165,647	3.0	4.3	3.0
TOTAL	5,562,821			

The adjustment for the calibration weight was trimmed to avoid extreme weights to give the Child Benefit family weight (W2).

## Child Benefit sample: Child weights

### Child selection weight

At each sampled address from the Child Benefit sample, a single child was selected at random to be the focus of the detailed childcare section of the questionnaire. Children

aged 2 to 4 were given a higher chance of selection (by a factor of 3) in order to boost the sample in that age range.

The child selection weight (W3) is the inverse of the child selection probabilities applied within each household:

$W3 = 1/Pr(C)$ ; where

$Pr(C) = 1 / [(\# \text{ children not aged 2 to 4}) + 3 \times (\# \text{ children aged 2 to 4})]$  if the child was not aged 2 to 4

$Pr(C) = 2 / [(\# \text{ children not aged 2 to 4}) + 3 \times (\# \text{ children aged 2 to 4})]$  if the child was aged 2 to 4

### **Child calibration weight**

The next stage was to produce calibration weights that adjusted the sample of selected children so that the weighted distributions for age/sex groups, region and number of children in the household matched child-level Child Benefit counts (Table A.8). The starting weights for the calibration stage (W4) were obtained by combining the family weight (W2) with the child selection weights (W3):  $W4 = W2 \times W3$ .

**Table A.8 Control totals for the child calibration weights**

	Population	Population	Pre-calibration weight (W4)	Final weight (W4)
	N	%	%	%
<b>Region (children)</b>				
North East	419,261	4.6	4.5	4.6
North West	1,227,874	13.4	13.3	13.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	922,391	10.1	10	10.1
East Midlands	778,871	8.5	8.9	8.5
West Midlands	1,016,163	11.1	10.7	11.1
East of England	1,013,551	11.1	10.4	11.1
London	1,495,032	16.3	16.8	16.3
South East	1,442,398	15.7	16.5	15.7
South West	846,742	9.2	9	9.2
TOTAL	9,162,283			
<b>Selected child's gender / age (children)</b>				
Males: 0-1	423,892	4.6	4.7	4.6
Males: 2-4	925,517	10.1	8.9	10.1
Males: 5-7	1,039,628	11.3	11.2	11.3
Males: 8-11	1,355,997	14.8	14.8	14.8
Males: 12-14	945,339	10.3	11	10.3
Females: 0-1	403,526	4.4	4.7	4.4
Females: 2-4	880,930	9.6	9.2	9.6
Females: 5-7	990,077	10.8	12.1	10.8
Females: 8-11	1,294,822	14.1	14	14.1
Females: 12-14	902,555	9.9	9.4	9.9
TOTAL	9,162,283			
<b>Number of children in household (children)</b>				
1	2,872,645	31.4	30.6	31.4
2	3,972,003	43.4	43.4	43.4
3	1,601,357	17.5	17.9	17.5
4+	716,278	7.8	8.1	7.8
TOTAL	9,162,283			

## FRS Sample: Family and child weights

Because the number of interviews carried out with the sample selected from the Family Resources Survey was relatively small (45), a complex weighting strategy was not appropriate. Instead, the child and family weights for the FRS sample were both set to be three times the corresponding mean value for the Child Benefit sample weights.

The weights for the two sample components were combined and re-scaled to have mean of 1, so the weights sum to the sample size.

## Effective sample size

Disproportionate sampling and sample clustering usually result in a loss of precision for survey estimates. All else being equal, the more variable the weights, the greater the loss in precision.

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 as the design being implemented. The efficiency of a sample is given by the ratio of the effective sample size to the actual sample size.

The estimated 'average' effective sample size and sample efficiency were calculated for both weights (Table A.9). Note that this calculation includes only effects of the weighting; it does not include clustering effects, which will be question-specific. In addition, this is an 'average' effect for the weighting – the true effect will vary from question to question. These figures provide a guide to the average level of precision of child-level and family-level survey estimates.

**Table A.9 Effective sample size and weighting efficiency**

	All
<i>Base: All cases</i>	5,922
<b>Child weight</b>	
Effective sample size	4,404
Sample efficiency	74.4%
<b>Family weight</b>	
Effective sample size	3,364
Sample efficiency	56.8%

## Confidence intervals

Confidence intervals (at the 95% level) for key estimates in the survey are shown in Table A.10. The confidence intervals have been generated using standard errors calculated using complex samples formulae.

