Childcare and early years survey of parents 2009

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Introduction

This report provides the main findings of the 2009 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey series is funded by the Department for Education and has been carried out by the National Centre for Social Research since 2004[1]. The survey has two main objectives. The first is to provide up-to-date and accurate information on parents' childcare arrangements and their views of particular childcare providers and childcare provision in general. The second is to continue the time series and provide information to help monitor the progress of policies in the areas of childcare and early years education.

The launch of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998 (DfEE 1998) marked the start of a Government commitment to improve the quantity and quality of childcare in England, taking on the commitment of ensuring *"good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0-14 in every neighbourhood"*. Six years later, the 10-Year Childcare Strategy was published in 2004 (HM Treasury 2004) with plans to build on the work that had been done to date. It identified a number of key childcare challenges, suggested how these should be overcome, and committed significant funding to this area. The two overarching aims of the Childcare Strategy have been to improve child outcomes by giving children the opportunity to attend a high quality early years setting, and to reduce child poverty by facilitating parental employment.

The Childcare Act 2006 provided the legal underpinning for the proposals laid out in the 10-Year Childcare Strategy, including a range of duties for Local Authorities, including securing sufficient childcare for working families; and reinforcing the framework for their facilitating and supporting their local childcare markets. An updated strategy document published in 2009 (HM Government 2009) reflected on progress since 2004 and proposed a number of new policies aimed at achieving the objectives set out in the 10-Year Childcare Strategy. As a result of these policy initiatives, the childcare and early years sector has undergone a significant transformation, particularly with regard to early years education.

The report describes in detail what childcare is used by different types of families, changes in take-up 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.

Methodology

Just over 6,700 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study, between June and December 2009. They were randomly selected from Child Benefit records. All the parents had children aged 14 and under, to be comparable with the previous surveys in the series and to focus on the age group most often included within Government policy on childcare. The survey oversampled families with 2-4 year olds, in order to enable a more detailed analysis of the take-up of early years education by this age group.

Unfortunately an error occurred when the sample was selected by the Department for Work and Pensions that affects how representative the sample is of the population. Specifically, the survey under-represents first time parents, with children aged 0-1, who

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[1] The survey series was preceded by two earlier survey series that were also carried out by the National Centre for Social Research: the Parents' Demand for Childcare series and the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services series.

had not been on benefits in the last seven years. This introduces some bias into the estimates presented throughout the report which cannot be removed by weighting the data. These will be serious only if the bias is large in comparison to the margin of error associated with each estimate. The technical appendix of the report includes some key tables with estimates for the amount of bias in each estimate, and a table that approximates how the margins of error vary for some key estimates to help judge which comparisons are likely to be affected by the bias.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and lasted for an average of three-quarters of an hour. 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.

Use of childcare and early years provision

There has been substantial growth in the use of formal childcare over the last decade and in particular between 1999 and 2004. This can largely be attributed to an increase in the take-up of early years education with the entitlement to free early years provision being rolled out to 3 year olds during this period, and whilst 77% of 3-4 year olds attended an early years setting in 1999, this had increased to 94% by 2004 (Butt et al. 2007). In addition, use of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (on and off a school site) doubled between 2001 and 2004 (Bryson et al. 2006). Since then, Kazimirski et al. (2008) found no further growth in take-up of formal childcare between 2004 and 2007. Likewise, the current survey showed that families' term-time use of formal childcare and early years provision remained constant between 2008 and 2009.

The use of various forms of childcare varied according to the age of their child and their circumstances. Three and four year olds were most likely to be in childcare (due largely to the entitlement to free early years provision), 12-14 year olds were the least likely to receive childcare. Pre-school children from Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi and 'other' Asian backgrounds (but not Asian Indian) were less likely to be in formal childcare than children from a White British background even after controlling for their other socio-demographic characteristics.

Children from working and higher income families were more likely to be in formal childcare than those from non working and lower income families. The pattern was similar for informal childcare. There were no differences in take-up of formal childcare by region or area deprivation after other characteristics had been taken into account.

There has been no change in the last year in the use of early years provision by 3 and 4 year olds who are eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision (although there were notable changes earlier in the decade). In 2009, 92% of 3 and 4 year olds had received some early years provision and 87% reported that they received some 'free hours' of early years provision.[2] Those who were not receiving early years provision were significantly more likely to be from non working and lower income families, and 3 year olds were less likely to receive the entitlement to free early years provision than 4 year olds. On average, children receiving their entitlement tended to receive 12.5 free hours per

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[2] Note that these parent reports may include some lack of awareness thereby deflating these figures. In addition, since the analysis focuses on a term-time reference week, some children may 'usually' receive the free hours but not have done so in the reference week due to one-off reasons such as sickness. The Early Years and Schools Census figures from January 2010 suggest that the take-up rate of the entitlement to free early years provision are 92% for 3 year olds and 98% for 4 year olds
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000935/index.shtml.

week or more and parents were largely satisfied with the number of hours they were entitled to. For just under three-quarters of children (74%), the number of free hours they received was the same each day. Four year olds typically received their entitlement from a reception or nursery class (57% and 32% respectively) while 3 year olds received their entitlement from a wider variety of settings.

Finally, one-third of families with school-age children used a breakfast or after-school club on a school site and 7% used a breakfast or after-school club off-site. The most common activity that children took part in was sport (60%) and just under one-third took part in play/ recreational activities, or other creative activities (31% and 28% respectively).

Packages of childcare for pre-school children

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their pre-school children during term-time. Three types or packages of childcare were most commonly used for pre-school children: only formal centre-based care e.g. nursery classes, day nurseries (26%); only informal care, e.g. ex-partners or grandparents (14%); or a combination of formal centre-based and informal care (18%). Twenty-eight per cent were not in childcare at all. Use of centre-based provision was much more common among 3-4 year olds than among 0-2 year olds, reflecting the high take-up of their entitlement to free early years provision. Accordingly, younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to be receiving only informal care (22% and 3% respectively).

Pre-school children spent an average of 5.9 hours per day in childcare, and 20.0 hours per week. Older pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare on average than younger ones (23.5 and 17.0 hours respectively).

Children receiving a combination of formal centre-based care and informal care were clearly the heaviest users of childcare. For instance, while the great majority of pre-school children receiving only one type of care attended just one provider, 29% of those receiving a combination of care attended three or more. On average, these children received the most hours of childcare per week and per day, and attended on a greater number of days per week. They were also the most likely to have a mother who was in work, and to attend childcare for economic reasons, illustrating that this heavy childcare use was commonly designed to cover parents' working hours.

Fifty-eight per cent of pre-school children who went to childcare were doing so for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 64% for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 33% for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). While 0-2 year olds were more likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (63% compared to 54% of 3-4 year olds), 3-4 year olds were more likely to attend for child-related reasons (79% compared to 47%). Across all pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal centre-based care, and parental time reasons with informal care.

Packages of childcare for school-age children

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their school-age children, during term-time, outside school hours. Forty per cent of school-age children were not in childcare and 16% were only in informal care. Fourteen per cent were in only formal out-of-school childcare (breakfast or after-school club) and 9% were in a combination of out-of-school and informal care. No other particular type or package of childcare (e.g. centre-based or leisure) accounted for more than 4% of children.

School-age children in each of the three age groups were equally likely to be receiving informal care only. However, children aged 8-11 were significantly more likely than both older and younger school-age children to attend out-of-school care, either on its own or in combination with informal care. Five to seven year olds used a wider range of childcare packages than older school-age children (attributable at least in part to their greater use of reception classes and childminders).

More than three-quarters of school-age children receiving just one type of care attended just one provider, while 40% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care attended three or more.

As we would expect given that all these children were in full-time school, the average number of hours of childcare received per day was low – just 2.2 hours. School-age children spent an average of 6.5 hours in childcare per week. Those in only out-of-school care attended for far fewer hours per week than those in only informal care and those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care (2.0 hours on average, compared to 8.0 and 8.3 hours respectively). Those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal care tended to attend some childcare on a greater number of days of the week.

Forty-eight per cent of school-age children who were in childcare attended for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 70% for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 21% for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). Children in out-of-school care only were less likely than the other groups to be attending a provider for economic reasons, reflecting the fact that these children only received a small amount of care each week. Children in a combination of out-of-school and informal care were the most likely to be attending a provider for economic reasons, indicating that, even once they start full-time school, a package of care can still be required to cover parents' working hours. For school-age as for pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal out-of-school care, and parental time reasons with informal care.

Paying for childcare

Overall, 59% of families who used childcare in the reference week reported they had paid for some or all of that care. More parents paid formal providers than informal providers, although a small proportion of families who used relatives and friends did make some payment for it (8%), and payment in kind (e.g. doing return favours, buying gifts) was quite common. Forty-one per cent of parents who used grandparents made some payment in kind and 66% of parents made a payment in kind for friends and neighbours.

The overall median weekly amount paid by families 'out of their own pockets' (£21) hides wide variability in costs between families in different circumstances and using different providers. While there were some differences in the costs paid by different types of families and families living in different areas of the country, most differences appear to be accounted for by the age of the children and different patterns of childcare use. Families paid the most for the childcare used by 0-2 year olds that offers care for a full day (e.g. day nurseries).

Sixteen per cent of families using childcare reported they had received financial help from others, including the Local Authority, their employer or ex-partners. However, 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 years education place to be 'paid for'. Parents most commonly reported getting financial assistance from Local Authorities, followed by

employers. Help from employers was mostly in the form of childcare vouchers paid for by salary sacrifice.

Seventy-one per cent of families reported receiving Child Tax Credit, 46% on its own and 25% with Working Tax Credit (WTC).[3] Some, but not all, families receiving WTC are eligible for additional tax credits to help with childcare costs: 14 per cent of families receiving WTC said they received the childcare element of the tax credit. Sixty-six per cent of families receiving WTC but not the childcare element said they were aware of the extra money available for childcare. The most common reason for not claiming the childcare element was because families did not qualify, or did not think they qualified - either because their earnings were too high or because they did not use appropriate childcare.

Overall, 24% of families paying for childcare said they found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs. Lone parents, low income families, and those with the highest weekly bills, were most likely to struggle with their childcare costs.

Factors affecting decisions about childcare

If parents are to make informed choices about childcare, they need access to up-to-date and accurate information about all of the childcare available in the local area. However evidence suggests that not all parents feel they have access to good information, and that parents from the most disadvantaged groups in society in particular may struggle to find the information they need (Speight et al. 2010).

Sixty-one per cent of parents said they had used one or more sources of information about childcare in the last year. Among those who had accessed information, most had relied on information from people/ organisations they regularly encountered in daily life, particularly word-of-mouth from friends/ relatives and, for those with school-age children, information provided by their children's school. Sure Start/ Children's Centres were mentioned as a source of information by 10% of parents, and 8% mentioned their Local Authority. Families Information Services (FIS) were familiar to around a third (31%) of parents but less than half of these (13% of all parents) had ever used them.[4]

Accessing information was strongly linked to existing childcare use – those families who did not use formal provision were much less likely to have accessed information. This in turn meant that those groups known to have lower rates of formal care use, in particular low income families, were less likely to access information about childcare. Families on very low incomes (less than £10,000 per year) were more likely to say they had received childcare information from Jobcentre Plus, Sure Start/ Children's Centres and health visitors, but they were less likely to have found that information helpful. In turn those groups with lower formal care use were more likely to say they had too little information on childcare and more likely to say they were unsure about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare in the local area.

Just over a third (34%) of parents believed there were not enough childcare places in their local area and a similar proportion (36%) believed that affordability was fairly or very poor. Parents were more positive about the quality of local childcare (64%) and this represents an increase in positive views since 2004 (when the equivalent figure was 61%). Similarly, they were less likely to say that there were not enough places available in their local area. Views about the affordability of local childcare show no statistically significant change.

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[3] Families are eligible for Child Tax Credit if they have at least one child and an income of less than £50,000 per year. Families are eligible for Working Tax Credit if they have children and at least one partner works for 16 hours or more a week and are on a low income.
[4] Families Information Services are also known as Children's Information Services / Families Information Services / Parents' Information / Information for Parents.

Turning to out-of-school provision, demand for these services is reasonably high amongst families who do not have access to this provision. Twenty-one per cent of parents affected said they would use a before-school club if one was available, whilst 42% said they would use an after-school club. This demand was strongly motivated by thinking it would benefit the child, although a substantial minority of parents did say it would help them to work, or work longer hours (41% for before and 21% for after-school clubs). Where parents had these services available but were not using them, this was mostly through personal choice, often because children did not want to go or because family circumstances meant they did not need to use such care at the moment. A minority of families were not using such provision because of problems with cost, timing or accessibility.

Very few parents had not accessed any childcare at all in the last year (11% of all families). Where they had not used childcare, this was often because families had older school-age children or because they preferred to look after their children themselves. A small minority (10%) said they were not using childcare because they could not afford it, and very few parents mentioned problems with availability, transport or quality. This suggests that for many, although not all, families not using childcare in the last year was mainly due to choice rather than constraint. As a result, for the majority of families not using any formal childcare in the last year, it appeared that there were no potential changes to childcare provision which might change their mind. In terms of informal care, most (86%) of these families said it was available to them if they needed it for one-off occasions but fewer (56%) said it was available to help them on a regular basis.

Parents of younger children (0-2 years) who had not used nursery education largely attributed their decision to personal preference, with 60% saying their child was too young and 32% expressing a direct preference for keeping their child with them at home. Only a minority mentioned problems with affordability and availability of childcare, although there was an indication that these might have been more of a concern for working lone parents.

Overall, 8% of selected children had a longstanding health condition or disability; 6% had a health condition or disability that affected their daily life – 2% said it did not affect their daily life. Children with an illness/ disability which affected daily lives were as likely as other children to have used childcare in the last week. However, substantial proportions of parents with disabled children felt that local childcare provision did not adequately cater for their particular needs. For instance, only 43% of parents agreed that there were providers in their area who could cater for their child's illness/ disability; only 39% felt that hours available at those providers fitted with their other daily commitments and 21% said it was difficult/ very difficult to travel to a suitable provider.

Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

Parents using formal childcare were most likely to choose a childcare provider because of the provider's reputation and concern with the care being given e.g. someone who was affectionate or well trained. This applied whether the childcare was for pre-school or school-aged children. However, there was variation in parents' reasons for choosing providers of different types. For example, parents were more likely to choose childminders than other providers for reasons of trust and concern with the nature of care given; they often chose nursery schools and classes for the educational benefits to the child, playgroups so that the child could mix with other children, and breakfast and after-school clubs because of the child's preference. For both pre-school and school-age groups, only a very small proportion of parents said they had no choice over which provider to use.

The reasons that parents gave for choosing their main provider varied depending on the age of their child. Parents of 3-4 years olds were more likely to cite reasons relating to the educational benefits that the childcare could provide, with parents of 0-2 year olds more

likely to mention trust, concern with care and so the child could mix. Parents of school-age children tended to choose factors which related to the life-stage of their child, with trust being more important for younger school children, while parents of older school-age children were more likely to consider the child's choice.

Virtually all parents of pre-school children stated that their provider helped their child develop academic skills e.g. recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes. Reception classes were more likely than other providers to develop academic skills. When looking at social skills encouraged by providers e.g. playing with other children or behaving well, the providers of pre-school children were more likely to encourage these than the providers of school-age children.

Parents of both pre-school and school-age children said that talking to staff was the most common way of getting feedback from their provider. However this was mentioned more often by parents with pre-school children than those with school-age children perhaps because pre-school children mainly attend early years settings that have an educational remit and are thereby expected to offer some formal progress reporting (like schools). Further, parents of pre-school children said that they spoke to providers more often about how their child was getting on and the activities that their child had been involved in, than parents of school-aged children.

In terms of the home learning activities that parents of children aged 2-5 engage in – that is what parents do with their children at home to encourage their educational development – many activities were engaged in very frequently e.g. reading or singing songs; only going to the library or using a computer were engaged in less often (if at all).

The availability of additional services at formal group-based pre-school providers was generally low, with 62% of parents of pre-school children saying that no additional services were available at their provider. In addition, take-up of services at providers where other services were available was low. However, when asked about which additional services they would use if available, parents mentioned a number of services, most frequently health services, courses or training and advice and support for parents. This demand for services was higher than availability or take-up of services and may suggest that parents overestimate the likelihood that they would use these services if they were available.

Use of childcare during school holidays

Just over half of families with school-age children used childcare in the school holidays (51%), and they were more likely to use informal providers than formal providers (37% and 23% respectively). This represents no change since 2008.

There were some notable differences between families' use of childcare in term-time and the school holidays. Where families used childcare during term-time, 42% used no childcare during the school holidays; and where families used no childcare during term-time, 34% used some holiday care. The major difference between the term and holiday period was that children were much more likely to be cared for by formal providers during term-time (40%) than during the holidays (18%). Holiday clubs and schemes were the most common form of formal childcare in the holidays (11%). In terms of informal carers, grandparents played a particularly important role in providing childcare during school holidays (24% of children received grandparental care in the holidays compared with 19% during term-time).

Use of formal childcare during school holidays varied by children's characteristics and their families' circumstances. Those less likely to use formal holiday care included: older school-age children (i.e. those aged 12-14), children from Asian and Black African

backgrounds, children in lone parent families, children from non working families, children in lower income households, and children living in disadvantaged areas.

Two-thirds (68%) of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons, 59% of parents gave reasons around their child's development or enjoyment reasons, and 18% of parents gave reasons relating to how the holiday provision gave them time to do other things (e.g. shop, attend appointments). Parents' reasons for using holiday care varied depending on the types of providers used. For example, child development and enjoyment reasons tended to be more important when using holiday schemes and breakfast and after-school clubs, while economic reasons played a more important role where parents used childminders. All types of informal provider (except ex-partners) were primarily used for economic reasons. In families where ex-partners provided care this was mainly for child's enjoyment and/ or development.

The majority (63%) of parents of school-age children who worked in school holidays thought that it was easy or very easy to arrange. However, 20% thought that it was difficult or very difficult. Lone parents were more likely to report difficulties than couple parents. Not having family or friends available to help with childcare was the biggest difficulty, followed by: difficulties with affording the cost of holiday childcare, a perceived lack of places and difficulties finding out about holiday provision. When parents who had used formal provision were asked how easy they thought it would be to find alternative providers if theirs were not available over half thought this would not be easy.

Parents' views on the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday care were mixed – over half (57%) of parents said that they were happy with the quality of childcare available. However, 30% reported difficulties finding childcare that they can afford during the school holidays, 20% reported having problems finding holiday care that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 16% were unhappy with the quality of care available. Lack of flexibility and the affordability of the available holiday provision caused difficulties for more lone parents than for couple parents. A substantial minority of parents also indicated that the availability and affordability of holiday childcare impacts on their capacity to work more hours.

Lastly, focusing on families who did not use holiday childcare, 37% said they were likely to use childcare in the holidays if it was available. Where parents used formal providers during term-time but not in the holidays, over half (59%) said that their providers were not available during the holidays[5] – and of those families, 40% said that they would be likely or very likely to use holiday childcare if suitable care could be found. These figures suggest that there is a considerable level of unmet demand for holiday provision amongst those families who used formal childcare during term-time but not in the holidays, which might be met through term-time formal providers remaining open for business during the holiday periods.

Mothers, childcare and work

Since the survey series began, ten years ago, there has been an increase in maternal employment which is likely to have been influenced by the range of childcare and family-work reconciliation policies that have been introduced during this decade.

The majority of mothers reported that they worked atypical hours at some point during the week (63%); this was focussed around working on Saturdays and during the evenings. A significant minority of mothers, especially lone mothers, reported that working at atypical hours has caused problems with childcare.

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[5] This represents 8% of all families with school-age children (who only used formal childcare during the term-time and whose term-time providers were not open in the holidays.

With regard to entering employment in the past two years, these mothers most commonly reported that their reason for doing so was that they had secured a job that enabled them to combine work with caring. A job opportunity or promotion was most likely to have prompted a move from part-time to full-time employment.

Having reliable childcare, children's life stages and the availability of informal care were all factors which enabled mothers to be in employment. Children's fathers played a role in supporting maternal employment, but, in addition, the role of other relatives seemed important for both couple and lone parent households. A substantial minority of lone parents reported that the childcare subsidies provided through Working Tax Credit enabled them to work; a far lower proportion of partnered mothers reported this.

Mothers frequently reported that financial considerations influenced their decisions around maternal employment: a substantial proportion of mothers mentioned financial necessity as a factor related to their employment, with lone mothers more commonly reporting this. Work orientation was also an important influence with a substantial number of mothers saying they enjoyed working. Compared with other factors, the availability of family friendly employment seems to have had a smaller influence on mothers' decisions to work. This is particularly true of lone mothers and may reflect difficulties in securing these arrangements rather than a lack of demand for these arrangements.

When asked about their ideal working arrangements, a substantial minority of working mothers would like to give up work to become full-time carers (38%), and this was particularly the case for less educated mothers. A slim majority would like to reduce their working hours (57%) and the most likely to want to do so were those in higher-level occupations. In contrast, 18% of mothers said they would increase their hours if good quality, convenient, reliable and affordable childcare were available. This was most often the case for lone mothers, and for routine and semi-routine workers.

Self-employment also seems to play a considerable role in helping mothers to combine employment with parenting. The proportion of self-employed mothers was small, but most of these had chosen it because it fitted with bringing up children, providing flexibility over the number of hours worked and the times of day worked.

A small proportion of mothers were studying and, as with those who were working, the child's life cycle, the availability of reliable childcare and childcare provision from relatives were all key factors that helped them study.

The analysis of mothers who were not in employment shows that a substantial proportion reported childcare as a barrier to work. However examining past data, we can see a decline throughout the past decade in the proportion of mothers saying that they could not go to work due to difficulties in accessing suitable childcare. Financial considerations influenced the decisions of a substantial minority of mothers to remain out of work, though mothers in couple families were more likely to report that there was no financial need for them to work, they had enough money, whereas lone mothers were more likely to claim that they could not afford to work, that is they would not earn enough money to make working worthwhile. The proportion of mothers who were not working because they did not want this to result in a loss of benefits has declined considerably since 1999, which is likely to be due to the introduction of policies, such as tax credits, which make work more financially attractive to low earning families.

Conclusions

Early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds

It is now over a decade since the entitlement to free early years provision for 4 year olds was introduced, and a little less than that since it became available to all 3 year olds[6]. More recently, in September 2010 the number of free hours for 3 and 4 year olds was increased from 12.5 hours each term-time week to 15 hours; and parents became able to use these hours flexibly over the week. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents can provide information on the take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision and on how parents use their entitlement alongside other childcare.

In 2009, the Childcare and Early Years Survey estimates that 97% of 4 year olds and 87% of 3 year olds were in early years provision. Although these levels are encouragingly high, and show how well policy has worked, the fact that families with low incomes are disproportionately likely to be among those not using early years provision is of concern; lack of awareness seems to be an important explanatory factor. Many parents of 3-4 year olds reconcile their childcare needs by using different providers and a high proportion use (and so presumably need) more than 15 hours per week of early years provision and childcare. So, whilst making the entitlement to free early years provision more flexible and extending it to 15 hours may make arranging childcare easier, it is likely that parents will still need to supplement these hours.

Out-of-school and holiday childcare for school-age children

Over the last five years the Extended Services Strategy (DfES 2005; HM Government 2007) has been working towards primary schools offering (or facilitating) access to both childcare and a range of positive activities on weekdays from 8am until 6pm for 48 weeks each year; and towards secondary schools offering access to a range of positive activities during the same hours during term-time and flexibly during the school holidays.

In 2009, a third (33%) of families with school-aged children had used a breakfast or after-school club on the school premises and 7% had used one off-site in a reference week. Whether parents say that out-of-school care is available to them is a measure of the progress of the Extended Services Strategy (DfES 2005; HM Government 2007). Eight in ten parents not using out-of-school care said that it was available after-school, and over half said it was available before school. So, at least in terms of after-school care, it seems as if progress has been going fairly well. Furthermore, where it is available and parents are not using it, *in the main* this is not to do with barriers such as cost, opening hours or availability of places, but rather that parents or children do not want or need to use it. However, around half of those parents who do not have out-of-school services available say that they would use after-school clubs if they could (demand for before school clubs was lower).

In terms of holiday care - around one in eight school-age children had been in group holiday childcare in the past year. However, only half of those who had spent time in holiday clubs had been there so that their parents could work; being there for their own development or enjoyment was much more common. Holiday clubs are clearly fulfilling more than a childcare role for many children. But, as childcare for working parents, current availability appears not to meet current demand. Substantial minorities of parents report finding it difficult to find holiday care that is affordable and meets their needs. Six in ten parents who only used their formal providers in term-time said that they were not open during the holidays – and of those 40% said that they would be likely or very likely to use

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[6] Free places for 4 year olds were introduced in 1998 and for three year olds in 1999 with the roll out complete by 2004.

holiday care if something suitable could be found. Around a quarter of parents using out-of-school clubs during term-time said that the clubs were not open for a sufficient number of hours during the holidays. Furthermore, among parents who had used holiday care, some felt that the cost or opening hours meant that they were not working as many hours as they would have liked to (19% and 15% respectively).