**Table A.10 Confidence intervals (95%) for key estimates**

	Estimate	Standard error	Lower	Upper	Unweighted base
Use of any childcare	75.45%	0.01	73.61%	77.29%	5,922
Use of formal childcare	62.15%	0.01	60.25%	64.05%	5,922
Use of informal childcare	34.59%	0.01	32.47%	36.72%	5,922
Hours of childcare used (all)	16.68	0.33	16.02	17.34	3,818
Hours of childcare used (pre-school children)	24.53	0.43	23.67	25.38	2,028
Hours of childcare used (school-age children)	12.58	0.41	11.79	13.38	1,790
Weekly amount paid for childcare	54.10	2.18	49.81	58.39	2,618
Use of any holiday childcare	38.34%	0.01	35.76%	40.92%	4,927

# Appendix: Socio-demographic profile

## Respondent characteristics

### Gender

As in previous surveys in the series, the majority of parents who responded to the survey were female (85%).

### Age

The mean age of respondents was 39, and of their partners, 41. Table B.1 shows the age bands of respondents by family type. It shows that respondents in couple families tended to be slightly older than lone parent respondents.

**Table B.1 Age of respondent, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of respondent	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,515	1,407	5,922
20 and under	*	1	*
21 to 30	13	25	16
31 to 40	43	39	42
41 to 50	37	28	34
51+	7	7	7
Mean	39	37	39

### Marital status

The majority of respondents (70%) were married and living with their husband/wife. One in five (21%) were single and never married (including persons who were cohabiting) (Table B.2).

**Table B.2 Marital status**

	All
Marital status	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	5,922
Married and living with husband/wife	70
Single (never married)	21
Divorced	5
Married and separated from husband/wife	4
Widowed	*

## Qualifications

Respondents in lone parent families tended to have lower qualifications than respondents in couple families (Table B.3). Lone parents were less likely to hold Honours and Masters degrees as their highest qualification than were respondents in couple families, and were more likely not to hold any academic qualifications.

**Table B.3 Highest qualification, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Qualifications	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,379	1,371	5,750
GCSE grade D-G/CSE grade 2-5/SCE O Grades (D-E)/SCE	5	12	7
GCSE grade A-C/GCE O-level passes/CSE grade 1/SCE O	15	22	17
GCE A-level/SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	16	17	16
Certificate of Higher Education	9	10	9
Foundation degree	5	3	4
Honours degree (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd)	25	10	22
Masters degree (e.g. MA, PGDip)	13	4	11
Doctorate (e.g. PhD)	2	*	1
Other academic qualifications	1	1	1
None	10	20	12

## Family characteristics

### Size of the family

The median family size was four people. The smallest families comprised two people (i.e. one parent and one child), and the largest comprised 11 people.

### Number of children aged 0 to 14 in the family

Around half (51%) of families had one child aged 0 to 14, 36 per cent had two children, and 13 per cent had three or more children (Table B.4). Lone parents tended to have fewer children than couple families.

**Table B.4 Number of children in the household, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Number of children	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,515	1,407	5,922
1	49	58	51
2	38	30	36
3+	13	12	13



Almost three in five (59%) families had only school-age children, 20 per cent had both pre-school and school-age children, and the remaining 21 per cent had only pre-school children (Table B.5).

**Table B.5 Number of pre-school and school-age children in the family, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of children in family	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,515	1,407	5,922
Only pre-school children (0 to 4 years)	22	18	21
Both pre-school and school-age children	21	17	20
Only school-age children (5 to 14 years)	57	65	59

### Family annual income

Table B.6 shows the family annual income (before tax). Lone parents tended to have lower family annual incomes than did couple families.

**Table B.6 Family annual income by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Family annual income	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,295	1,357	5,922
Up to £9,999	3	19	7
£10,000 - £19,999	13	47	21
£20,000 - £29,999	16	22	17
£30,000 - £44,999	21	8	18
£45,000 or more	47	4	36

### Family type and work status

Table B.7 shows family type and work status. Just over half of respondents were from couple families where both parents worked (52%), and a further 20 per cent were in couple families where one parent worked. In 14 per cent of families no-one was working (10% were non-working lone parent families and 4 per cent were couple families where neither parent was in work).

**Table B.7 Family work status**

	All
Family work status	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	5,922
Couple – both working	52
Couple – one working	20
Couple – neither working	4
Lone parent working	14
Lone parent not working	10

## Tenure

The tenure of respondents' families is shown in Table B.8. Families were most likely to be buying the property with a mortgage or loan (49%) or renting the property (41%). The majority of couple families were in the process of buying their home with the help of a mortgage or loan (58%), while the majority of lone parents were renting (73%).

**Table B.8 Tenure status, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Tenure status	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,508	1,403	5,911
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	58	19	49
Rent it	30	73	41
Own it outright	10	7	9
Live rent-free (in relative's/friend's property)	1	2	1
Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)	1	*	*

## Selected child characteristics

### Gender

There was a roughly even split of selected boys and girls (51% boys; 49% girls).

### Age

The age of the selected child was spread across all age categories (Table B.9).

**Table B.9 Age of selected child, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,515	1,407	5,922
0 to 2	17	13	16
3 to 4	14	15	14
5 to 7	23	20	22
8 to 11	28	30	28
12 to 14	19	22	20

## Ethnic group

The majority of selected children in the survey were White British (68%) (Table B.10).

**Table B.10 Ethnicity of selected child, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Ethnicity of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,510	1,403	5,913
<b>White</b>			
White British	68	69	68
White Irish	*	*	*
Other White	7	5	7
<b>Mixed</b>			
White and Caribbean	1	3	2
White and Black African	1	2	1
White and Asian	2	1	2
Other mixed	1	1	1
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>			
Indian	4	1	3
Pakistani	5	2	4
Bangladeshi	2	1	2
Other Asian	2	1	2
<b>Black or Black British</b>			
Caribbean	1	3	1
African	3	8	4
Other Black	*	*	*
<b>Chinese</b>	1	*	1
<b>Arab</b>	1	*	1
<b>Other</b>	1	1	1

## Special education needs and disabilities

Eight per cent of selected children had a special educational need<sup>5</sup>, and seven per cent had a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability (Table B.11).

**Table B.11 Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
<b>Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	4,515	1,407	5,922
Child has SEN	7	12	8
Child has long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability	6	10	7

Among children with a special educational need, two in five (41%) had an Education, Health and Care plan or a Statement of special educational needs, and 23% received SEN support (Table B.12). A further nine per cent received one of these (an Education, Health and Care plan/Statement of special educational needs, or SEN support) but the parent did not know which.

**Table B.12 Type of special educational needs of selected child, by family type**

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All child(ren) with a special educational need or other special needs</i>	305	142	447
Child has Education, Health and Care plan or Statement of special educational needs	43	37	41
Child receives SEN support	23	22	23
Child receives one of the above but parent does not know which	9	11	9
Child does not receive any of these	25	30	27

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<sup>5</sup> 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]"

## Region, area deprivation and rurality

Table B.13 shows the geographical spread of the surveyed families according to region.

**Table B.13 Region**

	<b>All</b>
<b>Region</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	5,922
North East	5
North West	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
East Midlands	8
West Midlands	11
East of England	11
London	17
South East	16
South West	9

Interviewed families lived in a broad range of areas in terms of deprivation levels, as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England (Table B.14).

**Table B.14 Area deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation**

	<b>All</b>
<b>Area deprivation</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	5,922
1 <sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived	18
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	19
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	18
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	20
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived	24

Table B.15 shows that 85 per cent of families lived in urban areas, with the remaining 15 per cent living in rural areas.

**Table B.15 Rurality**

	<b>All</b>
<b>Rurality</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 14</i>	5,922
Rural	15
Urban	85
Urban - major conurbation	37
Urban - minor conurbation	3
Urban - city and town	44
Rural - town and fringe	8
Rural - town and fringe in a sparse setting	*
Rural - village and dispersed	7
Rural - village and dispersed in a sparse setting	1



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