That said, for those who had arranged holiday care, it was fulfilling a role that parents did not think could be filled otherwise. Over half of those using formal holiday provision said that it would not be easy to replace.

Providing information and support to parents

Supporting parents through the provision of information and services has been an important element of the National Childcare Strategy and the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare (DfEE 1998; HM Treasury 2004; HM Government 2009). The extent to which local and national Government has played a significant role in helping parents to find out about the childcare in their area is open to question. Only a minority of parents had heard of Families Information Services, with one in eight parents saying that they had used them – although this proportion is higher than it was in 2004.[7] Schools were a more common source of information, which raises the question of whether more weight might be put to promoting childcare via local places that parents might visit. Other local providers, such as Jobcentre Plus and health visitors were also playing some role in providing information. However, a third of parents felt that they did not have enough information about local childcare provision. Substantial minorities of parents were not able to give a view on whether their local childcare was affordable or of sufficiently high quality, although this includes parents who were not using childcare, some of whom may not have had reason to seek or absorb information that was available. However, on a more positive note, where parents had sought information, in the main they thought that the advice they got was helpful (although ratings were lower for Jobcentre Plus).

Among families using pre-school providers, use of other family services that were available there was low - despite the fact that two in five parents said that services were available. The types of family services available at pre-school providers tended to be: advice, parent and toddler sessions, courses and training, parenting classes or health services. However, among parents whose providers did not have these other family services, demand for them was relatively high. It seems that some work needs to be done to reconcile the low take-up with the high demand, which may suggest that parents overestimate the likelihood that they would use these services if they were available.

Provision for disabled children

The Aiming High for Disabled Children paper (HM Treasury/ DfES 2007) included a commitment to ensure that disabled children had access to affordable, high quality childcare which is also appropriate to their needs. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents found that children with an illness or disability which affected their daily lives were as likely as other children to use childcare. However, this basic headline finding masked the fact that substantial proportions of parents with disabled children feel that local childcare provision does not adequately cater to their particular needs – those specific to their child's illness/ disability, at the hours they required or at a distance that it was suitable to travel. This finding endorses the work that has been done to increase the provision of suitable childcare for disabled children. Moreover, where parents were using formal childcare for their disabled child, one-third thought that the staff were not properly

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[7] Families Information Services are also known as Children's Information Services / Families Information Services / Parents' Information / Information for Parents.

trained to deal with the child's condition. This suggests that, currently, when parents do find provision it does not always meet their needs.

Moreover, the survey also pointed to the need for better information for parents with disabled children, as substantial proportions of parents were not able to give an answer (or answered neither agree nor disagree) to questions about the availability or suitability of local provision for their child, although this includes parents who were not using formal childcare, some of whom may not have had reason to seek or absorb information that was available.

1 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the study

This report provides the main findings of the 2009 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), formerly the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). 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 ten years - on issues covered throughout the survey series. Overarching both these aims, the study provides information to help monitor the progress of policies in the areas of childcare and early years education.

1.2 Policy background

The launch of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998 (DfEE 1998) marked the start of a Government commitment to improve the quantity and quality of childcare in England, taking on the commitment of ensuring *"good quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0-14 in every neighbourhood"*. Six years later, the 10-Year Childcare Strategy was published in 2004 (HM Treasury 2004) with plans to build on the work that had been done to date. It identified a number of key childcare challenges, suggested how these should be overcome, and committed significant funding to this area. The two overarching aims of the Childcare Strategy have been to improve child outcomes by giving children the opportunity to attend a high quality early years setting, and to reduce child poverty by facilitating parental employment.

The Childcare Act 2006 provided the legal underpinning for the proposals laid out in the 10-Year Childcare Strategy, including a range of duties for Local Authorities, including securing sufficient childcare for working families; and reinforcing the framework for their facilitating and supporting their local childcare markets. An updated strategy document published in 2009 (HM Government 2009) reflected on progress since 2004 and proposed a number of new policies aimed at achieving the objectives set out in the 10-Year Childcare Strategy.

Children's outcomes

The key initiative addressing the aim to improve child outcomes has been the introduction of an entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds (who, at the time of writing, were entitled to 12.5 hours per week – in five sessions of 2.5 hours each). Since then pathfinder pilots have been undertaken to explore the option of increasing the number of free hours available as part of this offer to 15 rather than 12.5 hours each term-time week (with the rationale that this will make it easier to cover part-time working hours). Whilst furthermore, all Local Authorities have now expanded the offer to disadvantaged 2 year olds (in the form of 10 hours per week, HM Government 2009).

Another strand of the strategy aimed at improving child outcomes has been the integration of services offering information, health, parenting support, childcare and other services for pre-school children and their families via Children's Centres and Extended Services in schools. Children's Centres are at the heart of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda, which was given legal force in the Children Act 2004, and they build on earlier initiatives such as Neighbourhood Nurseries and Sure Start Local Programmes (Strategy Unit 2002). The 10-Year Childcare Strategy (HM Treasury 2004) set out the objective to roll out Children's Centres nationwide by 2010 and this target has now been

met. Extended Services in schools have also been developed over the last five years and are due to be available in all primary and secondary schools by September 2010.

In response to research that demonstrates the importance of high quality of provision in improving child outcomes (Sammons et al. 2004, Sylva et al. 2004, CMPO 2006, Melhuish et al. 2008, Smith et al. 2009b) a number of policy initiatives have focused specifically on the quality of the provision. In particular, there has been a drive to improve the qualifications of staff working in early years settings since qualifications affect the quality of childcare and early years education (Mathers and Sylva 2007). In 2006, the Early Years Professional Status was introduced, which is a new qualification equivalent to the Qualified Teacher Status. Funding has been made available to daycare settings through the Transformation Fund (2006-2008) and the Graduate Leader Fund (since 2008) aiming to ensure that a graduate early years professional takes a lead role in every Children's Centre by 2010 and in every full daycare setting by 2015. Finally, 2008 saw the rollout of the Early Years Foundation Stage for 0-5 year olds, a new curriculum framework integrating the Foundation Stage curriculum with the National Standards for Daycare and Childminding and the Birth to Three Matters Guidance for providers working with children under 3.

In recent years the importance of childcare provision for disabled children of all ages and their parents has increasingly been recognised. Indeed, affordable, high quality childcare can be one means of facilitating their social inclusion and improving their lives (HM Treasury/ DfES 2007). The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (DfES/ DH 2004), Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People (PMSU 2005), and Aiming High for Disabled Children (HM Treasury/ DfES 2007) all stressed the importance of appropriate childcare for disabled children and young people, and acknowledged the lack of adequate provision to meet need. Thus there has been policy recognition that it is not sufficient to rely solely on the universal entitlements for all children and that disabled children may also require additional services tailored to their needs. To address this need the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare Pilots were introduced as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative.

Employment

With regard to the Childcare Strategy's aim of facilitating maternal employment, a key work-related childcare subsidy was introduced – the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit – which is available to low and middle income parents working more than 16 hours a week. In addition there has also been a drive to encourage employers to provide childcare support e.g. through tax exemptions for employer-supported childcare such as childcare vouchers and workplace nurseries. While furthermore, there were enhancements to maternity leave in 2007 and parents now have a right to request flexible working.

The substantial increases in the take-up of formal care in previous waves of the Childcare Survey series (Bryson et al. 2006) largely reflect the success of the entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds. Although take-up of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (on and off a school site) also saw an increase, doubling between 2001 and 2004 (Bryson et al. 2006). However, barriers around cost and availability persist in limiting the use of childcare (and in turn maternal employment), particularly for disadvantaged families (La Valle and Smith 2009, Speight et al. 2010). Since the latest Childcare Survey report in 2008 (Speight et al. 2009) the economic climate has undergone significant change leading to an increase in unemployment (ONS 2010) which may in turn influence families' childcare requirements.

Despite the various initiatives around formal childcare, many families opt to use informal carers, particularly grandparents, to look after their children. In part this reflects issues around the affordability and accessibility of formal care; but in other respects this simply

reflects parental choice (Bryson et al. 2006; Kazimirski et al. 2008; Speight et al. 2009). Until recently, informal childcare had not been included within Government policy. However, in the 2009 budget it was announced that grandparents of working age who care for children under the age of 12 would receive National Insurance credits if they provide care for over 20 hours a week (this is due to come into effect from 2011). This introduction would recognise the fact that providing childcare can require grandparents to stop work or reduce their working hours, which can adversely affect their National Insurance contributions and ultimately their pension provision (Grandparents Plus 2009).

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

The current study is the fourth in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series, which began in 2004. The time series, however, stretches back further than 2004, since the current series is the result of a merger between two series that preceded it: the Parents' Demand for Childcare series (from here referred to as the Childcare series) and the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services series (from here referred to as the Early Years series). These two survey series, both conducted by NatCen since their inception, have played a key role in helping to monitor, evaluate and further develop childcare policies. The Childcare series included two studies conducted in 1999 and 2001. Focusing on families with children aged 14 and under, it collected information on their use of childcare and early years provision over the past year and, in more detail, over a reference term-time week. With an interest in childcare used for economic and other reasons, it collected information about services used at any time during the day or week. The six surveys in the Early Years series were conducted between 1997 and 2002 and focused on families with children aged 3 and 4. With more of an interest in early years provision, the series focused on services used Monday to Friday, 8am until 6pm. NatCen conducted a feasibility study into combining these two survey series (Finch et al. 2003), which contains more information about how losses to each of the survey series were minimised, how it was possible to facilitate a combined design, and the alterations to the questionnaire and survey design to address the changes that had occurred in policy over time.

The success of the merger means that it is possible to see how a number of key estimates have changed since 1999. However, over the last decade there have also been a number of changes to the questionnaire to improve the quality of data collection. Similarly, the structure and content of the reports has altered to better address the information needs of researchers and policy makers. As such, in a number of instances it is not possible to provide direct comparisons that extend to the beginning of the time series, and in other instances comparable data was not presented in earlier reports.

1.4 Overview of the study design

The sample

Just over 6,700 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study, between June and December 2009. They were randomly selected from Child Benefit records, which, given its almost universal take-up, provide a comprehensive sampling frame for families with dependent children.

The decision to limit the children's age range to under 15 was in order to be comparable with the previous surveys in the Childcare series and to focus on the age group most often included within Government policy on childcare. In order to have sufficient numbers of children attending early years provision for separate analyses, the proportion of parents with 2, 3 or 4 year olds was boosted. The total of 6,708 parents surveyed includes the boost of 763 additional parents of children in this age group. Combining the boost sample

with the parents of 2, 3 and 4 year olds in the main sample enables the continuation of the Early Years series and allows more detailed analysis of this group, which is important given the recent policy focus.

Unfortunately an error occurred when the sample was selected by the Department for Work and Pensions that affects how representative the sample is of the population. Specifically, any people who had not been on any DWP benefits since 2002 and had had their first child after November 2007 were not included in the sample frame. This means that the survey under-represents first time parents, with children aged 0-1, who had not been on benefits in the last seven years. This introduces some bias into the estimates presented throughout the report which cannot be removed by weighting the data. These will be serious only if the bias is large in comparison to the margin of error[8] associated with each estimate. This would be an indication that the bias is a greater cause of error than the natural sampling variation. As the tables given in this report do not quote margins of error for most estimates, section B.3 presents some of the key tables with estimates for the amount of bias in each estimate, and also presents and a table that approximates how the margins of error vary for some key estimates to help judge which comparisons are likely to be affected by the bias.

Among all those selected and eligible for interview (e.g. excluding families who did not have a child aged under 15) 52% of parents were interviewed[9]. For further details on response see Appendix B.

The interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and lasted for an average of three-quarters of an hour. 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-demographic characteristics. Where this was not possible, the main respondent was asked to provide proxy information about their partner.

The interview focused on the families' use of both childcare and early years provision. However, because of time constraints, detailed information on the use and needs of all children in the family could not be collected. Rather, in families where there were two or more children, we obtained a broad picture about all the children first, and then asked detailed questions about one randomly selected child. Similarly, 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). However, a separate set of questions were asked about use of childcare during school holidays. These questions were added to the survey in 2008 and were asked only of families who had school-age children.

The interview broadly covered the following topic areas.

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[8] The margin of error of an estimate of a mean or proportion equals half the width of a 95% confidence interval. For example, if a 95% confidence interval of an estimate of a proportion is 60% to 80% then the margin of error is 10% and the estimate will sometimes be written as 70% ± 10%.

[9] The response rate is markedly lower than that achieved in the 2008 survey (Speight et al. 2009) because the sample contained a substantial proportion of out of date addresses, and many of these families were untraceable (in 2009 22% of the eligible sample were non-contacts compared with 14% in 2008). Please see section B.3 in Appendix B for more details about this problem with the sample.

For all families:
- Use of childcare and early years provision in the reference term-time week and in school holidays;[10]
- Payments made for childcare and early years provision, and use of tax credits and subsidies;
- Sources of information about, and attitudes towards childcare and early years provision in the local area.

For one randomly selected child:
- Detailed record of childcare attendance in the reference week;
- Reasons for using and views of the main formal provider.

Classification details:
- Family structure;
- Socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, income);
- Parents' education and work details.

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

Defining childcare

Following the model of previous surveys in the series, 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. Thus, the definition is much wider than other studies that focus on childcare use when parents are working or studying, or on early years education. 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;
- Special day school or nursery or unit;
- Day nursery;
- Playgroup or pre-school;
- Childminder;
- Nanny or au pair;
- Babysitter who came to home;
- Breakfast/ After-school club or activity;[11]
- Holiday club/ scheme.

Informal providers

- My ex-husband/ wife/ partner/ the child's other parent (who does not live in this family);
- The child's grandparent(s);
- The child's older brother/ sister;
- Another relative;
- A friend or neighbour.

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[10] As previously mentioned, questions about childcare use in school holidays were asked only of families with school-age children.
[11] Those parents who used this type of provision were asked separately whether it was based on the same site as the school/nursery school or on a different site.

Other

- Other nursery education provider ;
- Other childcare provider.

It is worth noting that we have classified providers according to the service for which they were being used, e.g. daycare or early years education. Thus, we have continued to use – and classify according to – terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than include forms of integrated provision such as Children's Centres. In relation to reception classes, this type of provider should only have been included as *childcare* if it was not compulsory schooling, that is if the child was aged under 5 (or had turned 5 during the current school term). Further details of the definitions of the above categories of providers are supplied in Appendix B.

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, especially given the changing childcare and early years market. We have therefore checked the classifications given by parents with the providers themselves in a separate telephone survey. See Appendix B for more details about the provider checks.

1.5 The report

The data from this study are very detailed and so it is not possible to cover everything in this initial 'broad sweep' report. Here, the aim 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.

Even restricting analysis to a 'broad sweep' of the findings does not sufficiently curtail the length of this report. Therefore where the tables that are referenced are very long or very detailed they have been included in Appendix C.

There are a number of methodological issues to consider in interpreting the analysis in the report. These are discussed in turn in the rest of the section.

Interpreting results in the report

During the report we use data mostly at the following two levels:

- The family level (e.g. proportions of families paying for childcare, parents' perceptions of childcare provision in their local areas);
- 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 we can have 'all children' in the household as the base (as opposed, say, to 'all families' in the survey. This was done to increase the sample size in order to be able 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 we know so much more about the selected child than we do about all children in the household.

Weights

A 'family level' weight is applied to the family level analysis. This weight ensures that the research findings are representative of the population of families in England in receipt of Child Benefit, and re-balances the relative proportions of the main and boost samples[12]. 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 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 in the whole sample or in the particular sub-group being analysed (e.g. different types of families, income groups). The total base figure includes all the eligible cases (i.e. all respondents or all respondents who were asked a particular question) minus cases with missing data (codes 'don't know' or 'not answered'). Thus, while the base description may be the same across several tables (e.g. 'all families using childcare in the reference week'), the base sizes may differ slightly due to the exclusion of those coded 'don't know' or 'not answered'.[13]

Both weighted and unweighted bases are presented throughout. Unweighted bases represent the raw number of people or families in the sample, and the weighted bases represent the number of people or families *once their prevalence in the population has been taken into account through weighting.*

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

Percentages

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to exactly 100%. Furthermore, where the information in tables is based on multi-coded questions, the percentages in the table could add up to more than 100%.

Statistical significance

Throughout the report, whenever the text comments on differences between sub-groups of the sample, these differences have been tested for significance using the survey commands in SPSS 15.0 or STATA 10.0, and found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval or above.

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
0   percentage value of zero.

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[12] This weight is also used for the analysis in Chapters 3 and 4.
[13] Occasionally the proportion of people saying 'don't know' was sufficiently high to warrant showing them within the table (and therefore they are included in the base). This is particularly the case for questions about perceptions of childcare provision in the local area.

2 Use of childcare and early years provision

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores families' use of childcare and early years provision, and how the patterns vary by children's characteristics (e.g. their age and ethnicity), characteristics of families (e.g. household income), region and levels of area deprivation. The definition of childcare is very broad, defined as any time when the child is not with their resident parent (or their resident parent's current partner) or at school – that is, including any day of the week and any time of the day and irrespective of the reason the child is away from their resident parent (it includes periods where a child is with their non-resident parent). The chapter covers both formal provision and childcare provided by grandparents and other informal providers.

In this chapter, we describe how childcare is used during term-time, focusing in particular on a reference term-time week (usually the last week before the interview). Childcare use during school holidays is discussed in Chapter 8.

The first part of the chapter (sections 2.2 and 2.3) shows how proportions of families using different forms of childcare have changed over time, and provides estimates of the numbers of families using different types of childcare. Subsequent sections describe:

- How different types of families in different areas use formal and informal providers (sections 2.4 – 2.7);
- The amount of childcare families use (section 2.8);
- Early years provision for 3 and 4 years olds, exploring patterns of use of their entitlement to free early years provision (section 2.9);
- School-age children's use of breakfast and after-school clubs and the activities they engage in while there (section 2.10).

2.2 Use of childcare: trends over time

This section describes families' use of different childcare providers during a term-time reference week in 2009, and reports on how families' use has changed in the past decade (focusing on top line findings and looking at the childcare families used for any reason).

There was substantial growth in the use of formal childcare between 1999 and 2004. This can largely be attributed to an increase in the take-up of early years education with the entitlement to free early years provision being rolled out to 3 year olds during this period, and whilst 77% of 3-4 year olds attended an early years setting in 1999, this had increased to 94% by 2004 (Butt et al. 2007). In addition, use of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (on and off a school site) doubled between 2001 and 2004 (Bryson et al. 2006). Kazimirski et al. (2008) found no further growth in take-up of formal childcare between 2004 and 2007.

Methodological changes introduced in 2008 mean that the estimates of take-up in 2008 and 2009 cannot be *directly* compared to the estimates from 2007 and earlier. However, to facilitate comparisons between 2007 and earlier, the 2008 report (Speight et al. 2009) provided two sets of figures – one set that should *not* be compared with previous surveys in the series and one set that *could* be compared (although there were some changes that could not be entirely mitigated). Using these comparable figures, the data from 2008 suggests that between 2007 and 2008 there may have been a small increase in the take-up of formal childcare, resulting largely from the higher take-up of out-of-school clubs and

activities located on a school site (which may be attributed to the growth of the Extended Schools agenda)[14].

Families' use of informal care has fluctuated a little over the years but has remained constant over the decade. In 1999 41% of families had used some informal care during the reference term-time week (see Bryson et al. 2006) and the same proportion used some informal care in 2008 (Speight et al. 2009)[15].

Table 2.1 shows that, in 2009, 73% of families used some form of childcare in the reference term-time week. Fifty-five per cent of families used formal provision, and 41% used informal providers. The most commonly used formal provision was breakfast and after-school clubs or activities on a school site (27%) and the most commonly used informal carers were grandparents (26%). For details on how use varies for children of different ages, see section 2.4.

There have been no significant changes in the take-up of childcare as a whole or of different types of childcare between 2008 and 2009. This can be interpreted positively since the economic downturn has led to an increase in unemployment (ONS 2010) which one might have expected would reduce demand for childcare.

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[14] The methodological changes were introduced in order to improve the accuracy of estimates of the take-up of formal childcare, in particular of the use of breakfast and after-school clubs for school-age children and, to a lesser extent, the use of reception classes for 4 year olds. These changes inflated the estimates of take-up of formal childcare compared to previous years, for further details see Speight et al. 2009 (p18-19).
[15] Take-up rates for the intervening years were 36% in 2001 and 42% in 2004 (see Bryson et al. 2006), and 39% in 2007 (Kazimirski et al. 2008). The methodological changes in 2008 had a small effect on the take-up estimates for informal childcare – the non-comparable estimate of take-up from 2008 was 41%, however the estimate that is comparable with 2007 was 40%.

Table 2.1 Use of childcare providers, 2008-2009

Base: All families

| | Survey year | |
| | 2008 | 2009 |
Use of childcare	%	%
Any childcare	**73**	**73**
Formal childcare and early years provision	**56**	**55**
Nursery school	4	4
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	5	5
Reception class[16]	7	8
Special day school/ nursery/ unit for children with SEN	1	1
Day nursery	9	8
Playgroup or pre-school	6	6
Other nursery education provider	+	+
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	28	27
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	6	6
Childminder	5	5
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Babysitter who came to home	1	2
Informal childcare	**41**	**41**
Ex-partner	6	7
Grandparent	26	26
Older sibling	5	5
Another relative	6	6
Friend or neighbour	8	7
Other[17]		
Leisure/ sport	9	9
Other childcare provider	5	4
No childcare used	**27**	**27**
Weighted base	*7077*	*6708*
Unweighted base	*7076*	*6708*

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[16] The data on use of reception classes should be treated with caution, as there is both under- and overreporting of the use of this type of childcare. The underreporting concerns 4 year olds, whose parents sometimes did not consider reception class a type of childcare, even if their 4 year olds were attending school (hence were likely to be in reception). The overreporting concerns those 5 year olds who attended reception class as compulsory school rather than childcare but whose parents listed it as a type of childcare.
[17] 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

If we gross-up the 2009 figures reported in section 2.2 to national estimates[18], there were 3.7 million families in England using childcare and early years education in term-time, of which 2.8 million used formal provision and 2.1 million used informal providers (see Table 2.2). In terms of the number of *children* this equates to 5.5 million children in childcare overall, of which 3.7 million were in formal provision, and 2.9 million were with informal providers (figures on the proportion of children receiving childcare are discussed in section 2.4). Among the 2.9 million with informal providers, 1.8 million children were looked after by their grandparents in the reference term-time week.

Table 2.2 National estimates of use of childcare		
Use of childcare	Number of families	Number of children
Any childcare	3,743,000	5,477,000
Formal childcare and early years provision	2,811,000	3,704,000
Nursery school	198,000	200,000
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	248,000	261,000
Day nursery	411,000	448,000
Playgroup or pre-school	312,000	311,000
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	1,376,000	1,627,000
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	301,000	397,000
Childminder	264,000	352,000
Informal childcare	2,084,000	2,880,000
Ex-partner	347,000	459,000
Grandparent	1,325,000	1,842,000
Older sibling	267,000	292,000
Another relative	301,000	373,000
Friend or neighbour	337,000	396,000

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

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

In this section, we explore whether there is variation between children with different characteristics (e.g. by their age, ethnicity, and whether they have special educational needs) in terms of the childcare they receive. Then the following two sections focus on differences across family characteristics (e.g. household income and work status), and region and area deprivation. Of course many of these factors are interrelated and it can be difficult to identify whether particular characteristics have a direct association with childcare use, or whether the association can be attributed to another related characteristic. To try to unpick this, section 2.7 presents regression analysis that identifies which characteristics are associated with childcare use when other factors are held constant. For these analyses, we focus on the proportion of *children* receiving childcare rather than the proportion of *families* that use childcare.

As seen in earlier surveys in the series (Bryson et al. 2006, Speight et al. 2009) children of different ages vary in their propensity to receive childcare, and in their propensity to attend particular types of providers (see Table 2.3). In 2009, 3 and 4 year old children were more

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[18] National estimates are based on the number of families with children aged 0-14 (5,110,000) and the number of children in this aged group (8,636,000) who were receiving Child Benefit as of February 2009. This information was provided by DWP at the time of sampling for the survey.

likely than any other age group to receive formal childcare (e.g. 86% attended some formal childcare compared with 43% of all children). This reflects both the universal entitlement to free early years provision for this age group, and a greater need in general for childcare for pre-school children compared with older children, who spend most of their day at school. (Take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision will be explored in more detail in section 2.9). Twelve to fourteen year olds were least likely to receive formal childcare (22% compared with 43% of all children), which probably reflects their ability to spend some time in the day on their own, but may also relate to difficulties getting teenagers involved in out-of-school activities (Cummings et al. 2007). The lower use of childcare by older children is particularly striking given the greater propensity for parents of older children to be in work (table not shown). The regression analysis confirms that these findings hold even when other factors such as family work status have been taken into account.

Table 2.3   Use of childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All children

	Age of selected child					
	0-2	3-4	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%
Any childcare	**58**	**89**	**66**	**64**	**47**	**63**
Formal childcare and early years provision	**35**	**86**[19]	**44**	**41**	**22**	**43**
Nursery school	3	13	+	0	0	2
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	1	20	+	0	0	3
Reception class	0	21	10	0	0	5
Day nursery	17	16	+	0	0	5
Playgroup or pre-school	7	17	+	0	0	4
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	+	4	26	34	18	19
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	0	2	6	7	5	5
Childminder	6	7	6	3	1	4
Nanny or au pair	1	2	1	1	+	1
Informal childcare	**37**	**34**	**35**	**35**	**27**	**33**
Ex-partner	5	3	5	6	6	5
Grandparent	30	26	23	21	11	21
Older sibling	1	1	1	4	8	3
Another relative	6	5	5	4	2	4
Friend or neighbour	1	3	6	7	3	5
No childcare used	**42**	**11**	**34**	**36**	**53**	**37**
Weighted base	*1137*	*934*	*1341*	*1845*	*1451*	*6708*
Unweighted base	*1180*	*1332*	*1178*	*1693*	*1325*	*6708*

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[19] Those 3-4 year olds who attended school (and therefore received formal childcare) but whose parents did not mention using reception class or any other formal providers, are coded here as not receiving formal childcare. However, they are reclassified as receiving childcare eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision in section 2.9.

Looking in more detail at use of formal care across the age groups, there were differences both in the overall proportions of children receiving formal provision and in the types of providers used. The most common formal provider for children aged 0-2 was a day nursery (17%) and only a small proportion of this age group used other types of formal care. Three to four year olds were equally likely to use a day nursery (16%) but were substantially more likely to attend other forms of early years provision. Twenty per cent attended a nursery class, 17% attended a playgroup or pre-school and 13% attended a nursery school. The proportions of 0-2 year olds, 3-4 year olds and 5-7 year olds going to a childminder were very similar (6%, 7% and 6% respectively). However attendance at childminders declined (to 3% and below) amongst older children. For school-age children, breakfast or after-school clubs on a school site were the most popular forms of childcare used by 26% of 5-7 year olds, 34% of 8-11 year olds and 18% of 12-14 year olds.

As for formal care, take-up of informal care varied by age. Among children aged under 12, around a third spent some time with informal carers (34%-37%), whilst this dropped to a quarter (27%) for 12-14 year olds. In contrast, older children were looked after by their older siblings more often than younger children (8% of 12 to14 year olds compared with 1% of 0-2 year olds). The proportion of children spending time with their grandparents decreased with age – from 30% of 0-2 year olds to 11% of 12-14 year olds, and primary school children were particularly likely to spend time with friends or neighbours (6%-7% of 5-11 year olds, compared with 1%-3% of other children).

Table 2.4 illustrates the proportions of children from different ethnic backgrounds, and with special educational needs (SEN) who are in different forms of childcare. There is a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and receipt of both formal and informal childcare. The children least likely to receive formal childcare were those from an Asian Bangladeshi, Asian Pakistani and 'other' Asian background (but not Asian Indian). For instance, whilst 43% of all children received some childcare this was the case for only 22% of Asian Pakistani children, 20% of Asian Bangladeshi children and 27% of children from 'other' Asian backgrounds. Although the classification of ethnicity was updated for the 2009 survey, similar patterns of differences in childcare use by ethnic background were found in the previous surveys in the series (see Speight et al. 2009 and Kazimirski et al. 2008).

Since families from different ethnic groups have different characteristics e.g. in terms of age of children and work status, these findings can be difficult to interpret as they stand (Bell et al. 2005a). For instance population trends in Britain are such that children from some minority ethnic groups are younger than children in White British families e.g. those from Asian Bangladeshi families. Similarly many minority ethnic families are less likely to be working than White British families e.g. those from Asian Bangladeshi, Asian Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African families (even when children's age is controlled for – tables not shown). As such, the findings in Table 2.4 should be interpreted in combination with the regression analysis presented in section 2.7. The regression analysis illustrates that children from Asian backgrounds (apart from Asian Indian backgrounds) were less likely to use formal childcare than White British children even when other factors such as the age of children and families' work status had been taken into account (although only for pre-school children and not for school-age children).

Table 2.4   Use of childcare, by child characteristics

Base: All children

| | Use of childcare | | | | |
| | Any childcare % | Formal childcare % | Informal childcare % | *Weighted base* | *Unweighted base* |
Ethnicity/ SEN					
All	63	43	33	*6708*	*6708*
Ethnicity of child, grouped					
White British	66	44	37	*5184*	*5314*
Other White	71	55	33	*182*	*173*
Black Caribbean	69	53	28	*90*	*77*
Black African	46	37	12	*182*	*151*
Asian Indian	57	38	24	*140*	*141*
Asian Pakistani	44	22	20	*248*	*230*
Asian Bangladeshi	29	20	6	*95*	*83*
Other Asian	43	27	16	*100*	*90*
White and Black	66	48	28	*137*	*128*
White and Asian	66	37	38	*85*	*79*
Other mixed	59	42	23	*106*	*100*
Other	52	39	20	*143*	*126*
Whether child has SEN					
Yes	60	38	34	*514*	*495*
No	64	43	33	*6183*	*6203*

NB: Row percentages

Children with SEN were less likely to receive formal childcare than other children (38% compared with 43%). However children with SEN tend to be older than other children (reflecting the increasing likelihood of children being identified as having special needs as they get older, particular once they reach school, see Bryson et al. 2005) and we saw in Table 2.3 that older children are less likely to use childcare. Indeed, the regression analysis presented in section 2.7 suggests that the difference in take-up of childcare with and without SEN is attributable to the children's age profile rather than to their SEN status per se.

There was no difference in their likelihood of children with and without SEN receiving informal care.

2.5   Use of childcare by families' circumstances

Children's receipt of childcare is associated with a range of family characteristics (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Firstly with regard to household type (i.e. whether children belong to a couple or a lone parent family), children in couple households were more likely to receive formal childcare than those in lone parent households (44% compared with 40%), whilst the reverse was true for informal care where 40% of children from lone parent households received informal care compared with 31% of children from couple households. It is likely that this latter finding is related to the greater likelihood that children in lone parent households will spend time with their non-resident parent (respondents were asked whether their ex-partner provided childcare, 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) (see Table C2.2 in Appendix C).

Since lone parents are less likely to be in work than parents in couple households (see Appendix A, Table A7) the differences reported above may be attributed to work status rather than household type. These two factors are therefore considered in combination in Figure 2.1. Children from working lone parent families (79%) and dual-earning couple families (72%) were most likely to receive childcare. Indeed, this is true for both formal and informal childcare. Amongst children in dual-earning couple families 50% received formal childcare, compared with 38% in sole-earning couple families and 24% of non working couple families. Similarly, 38% of children in dual-earning couple families were looked after by informal carers, compared with 22% of children in sole-earning couple families and 17% of children in non working couple families. The same pattern can be observed for children in working and non working lone parent families (for more detail on the reasons families used childcare e.g. for economic reasons, or for children's development or enjoyment, see Chapters 3 and 4).

Working families were most likely to use the following forms of formal childcare: day nurseries, breakfast and after-school clubs (both on and off a school site) and childminders. In terms of informal carers, they were more likely to use: grandparents, and friends and neighbours (see Table C2.2 in Appendix C). In addition, children in working lone parent households were more likely to spend time with their non-resident parent than children in non working lone parent households.

Figure 2.1 Use of childcare, by family type and work status

Base: All children
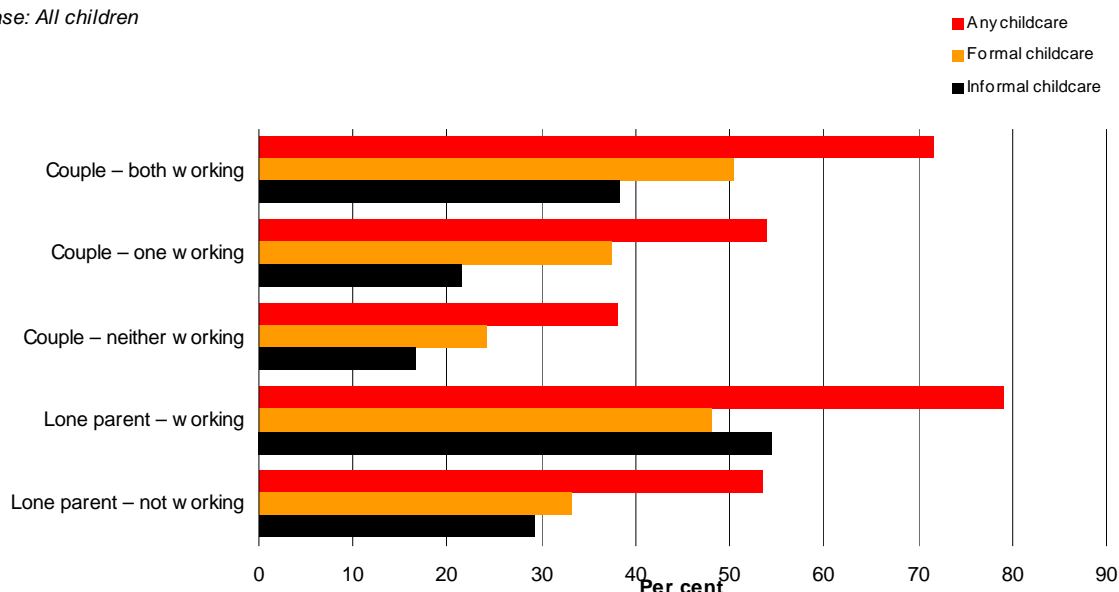
Source: Table C2.1 in Appendix C.

There was also substantial variation in families' use of (formal and informal) childcare depending on their income (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Although this might be expected given the strong correlation between income and work status (22% of families with an income under £9,999 were working compared with 99% of those earning £30,000 or more – table not shown), findings in section 2.7 illustrate that both income and work status are independently associated with take-up of childcare.

The clearest trend between income and take-up of childcare, can be seen in the take-up of formal care where 36% of children in the lowest income group attended some formal provision (household income less than £10,000) compared with 58% of children in the

34

highest income group (household income £45,000 or more). The association between take-up of informal care and income is less stark, although still present (which may be related to the role informal care plays in enabling parents to work – see Chapters 3 and 4). For instance, 27% of children in the lowest income group were looked after by informal carers compared with 37% of children in the highest income group.

Children who had two or more siblings aged 0-14 were less likely to receive childcare (54%) than those who had only one sibling (68%) or no siblings (67%). The association with the use of informal childcare was more pronounced, with the take-up rates decreasing from 41% for only children, to 35% for those with one sibling and 24% for those with two or more siblings (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Although the number of children in the household is associated with the age of children in the household, income and household work status – the relationship between number of children in the household and take-up of formal childcare for pre-school children holds even when other factors are controlled for (see section 2.7). This may be because the logistics of organising childcare for multiple children are more complicated than for fewer children.

2.6   Use of childcare by region and area deprivation

Previous surveys in the series have consistently found variation in take-up of childcare in different regions (Speight et al. 2009, Kazimirski et al. 2008 and Bryson et al. 2006) and the same is true in 2009 (see Table 2.5). Take-up of childcare was lowest in London (55% of children living in London received childcare compared to 63% of children overall) which can largely be attributed to the lower take-up of informal childcare (20% of children living in London were looked after by informal carers compared with 33% of children overall). This probably reflects the fact that many parents living in London seem to have moved away from their families since they were less likely to be able to draw on grandparents or other extended family members for childcare (see Chapter 6).

The children most likely to receive childcare were those living in the West Midlands, the South West and the South East. In these areas children were more likely than average to receive formal childcare (46%, 48% and 47% respectively, compared with 43% of all children). This reflects the greater employment rates in the South West and South East (84% and 86% compared with 81% for England as a whole – table not shown)[20].

Informal childcare was used most often among children living in the North East (44% compared with 33% of all children).

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[20] The East of England also has an employment rate of 84%.

Table 2.5　Use of childcare, by Government Office Region

Base: All children

Government Office Region	Use of childcare			*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Any childcare %	Formal childcare %	Informal childcare %		
All	63	43	33	*6708*	*6708*
North East	63	35	44	*322*	*356*
North West	63	40	37	*914*	*934*
Yorkshire & the Humber	63	40	35	*674*	*720*
East Midlands	64	43	33	*567*	*598*
West Midlands	70	46	39	*727*	*750*
East	62	42	32	*740*	*760*
London	55	41	20	*1067*	*866*
South East	66	47	33	*1064*	*1058*
South West	68	48	38	*633*	*666*

NB: Row percentages

Figure 2.2 illustrates the clear relationship between take-up of childcare (both formal and informal) and area deprivation whereby children living in the most deprived areas of the country were less likely to receive childcare than those living in the least deprived areas. Although some Government policies worked towards increasing the supply of childcare places in disadvantaged areas (e.g. the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative) this pattern is clearest for use of formal childcare. Fifty-one per cent of children living in the least deprived areas of the country received formal childcare compared with 34% of those living in the most deprived areas. A factor that may account for this relationship is the lower employment rates amongst families in disadvantaged areas (63% of families in the most deprived areas were in work compared with 94% of those in the least deprived areas – table not shown) and their corresponding lower need for childcare.

Figure 2.2　Use of childcare, by area deprivation

Base: All children
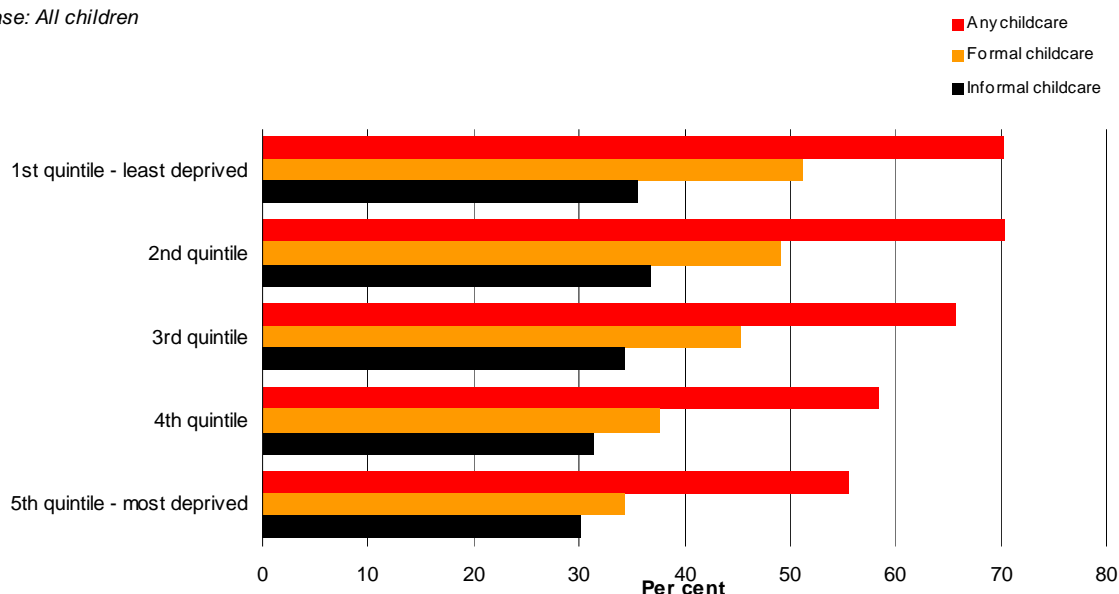
Source: Table C2.3 in Appendix C.

2.7 Key characteristics associated with the use of formal childcare

As discussed above, the use of formal childcare is associated with a number of factors to do with a child and his or her family and area characteristics, many of which are inter-related. For example, working families and higher income families are both more likely to use formal childcare. However, since working families tend to have higher incomes, it is not clear what drives these differences – the working status of the family (and thus their need for childcare so that parents can work) or their material situation (which affects the family's ability to afford formal childcare). In order to disentangle these effects, we have undertaken multivariate logistic regression analysis, separately for pre-school and school-age children (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C).[21]

The analysis showed that both the work status and the income of the family were independently associated with use of formal childcare – that is, the differences we found in relation to income were not simply reflecting the association between income level and working status. These associations held for both pre-school and school-age children (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C). As reported in section 2.5, children from two-parent families where only one parent or neither parent worked were less likely to use formal childcare than those from families where both parents worked. Furthermore, children of working lone parents were more likely to use formal childcare than those from couple families where both parents worked (even after controlling for other variables). This illustrates that working families' need for childcare during their working hours influences take-up of formal childcare and that their increased usage cannot solely be attributed to their greater income and corresponding ability to pay. However, the regression results relating to family income also reinforced the findings from section 2.5 (demonstrating that families with lower incomes were less likely to use formal childcare than those with higher incomes) demonstrating that families' income and their corresponding ability to pay is also directly associated with take-up of formal childcare.

Only for pre-school children was there an association between the number of children in the family and use of formal childcare: those children with two or more siblings were significantly less likely to receive formal provision than those from families with one or two children only (perhaps due to the complex logistics of arranging childcare for three or more children). For school-age children, take-up of formal childcare was not associated with family size.

Children's age and ethnic background were also important. For pre-school children, as we would expect given their entitlement to free early years provision, children aged 3-4 years were much more likely to receive formal provision than those aged 0-2; and for school-age children, those aged 12-14 were significantly less likely to receive formal childcare than those aged 5-7. The differences by ethnic background applied to pre-school children only, with children from Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi and 'other' Asian backgrounds (but not Asian Indian) being less likely to receive formal provision than White British children, even after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics, which suggests that these differences may be attributable to cultural factors.

Neither children's SEN status or area deprivation were independently associated with take-up of formal childcare. This was the case for both pre-school and school-age children[22]. As such, it seems likely that the apparent relationship between children's SEN

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[21] Pre-school age children are defined as those aged 0 to 4, and school-age children are defined as those aged 5-14. We entered into the models all child, family and area characteristics discussed above, except region, as there was no significant association between the region children lived in and their use of formal childcare once socio-demographic characteristics were controlled for.
[22] Although in each model one of the categories of area deprivation was significantly different from the reference category, the *overall* variable was not significantly related to take-up of formal childcare.

and take-up of formal childcare (discussed in section 2.4) can be attributed to the difference in age profile for children with SEN and those without (with older children both more likely to be identified as having an SEN and less likely to use childcare). Likewise, the apparent relationship between area deprivation and take-up of formal childcare (see section 2.6) disappears once factors such as work status and income are taken into account. This suggests that the association between area deprivation and take-up of childcare is driven by differences in families' economic circumstances.

2.8   Hours of childcare used

This section describes the number of hours per week that children in childcare spent with their providers. We comment in the text on the median values (referred to as averages) because they more accurately reflect levels of childcare use, but mean values are also shown in the tables in this section[23].

Overall, children who attended childcare spent an average of 10.8 hours per week there (Table 2.6). Those receiving formal childcare spent an average of 8.0 hours in this provision, and those receiving informal childcare spent an average of 7.0 hours with these carers. Pre-school children spent much longer in formal childcare than school-age children (16.0 hours compared with 3.0 hours) which is related to the facts that early years education is included within these hours and that school-age children spend most of the day at school. There was no significant difference in the time that pre-school children and school-age children spent with informal carers (9.0 hours and 6.0 hours respectively).

Looking at children of different ages in more detail - 0-2 year olds spent a little less time in childcare than 3-4 year olds (17.0 hours compared with 23.5 hours). This reflects the greater length of time that 3-4 year olds spend in formal childcare compared with 0-2 year olds (even though 0-2 year olds spent a little longer with informal carers). Similarly, 5-7 year olds spent longer in childcare than older school-age children (8.2 hours compared with 6.0 hours for both 8-11 year olds and 12-14 year olds). This difference was driven by their time in formal childcare only – there was no difference in their use of informal childcare.

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[23] Means are also used as the basis of the tests for statistically significant differences between groups.

Table 2.6   Hours of childcare used per week, by age of child

Base: All children receiving any/ formal/ informal childcare

				Age of selected child				
	0-2	3-4	All pre-school children	5-7	8-11	12-14	All school-age children	All children
Use of childcare								
Any childcare								
Median	17.0	23.5	20.0	8.2	6.0	6.0	6.5	10.8
Mean	20.0	25.1	22.8	15.0	11.9	13.3	13.2	16.7
Standard error	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.3
Formal childcare								
Median	15.0	17.1	16.0	5.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	8.0
Mean	18.3	21.1	20.1	11.6	5.2	4.4	7.3	12.7
Standard error	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Informal childcare								
Median	10.0	8.0	9.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	7.0
Mean	14.1	12.0	13.2	12.3	13.5	13.4	13.1	13.1
Standard error	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.4
Weighted base for any childcare	*635*	*759*	*1394*	*795*	*1050*	*642*	*2487*	*3881*
Weighted base for formal childcare	*383*	*734*	*1117*	*530*	*677*	*303*	*1510*	*2626*
Weighted base for informal childcare	*404*	*293*	*697*	*418*	*577*	*364*	*1358*	*2055*
Unweighted base for any childcare	*703*	*1084*	*1787*	*710*	*971*	*599*	*2280*	*4067*
Unweighted base for formal childcare	*458*	*1049*	*1507*	*472*	*621*	*278*	*1371*	*2878*
Unweighted base for informal childcare	*436*	*431*	*867*	*377*	*542*	*346*	*1265*	*2132*

Table 2.7 demonstrates the substantial variation in how much time children spent with different types of provider. Firstly, focusing on the types of provider typically attended by pre-school children, those attending nursery classes usually went for 12.5 hours (which is the number of free hours offered by most nursery classes as part of the entitlement to free early years provision – see Nicholson et al. 2008). Children attended reception classes for an average of 31.3 hours (i.e. a full-time school place). Children attending day nurseries spent much longer there per week (18.0 hours) than those attending playgroups (9.0 hours). When pre-school children went to a childminder they typically went for 16.0 hours a week (see Table C2.5 in Appendix C).

Out-of-school provision was used for much shorter periods of time, typically 2.0 hours per week (see Table 2.7) regardless of whether it was on or off a school site. School-age children who went to a childminder typically went for 7.0 hours per week (see Table C2.5 in Appendix C).

Children were generally looked after by informal carers for short lengths of time (3.0 to 6.0 hours, see Table 2.7) and there were only small differences in the length of time that pre-school and school-age children spent with informal carers (see Table C2.5 in Appendix

C). The exception to this was where children were looked after by their non-resident parent – in these instances children were typically looked after for much longer – 17.4 hours on average (see Table 2.7) and whilst pre-school children were typically looked after for 11.6 hours, school-age children were looked after for 20.7 hours on average (see Table C2.5 in Appendix C).

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

Table 2.7   Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type

Base: All children receiving care from provider types

Use of childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Any provider	10.8	16.7	0.3	*3881*	*4067*
Formal providers	8.0	12.7	0.3	*2626*	*2878*
Nursery school	14.5	17.2	0.8	*144*	*187*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	12.5	15.4	0.5	*185*	*265*
Reception class	31.3	27.7	0.4	*302*	*380*
Day nursery	18.0	20.7	0.7	*335*	*418*
Playgroup or pre-school	9.0	9.6	0.3	*223*	*335*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	2.0	3.7	0.2	*1142*	*1052*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	2.0	4.1	0.4	*279*	*265*
Childminder	10.4	13.0	0.7	*253*	*272*
Nanny or au pair	13.1	17.3	2.0	*56*	*61*
Informal providers	7.0	13.1	0.4	*2055*	*2132*
Ex-partner	17.4	22.6	1.1	*325*	*313*
Grandparent	6.0	10.9	0.4	*1321*	*1417*
Older sibling	3.0	4.5	0.4	*201*	*202*
Another relative	4.0	11.4	1.4	*266*	*270*
Friend or neighbour	3.0	4.8	0.4	*275*	*274*

2.9 Take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision by 3 and 4 year old children

This section focuses on the entitlement to free early years provision (at the time of fieldwork 12.5 hours per week) by eligible 3 and 4 years olds.[24] The figures are based on whether parents reported that their child received any early years provision, as well as a separate question specifically about whether they received any 'free hours' of early years provision.[25]

Table 2.8 looks at 3 and 4 year olds who were eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision. Four year olds were substantially more likely than 3 year olds to have received their entitlement or attended school in the reference term-time week (97% compared with 75% respectively)[26]. However, as we rely here on parents' reports and not on information from childcare providers themselves, there may be some underreporting due to lack of parental awareness that their children were receiving any free hours. If we look at the proportion of children who received some early years provision (i.e. some free hours; some early years provision but not any free hours; or some early years provision but not sure about free hours) - the findings show that 87% of 3 year olds and 97% of 4 year olds received some early years provision. This represents no significant change from 2008, although as discussed in section 2.2 there were notable changes in take-up before this, for while 77% of 3 and 4 year olds attended an early years provider in 1999, this had increased to 94% by 2004 (Butt et al. 2007).

Table 2.8   Receipt of the entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Receipt of free early years provision	%	%	%
Received free hours (or attended school)	75	97	87
Received early years provision but not free hours	9	1	4
Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	2	+	1
Did not receive any early years provision	13	3	8
Weighted base	*389*	*465*	*854*
Unweighted base	*539*	*675*	*1214*

Analysis presented in Table 2.9 suggests that children in non working families were less likely to receive the entitlement to free early years provision or attend school than children in working families (for example 78% of children in non working lone parent households

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[24] Children are eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision from 1 April, 1 September or 1 January following their 3rd birthday, and are entitled to up to six terms of provision before reaching statutory school age, which is the first term following their 5th birthday. However, even though it is not compulsory for children to attend school until the first term following their 5th birthday, more than half of 4 year olds attend school full- or part-time (usually, a reception class). The base for the figures on the entitlement to free early years provision is all children who are eligible. To ensure that take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision 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 free hours).

[25] 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 3-4 who attended school (full- or part-time) are also considered to be receiving early years provision.

[26] As discussed later in this paragraph, these parent reports may include some lack of awareness thereby deflating these figures. In addition, since the analysis focuses on a term-time reference week, some children may 'usually' receive the free hours but not have done so in the reference week due to one-off reasons such as sickness. The Early Years and Schools Census figures from January 2010 suggest that the take-up rate of the entitlement to free early years provision are 92% for 3 year olds and 98% for 4 year olds http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000935/index.shtml.

received the entitlement to free early years provision or attended school compared with 87% of children in working lone parent households).

Table 2.9	Receipt of the entitlement to free early years provision, by family type and work status

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds

	Family type and work status					
	Couple families			Lone parents		Total
Receipt of free early years provision	Both working %	One working %	Neither working %	Working %	Not working %	%
Received free hours (or attended school)	91	89	76	87	78	87
Received early years provision but not free hours	3	4	6	7	6	4
Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	+	1	2	1	4	1
Did not receive any early years provision	6	6	16	5	12	8
Weighted base	*357*	*237*	*55*	*66*	*139*	*854*
Unweighted base	*523*	*334*	*74*	*93*	*190*	*1214*

There were also differences between families of different income levels in their take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision. Children from families with a lower household income were less likely to receive these free hours or attend school than those from families with a higher household income (see Table C2.6 in Appendix C).

Parents who said that their children were not receiving the entitlement to free early years provision were asked whether they were aware that the Government paid for some hours of nursery education per week for 3 and 4 year olds. Over a third of these parents (37%) said they were not aware of the scheme which suggests that there is scope to improve the distribution of information about the entitlement to free early years provision (table not shown).

Those children who were receiving the entitlement to free early years provision received an average (median) of 12.5 free hours per week (see Table C2.7 in Appendix C). Two-thirds (68%) of children received 12.5 free hours or more, with 4 year olds receiving more free hours per week than 3 year olds. Parents were largely satisfied with the number of free hours that were available to them (see Figure 2.3) with 90% of parents reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied.

Figure 2.3 Whether parents satisfied with the number of free hours

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through atttending school

- ■ Very satisfied
- ■ Fairly satisfied
- ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ■ Fairly dissatisfied
- □ Very dissatisfied
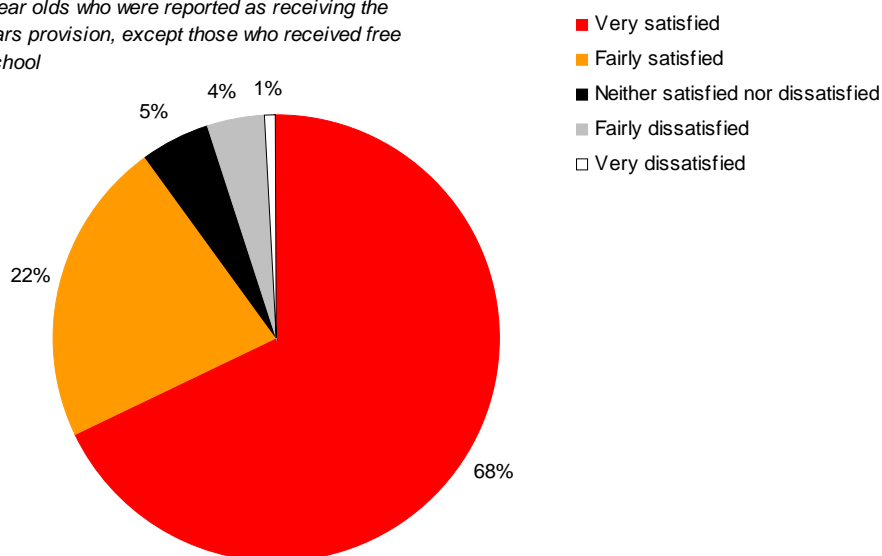
Source: Table C2.8 in Appendix C.

In cases where children did receive the entitlement to free early years provision, but for fewer than 12.5 hours a week, parents were asked why their child did not receive any more free hours in the reference week. Results presented in Table 2.10 show that a quarter (26%) of these parents thought that more hours would have to be paid for, a quarter (25%) did not need childcare for more hours, and 15% said that the setting had no extra sessions available. Also, 14% of parents said it was due to a one-off circumstance that the child received less than 12.5 hours of the entitlement to free early years provision in the reference week.

Table 2.10 Reasons for receiving less than 12.5 free hours, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who received less than 12.5 free hours

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Reasons	%	%	%
More hours would have to be paid for	22	37	26
Didn't need childcare for the child for longer	28	19	25
The setting had no extra sessions available	18	8	15
One-off circumstance (e.g. holiday, sickness)	13	17	14
The child is too young to go for longer	9	6	8
The child would be unhappy going for longer	3	2	3
The setting had extra sessions available but not at convenient times	2	2	2
The setting is difficult to get to	1	0	+
Other reason	9	12	10
Weighted base	*96*	*39*	*135*
Unweighted base	*136*	*58*	*194*

Parents were asked on which days of the week they received free hours and whether it was the same number of hours every day or whether it varied. Over half (54%) of 4 year

olds received free hours over five days a week. Three year olds typically received free hours over fewer days than 4 year olds (4.0 compared with 5.0) and the pattern of use was more varied - 44% received their entitlement to free early years provision over five days and 14% received them over two days (see Table 2.11).

Table 2.11 Number of days per week over which 3 and 4 year olds received their entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Number of days	%	%	%
1 day	2	1	2
2 days	14	5	10
3 days	20	19	20
4 days	13	15	14
5 days	44	54	48
Unsure – free hours received as part of a longer care package	7	6	7
Median	4.0	5.0	5.0
Mean	3.9	4.2	4.0
Weighted base	*292*	*170*	*462*
Unweighted base	*410*	*246*	*656*

Where children received free hours over more than one day per week almost three-quarters (74%) received the same number of hours per day. Fifteen per cent of children went for different numbers of hours on different days, and for 11% their parents were unable to say because the hours were received as part of a longer care package[27].

Parents were asked about the type of provider their child attended for the entitlement to free early years provision. Table 2.12 shows notable differences between the types of provider attended by children of different ages. Over half of 4 year olds received their free hours from a reception class (57%) and one-third received their free hours from a nursery class (32%). In contrast 3 year olds attended a wider variety of providers: 30% received free hours at a playgroup, 26% at a day nursery, 25% at a nursery class, and 20% at a nursery school. Overall, less than 1% of children received their free hours from a childminder, which is unsurprising given that childminders need to be part of a childminding network before being eligible to provide the entitlement to free early years provision.

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[27] For instance, if a child attended an early years provider for 30 hours per week they may receive a discount off their bill equivalent to the cost of 12.5 hours, and may not be able to identify which of the 30 hours are free, and which are paid for.

Table 2.12 Use of childcare providers for 3 and 4 year olds receiving their entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, or attended school

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Use of childcare	%	%	%
Nursery school	20	8	13
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	25	32	29
Reception class	1	57	35
Day nursery	26	8	15
Playgroup or pre-school	30	9	17
Childminder	0	+	+
Other	3	1	2
Weighted base	*291*	*448*	*739*
Unweighted base	*408*	*652*	*1060*

2.10 Use of out-of-school clubs and activities

In this section, we focus on families with school-age children. In the reference week, a third (33%) of families with school-age children had used a breakfast or after-school club that was on a school site and 7% used one that was off-site (table not shown). Table 2.13 shows the activities children engaged in while attending after-school provision. The most common activity was sport (60%). Just under a third of families said their children played and did other recreational activities (31%) or did creative activities such as art or cooking (28%). A fifth of families said their children did music (20%) and dance (17%). This suggests that the schools these families use are offering a varied menu of activities which forms part of the core offer for Extended Schools.

Issues of availability and demand for out-of-school activities are discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 2.13 Activities during out-of-school provision

Base: Families with school-age children who had used after-school provision in reference term-time week

	Total
Activities	%
Sport	60
Play/ other recreational activity	31
Creative activities (e.g. art/ creative writing/ cooking)	28
Music	20
Dance	17
Computer/ IT activities	14
Studying/ Homework	12
Drama	9
Learning Languages	4
Weighted base	*1846*
Unweighted base	*1958*

2.11 Summary

There has been substantial growth in the use of formal childcare over the last decade and in particular between 1999 and 2004. This can largely be attributed to an increase in the take-up of early years provision since the entitlement to free early years provision was rolled out to 3 year olds during this period, and whilst 77% of 3-4 year olds attended an early years provider in 1999, this had increased to 94% by 2004 (Butt et al. 2007). In addition, use of breakfast clubs and after-school clubs (on and off a school site) doubled between 2001 and 2004 (Bryson et al. 2006). Since then, Kazimirski et al. (2008) found no further growth in take-up of formal childcare between 2004 and 2007. Likewise, the current survey showed that families' term-time use of formal childcare and early years provision remained constant between 2008 and 2009 despite the increase in unemployment resulting from the economic downturn (ONS 2010).

The use of various forms of childcare varied according to the age of their child and their circumstances. Three and four year olds were most likely to be in childcare (due largely to the entitlement to free early years provision), 12-14 year olds were the least likely to receive childcare. Pre-school children from Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi and 'other' Asian backgrounds (but not Asian Indian) were less likely to be in formal childcare than children from a White British background even after controlling for their other socio-demographic characteristics.

Children from working and higher income families were more likely to be in formal childcare than those from non working and lower income families. The pattern was similar for informal childcare. There were no differences in take-up of formal childcare by region or area deprivation after other characteristics had been taken into account.

Children who received childcare spent an average (median) of 10.8 hours per week being cared for by childcare providers (8.0 hours with formal providers and 7.0 hours for informal providers). Pre-school children spent longer in formal childcare than school-age children. The hours spent with different providers reflected whether they were providers of daycare, after-school care, early years education or were part of a mainstream school. For example, children attending reception classes attended them for an average of 31.3 hours per week, day nurseries were attended for 18.0 hours on average, and nursery classes for 12.5 hours, while children attending out-of-school clubs and activities did so for 2.0 hours per week on average. As regards informal providers, children receiving care from their non-resident parent spent the longest in their care compared with those receiving care from other informal providers.

There has been no change in the last year in the use of early years provision by 3 and 4 year olds who are eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision (although there were notable changes earlier in the decade). In 2009, 92% of 3 and 4 year olds had received some early years provision and 87% reported that they received some 'free hours' of early years provision.[28] Those who were not receiving early years provision were significantly more likely to be from non working and lower income families, and 3 year olds were less likely to receive the entitlement to free early years provision than 4 year olds. On average, children receiving their entitlement tended to receive 12.5 free hours per week or more and parents were largely satisfied with the number of hours they were entitled to. For just under three-quarters of children (74%), the number of free hours they received was the same each day. Four year olds typically received their entitlement from a

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[28] Note that these parent reports may include some lack of awareness thereby deflating these figures. In addition, since the analysis focuses on a term-time reference week, some children may 'usually' receive the free hours but not have done so in the reference week due to one-off reasons such as sickness. The Early Years and Schools Census figures from January 2010 suggest that the take-up rate of the entitlement to free early years provision are 92% for 3 year olds and 98% for 4 year olds
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000935/index.shtml.

reception or nursery class (57% and 32% respectively) while 3 year olds received their entitlement from a wider variety of settings.

Finally, one-third of families with school-age children used a breakfast or after-school club on a school site and 7% used a breakfast or after-school club off-site. The most common activity that children took part in was sport (60%) and just under one-third took part in play/ recreational activities, or other creative activities (31% and 28% respectively).

3 Packages of childcare for pre-school children

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on parents' use of childcare for their pre-school children. In Chapter 2, we reported that 58% of 0-2 year olds and 89% of 3-4 year olds were in some form of childcare (see Table 2.3). For the youngest age group, two provider types stood out as the most frequently used: grandparents (30%), followed by a day nursery (17%). The picture for 3-4 year olds was rather more varied, with 26% cared for by a grandparent; 20% and 21% respectively attending a nursery or reception class; 17% attending a playgroup; 16% a day nursery and 13% a nursery school.

In Chapter 2, we classified childcare providers as either 'formal' or 'informal'; in this chapter, we use a more refined classification for formal 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 or after-school club, on school/ nursery school site;
- Breakfast club or after-school club, not on school/ nursery school site;
- Holiday club/ scheme. [29]

Formal: Leisure/ Other
- Other childcare provider;
- Leisure/ sport activity.

As in Chapter 2, the category 'Informal Providers' includes: children's non-resident parent;[30] grandparents; older siblings; other relatives; and friends and neighbours.

Using this more detailed classification of formal providers is helpful because it captures the key distinctions between the different provider types. Moreover, we know that some children receive care from more than one type of formal provider, and that some families combine formal provision with informal care. The new classification of formal providers will help us explore the 'packages' of care parents construct for their children e.g. the proportion of parents who combine centre-based childcare with informal care. This chapter also investigates how the types and packages of childcare used for pre-school

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[29] Whilst this chapter focuses on the childcare children used during the reference term-time week, a very small number of parents reported that they used a holiday club during that period.
[30] Respondent's 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.

children relate to: the children's ages (0-2 year olds[31] compared with 3-4 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); and parents' reasons for using particular providers (section 3.5).

All the findings presented in this chapter relate to childcare used during the reference term-time week, with the unit of analysis being a child rather than a family. However, unlike most other chapters in the report, the majority of the analysis draws on information about all children in the household rather than just the 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 information was available for all children in the household, and looking at a larger sample of children allows us to explore use of different types of childcare in greater detail. The only findings presented in the chapter that draw on information for the selected child only are those relating to patterns (days and hours) of use, since these data were part of the detailed record of childcare attendance that was only collected for the selected child (see Chapter 1).

3.2   Use of childcare by age of pre-school child

It is clear from Table 3.1 that three types or packages of childcare were most commonly used for pre-school children: only formal centre-based childcare (26%); a combination of formal centre-based childcare and informal care (18%); and only informal care (14%). No more than 3% of pre-school children were in any one of the remaining types or packages of care, and 28% were not in childcare at all. No significant changes have occurred with respect to these figures between 2008 and 2009.[32]

Table 3.1   Use of childcare for pre-school children, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children in the household

| | Age of child | | |
| | 0-2 | 3-4 | Total |
Package of care	%	%	%
Formal: Centre-Based only	15	41	26
Formal: Centre-Based & Informal	11	27	18
Informal only	22	3	14
Formal: Individual only	5	1	3
Formal: Centre-Based & Formal: Individual	1	6	3
Formal: Centre-Based & Formal: Individual & Informal	1	2	2
Formal: Individual & Informal	2	+	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Formal: Out-of-School	+	3	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Formal: Out-of-School & Informal	+	2	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Leisure/ Other	+	1	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Leisure/ Other & Informal	+	1	1
Other	1	3	2
No childcare used	41	11	28
Weighted base	*2015*	*1566*	*3581*
Unweighted base	*2426*	*2332*	*4758*

There is a stark difference between the types and packages of childcare used for younger and older pre-school children, reflecting the high take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision for 3-4 year olds. Forty-one per cent of 3-4 year olds were attending only centre-based childcare, while 27% were attending this type of care in combination with informal provision. The equivalent figures for 0-2 year olds are just 15% and 11%. In

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[31] Separate analysis of children aged under one has not been presented here but can be found for the 2007 data in a separate report by Smith et al. (2009a).
[32] The detailed classification of formal providers and analysis of types / packages of care were introduced in 2008 so comparisons have not been made with years prior to 2008.

contrast, 22% of 0-2 year olds were only cared for by informal providers, compared to just 3% of 3-4 year olds.

In total, 3% of pre-school children went to a formal individual provider only (for instance a childminder) and a further 3% went to both a formal individual provider and centre-based childcare. It was mainly 0-2 year olds who went to a formal individual provider only (5% compared with 1% of 3-4 year olds) and 3-4 year olds who went to both a formal individual provider and centre-based childcare (6% compared with 1% of 0-2 year olds). This corresponds to the findings in Chapter 2 which demonstrated that very few 3-4 year olds received their entitlement to free early years provision from a childminder.

3.3   Number of providers used for pre-school children

Packages of childcare can incorporate more than one type of provision as well as more than one provider of the same type (for example children using informal care only could go to a number of different informal providers such as grandparents and other relatives). Therefore, in order develop a good understanding of how parents use childcare it is helpful to look at the number of providers used, as well as the type of provision.

Table 3.2 shows that younger pre-school children tended to attend a smaller number of childcare providers than older ones. For example, 62% of 0-2 year olds attended just one provider, compared to 46% of 3-4 year olds. And while 20% of 3-4 year olds attended three or more providers, this was true of just 9% of their younger counterparts.

Table 3.2   Number of providers, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Number of providers	%	%	%
1	62	46	54
2	29	34	31
3+	9	20	15
Weighted base	*1193*	*1390*	*2584*
Unweighted base	*1363*	*2042*	*3405*

Table 3.3 shows the number of providers attended by the type or package of care used.[33] As might be expected, the great majority of children in centre-based care only attended just one centre-based provider (94%). This suggests that when parents need to supplement the childcare offered by one centre-based provider they tend to use a different type of childcare rather than an additional centre-based provider (27% of pre-school children used centre-based provision in combination with some other type of childcare, see Table 3.1)[34]. Pre-school children who used just informal care were also usually looked after by just one person (81%) although 17% were looked after by two informal carers.

Whilst very few of those children in one type of care attended more than two providers, this was the case for 29% of children in a combination of centre-based and informal care. For these families, constructing and maintaining a package of childcare may be complex, and it is likely that these children experience a range of different care environments (see section 3.4 for details on whether these providers were used on the same or different

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[33] Throughout the chapter, where analysis by pckage of care is presented, only figures for the three most commonly-used types / packages are shown, as the bases for the other types and packages were too small. However, details on the number of hours children spent with individual providers such as childminders can be found in Chapter 2, section 2.8

[34] The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

days, and whether or not the sessions of childcare followed on immediately after each other).

Table 3.3 Number of providers, by package of care

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare

| | Package of care | | |
| | Formal: Centre-Based only | Informal only | Formal: Centre-Based & Informal |
Number of providers	%	%	%
1	94	81	0
2	6	17	71
3+	+	2	29
Weighted base	*938*	*490*	*659*
Unweighted base	*1318*	*559*	*851*

Turning to particular types of childcare, playgroups were the least likely of the centre-based providers to be used as sole childcare providers for pre-school children (37%). Instead they were most likely – jointly with reception classes – to be used in combination with two or more other providers (25% respectively, see Appendix C, Table C3.1). In contrast, day nurseries were the most likely to be sole providers (50%) and the least likely to be used in combination with two or more other providers (15%), probably reflecting their relatively extensive opening times.

Grandparents (28%) were more likely than other informal providers (18%-20%) to be the only source of childcare for a pre-school child. Whereas, other relatives (41%) and friends/ neighbours (47%) were more likely to be used in combination with two or more other providers (see Appendix C, Table C3.2).

3.4 Patterns of childcare use for pre-school children

In this section, we explore patterns of childcare use, i.e. the number of days of childcare used per week and the number of hours used per day. We comment in the text on the median values (referred to as averages).

Table 3.4 shows that, on average, pre-school children spent 5.9 hours per day in childcare (on days that childcare was used), and 20.0 hours per week. Older pre-school children typically spent more time in childcare per week than their younger counterparts (23.5 hours compared to 17.0); we showed in Chapter 2 (section 2.8) that this difference mainly reflects differences in the use of formal – rather than informal – care (see Table 2.6). Children aged 3-4 were also more likely than their younger counterparts to attend childcare on a greater number of days (e.g. 57% of 3-4 year olds attended childcare on five days of the week, compared to 18% of 0-2 year olds). This very likely reflects the fact that the entitlement to free early years provision is typically offered across five days per week (see section 2.9).

Table 3.4   Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children who received childcare

	Age of child		
Days and hours of childcare received	0-2 %	3-4 %	Total %
Days per week:			
1	22	2	11
2	21	5	12
3	21	14	17
4	14	13	13
5	18	57	39
6	3	6	5
7	2	3	3
Median hours per day	6.0	5.7	5.9
Median hours per week	17.0	23.5	20.0
Weighted base	*635*	*759*	*1394*
Unweighted base	*703*	*1084*	*1787*

Table 3.5 shows that pre-school children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare were the heaviest users of childcare by all three measures. They received a substantially greater number of hours of care per week: 28.3 on average, compared to 15.0 for those in centre-based care only and 9.0 for those in only informal care. They also spent the most hours per day in childcare (on days when care was received): 6.5 hours on average, compared to 5.0 for those in centre-based care only, and 4.8 for those in only informal care. Finally, they were the most likely to be in childcare on five or more days per week (59%, compared to 50% of those in centre-based care only and 14% of those in only informal care). The heavier use of childcare by pre-school children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare reflects the greater likelihood that their parents were in work. Seventy-three per cent of these children's mothers were in work compared with 46%-47% of those who went to centre-based care only or informal care only (table not shown). (There were no differences in the working patterns of these mothers – they were equally likely to work full-time and part-time).

The heavier use of childcare among children in a combination of centre-based and informal care was reflected within each of the two age-groups (See Appendix C, Table C3.3).

The fact that half the pre-school children in only centre-based care went on exactly five days per week (50%) and that very few went on six or seven days per week (less than 0.5%), reflects the fact that formal childcare settings are not typically open at weekends. This is in contrast with pre-school children who received a combination of centre-based and informal care, where 19% attended childcare on six or seven days per week.

Base: All pre-school children who received childcare

Days and hours of childcare received	Package of care Formal: Centre-Based only %	Informal only %	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal		
			Total %	Centre-based %	Informal %
Days per week:					
1	6	39	0	7	37
2	14	25	4	23	28
3	21	12	15	18	14
4	8	10	21	14	7
5	50	11	40	39	10
6	+	1	13	0	3
7	+	2	6	0	1
Median hours per day	5.0	4.8	6.5	4.8	5.0
Median hours per week	15.0	9.0	28.3	15.0	9.7
Weighted base	*539*	*268*	*339*	*339*	*339*
Unweighted base	*717*	*271*	*477*	*477*	*477*

Children attending reception classes received the greatest number of hours of centre-based care per week on average (31.3), suggesting that most of the 4 year olds attending a reception class were doing so full-time (see Appendix C, Table C3.4).[35] Those attending nursery classes were receiving an average of 13.3 hours of centre-based care per week, roughly reflecting the entitlement to free early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds.[36]

Of the remaining centre-based providers, as we might expect pre-school children attending day nurseries were receiving the greatest number of hours of centre-based care per week (20.0 on average, compared to 15.0 for those attending nursery schools and 10.0 for those attending playgroups). They were also receiving more hours of centre-based care on each day that they were there (7.2 hours on average, compared to 4.0 and 3.0 respectively).

Pre-school children who were cared for by a non-resident parent received a particularly high number of hours of informal childcare per week on average (19.4 hours, compared to 5.0-12.1 hours among pre-school children receiving care from other informal providers, see Appendix C, Table C3.5).[37] On each day that they were with their non-resident parent they spent an average of 6.4 hours there. This is markedly higher than the number of hours per day spent with other informal providers. The longer time children spend with non-resident parents probably reflects joint parenting and access for non-resident parents to see their children.

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[35] We have looked at hours spent in centre-based care rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received care from more than one type of centre-based provider.

[36] At the time of the survey 34 Local Authorities were trialling an increase in the entitlement to free early years provision from 12.5 to 15 hours per week.

[37] We have looked at hours spent in informal care rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received care from more than one type of informal provider.

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

We now focus on the pre-school children who typically received the greatest amounts of childcare, i.e. those in a combination of centre-based and informal care, to explore their patterns of childcare use in a bit more detail.

By definition, a child in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare must spend time with at least two providers; we showed in section 3.3 that 29% of these children were attending three or more providers. Figure 2.1 shows the proportions of these children who attended more than one provider *on the same day*. Sixty-seven per cent of 3-4 year olds in a combination of centre-based and informal care always or sometimes attended more than one provider on the same day, compared to 50% of 0-2 year olds receiving this package of care.

Figure 3.1 Whether pre-school child attended more than one provider on the same

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received a package of centre-based and informal childcare
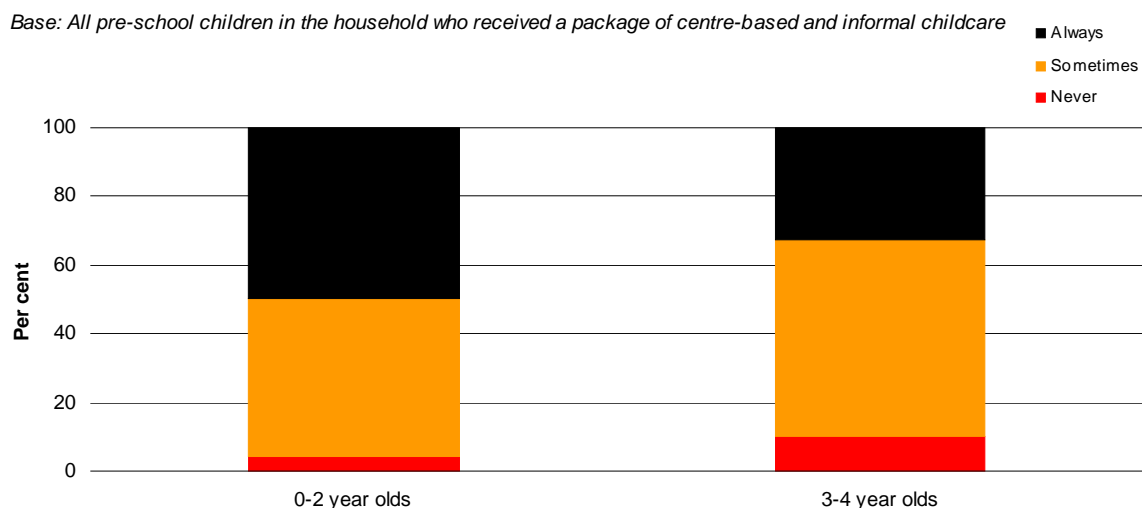
Source: Table C3.6 in Appendix C.

Where these children were attending more than one provider on the same day, we looked at whether the arrangement could be classified as 'wraparound' care, i.e. whether a session with one provider followed on immediately after a session with another. Almost three-quarters of these children did receive some wraparound care during the reference term-time week (73% for both 0-2 year olds and for 3-4 year olds, table not shown).

3.5 Reasons for using childcare providers for pre-school children

For each childcare provider used, parents were asked why they had used them in the reference term-time week (they were able to give as many reasons as they wanted from a pre-coded list). These reasons have been grouped into three categories:

- Economic reasons, e.g. so that parents could work, look for work, or study;
- Child-related reasons, e.g. because a provider helped with a child's educational or social development, or because the child liked going there;
- Parental time reasons, e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise or look after other children.

Figure 3.2 shows that 58% of pre-school children who went to childcare were doing so for economic reasons; 64% for child-related reasons; and 33% for parental time reasons.[38] There are clear differences between the age groups. Whilst 63% of 0-2 year olds who went to childcare did so for economic reasons, this applied to just 54% of 3-4 year olds. In contrast, 79% of 3-4 year olds were attending providers for child-related reasons, compared to 47% of 0-2 year olds. It is likely that these differences are related to 3-4 year olds' entitlement to free early years provision. Furthermore, the differences may be exacerbated by the fact that some 4 year olds were in reception class, which parents would typically perceive as being used for the child's benefit rather than to cover their working hours (even though school is not compulsory until the term after children turn 5).

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

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare ■ Economic ■ Child-related ■ Parental time
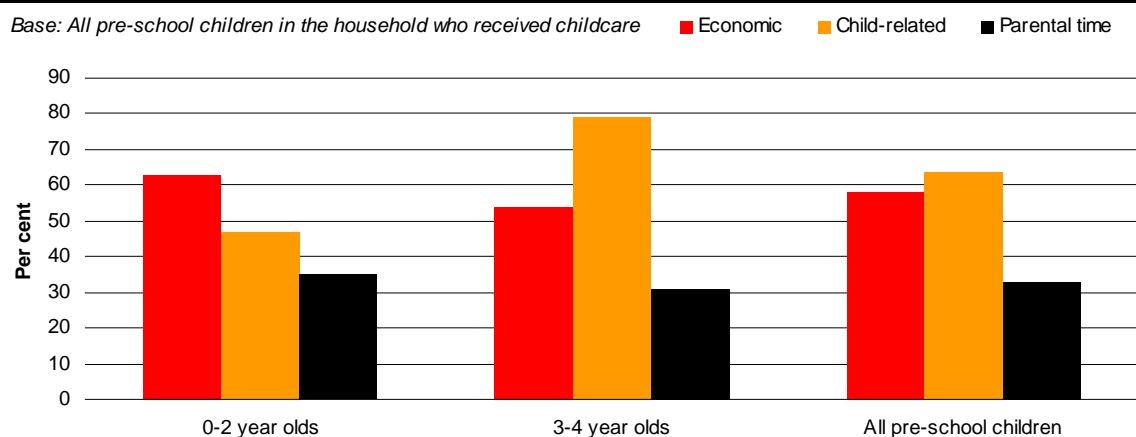
Source: Table C3.8 in Appendix C.

Table 3.6 shows parents' reasons for using different packages of childcare for their pre-school children.[39] Almost three-quarters of children in a combination of centre-based and informal care were attending a provider for economic reasons (74%), compared to less than half of those in centre-based care only or informal care only (both 43%). This together with the earlier finding that these children were the heaviest users of childcare (see section 3.4) illustrates that a combination of care can be required to cover parents' working hours.

Children who were only cared for by informal providers were substantially less likely than other children to be receiving care for child-related reasons (38% compared to 71% of those in centre-based care only and 76% of those in a combination of centre-based and informal care). A similar pattern can be seen if we look at the separate reasons for attending their centre-based provider and their informal carer among children in a combination of care. Forty-one per cent of children in a combination of care went to their informal carer for child-related reasons compared with 69% who went to their centre-based carer for child-related reasons.

In contrast, children in informal care only were more likely than either of the other groups to go for reasons relating to parental time (47% compared to 22% of children in centre-based care only and 37% of those in a combination of centre-based and informal care). Similarly, those in a combination of care were more likely to go to their informal providers for reasons relating to parental time (31%) than their centre-based ones (15%).

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[38] The percentages of parents who gave different combinations of reasons for using their provider(s) (e.g. economic and child-related; child-related and parental time) are shown in Appendix C, Table C3.7.

[39] We look in more detail at the reasons parents chose one type of provider rather than another in Chapter 7.

Table 3.6 Reasons for using childcare providers, by package of care

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare

Reasons	Package of care Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal		
			Total	Centre-based	Informal
	%	%	%	%	%
Economic	43	43	74	56	63
Child-related	71	38	76	69	41
Parental time	22	47	37	15	31
Weighted base	*938*	*490*	*659*	*659*	*659*
Unweighted base	*1318*	*559*	*851*	*851*	*851*

Day nurseries were the most likely of the centre-based providers to be used for economic reasons (79% compared to 26%-50% of those attending other centre-based provider types) and the least likely to be used for child-related reasons (49% compared to 62%-89% for the other providers) (see Appendix C, Table C3.9).[40] This reflects the findings described in section 3.4, where we show that, on average, day nurseries were used for more hours per week and for longer days, i.e. hours suitable to cover parents' working hours.

Table 3.7 shows clearly that, where childcare was used for economic reasons, children tended to use a greater number of hours. Pre-school children whose parents used a provider for economic reasons received an average of 27.0 hours of childcare per week, compared to 20.0 hours for those whose parents used a provider for child-related reasons and 15.3 for those whose parents mentioned parental time as a reason for use. The findings for hours per day are also notable – children attending a provider for economic reasons received 6.9 hours per day on average, compared to 5.5 for those attending for child-related reasons and 4.5 for those attending for reasons relating to parental time. Once again, these findings reinforce the picture of working parents using relatively large amounts of childcare.

While children whose parents cited parental time as a reason for using a provider were more likely to be in childcare for fewer days per week, there are only small differences between economic and child-related reasons in terms of the number of *days* a child was in childcare. The fact that less than half of children who attended a provider for economic reasons attended on five or more days of the week indicates that a substantial proportion of pre-school children with working parents had at least one parent who worked fewer than five days a week.[41]

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[40] We have looked at reasons for using centre-based providers rather than reasons for using particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received care from more than one type of centre-based provider.
[41] The findings in Chapter 9 broadly support this hypothesis, showing that 37% of all mothers worked part-time (see Table 9.1).

Table 3.7   Patterns of childcare use, by reasons for using childcare providers

Base: All pre-school children who received childcare

Days and hours of childcare received	Reasons for using		
	Economic %	Child-related %	Parental time %
Days per week:			
1	6	7	16
2	9	11	14
3	19	14	16
4	17	14	12
5	40	45	30
6	5	7	8
7	3	3	4
Median hours per day	6.9	5.5	4.5
Median hours per week	27.0	20.0	15.3
Weighted base	*805*	*889*	*452*
Unweighted base	*1039*	*1208*	*565*

3.6   Summary

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their pre-school children during term-time. Three types or packages of childcare were most commonly used for pre-school children: only formal centre-based care e.g. nursery classes, day nurseries (26%); only informal care only, e.g. ex-partners or grandparents (14%); or a combination of formal centre-based and informal care (18%). Twenty-eight per cent were not in childcare at all. Use of centre-based provision was much more common among 3-4 year olds than among 0-2 year olds, reflecting the high take-up of their entitlement to free early years provision. Accordingly, younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to be receiving only informal care (22% and 3% respectively).

Pre-school children spent an average of 5.9 hours per day in childcare, and 20.0 hours per week. Older pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare on average than younger ones (23.5 and 17.0 hours respectively).

Children receiving a combination of formal centre-based care and informal care were clearly the heaviest users of childcare. While the great majority of pre-school children receiving only one type of care attended just one provider, 29% of those receiving a combination of care attended three or more. On average, these children received the most hours of childcare per week and per day, and attended on a greater number of days per week. They were also the most likely to have a mother who was in work, and to attend childcare for economic reasons, illustrating that this heavy childcare use was commonly designed to cover parents' working hours.

Fifty-eight per cent of pre-school children who went to childcare were doing so for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 64% for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 33% for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). While 0-2 year olds were more likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (63% compared to 54% of 3-4 year olds), 3-4 year olds were more likely to attend for child-related reasons (79% compared to 47%). Across all pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal centre-based care, and parental time reasons with informal care.

4 Packages of childcare for school-age children

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on parents' use of childcare for their children aged 5-14, in term-time, outside school hours.[42] We will use the classification of formal providers outlined in Chapter 3 (section 3.1) to detail how the types and packages of childcare used for school-age children 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); and parents' reasons for choosing particular providers (section 4.5). We divide school-age children into three age groups: 5-7 year olds, 8-11 year olds, and 12-14 year olds, to reflect their differing childcare needs. These categories roughly represent the infant, junior and early secondary school stages.

In Chapter 2 (see Table 2.3), we showed that the eldest school-age children – 12-14 year olds – were considerably less likely to be in childcare (47%) than their younger counterparts (66% of 5-7 year olds and 64% of 8-11 year olds), probably because many children of this age do not require constant adult supervision. School-age children most commonly used a breakfast or after-school club situated on the school site (26% of 5-7 year olds, 34% of 8-11 year olds, and 18% of 12-14 year olds). Only small percentages of school-age children used any other formal provider type. As with pre-school children, around a third of school-age children received some informal childcare, and grandparents were the most commonly-used informal provider (23% of 5-7 year olds, 21% of 8-11 year olds and 11% of 12-14 year olds).

As in Chapter 3, all the findings presented in this chapter relate to childcare used during the reference term-time week, with the unit of analysis being a child rather than a family. Unlike most other chapters in the report, the majority of the analysis draws on information about all children in the household rather than just the selected child (see Appendix B for further information about the selected child). This approach was taken here, and 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 the chapter that draw on information for the selected child only are those relating to patterns (days and hours) of use, since these data were part of the detailed record of childcare attendance that was only collected for the selected child (see Chapter 1).

4.2 Use of childcare by age of school-age child

Table 4.1 shows that 40% of school-age children were not in childcare and 16% were only in informal care. Fourteen per cent were in only formal out-of-school childcare (i.e. a breakfast and/ or after-school club, on or off the school site), and 9% were in a combination of out-of-school and informal care. No more than 4% of school-age children were receiving any other particular package of childcare. No significant changes have occurred in the use of these different packages between 2008 and 2009.[43]

School-age children in each of the three age groups were equally likely to be receiving informal care only (all 16%). However, children aged 8-11 were significantly more likely than both older and younger school-age children to attend out-of-school care, either on its own (16% compared to 11% and 12%) or in combination with informal care (12% compared to 6% and 8%).

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[42] Use of childcare in the school holidays is explored in Chapter 8.
[43] The detailed classification of formal providers and analysis of types / packages of care were introduced in 2008 so comparisons have not been made with years prior to 2008.

The other main difference between school-age children of different ages is that 5-7 year olds used a wider range of childcare packages than older school-age children. Twenty-nine per cent of 5-7 year olds used a childcare package that was outside the three most common packages, compared with 21% of 8-11 year olds and 15% of 12-14 year olds. This reflects the fact that some 5-7 year olds used centre-based care (usually a reception class) and a greater proportion of children this age were looked after by formal individuals i.e. by childminders (see Table 2.3 in Chapter 2).

Table 4.1 Use of childcare for school-age children, by age of child

Base: All school-age children in the household

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Package of care	%	%	%	%
Informal only	16	16	16	16
Formal: Out-of-School only	12	16	11	14
Formal: Out-of-School & Informal	8	12	6	9
Formal: Leisure/ Other only	4	4	6	4
Formal: Out-of-School & Formal: Leisure/ Other	3	4	2	3
Formal: Leisure/ Other & Informal	2	3	3	3
Formal: Out-of-School & Formal: Leisure/ Other & Informal	2	3	2	2
Formal: Individual only	3	2	+	2
Formal: Centre-Based only	4	+	+	1
Formal: Individual & Formal: Out-of-School	2	2	+	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Informal	3	+	+	1
Formal: Individual & Informal	1	1	+	1
Formal: Individual & Formal: Out-of School & Informal	1	1	+	1
Formal: Centre-Based & Formal: Out-of-School	1	+	+	+
Formal: Individual & Formal: Out-of-School & Formal: Leisure/ Other	+	+	+	+
Formal: Centre Based & Formal: Out-of-school & Informal	1	+	0	+
Formal: Individual & Formal: Leisure/ Other	+	+	+	+
Other	2	1	+	1
No childcare used	34	34	52	40
Weighted base	*2257*	*3181*	*2567*	*8005*
Unweighted base	*3053*	*3900*	*2601*	*9554*

4.3   Number of providers used for school-age children

As mentioned in Chapter 3, packages of childcare can incorporate more than one type of provision as well as more than one provider of the same type (for example children using only out-of-school provision could be using a number of different out-of-school providers such as a football club, and a homework club). Therefore, in order to develop a good understanding of how parents use childcare it is helpful to look at the number of providers used, as well as the type of provision.

Table 4.2 shows that more than half of school-age children in childcare were attending two or more providers (52%). Children aged 8-11 were most likely to have two or more providers (57% compared to 52% of 5-7 year olds and 45% of 12-14 year olds), and 27% attended three or more providers, compared to 22% of 5-7 year olds and 18% of 12-14 year olds[44].

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[44] The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

Table 4.2   Number of providers, by age of child

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare

| | Age of child | | | |
| | 5-7 | 8-11 | 12-14 | Total |
Number of providers	%	%	%	%
1	48	43	55	48
2	29	30	27	29
3	13	15	11	13
4+	10	12	7	10
Weighted base	*1489*	*2090*	*1226*	*4806*
Unweighted base	*1936*	*2435*	*1206*	*5577*

Table 4.3 shows the number of providers used by package of care.[45] Over three-quarters of school-age children in either out-of-school care only or informal childcare only attended just one provider (77% and 78% respectively). Those in out-of-school care only were more likely than those in only informal care to attend three or more providers (8% compared to 3%). Forty per cent of school-age children in a combination of out-of-school and informal care attended three or more providers.

Table 4.3   Number of providers, by package of care

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare

| | Package of care | | |
| | Formal: Out-of-School only | Informal only | Formal: Out-of-School & Informal |
Number of providers	%	%	%
1	77	78	0
2	16	19	60
3	5	3	28
4+	3	+	12
Weighted base	*1099*	*1260*	*744*
Unweighted base	*1310*	*1402*	*802*

Older siblings were the most likely of all the informal providers to be the only source of childcare for a school-age child (38%, see Appendix C, Table C4.1). Otherwise (as with pre-school children, see Appendix C, Table C3.2), grandparents (34%) were more likely than other informal carers to be a school-age child's sole childcare provider. Friends and neighbours were more likely than other informal carers to be used in combination with at least one other provider (85%, compared to 62%-72%).

4.4   Patterns of childcare use for school-age children

Table 4.4 shows that 42% of school-age children who attended childcare went on just one or two days per week, whilst 23% attended on five days per week. As we might expect given that all these children attended full-time school, amounts of time spent in childcare per day were small (an average of 2.2 hours per day that childcare was used). School-age children who received childcare went for an average of 6.5 hours of care per week.

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[45] Throughout the chapter, where analysis by package of care is presented, only figures for the three most commonly-used types / packages are shown, as the bases for the other types and packages were too small.

On average, 5-7 year olds in childcare spent the greatest number of hours per week there (8.2, compared to 6.0 hours in each of the older age groups). Children aged 5-7 were also more likely than their older counterparts to receive some childcare on more days of the week; for example, 39% of 5-7 year olds who received childcare went on five or more days of the week, compared to 28% of 8-11 year olds and 24% of 12-14 year olds[46]. This pattern of childcare use for 5-7 year olds probably reflects the fact that a notable minority attend reception classes and childminders (whilst this is the case for far fewer older school-age children), and that these providers are typically used for longer periods of time than either out-of-school providers or the majority of informal providers (see section 2.8 in Chapter 2).

Table 4.4   Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

Base: All school-age children who received childcare

| Days and hours of childcare received | Age of child | | | |
| | 5-7 | 8-11 | 12-14 | Total |
	%	%	%	%
Days per week:				
1	18	20	24	21
2	19	22	22	21
3	14	18	16	16
4	10	12	14	12
5	31	20	17	23
6	5	5	4	5
7	3	2	3	2
Median hours per day	2.5	2.0	2.1	2.2
Median hours per week	8.2	6.0	6.0	6.5
Weighted base	*795*	*1050*	*642*	*2487*
Unweighted base	*710*	*971*	*599*	*2280*

Table 4.5 breaks down patterns of use according to the package of care used. School-age children in only out-of-school care typically attended far fewer hours of childcare per week than those receiving informal care only or a combination of out-of-school and informal care (just 2.0 hours on average, compared to 8.0 and 8.3 hours respectively). They also attended for fewer hours on each of the days that they were with the providers (1.3 on average, compared to 3.0 for children in informal care only, and 2.5 for those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care).

These patterns are consistent within each of the three age groups (see Appendix C, Table C4.2). The fact that age does not emerge as a significant predictor of patterns of childcare use once childcare package is taken into account supports the view that the age difference apparent in Table 4.4 mainly reflects the 10% of 5-7 year olds in reception class and the 6% who go to childminders (see Table 2.3).

Focusing on school-age children in a combination of out-of-school and informal care; they were substantially less likely than the other groups to attend childcare on just one or two days per week (27%, compared to 63% of those in only out-of-school care and 51% of those in only informal care)[47]. However, they generally received *each type* of care (out-of-school or informal) on only one or two days per week. For instance, children receiving a combination of care were more likely to receive their out-of-school care on just one or two days per week than children receiving out-of-school care only (76%, compared with 63%). Similarly they were more likely to receive their informal care on just one or two days per week than children receiving informal care only (62% compared with 51%).

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[46] The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.
[47] The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

Table 4.5 Patterns of childcare use, by package of care

Base: All school-age children who received childcare

Days and hours of childcare received	Package of care Formal: Out-of-School only %	Informal only %	Formal: Out-of-School & Informal Total %	Out-of-school %	Informal %
Days per week:					
1	42	25	2	52	37
2	21	26	24	24	25
3	13	16	22	10	17
4	7	10	20	6	9
5	16	18	24	8	11
6	1	3	5	+	1
7	+	2	2	0	1
Median hours per day	1.3	3.0	2.5	1.0	2.8
Median hours per week	2.0	8.0	8.3	2.0	5.0
Weighted base	*585*	*664*	*381*	*381*	*381*
Unweighted base	*520*	*623*	*351*	*351*	*351*

Mirroring the pattern we observed in relation to pre-school children (see Appendix C, Table C3.5), school-age children who were cared for by a non-resident parent received a particularly high number of hours of informal childcare per week on average (24.0 hours, compared to 4.0–7.5 hours among school-age children receiving care from other informal providers) (see Appendix C, Table C4.3).[48] On each day they were with their non-resident parent, they spent an average of 8.9 hours there. This is markedly higher than the number of hours per day spent with other informal providers. The longer time children spend with non-resident parents probably reflects joint parenting and access for non-resident parents to see their children.

4.5 Reasons for using childcare providers for school-age children

As described in Chapter 3, parents were asked why they had used each provider in the reference term-time week (they were able to give as many reasons as they wanted for each provider from a pre-coded list). These reasons have been grouped into three categories:

- Economic reasons, e.g. so that parents could work, look for work, or study;
- Child-related reasons, e.g. because a provider helped with a child's educational or social development, or because the child liked going there;
- Parental time reasons, e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise or look after other children.

Figure 4.1 shows that when school-age children were in childcare 48% attended for economic reasons; 70% for child-related reasons; and 21% for parental time reasons.[49] We saw in Chapter 3 that child-related reasons were the most commonly given reasons for using providers for pre-school children, but school-age children were even more likely to attend their provider for child-related reasons (70% compared to 64% of pre-school children who were in childcare, see Figure 3.2). Children aged 12-14 were considerably

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[48] We have looked at hours spent in informal care rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received care from more than one type of informal provider.
[49] The percentages of parents who gave different combinations of reasons for using their provider(s) (e.g. economic and child-related; child-related and parental time) are shown in Appendix C, Table C4.4.

less likely than younger school-age children to be receiving their care for economic reasons (38%, compared to 50% of 8-11 year olds and 52% of 5-7 year olds in childcare). This probably reflects the fact that many parents do not consider constant adult supervision necessary for children of this age and therefore do not *require* childcare to cover their working hours (even though they may be at work whilst their child is at the out-of-school club or activity).

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

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare   ■ Economic   ■ Child-related   ■ Parental time
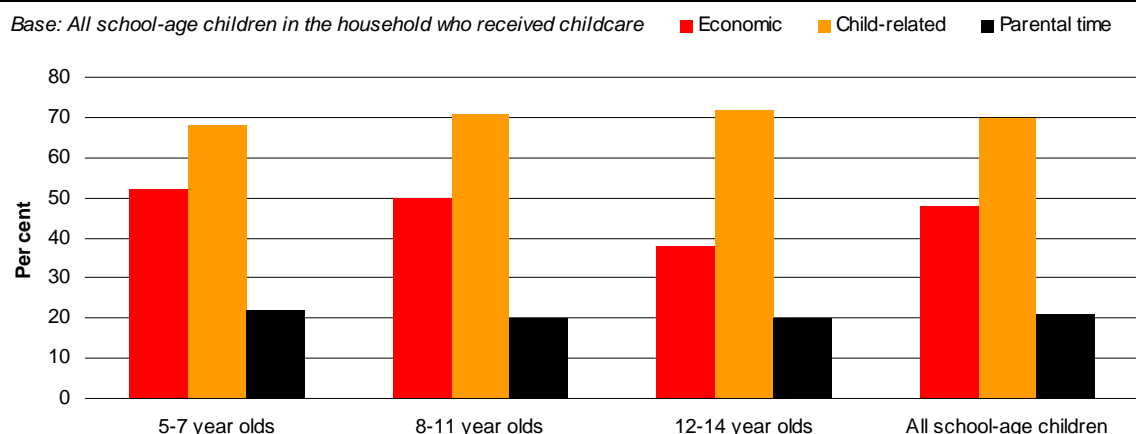
Source: Table C4.5 in Appendix C.

Table 4.6 shows the reasons that school-age children were receiving particular packages of care.[50] Those children in out-of-school care only were least likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (24%, compared to 60% of those in only informal care and 65% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care). This reflects the small average number of hours of out-of-school care used per week (see Table 4.5), as a couple of hours of care per week is unlikely to play an important role in helping parents to work. The fact that those children in a combination of out-of-school and informal care were most likely to be receiving childcare for economic reasons suggests that, even once children start full-time school, a package of care can still be required to cover parents' working hours.

As with pre-school children (see Table 3.6), school-age children who received only informal care were the least likely to receive care for child-related reasons (40%, compared with 79% of those in out-of-school care only and 81% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care). A similar pattern can be seen if we look at the separate reasons that children in a combination of care attended their out-of-school provider compared with their informal carer. Forty-four per cent of children in a combination of care went to their informal carer for child-related reasons, compared to 71% who attended their out-of-school provider for child-related reasons.

Children in only out-of-school care were substantially less likely than those in the other groups to be attending a provider for reasons relating to parental time (5%, compared with 26% of those in only informal care and 30% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care). Accordingly, those in a combination of care were more likely to receive their informal care for reasons relating to parental time (27%) than their out-of-school care (6%). This association between informal care and parental time reasons also echoes the findings for pre-school children (see Table 3.6).

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[50] We look in more detail at the reasons parents chose one type of provider rather than another in Chapter 7.

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

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare

	Package of care Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School & Informal		
			Total	Out-of-school	Informal
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
Economic	24	60	65	32	59
Child-related	79	40	81	71	44
Parental time	5	26	30	6	27
Weighted base	*1099*	*1260*	*744*	*744*	*744*
Unweighted base	*1310*	*1402*	*802*	*802*	*802*

Children cared for by a non-resident parent were more likely than those cared for by other informal providers to be receiving informal care for child-related reasons (75%, compared to 19%-47% - see Appendix C, Table C4.6).[51] They were also less likely to be receiving informal care for economic reasons (42%, compared to 59%-69%). It is likely that these findings reflect contact arrangements and shared parenting between respondents and their ex-partners, whilst indicating that other informal childcare providers were more likely to play a key role in enabling parents to work.

Table 4.7 shows that school-age children receiving childcare from a provider used for economic reasons tended to attend on more days per week. For example, only 8% of these children attended on one day of the week, compared to 20% of those attending for child-related reasons and 18% of those attending for reasons relating to parental time. In contrast, 33% of children attending providers for economic reasons went on five days of the week, compared to 21% of those attending for child-related reasons and 17% of those attending for reasons relating to parental time.

The number of hours that children spent with providers did not vary significantly between children who attended for economic, child-related or parental time reasons.

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

Base: All school-age children who received childcare

	Reasons for using		
Days and hours of childcare received	Economic %	Child-related %	Parental time %
Days per week:			
1	8	20	18
2	16	22	26
3	17	17	16
4	16	12	13
5	33	21	17
6	7	6	6
7	3	3	3
Median hours per day	2.5	2.1	3.0
Median hours per week	9.0	6.5	8.5
Weighted base	*1165*	*1748*	*514*
Unweighted base	*1080*	*1594*	*466*

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[51] We have looked at reasons for using informal providers rather than reasons for using particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received care from more than one type of informal provider.

4.6 Summary

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types and packages of childcare for their school-age children, during term-time, outside school hours. Forty per cent of school-age children were not in childcare and 16% were only in informal care. Fourteen per cent were in only formal out-of-school childcare (breakfast or after-school club) and 9% were in a combination of out-of-school and informal care. No other particular type or package of childcare (e.g. centre-based or leisure) accounted for more than 4% of children.

School-age children in each of the three age groups were equally likely to be receiving informal care only. However, children aged 8-11 were significantly more likely than both older and younger school-age children to attend out-of-school care, either on its own or in combination with informal care. Five to seven year olds used a wider range of childcare packages than older school-age children (attributable at least in part to their greater use of reception classes and childminders).

More than three-quarters of school-age children receiving just one type of care attended just one provider, while 40% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care attended three or more.

As we would expect given that all these children were in full-time school, the average number of hours of childcare received per day was low – just 2.2 hours. School-age children spent an average of 6.5 hours in childcare per week. Those in only out-of-school care attended for far fewer hours per week than those in only informal care and those in a combination of out-of-school and informal care (2.0 hours on average, compared to 8.0 and 8.3 hours respectively). Those receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal care tended to attend some childcare on a greater number of days of the week.

Forty-eight per cent of school-age children who were in childcare attended for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 70% for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 21% for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could do domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). Children in out-of-school care only were less likely than the other groups to be attending a provider for economic reasons, reflecting the fact that these children only received a small amount of care each week. Children in a combination of out-of-school and informal care were the most likely to be attending a provider for economic reasons, indicating that, even once they start full-time school, a package of care can still be required to cover parents' working hours. For school-age as for pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal out-of-school care, and parental time reasons with informal care.

5 Paying for childcare

5.1   Introduction

Ensuring that all families are able to access the childcare they need, at a cost they can afford, has been central to the National Childcare Strategy (DfEE 1998; HM Treasury 2004). With a view to achieving affordable childcare for all, the updated National Childcare Strategy reinforced a commitment to using a mixture of demand-side and supply-side subsidies (HM Government 2009):

- Increasing participation in part-time early years education has, in the main, been addressed by the entitlement to free early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as the most disadvantaged 2 year olds – a supply-side measure whereby the Government make payments directly to the provider;

- Improving the affordability of childcare, particularly to working parents, has mainly been addressed through a range of means-tested payments to parents, such as the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, and tax exemptions for employer-supported childcare. These demand-side subsidies were intended to increase the purchasing power of parents who might not otherwise be able to afford the market price of childcare, as well as to enable parents to shop around and access the services which are best suited to their needs.

Following the discussion regarding the take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision in Chapter 2, this chapter focuses on the affordability of childcare. It begins by describing how many families paid for their childcare, what they were they paying for and how much they paid for all the care they received over the reference week, both in total and the hourly rate (section 5.2). It then looks at the financial help that families received from others, particularly from employers (section 5.3), and through tax credits (section 5.4). The chapter closes with a brief description of what parents who were paying for childcare said about the affordability of their own childcare arrangements (section 5.5).

Where possible, comparisons are made with previous surveys in the Childcare and Early Years series. For some areas, such as receipt of tax credits, the data available go back to 2004. However in other areas, particularly the details of families' childcare payments, substantial revisions were made to the design of the questionnaire in 2008. This made it easier for parents to answer and improved the quality of the information collected. However, it means that, whilst reliable comparisons can be made between 2009 and 2008, it is not possible to draw comparisons with earlier years.

5.2   Family payments for childcare

This section focuses on what families paid for the childcare that they used during the reference week. For each provider used, families were asked whether they, their partner or anyone else in the household, had paid anything to that provider for a range of services, refreshments and/ or activities. This only included money paid by the family themselves; respondents were instructed that money paid by other organisations, employers, Local Authorities or the Government should be excluded.

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

In 2009, 59% of families who used childcare in the reference week reported that they had paid for some or all of that care (see Table 5.1). There was no significant change in the proportion of families paying for childcare compared to 2008.

Parents were much more likely to pay formal providers than informal providers: 63% of families using formal providers paid for care by these providers compared with only 8% of families using informal providers (Table 5.1).

For formal providers, whether parents were paying them and what they were paying for varied according to the type of provider they were. Families using childminders (95%) and nannies/ au-pairs (93%, see Table 5.1) were the most likely to pay for their childcare. Parents using day nurseries were also very likely to be paying for that care (89%). This probably reflects the relatively high use of these providers for children aged 0-2 (see Chapter 2), most of whom are not eligible for free early years provision. In addition it may well be related to the fact that day nurseries typically offer care for the full day so parents of 3-4 year olds who attend day nurseries for their entitlement to free early years provision are likely to be paying for additional hours.

In contrast it was less common for parents to be paying for nursery schools, playgroups and nursery classes (68%, 68% and 41% respectively of parents using these providers paid for that care) since these providers are primarily used by 3 and 4 year olds who are eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision. Looking at the types of providers more commonly used by school-age children, only half (54%) of families using out-of-school care on the school site reported that they had paid for that care, compared with 83% of those using off-site provision (Table 5.1). This may be because free sports, arts or music clubs run by the school (for instance through the Extended Schools programme) were included within on-site out-of-school care.

Table 5.1 Family payment for childcare, by provider type

Base: Families using provider type

Use of childcare	Family paid provider %	Weighted base	Unweighted base
Any childcare provider	**59**	*4913*	*5160*
Formal childcare and early years provider	**63**	*3690*	*4187*
Nursery school	68	*250*	*329*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	41	*316*	*470*
Day nursery	89	*533*	*606*
Playgroup or pre-school	68	*409*	*583*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on-site	54	*1798*	*1895*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off-site	83	*392*	*433*
Childminder	95	*343*	*369*
Nanny or au pair	93	*58*	*72*
Babysitter who came to home	75	*116*	*137*
Informal childcare provider	**8**	*2735*	*2716*
Grandparent	6	*1739*	*1820*
Older sibling	13	*351*	*264*
Another relative	11	*395*	*400*
Friend or neighbour	7	*442*	*458*
Other			
Leisure/ sport activity	24	*2410*	*2420*
Other childcare provider	62	*291*	*310*

NB: Row percentages

Among families using informal care, it was least common for families to pay grandparents who were providing care (6%), whilst it was most common for families to pay children's older siblings (13%). Similarly 11% of families using other relatives and 7% of those using friends/ neighbours paid them for their help (Table 5.1).

Figure 5.1 shows the type of things that families were paying for (which parents selected from a showcard). Overall, families who paid providers were most commonly paying for childcare fees/ wages (56%), followed by education (35%) and refreshments (32%). Nineteen per cent of families paid for use of equipment whilst fewer than 10% of families paid for travel costs, or trips/ outings.

Figure 5.1 What families were paying providers for[52]

Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week
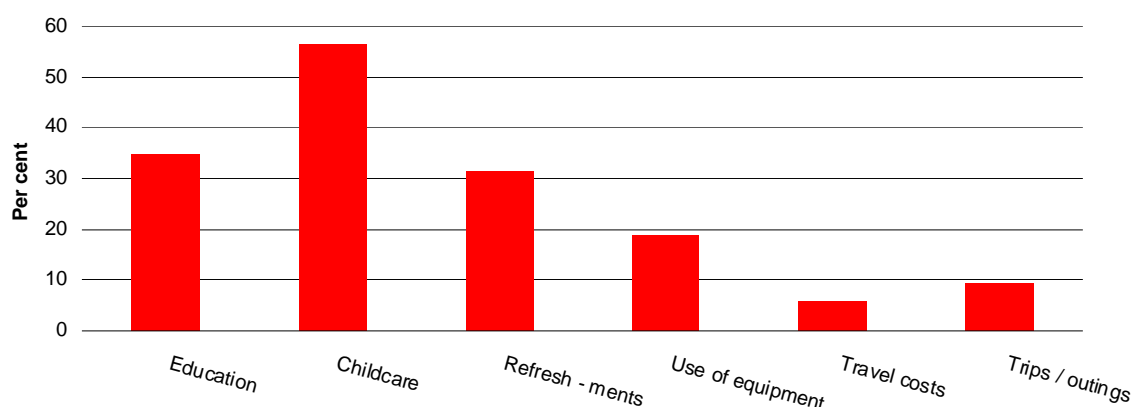
Source: Table 5.2

Table 5.2 shows that the reasons families paid for childcare differed between different types of provider. Childminders and nannies/ au-pairs are most often used for pre-school children and young primary school children (see Chapter 2), and generally provide childcare rather than early years education. As a result payments to childminders and nannies/ au-pairs were predominantly for childcare fees (96% and 95%). Most payments to day nurseries were also for childcare fees (87%); though in addition, 20% of parents who paid for day nurseries paid for education, 36% for refreshments and 13% for equipment.

We saw in Table 5.1 that families using nursery schools and playgroups were less likely to pay them than families using other formal providers; however a substantial proportion of these parents did make some payment (both 68% compared to 89% of families using day nurseries for example). Just over half the parents paying these providers paid childcare fees (59% of those paying nursery schools and 57% of those paying playgroups) and around a third (37% and 34%) paid education fees (see Table 5.2). Many parents were also paying for refreshments - 45% of parents paying nursery schools and 33% of those paying playgroups - with a further 11% of each saying they were paying for equipment.

Turning to families who paid for nursery classes, Table 5.2 shows that their payments were predominantly for refreshments (62%). Three in ten (28%) paid childcare fees and two in ten (19%) paid for education, reflecting the fact that most education and childcare fees are largely paid for by Government as part of the entitlement to free early years provision. A small proportion of parents paying for nursery classes also paid for the costs of trips (13%) and equipment (9%).

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[52] The 2008 report (Speight et al. 2009), analysis focused on all families using childcare in the reference week rather than those who *paid* for childcare, so the figures presented here are not directly comparable.

Where parents paid for out-of-school provision, payments to on-site clubs were more likely than to off-site clubs to be for childcare fees (41% compared to 33%) and refreshments (25% compared to 16%). In contrast, parents using out-of-school clubs that were not on a school site were more likely to pay for education (50% compared to 35%) and/ or use of equipment (31% compared to 17%).

Lastly we can see from Table 5.2 that the few parents who were making payments to grandparents were mostly paying for refreshments, travel costs and trips/ outings. However, 29% of the 6% of parents who were paying grandparents said they were paying childcare fees. Whilst this constitutes a small proportion of parents, it is notable that unlike most parents using formal childcare, they are not eligible to receive any financial help towards their costs.

Table 5.2   Services paid for, by type of provider paid[53]

Base: Families paying for provider type

Use of childcare	Services paid for								
	Childcare fees/ wages	Education fees/ wages	Refreshments	Use of equipment	Trips/ outings	Travel costs	Other	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	56	35	32	19	9	6	12	*2884*	*3124*
Formal									
Nursery school	59	37	45	11	8	1	3	*171*	*220*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	28	19	62	9	13	3	7	*132*	*195*
Day nursery	87	20	36	13	4	2	1	*472*	*527*
Playgroup or pre-school	57	34	33	11	4	+	3	*277*	*387*
Breakfast/ after-school, on-site	41	35	25	17	8	4	10	*979*	*1031*
Breakfast/ after-school, off-site	33	50	16	31	4	3	14	*327*	*359*
Childminder	96	4	23	4	6	5	1	*326*	*350*
Nanny or au pair	95	3	+	11	14	15	4	*54*	*67*
Babysitter	85	4	4	2	1	3	6	*88*	*102*
Informal									
Grandparent	29	2	39	4	19	29	13	*98*	*91*

NB: Row percentages

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[53] The 2008 report (Speight et al. 2009), analysis focused on all families using childcare in the reference week rather than those who *paid* for childcare, so the figures presented here are not directly comparable.

How much were families paying per week?

Families who had paid for childcare were asked in detail about the amount they had paid to each provider they used. These questions focused on the amount paid by families themselves, excluding financial help from other organisations/ individuals.

Several features of the data need to be made explicit:

- Since reported amounts reflect what families paid 'out of their own pocket', they are likely to include money received (and then paid out again) in the form of tax credits, but not include payments made directly to providers such as the entitlement to free early years provision;

- The questionnaire was not specific about how families should handle financial help from employers (e.g. childcare vouchers), so it is not possible to tell whether parents included or excluded these from the amounts they reported. However it is likely that the figures quoted include the value of the help they receive via their employer;

- Estimates here 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 numbers of hours used or number of children in the household. For those families who said that they paid for care in the reference week but indicated that the overall amount they reported was not 'usual', the cost included in analysis was families' 'usual cost' as this was considered the more reliable figure.

Overall, the median amount that families reported to have paid was £21 per week (see Table 5.3), a similar figure to 2008. The mean weekly payment was much higher at £50 and this reflects the fact that some families spent a very large amount on childcare (because the mean is more influenced by outlying values than the median).

There are of course large differences between the median amounts paid to different types of provider. Families paying nannies/ au-pairs spent the highest median weekly amount (£180) followed by those paying day nurseries (£72) and childminders (£55). As discussed earlier, this may reflect the fact that these providers are often used for 0-2 year olds who are mainly not yet eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision, and that these providers typically offer care for the full day which means that parents can potentially pay for a much larger number of hours than for other centre-based providers like nursery classes and nursery schools.

The median weekly payments that families made to nursery schools were lower than those made to day nurseries and childminders (£35, compared with £72 and £55). Since nearly all families using nursery schools said they were paying for education and/ or childcare fees, the lower weekly cost probably reflects the fact that parents were paying for fewer hours. This is likely to be a combination of the shorter hours offered by many nursery schools (compared to day nurseries or home-based care) and greater use of the entitlement to free early years provision by 3 and 4 year olds.

Similarly the lower medians for playgroups (£13) and nursery classes (£8) reflect the fact that many children using these providers received at least some of their care through the entitlement to free early years provision. Their low cost in comparison to nursery schools

may reflect the smaller proportion of parents who paid childcare fees to nursery classes than nursery schools (28% compared with 59%) and the smaller number of hours that parents used playgroups compared to nursery classes (a median of 9.0 hours compared to 14.5, see Chapter 2).

Table 5.3   Weekly payment for childcare, by provider type

Base: Families paying for provider type

Use of childcare	Median £	Mean £	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	21	50	1.64	*2828*	*3070*
Formal					
Nursery school	35	60	5.10	*169*	*217*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	8	28	6.38	*131*	*194*
Day nursery	72	91	3.90	*470*	*525*
Playgroup or pre-school	13	20	1.91	*276*	*386*
Childminder	55	70	3.80	*326*	*349*
Nanny or au pair	180	233	30.65	*54*	*67*
Babysitter who came to home	24	31	2.51	*87*	*101*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	7	17	1.25	*957*	*1017*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	8	19	2.00	*327*	*358*
Informal					
Grandparent	15	26	2.00	*98*	*91*

The difference in patterns of use between different provider types can make these overall weekly payments difficult to interpret (because for instance nursery classes are generally used for fewer hours than other providers such as day nurseries, and nursery classes tend to cater for a higher proportion of 3-4 year olds who are eligible for the entitlement to free early years provision). To help account for this Table C5.1 in Appendix C examined how these median weekly costs varied according to whether parents said that any payment was made for education/ childcare fees, or whether payments only covered other services (refreshments, equipment, travel or trips).

As shown in Table 5.2, payments to playgroups and nursery classes were usually for refreshments and equipment. Where parents were only paying for these things weekly medians were much lower (£4 for playgroups, £2 for nursery classes), whilst the minority of parents who said they were paying education or childcare fees had a much higher weekly cost (£15 for playgroups, £23 for nursery classes - Table C5.1 in Appendix C).

Similarly, median payments to before and after-school clubs on a school site were almost twice as high when families were paying for childcare or education fees (£9 compared with £5 when families were just paying for refreshments, equipment etc.).

The median amount paid to grandparents was £15 but it must be remembered that only 6% of parents using grandparental care made any payment at all (see Table 5.1). As we saw earlier, where payments were made to grandparents these were mostly for refreshments, equipment, travel and trips (the median for parents paying grandparents only for these things, and not directly for education or childcare fees was £10 per week).

Another way to unpick the differences between the costs of different providers is to look at the amounts parents were paying per hour[54] and the findings in Table 5.4 mirror those presented above. Parents paid most to nannies/ au pairs (£6.00 per hour), followed by childminders (£4.00 per hour) and day nurseries (£3.75). Nursery schools, nursery classes and playgroups/ pre-schools had a much lower cost *to parents* per hour, because these providers were often just used for the entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds (or for only a few hours above and beyond those that were free).

Table 5.4   Amount family paid per hour, by provider type

Base: Families paying for provider type

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Use of childcare	£	£			
Formal					
Nursery school	2.83	3.19	0.22	*164*	*210*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	0.39	1.69	0.31	*129*	*191*
Day nursery	3.75	3.99	0.14	*467*	*521*
Playgroup or pre-school	1.77	2.27	0.14	*275*	*384*
Childminder	4.00	4.87	0.24	*325*	*348*
Nanny or au pair	6.00	7.29	0.66	*54*	*67*
Babysitter who came to home	3.00	3.73	0.25	*87*	*101*
Breakfast/ after-school club, on school site	2.50	3.65	0.16	*948*	*1006*
Breakfast/ after-school club, off school site	2.93	4.67	0.34	*324*	*354*
Informal					
Grandparent	1.00	1.99	0.40	*98*	*90*

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[54] 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 'free' hours paid for 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 'free' hours paid for by the Local Authority or other subsidies would be included (i.e. in the denominator) but not represented in the cost paid by parents (i.e. in the numerator).

Did weekly payments vary by family characteristics?

Differences in the weekly payments paid by different families generally reflected differences in patterns of childcare use, the age of children in the household, how much parents were working and therefore how likely different groups of parents were to be using formal care (see Chapter 2).

Overall, couples made higher weekly payments than lone parents, but this difference can be accounted for by their working patterns (see Figure 5.2). Among families who paid for childcare, couples where both parents were working, and working lone parents reported very similar weekly costs (both £29) compared with £15 for couples where only one parent worked. In contrast, median amounts paid were much lower for non working families paying for childcare: £6 for non working couple families and £7 for non working lone parents (Table C5.2 in Appendix C).

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

Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week ■ Both w orking ■ One w orking ■ Neither w orking
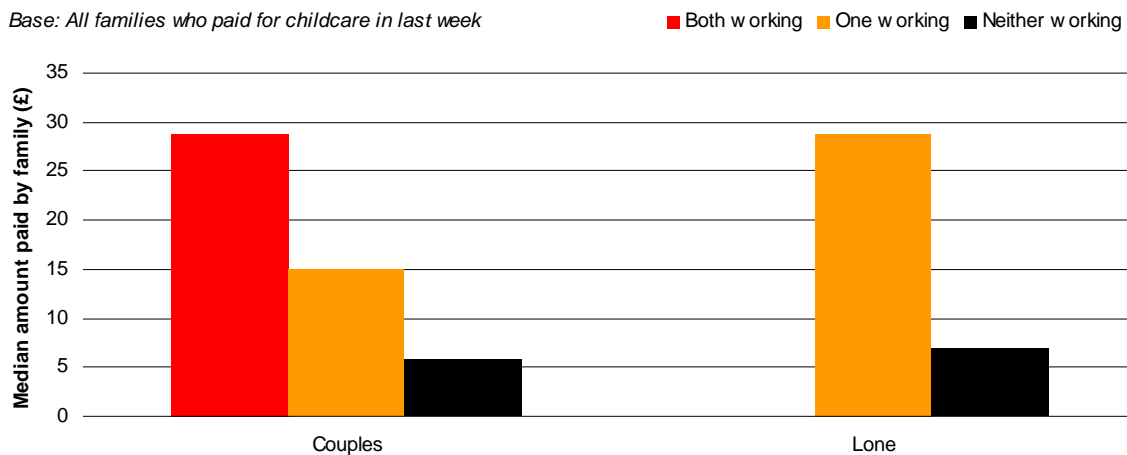
Source: Table C5.2 in Appendix C.

Table C5.2 (in Appendix C) also shows that the median cost of childcare increased in line with family income, which is probably associated with the number of hours worked by these parents as well as increased ability to pay. Similarly, families with pre-school children who paid for childcare had higher median weekly payments than those with school-age children (£50 for those with only pre-school children and £27 for those with pre-school and school-age children compared with £15 for families with school-age children only). This reflects the fact that families with pre-school children were likely to be using more hours of paid care (see Chapter 2).

Figure 5.3 shows a wide discrepancy in median weekly cost depending on where families lived. Family payments were highest in London (£33 per week) which reflects findings from earlier years of the Childcare and Early Years Surveys. The Childcare Affordability Programme has been working to address these higher costs.

Figure 5.3 Median weekly payment for childcare, by region

Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week
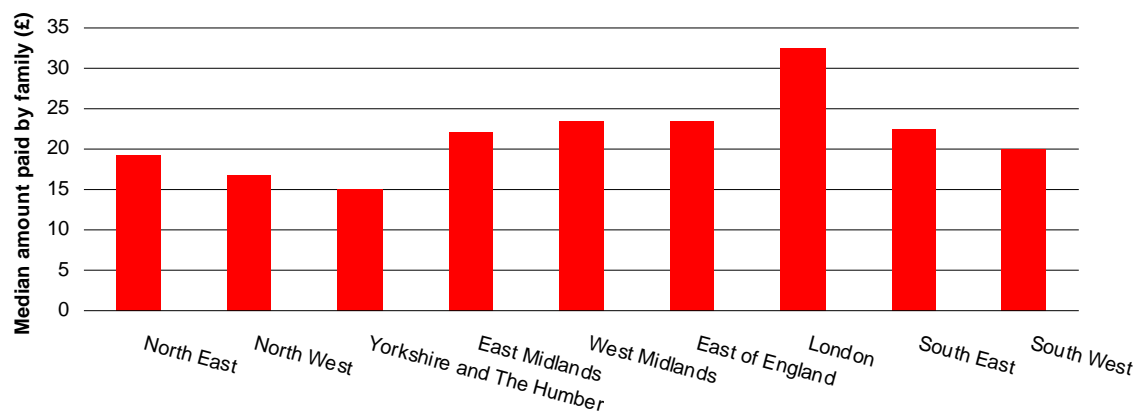
Source: Table C5.3 in Appendix C.

Families paid markedly different amounts depending on the level of deprivation of the area they lived in. Those in the most affluent areas paid a median of £27 per week compared with £13 for those in the most deprived areas (see Table C5.3 in Appendix C). This reflects patterns of childcare use, with families in more deprived areas being less likely to work and correspondingly less likely to use a lot of paid childcare.

How many families were making payments in kind?

We saw in Table 5.1 that only 8% of parents using informal care paid these carers for their help with providing childcare. This section explores whether parents made any payment in kind to informal carers such as looking after their children in return, doing favours, giving gifts etc. instead of (or as well as) a financial payment:

- Payment in kind was most common for friends/ neighbours: 66% of parents using friends/ neighbours for childcare had made some form of payment in kind, mostly looking after children in return (49%), gifts/ treats (16%) or other favours (11%);

- 41% of parents using grandparents had made a payment in kind in the last week, mostly gifts/ treats (30%) or other favours (16%);

- 46% of parents using older brothers/ sisters and 45% of parents using other relatives for childcare had made a payment in kind – for older brothers/ sisters gifts/ treats were most common, but for other relatives a wider range of payments in kind were used, including looking after children in return (18%, see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5   Payment in kind by informal provider type

Base: Families using provider type

| | **Payment in kind** | | | | | | |
| | None % | Looked after children % | Did favour % | Gave gift/ treat % | Something else % | *Weighted base* | *Unweighted base* |
Use of childcare							
Grandparent	59	1	16	30	1	*1740*	*1821*
Older sibling	54	5	10	35	1	*351*	*264*
Other relative	55	18	13	19	+	*395*	*400*
Friend/ neighbour	34	49	11	16	1	*442*	*458*

NB: Row percentages

5.3   Financial help with childcare costs

How many families were receiving help with childcare costs?

Families were asked whether they received any financial help towards childcare costs from a list of sources, such as: the Local Education Authority (e.g. the entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds); an employer (in the form of childcare vouchers, a workplace nursery and/ or payments made directly to a childcare provider); or an ex-partner[55].

Overall, 16% of families who used childcare in the reference week reported that they had received financial help from one or more external sources (13% said care was paid for by a combination of family payments and payment from others, whilst 3% said that *all* the costs of their childcare were paid for by others). This represents the same proportion as in 2008 (table not shown).

Unsurprisingly, financial help with childcare was much more common among those using formal childcare than those only using informal care: 21% of families using formal care received help compared to only 2% of those using informal (or 'other' care) only (table not shown). These figures should be interpreted with some caution because a substantial proportion of respondents reported using formal providers, but that no payment was made either by themselves, or by another organisation or individual. Formal providers are, ordinarily, paid for by somebody, so this suggests that many parents appear not to consider their early years education place to be 'paid for' or are not aware of who is paying for the childcare they use[56].

Since financial help was generally received for formal care, Table 5.6 focuses just on families that used formal childcare and shows that the most common source of financial help was the Local Education Authority (13% - usually the entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds). A further 6% of families using formal care received help

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[55] Financial assistance through the tax credit system was asked separately and is discussed in section 5.4.
[56] This under-reporting means that it is not advisable to combine the proportions of families and other organisations/individuals who pay for care to produce an overall rate for 'any paid childcare used'. Changes to the questionnaire in 2008 also mean it is not possible to compare these rates with figures reported for earlier survey years.

from their employer, whilst help from Social Services and ex-partners was received by 1% of families each.

Amongst families who used formal childcare, those with pre-school children were substantially more likely to receive help with the cost of childcare than families with school-age children only (see Table 5.6). It was only families with pre-school children who received help from the Local Education Authority, and they were much more likely to receive help from employers than families with school-age children (perhaps because the median weekly cost of out-of-school activities are much lower than cost of childcare for pre-school children, making it less worthwhile for families to spend time organising childcare vouchers etc).

Table 5.6   Financial help from others, by family characteristics

Base: Families using formal childcare in reference week

| | **Financial help from others** | | | | | | |
Family characteristics	None %	LEA %	Social Services %	Employer %	Ex-partner %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	79	13	1	6	1	*3690*	*4187*
Family type							
Couple	78	14	+	8	1	*2739*	*3239*
Lone parent (LP)	80	11	2	1	4	*951*	*948*
Family working status							
Couple – both working	77	13	+	11	1	*1838*	*2046*
Couple – one working	80	16	+	3	1	*760*	*1006*
Couple – neither working	81	18	1	0	0	*141*	*187*
LP – working	82	7	2	1	5	*521*	*444*
LP– not working	77	16	2	+	2	*431*	*504*
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	75	19	1	0	2	*300*	*297*
£10,000-£19,999	82	11	2	+	2	*714*	*831*
£20,000-£29,999	84	12	1	1	2	*617*	*731*
£30,000-£44,999	80	13	1	5	2	*740*	*834*
£45,000+	73	14	+	16	1	*1106*	*1263*
Number of children							
1	80	10	1	6	2	*1321*	*812*
2	78	14	+	8	1	*1692*	*2067*
3+	79	16	1	4	1	*677*	*1308*
Age of children							
Pre-school only	59	28	+	13	1	*970*	*967*
Pre- and school-age	71	20	1	8	1	*1044*	*1716*
School-age only	95	+	1	2	1	*1676*	*1504*

NB: Row percentages

Still looking at families using formal care, families towards the top of the income range (earning more than £45,000 per year) and those in the lowest quintile (earning less than £10,000 per year) were more likely to receive help from others than those in the middle (Table 5.6). Those in the higher income quintiles were more likely to receive help from employers (16%), whilst families in the bottom income quintile were most likely to receive help from the Local Education Authority (19%, see Table 5.6).

Turning to work status, working lone parents using formal care tend to have older children and were correspondingly less likely than other family types to receive help from Local Education Authority. Instead they were more likely to have received help from ex-partners (Table 5.6). Dual earning couples on the other hand were more likely to receive help with the costs of their formal care from employers than either sole earning couples or working lone parents (11% compared with 3% and 1% respectively).

Help from employers

Employers can offer three types of childcare support which qualify for exemption 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, the employee does not have to pay Income Tax or National Insurance contributions on the first £55 per week or £243 per month. If an employer provides a workplace nursery, employees do not have to pay any Income Tax or National Insurance contributions on it at all.

We saw earlier that 6% of families using formal care received help with childcare costs from their employer (Table 5.6). Most help from employers came in the form of childcare vouchers (74%) or through directly contracted childcare (21%, see Table 5.7). Most employer support was implemented through salary sacrifice schemes (86%), with only 6% of parents receiving help in addition to salary and 9% as a flexible benefits package. This kind of support predominantly benefited high earners: 73% of families who received help from employers had a household income of £45,000 or more and a further 15% earned between £30,000 and £44,999 (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Employer assistance with childcare costs

Base: Families who paid for childcare and received financial help from employer

Financial help/ Income	%
Type of financial help from employer	
Childcare vouchers	74
Directly contracted childcare	21
Childcare provider is at respondent's/ partner's work	1
Other	8
Nature of financial help	
Salary sacrifice	86
Flexible benefits package only	9
Addition to salary	6
Family Income	
Under £9,999	0
£10,000-19,999	1
£20,000-29,999	4
£30,000-44,999	15
£45,000 or more	73
Weighted base	*232*
Unweighted base	*269*

5.4 Tax credits

How many families reported receiving tax credits?

Seventy-one per cent of all families interviewed received Child Tax Credit, either on its own (46%) or along with Working Tax Credit (25%, see Table 5.8)[57]. The proportion of all families who were receiving Working Tax Credit has not varied greatly since the survey series began in 2004. However the proportion of families claiming Child Tax Credit has increased from 64% in 2004 to 71% in 2009[58].

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[57] Families are eligible for Child Tax Credit if they have at least one child and an income of less than £50,000 per year. Families are eligible for Working Tax Credit if they have children and at least one partner works for 16 hours or more a week and are on a low income. Since not all families interviewed would have been eligible to receive tax credits, these figures reflect the overall proportion of the entire population of families with children aged 0-14 who were receiving tax credits, not the take-up rate of Tax Credits among the eligible population.

[58] The apparent increase in proportion of families claiming tax credits in 2009 compared to 2008 is not statistically significant, but the difference between 2004 and 2009 is statistically significant.

Table 5.8 Receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, 2004-2009

Base: All families

Tax credits received	Survey year			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%
None	36	34	32	29
Child Tax Credit only	38	42	43	46
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	27	25	25	25
Weighted base	*7703*	*7052*	*7008*	*6671*
Unweighted base	*7691*	*7054*	*7004*	*6667*

Families claiming Working Tax Credit (WTC) were asked whether they received extra money specifically to cover the costs of childcare (i.e. the childcare element). Overall 14% of all families who were receiving Working Tax Credit reported receiving the childcare element (Table 5.9)[59]. Receipt of the childcare element has also increased significantly from 11% of those claiming WTC in 2004 to 14% in 2009.

Table 5.9 Receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, 2004-2009

Base: Families receiving Working Tax Credit

Tax credits received	Survey year			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%
Childcare element of WTC received	11	10	14	14
Weighted base	*2044*	*1729*	*1757*	*1646*
Unweighted base	*2034*	*1750*	*1737*	*1621*

Looking just at working families, Table 5.10 shows that 30% of families with one or more parents in work were receiving Working Tax Credit (69% of working lone parents, 35% of couple families where one parent worked and 16% of couple families where both parents worked).

Table 5.10 Working families' receipt of Working Tax Credit

Base: Working families

Tax credits received	Couple - both working	Couple - one working	Lone parent - working	All working families
	%	%	%	%
Working Tax Credit	16	35	69	30
Weighted base	*3081*	*1430*	*906*	*5418*
Unweighted base	*3025*	*1627*	*718*	*5370*

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[59] This equates to 29% of those using paid care (table not shown). These figures do not reflect the rate of take-up of the childcare element among potential beneficiaries. To receive the childcare element families need to use registered or approved childcare, in addition to meeting the requirements regarding the number of hours worked (the childcare element is generally only available to couples where both partners work 16 or more hours a week) and household income.

Turning to the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, 24% of working lone parents who received the Working Tax Credit received the childcare element. This was the case for 15% of dual-earning couples and 2% of single-earner couples (table not shown).

5.5   How much tax credit were families receiving?

The majority of families (89%) were able to report how much Working Tax Credit and/ or Child Tax Credit they received. Around a third (38%) of respondents were able to consult an HMRC statement whilst answering the survey questions which improved respondents' ability to report the amount they received. Ninety-six per cent of those who could produce a notice were able to say how much WTC and/ or CTC they received compared to 84% of those who did not refer to a notice. Families receiving Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit received an average of £119 per week (median). The average amount received by those only receiving Child Tax Credit was £45 (median).

Of the families who were receiving Working Tax Credit, 94% knew whether or not they were receiving the childcare element. In most cases (80%) these families were not receiving the childcare element, 14% said they were receiving it and a further 6% were not sure. These figures were unchanged from 2008.

Of the families who knew they were receiving the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, 65% were able to tell the interviewer how much they were receiving as the childcare element. This had increased from 55% in 2008, an increase which, at least in part, may be attributable to recent changes in how the childcare element is reported on families' tax credit statements.

For those who knew how much childcare element they were receiving, the average (median) amount of childcare element parents reported receiving was £50 per week. However the relatively high proportion of families who did not know how much they were receiving (45%) means this figure should be treated with caution Also, it is possible that the HMRC statement may not have included the full figure that the family was allocated for the childcare element because whilst some families' statements report the full figure separately, for others it will be included within other tax credit figures on their statement.

How many non-claiming families were aware of the Working Tax Credit childcare element?

Families who were not receiving the childcare element of Working Tax Credit were asked whether they were aware that the Government offered extra help with the costs of certain types of childcare through the tax credit system. Sixty-six percent said they were aware of the childcare element (table not shown), indicating that the level of awareness of the childcare element has remained stable over 2004-2009.

Why did families not take-up childcare element of the Working Tax Credit?

Families who were aware of the childcare element (but not already receiving it) and who had used childcare in the last week were asked why they were not claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (Table 5.11):

- Two-thirds (66%) of non-claimants indicated that they were not, or did not believe they were, eligible for tax credits, mostly because their earnings were too high (34%) or because they did not use formal childcare (24%);

- 22% indicated that they did not believe that claiming tax credits was worthwhile, mostly because their childcare costs were too low (15%);

- 11% of non-claimants appeared to be put off by the complexity of the tax credit system – 6% said they did not understand tax credits, 3% that it would take too long to make a claim and 2% that it was too much trouble to inform HMRC about changes to their circumstances.

Table 5.11 Reasons families did not claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit

Base: Families not receiving childcare element, but who knew about it (and had used childcare in the last week)

Reasons	%
Not eligible (or does not believe eligible) for tax credits	**66**
Earn too much to qualify	34
No formal care/ Prefer to use informal care	24
Respondent/ Partner does not work (so do not qualify)	4
Do not qualify/ aren't entitled	4
No suitable providers in area	2
Believes not worth claiming	**22**
Childcare costs are too low to make it worthwhile	15
Only need childcare in the holidays so not worth it	3
Working hours make it difficult to use sufficient formal childcare to make it worthwhile	2
Childcare would still be unaffordable even with tax credits	2
Better off taking up alternative forms of financial support	1
Put off by complexity	**11**
Do not understand tax credits	6
Too much work/ takes too long to make a claim	3
Too much trouble to inform HMRC about changes	2
Previously had problems with overpayments when claiming tax credits	2
Other reason	10
Weighted base	*3099*
Unweighted base	*3258*

5.6 Difficulties with childcare costs

Families who had paid for childcare in the last week were asked "*Given your family income, how easy or difficult do you find it to pay this amount per week for childcare?*" with answer codes ranging from very easy to very difficult on a five-point scale.

Just over three-quarters of families reported that they did not have significant problems covering their childcare costs: 50% said it was very easy or easy to pay for their childcare, whilst 26% said they found it neither easy nor difficult. Just under a quarter (24%) said they found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs (Figure 5.4). These figures show no significant change from 2004 (where 52% found it very easy or easy to meet their childcare cost and 22% found it difficult or very difficult).

Figure 5.4 Difficulty paying for childcare

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week
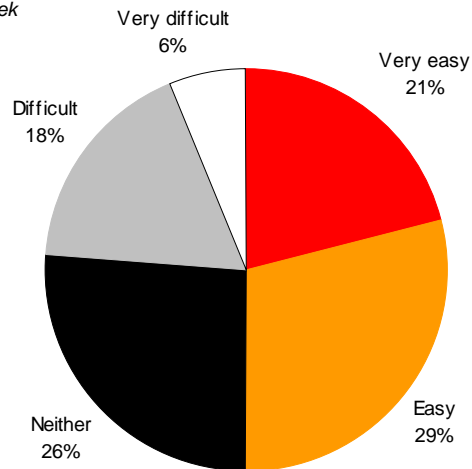
Source: Table C5.4 in Appendix C.

The proportion of families finding it difficult or very difficult to cover childcare costs differed between lone parents and couple families, and working versus non working families. Lone parents paying for childcare were more likely than couples paying for childcare to find it difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs (34% compared to 20%, see Table C5.4 in Appendix C). This was true for both working and non working families: working lone parents paying for childcare were much more likely than working couples paying for childcare to find it difficult to meet childcare costs (32% compared to 22% of couples where one partner was in work and 20% of couples where both were working, see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Difficulty paying for childcare, by family type and work status

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week   ■ Both working ■ One working ■ Neither working
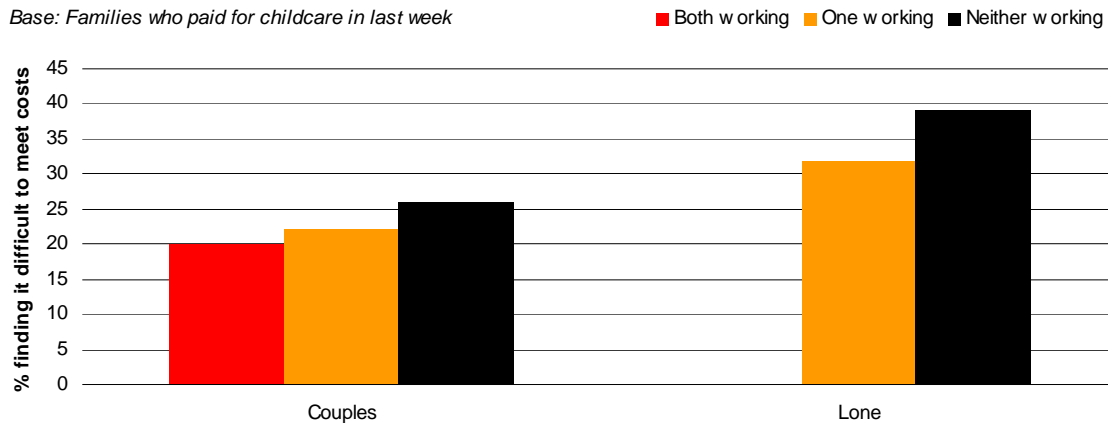
Source: Table C5.4 in Appendix C.

There were corresponding differences by family income - lower income families were much more likely than higher income families to find it difficult to meet childcare costs (Table C5.4 in Appendix C).

Difficulty paying was also related to the cost of childcare. Those families with the largest weekly bills (£80 per week or more) were significantly more likely to find it difficult to pay (Table C5.5 in Appendix C). This is despite the fact that higher spending on childcare was associated with families being in work and having higher incomes – characteristics that are associated with reduced difficulty in paying.

5.7   Summary

Asking parents about childcare costs and recording the information as survey data is complex. A major finding from earlier years of the Childcare and Early Years Survey series was that whilst most, if not all, parents appear to be able to talk confidently about money they paid out 'of their own pocket', they are often less clear about the detail of the financial help they received from others or through tax credits[60]. This chapter has set out the information that parents were able to provide, but has also discussed the potential significance of the gaps in parents' awareness of the help that they receive or which is available to them.

Overall, 59% of families who used childcare in the reference week reported they had paid for some or all of that care. More parents paid formal providers than informal providers, although a small proportion of families who used relatives and friends did make some payment for it (8%), and payment in kind (e.g. doing return favours, buying gifts) was quite common. Forty-one per cent of parents who used grandparents made some payment in kind and 66% of parents made a payment in kind for friends and neighbours.

The overall median weekly amount paid by families 'out of their own pockets' (£21) hides wide variability in costs between families in different circumstances and using different

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[60] For a full discussion of these issues and the implications of changes to the questionnaire for trend data, see Speight et al. (2009).

providers. While there were some differences in the costs paid by different types of families and families living in different areas of the country, most differences appear to be accounted for by the age of the children and different patterns of childcare use. Families paid the most for the childcare used by 0-2 year olds that offer care for a full day (e.g. day nurseries).

Sixteen per cent of families using childcare reported they had received financial help from others, including the Local Authority, their employer or ex-partners. 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 years education place to be 'paid for'. Parents most commonly reported getting financial assistance from Local Authorities, followed by employers. Help from employers was mostly in the form of childcare vouchers paid for by salary sacrifice.

Seventy-one per cent of families reported receiving Child Tax Credit, 46% on its own and 25% with Working Tax Credit (WTC).[61] Some, but not all, families receiving WTC are eligible for additional tax credits to help with childcare costs: 14 per cent of families receiving WTC said they received the childcare element of the tax credit. Sixty-six per cent of families receiving WTC but not the childcare element said they were aware of the extra money available for childcare. The most common reason for not claiming the childcare element was because families did not qualify or did not think they qualified, either because their earnings were too high or because they did not use appropriate childcare.

Overall, 24% of families paying for childcare said they found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs. Lone parents, low income families, and those with the highest weekly bills, were most likely to struggle with their childcare costs.

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[61] Families are eligible for Child Tax Credit if they have at least one child and an income of less than £50,000 per year. Families are eligible for Working Tax Credit if they have children and at least one partner works for 16 hours or more a week and are on a low income.

6   Factors affecting decisions about childcare

6.1   Introduction

Given that childcare policy from 1997 to 2010 under the Labour administration focused almost exclusively on formal childcare, parents' decisions about the childcare packages they use, and in particular why those from disadvantaged groups are less likely to use formal childcare, continues to be of interest to policy makers. The links between childcare use and disadvantage are complex, as are the individual decisions that families make about care. It is difficult to disentangle, for example, how families balance the choices and constraints they face regarding work and income (whether to work, how much to work etc.) with their choices and constraints around childcare. As a result it is difficult to tell to what extent those that do not use formal childcare do not want or need it, or are unable or think they are unable to afford it.

Previous research has shown that the majority of families not using childcare report a preference for parental care (Speight et al. 2009). This choice reflects the different values that parents balance when making decisions about their family life and children's welfare, values which are sometimes influenced by the cultural norms of the communities in which they live. However this preference may also be related to their perceptions of the childcare available in their local area, which in turn may be influenced by where families get their information from. As such, Government has placed high importance on ensuring that parents have access to up-to-date, comprehensive and accurate information about formal childcare in their local area (HM Government 2009).

This chapter begins by exploring how parents access information about childcare (section 6.2): where do they get their information from? How useful are those sources? Do parents feel they have enough information about childcare in their local area? In section 6.3, attention then turns to parents' perceptions about local provision: is there enough childcare available in their local area? Is it of sufficient quality? Is it affordable? Throughout this analysis special attention is given to families who are on low incomes - is there any evidence of a relationship between economic disadvantage and reduced access to information about childcare or negative views of local provision?

The remainder of the chapter then focuses on specific sub-groups who do not use childcare to explore their reasons for not doing so. These sub-groups include families with school-age children who are not using before or after-school care (section 6.4); families who did not use any childcare in the last year (section 6.5); families not currently using nursery education for their 0-2 year olds (section 6.6); and families with disabled children (section 6.7).

Most analysis in this chapter explores the views and experiences of *families.* The exceptions are the last two sections (those not using nursery education and disabled children) which focus on one child in the family (the *selected child* – see Chapter 1).

6.2 Access to information about childcare

Improving the quality and accessibility of information about childcare (e.g. through Families Information Services provided by Local Authorities and other Government supported routes) was one of the key objectives of the Government's Childcare Strategy (HM Government 2009).[62]

Where do parents get information from?

Overall, 62% of parents had used one or more sources of information about childcare in the last year (see Table 6.1). Parents tended to rely on locally available information, mostly from people/ organisations they regularly encountered in their everyday lives. They most frequently mentioned finding out about childcare from talking to friends and relatives (word-of-mouth - 37%), followed by information provided by school (23% - perhaps related to the high proportion of families who used before/ after-school clubs based on the school site, see section 2.2).

A significant minority of parents had used local or national Government sources: Sure Start/ Children's Centres were mentioned by 10% of parents[63], Local Authorities by 8%, and Families Information Services, Jobcentre Plus and health visitors by 5% each. Eight per cent of parents also mentioned local advertising (e.g. adverts in shop windows or local newspapers, see Table 6.1).

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[62] Families Information Services are also known as Children's Information Services / Families Information Services / Parents' Information / Information for Parents.
[63] Sure Start/ Children's Centre was added to the show card as a substantive code for the first time in 2009. This will have contributed to the increase in the rate that Sure Start / Children's Centres was mentioned between 2008 and 2009.

Base: All families

| | Childcare used in reference week | | | |
| | Used formal % | Informal (or other) childcare only % | No childcare used % | All % |
Source of information				
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	44	29	28	37
School	27	19	17	23
Local Authority/ NHS				
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	11	11	8	10
Local Authority	10	6	5	8
Families Information Services	7	3	4	5
Health visitor/ clinic	6	6	4	5
Doctor's surgery	2	2	3	3
Other National Government Sources				
Jobcentre Plus/ Benefits Office	4	5	7	5
ChildcareLink (national helpline/ website)	4	1	1	3
Direct.Gov website	5	3	3	4
Other Local Sources				
Local advertising	9	8	5	8
Local library	4	4	3	4
Childcare provider	6	3	3	4
Employer	3	3	2	3
Yellow Pages	1	1	1	1
Other Internet site	6	3	2	5
Other	1	1	2	1
None	30	47	49	38
Weighted base	*3685*	*1223*	*1795*	*6702*
Unweighted base	*4182*	*972*	*1548*	*6702*

Those who had used formal childcare providers in the reference week were more likely to have sought information than those who had used only informal care or no care at all (70% compared with 53% and 51% - Table 6.1). In particular they were also more likely to have used word of mouth, a school, the Local Authority and Families Information Services as well as their childcare provider (Table 6.1).

Other differences according to family characteristics (see Table C6.1a and Table C6.1b in Appendix C) are likely to be related to patterns of formal care use. For example, section 2.4 showed that families with 3-4 year olds were substantially more likely to use childcare than families with older children. It therefore follows that parents with pre-school children were much more likely to have used any sources of information and more likely to have used word-of-mouth, Sure Start/ Children's Centres and/ or the Local Authority. Parents of school-age children were more likely to have used a school as a

source of childcare information, which is to be expected as parents of school-age children will have more contact with school, and in particular will probably receive information about before and after-school clubs directly from the school (Table C6.1b in Appendix C).

Turning to work and income - section 2.7 showed that the work status and income of the family were independently associated with use of formal care (for pre-school and school-age children). Correspondingly, families on low incomes (less than £19,999) were less likely than higher income families to mention word-of mouth and school as sources of information about childcare (Table C6.1b in Appendix C). This follows the findings from secondary analysis of the 2008 study which found a strong linear association between the level of disadvantage in families and how likely parents were to say that they received information about childcare through word of mouth (Speight et al. 2010).

Families on very low incomes (less than £10,000 per year) were more likely than wealthier families to mention Jobcentre Plus (19%), Sure Start/ Children's Centres (16%) and health visitors (Table C6.1b in Appendix C). These are information sources which disadvantaged families may be particularly likely to contact, either because they are not working and so receiving benefits through Jobcentre Plus, or because Children's Centres were initially rolled out in disadvantaged areas and so may be more established in disadvantaged families' neighbourhoods.

Were the sources of information helpful?

Table 6.2 concentrates on the most commonly used sources of information and reports on parents' views of how helpful they had found them. Families Information Services, health visitors, schools and Children's Centres, and word of mouth were all rated as very or quite helpful by over 80% of parents. Those families who had used their Local Authority or local advertising as sources of information were a little less likely to have found them helpful (76% and 73% respectively) and, instead were more likely to have found them either not very helpful or not helpful at all (10% and 9% - Table 6.2). These figures show no statistically significant changes from 2008.

Satisfaction was lowest with information from Jobcentre Plus - 68% of families using Jobcentre Plus for childcare information said it was very or quite helpful and, 21% said it was not very helpful/ not at all helpful (Table 6.2). This is of particular concern as, along with health visitors, Jobcentres were the information sources more commonly used by low income families.

Table 6.2   Helpfulness of main childcare information sources

Base: Families using particular information source

Source of information	Very/ quite helpful %	Neither helpful nor unhelpful %	Not very/ not at all helpful %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Word of mouth	81	14	4	*2479*	*2618*
Families Information Services	84	11	5	*366*	*385*
Health visitor	84	9	7	*355*	*395*
School	83	12	5	*1538*	*1646*
Sure Start/ Children's Centres	80	13	7	*668*	*725*
Local Authority	76	14	10	*515*	*523*
Local Advertising	73	19	9	*493*	*500*
Jobcentre Plus	68	11	21	*317*	*314*

NB: Row percentages

Awareness and use of Families Information Services

Since April 2008, Local Authorities have had an enhanced duty to provide a range of information which parents may need in order to support their children until they are 20 years old. This duty is normally delivered through local Families Information Services (FIS), although the name of the service may vary in different areas[64]. Families Information Services are funded by Local Authorities and are either provided directly by them or delivered by other organisations on a contract basis (DCSF 2009).

Families Information Services act as a central information point to support parents and carers by providing information on childcare and early years services in the local area, the entitlement to free early years provision, and childcare settings that are suitable for children with disabilities or special educational needs. They also establish and run brokerage services for parents who find it difficult to access the childcare they need; provide local information about other services which families may need; and are tasked with reaching out to disadvantaged families who might otherwise find it difficult to take-up the services they need.

Around a third (31%) of families had heard of the FIS, with just under half of these (13%) ever having used it (Figure 6.1). This shows no significant difference from 2008, but both awareness and use of the FIS have increased since 2004 (Table C6.2 in Appendix C). Encouragingly, satisfaction with the FIS among those who had used it was high, 84% of those using the service had found it very or quite helpful (Table 6.2).

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[64] Prior to April 2008, Local Authorities met their information duty by running Children's Information Services (CISs) – the generic name for services provided by Local Authorities from April 2008 changed to Families Information Services. Families Information Services were referred to in the questionnaire as 'Children's Information Services / Families Information Services / Parents' Information / Information for Parents'.

Figure 6.1 Awareness and use of Families Information Services (FIS)

Base: All families
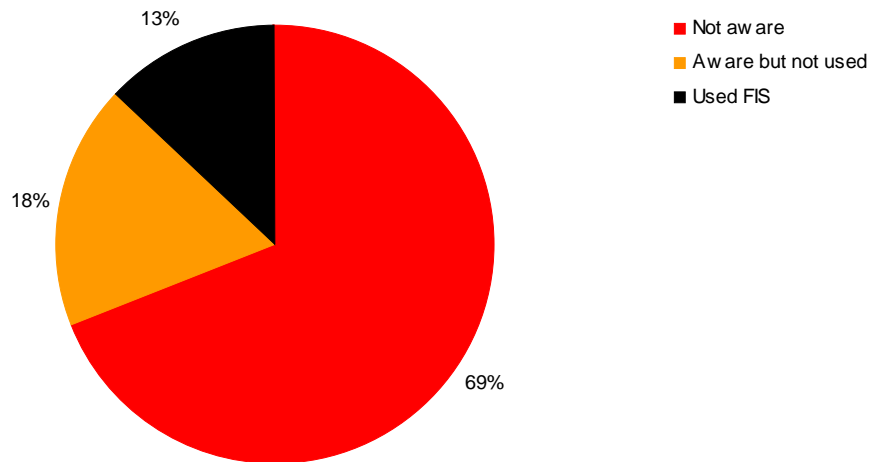
Source: Table C6.2 in Appendix C

Secondary analysis of the 2008 Childcare Survey found that parents of the most disadvantaged families were less likely to use Families Information Services (Speight et al. 2010), and the same is true in 2009. In part this reflects the fact that the most disadvantaged families are less likely to use formal childcare and correspondingly less likely to seek information from FIS. However, even where lower income families used formal childcare, they were less likely to be aware of FIS than higher income families who used formal childcare (26% of families with a household income under £10,000 compared with 42% of families whose income was £45,000 or more, table not shown).

Do parents get enough information?

Just under half of parents (45%) felt they had enough information about childcare services in their local area. Thirty-eight per cent of parents felt they had too little information, with a further 16% were unsure. These proportions show no significant difference compared to those for 2008. However they represent an improvement since 2004: compared to 2004 fewer parents in 2009 felt unsure about the level of information they had available to them and more parents reported that they had the right level of information (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3   Level of information about childcare in local area, 2004-09

Base: All families

	Survey year			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
Level of information	%	%	%	%
About right	38	43	43	45
Too much	1	1	2	1
Too little	38	35	37	38
Not sure or don't know	23	21	19	16
Weighted base	7798	7136	7074	6708
Unweighted base	7797	7136	7074	6708

Parents who had used formal childcare were more likely to have an opinion on the amount of information available to them (only 12% were unsure whether they had enough information compared with 18%-22% for the other groups). They were also more positive about the level of information available - with 47% saying the amount of information available to them was about right, compared to 43% of parents who used informal (or other) care only and 40% of parents who had not used any childcare in the reference week (Table C6.3 in Appendix C).

In terms of other family characteristics, the proportions of different family types saying they had the right amount of information was consistent with those more likely to use formal care: couple parents, those with higher family incomes, those with fewer children, and those with pre-school children only (Table C6.3 in Appendix C).

Multivariate logistic regression was used to disentangle the effects of these different factors. This showed that when controlling for childcare use and other characteristics, the only factor that was independently associated with whether families thought they had the right amount of information was whether or not they had pre-school children. Specifically, families with pre-school children were more likely to think they had the right amount of information about childcare whilst those with school-age children thought that they did not, or were not sure.

What further information would parents want?

Parents who thought they had too little information about childcare and those who were unsure were asked what further information they would like. Parents who felt they had too little information were most likely to say they would like more general information on childcare in the local area, costs of childcare and childcare during the school holidays (all mentioned by over 40%). Quality of childcare, childcare before or after the school day, hours of childcare and childcare for older children were also each mentioned by 24%-28% (see Table 6.4).

Responses by those who were not sure whether they had enough information followed a similar pattern, although they were substantially more likely to say that they did not need information (27% compared with 3%, see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Further information required

Base: All families with too little information about childcare or not sure

	Level of information	
	Too little	Not sure
What further information required	%	%
Costs of childcare available	43	19
During school holidays	42	17
Quality of childcare available	28	10
Before/ after the school day	26	8
Hours of childcare available	26	8
Childcare for older children	24	9
Pre-school childcare	19	7
Schools	12	10
Childminders, nannies, au-pairs	9	4
Childcare for children with special needs/ disabilities	1	0
General information on childcare in local area	44	25
Other information	3	3
Don't need information	3	27
Don't need childcare	1	8
Weighted base	*2522*	*941*
Unweighted base	*2532*	*855*

6.3 Perceptions of provision in the local area

Parents' knowledge of provision in the local area

Parents were asked a series of questions about childcare and early years provision in their local area:

- *"Please now think about the overall number of places at childcare providers in your local area, that is, places at the types of formal provider shown at the top of this card. Currently, would you say there are too many places, about the right number or not enough?"*

- *"And thinking about the overall quality of childcare provided in your local area, how good would you say this is?"*

- *"And thinking about the overall affordability of childcare provided in your local area, for a family like yours, how good would you say it is?"*

About one-quarter of parents found these questions difficult to answer: 23% were not sure of their answer regarding the availability of childcare in their local area, 25% were unsure about quality, 27% unsure about affordability (see Table C6.5, Table C6.8 and Table C6.11 in Appendix C).

As we saw for views on the availability of information, the types of families who did not use formal care, and particularly those who did not use childcare at all in the reference week, were less likely to be able to answer the questions about childcare in the local area; they were instead most likely to be unsure of their answers. For instance, whilst

only 22% of dual earning couples were not sure whether there were enough childcare places in their local area, this was the case for 32% of couples where neither parent was in work (see Table C6.5 in Appendix C). However, it was not use of formal childcare per se that meant that these groups were less likely to be able to answer the questions. Multivariate logistic regression shows that almost all the socio-demographic factors that are associated with take-up of formal childcare (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C) were also independently associated with ability to provide a view on childcare in the local area[65].

Perceptions of availability

Overall, 42% of parents thought that there were about the right number of childcare places in their local area, while 34% thought there were not enough. Only 1% thought there were too many. There has been a trend since 2004 whereby parents are now less likely to say that there were not enough places in their local area (34% compared with 40% in 2004), but were instead more likely to say that they were unsure about the availability of childcare places in the local area (23% compared with 19% in 2004, see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Perceptions of availability of local childcare places, 2004-2009
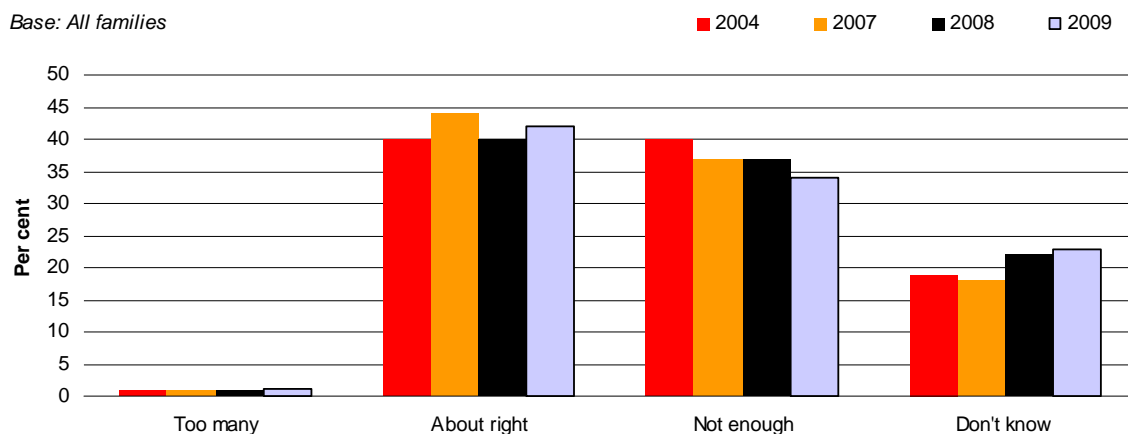
Source: Table C6.4 in Appendix C

As in 2008, exploring views of childcare availability according to family characteristics reveals a complex picture. As discussed above, those using formal childcare were more likely to be able to give a view about availability. They were correspondingly more likely both to say that there were about the right number of places and to say there were not enough.

Multivariate logistic regression reveals that the key factors associated with views on the availability of local childcare places were use of formal childcare and family work status:

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[65] 1) Income was not significantly associated with knowledge regarding availability when other factors were controlled for. 2) Number of children in the household was not significantly associated with knowledge regarding affordability when other factors were controlled for. 3) Family work status and number of children in the household was not significantly associated with knowledge regarding quality when other factors were controlled for.

- Families who used formal childcare were more likely than families who used no childcare to think that there were not enough childcare places locally;
- Similarly, working lone parents were more likely than dual earning couples to think that there were not enough local childcare places.

Perceptions of quality

Parents' perceptions of the quality of childcare in their area show a slight improvement over the survey time series (Figure 6.3). In 2009, 64% of parents thought that provision in their area was either very good (21%) or fairly good (43%). This represents an increase from 61% in 2004.

Figure 6.3 Perceptions of quality of local childcare places, 2004-2008
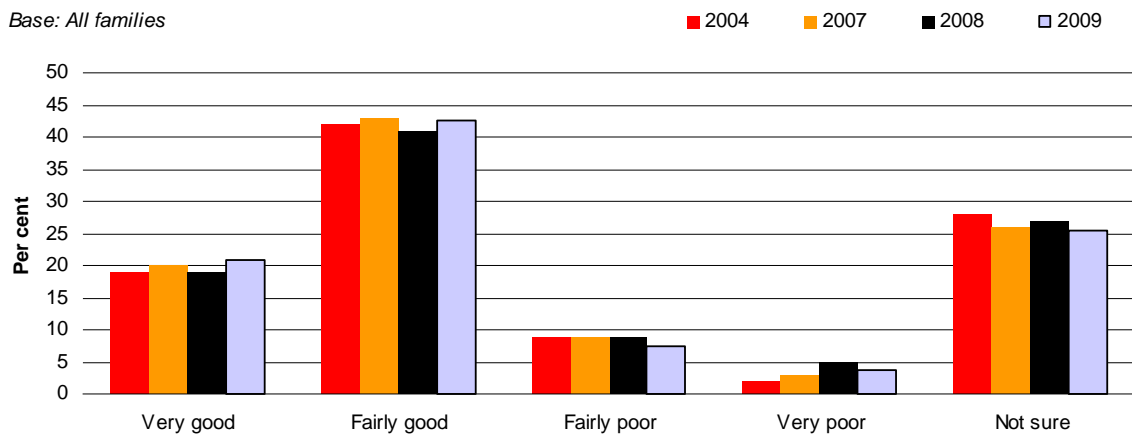
Source: Table C6.7 in Appendix C

A number of factors were independently associated with views on quality. The results of multivariate logistic regression demonstrated that:

- Families who used formal childcare were more positive about the quality of local childcare than those who used no childcare;
- Dual earning couples were more positive about childcare quality than both non working couples and non working lone parents;
- Higher income families were more positive about childcare quality than those with lower incomes;
- Families with pre-school children were more positive than families with school-age children only.

Perceptions of affordability

Parents were asked about the overall affordability of childcare provided in their local area. Overall, the proportion assessing it as very or fairly good (37%) was similar to that assessing it as very or fairly poor (36%). These proportions showed no statistically significant change over the survey period (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4 Perceptions of affordability of local childcare places, 2004-2008

Base: All families
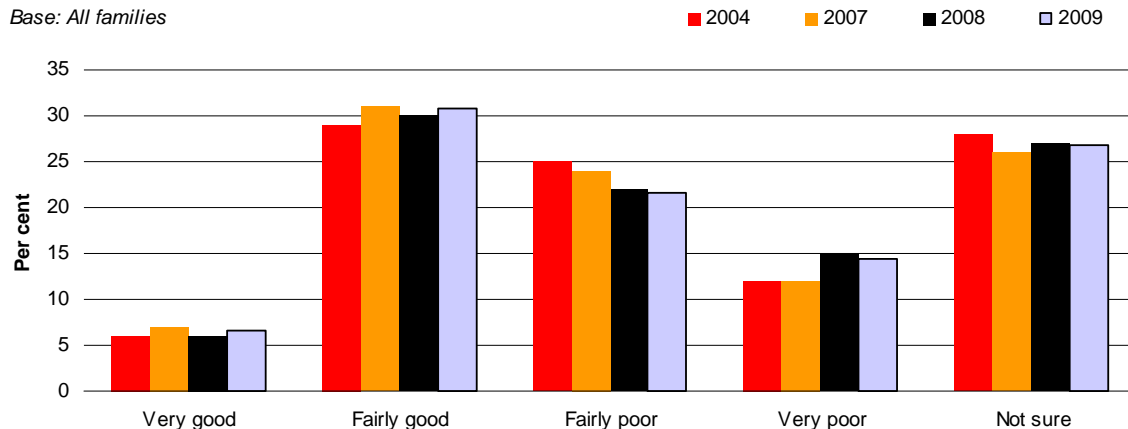
Source: Table C6.10 in Appendix C

As we saw for views on quality, a number of factors were independently associated with parents' perceptions of the affordability of local childcare. The results of multivariate logistic regression demonstrated that:

- Families who used formal childcare were more positive about the affordability of local childcare than those who used no childcare;
- Higher income families were more positive about affordability than those on lower incomes;
- Families with one or two children were more positive than families with three or more;
- Families with pre-school children were more positive about affordability than families with school-age children only.

6.4   Demand for childcare outside of school hours

Provision for 5-14 year olds outside of school hours is a priority area for the 10-Year Childcare Strategy (HM Government 2009) and has largely been addressed through the Extended Schools agenda[66]. To help inform the development of this initiative, parents with school-age children who said that before or after-school care was not offered at their child's school were asked a series of questions to gauge their demand for such care[67].

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[66] Extended Schools work with the Local Authority and other partners to offer: a varied menu of activities, community access to school facilities, swift and easy access to target and specialist services, and parenting support (HM Government 2007).

[67] For the early part of 2009 fieldwork questions were restricted to those families who had used childcare in the reference week (due to a routing error in the questionnaire). This analysis therefore focuses on the second half of fieldwork in Autumn 2009, where the question was asked of all families who said that before or after-school care was not offered at their school.

Why did families not use out-of-school clubs?

Among those families in which children aged 5-14 had *not* used a before/ after-school club in the reference week, 57% said the school did offer before-school provision and 81% said the school did offer after-school provision (on the school-site or elsewhere – table not shown). So, for a large proportion of families, the provision was there if they had wanted to use it (although the questionnaire did not specifically ask about the current availability of places at these providers).

Families who said that breakfast/ after-school clubs were available at their child's school, but who had not used them in the reference week were asked why they were not using the provision. The findings are presented in Table 6.5.

Where *before-schoo*l provision was offered but not used, the most common reasons for not using that provision were to do with personal choice: that children did not want to go (32%), that respondent did not need to be away from children (26%) or preferred to look after children at home (20%). Fewer families appeared to be constrained by cost, timing or availability: 10% said they were not using before-school provision because it was too expensive, 7% because the times were not suitable, 2% because they could not get a place and 2% because of transport difficulties (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Reasons for not using before/ after-school clubs

Base: Families with child(ren) aged 5-14 who did not use a before/ after-school club at school

Reasons	Before-school %	After-school %
Child or parents' choice		
Child(ren) didn't want to go/ didn't like it	32	43
No need to be away from children	26	13
Prefer to look after children at home	20	11
Attended activities elsewhere	n/a	3
Constraints around nature of care		
Not suitable for child's age	4	7
Too expensive/ cannot afford	10	6
Difficult combining activities with work/ times not suitable	7	6
Full/ could not get a place	2	3
Transport difficulties	2	3
Other/ one-off	17	22
Weighted base	*973*	*1415*
Unweighted base	*1042*	*1411*

Where *after*-school provision was offered but had not been used, again personal choice was the most common reason, but compared to before-school provision this appeared to be more on the child's part rather than parental choice: 43% said they were not using after-school clubs because their child did not want to go, whilst only 13% said they did not need to be away from children, and 11% preferred to look after children at home. Again suitability, cost, timing, accessibility or transport constraints were each mentioned by less than 10% of parents (see Table 6.5).

Would parents use out-of-school clubs if they were available?

Where before and after-school provision was not available at the child's school, parents were asked whether they would use such provision if it was available. There was some suggestion of unmet demand for before-school clubs: 21% of parents with a child aged 5-14 said they would be likely to use such provision if it was available (7% very likely, 14% likely – 17% said they were fairly unlikely to use such provision, table not shown). However, 63% of parents thought they would be very unlikely to use a breakfast club, even if it was available (table not shown). Demand for after-school provision was greater: where after-school provision was not available, just under half of parents said they would be likely to use such provision if available (42% - table not shown).

Where parents said they were likely to use before-school clubs, the most frequently given reasons for wanting a before-school club related to children's development or enjoyment: enjoyment (40%), social development (37%) and educational development (28%, see Table 6.6). Forty-one per cent of families said they would use a before-school club so that they or their partner could work or work longer hours, with a further 9% saying it was so they or their partner could study or train.

Table 6.6 Reasons for using before/ after-school clubs, if they were available

Base: Families with school-age children where before/ after-school provision not available[68]

Reasons	Before-school %	After-school %
Child's development or enjoyment		
Child's enjoyment	40	59
Child's educational development	28	55
Child's social development	37	50
Economic reasons		
To work/ work longer hours (respondent or partner)	41	26
To study/ train (respondent or partner)	9	3
So respondent could look after home/ other children	7	5
So respondent could shop/ attend appointments/ socialise	7	7
Other	6	3
Weighted base	*149*	*131*
Unweighted base	*164*	*154*

Demand for after-school clubs was even more strongly motivated by the child's benefit: 59% of parents who said they would be likely to use after-school provision if available said it would be for their child's enjoyment, 55% for educational development and 50% for social development. Only 26% of parents said they would use after-school clubs so they or their partner could work or work longer hours (with a further 3% mentioning

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[68] 'School-age children' refers to children aged 5-14 in the household. This analysis focuses on the second half of field work (in Autumn 2009), where the question was asked of all families who said that before or after-school care was not offered at their school.

study/ training, see Table 6.7). This indicates that further expansion of before-school provision may be more helpful for parents wanting to work or work longer hours.

6.5   Reasons for not using any childcare in the last year

Overall 11% of parents reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education for any of their children aged 0-14 in the last year (table not shown). By far the most common reason for not using childcare in the last year was that parents would rather look after their children themselves (67% of those not using childcare). Twenty-four per cent said they rarely needed to be away from their children and 18% that their children were old enough to look after themselves. Only a very small minority (10%) indicated that they were not using childcare because they could not afford it, and very few parents mentioned problems with availability, transport or quality (Table 6.7). This suggests that for many families, although not all, not using childcare in the last year was mainly due to choice rather than constraint.

Table 6.7 Reasons for not using childcare in last year

Base: Families who had not used any childcare in last year

Reasons	%
Choices	
I would rather look after my child(ren) myself	67
I rarely need to be away from my children	24
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	18
My/ partners work hours or conditions fit around children	4
Constraints	
I cannot afford childcare	10
My children need special care	2
There are no childcare providers that I could trust	2
I cannot find a childcare place as local providers are full	1
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1
The quality of childcare is not good enough	+
I have had bad experience of using childcare in the past	0
Other reasons	8
Weighted bases	*743*
Unweighted bases	*627*

To help illuminate the extent to which parents' decisions are guided by choice versus constraint, parents who had not used childcare in the last year were asked whether any informal childcare providers would be available to them if they needed them as a one-off and/ or on a regular basis. Only 14% of parents who used no care in the last year said that no informal carers were available for one-off occasions (this was particularly the case in London where 24% of families said no informal carers were available for a one-off, table not shown). However, many more (44%) said that none of the informal carers listed would be available if they needed them for childcare on a regular basis (this was the case for a similar proportion of families in London compared with elsewhere, 49% compared with 42%). Where informal care was available, for both one-off and regular

care, it was most likely to be from grandparents, older brothers/ sisters and other relatives. Friends and neighbours were more likely to be available for one-off care (23%) than regular childcare (9%, see Table 6.8).

Table 6.8 Availability of informal care

Base: Families who had not used any childcare in last year

Informal care available…	...as one-off %	…for regular childcare %
Ex-partner	10	5
Grandparents	43	27
Older sibling	28	13
Another relative	26	15
Friend/ neighbour	23	9
None	14	44
Weighted bases	*743*	*743*
Unweighted bases	*627*	*627*

Parents who had not used any childcare in the last year were also asked whether a range of factors would encourage them to start using formal childcare. For the majority of those not using any care, it appeared that there were no changes to childcare provision which might change their mind because they did not need formal childcare (79%). For the remainder, the most common factor was affordability (mentioned by 11% of those not using any childcare). Flexibility, availability in school holidays, information, quality and proximity were mentioned by less than 5% each (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9 Changes that would facilitate formal care use

Base: Families who had not used any childcare in last year

Change needed to start using formal care	%
More affordable childcare	11
Childcare provider closer to where I live	4
More flexibility about when care was available	4
More childcare available in school holidays	3
More information about formal childcare available	3
Higher quality childcare	2
Other	4
None (I don't need to use childcare)	79
Weighted bases	*742*
Unweighted bases	*626*

6.6   Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0-2 years

Given the potential benefit of nursery education for young children (Sylva et al. 2004; Smith et al. 2009b) we now look at parents with 0-2 year olds who had not used any nursery education in the last week, and report on why these parents had made that choice. Overall, 72% of selected children aged 0-2 years had not used any nursery education in the past week. Just over half (59%) of these children had not used any providers at all in the last week - 32% had used only informal providers; 6% had just used other types of formal provider (such as childminders); and 3% had used a combination of other types of formal provider and informal providers (table not shown).

Most families were not using nursery education because of personal preference, rather than a lack of availability. Sixty per cent felt the child was too young, and 32% directly expressed a preference for keeping the child at home, either because the parent preferred it or the child had been unhappy in nursery education. Sixteen per cent of these families mentioned affordability as a factor, and 8% mentioned problems with availability (Table 6.10).

Lone parents were more likely to mention cost as a problem but other than that there were few differences by families' work status (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0-2, by family type and work status

Base: Families where selected child aged 0-2 and not using nursery education

| | Family type and work status | | | | | |
Reasons	Couple both working %	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %	Total %
Child too young	61	63	60	[47]	58	60
Personal preference	26	38	39	[36]	28	32
Cost problems	17	12	12	[21]	22	16
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	9	8	10	[1]	8	8
Other reason	12	5	7	[17]	7	8
Weighted base	*224*	*302*	*70*	*39*	*178*	*813*
Unweighted base	*225*	*276*	*67*	*38*	*169*	*775*

Parents who had not used any childcare for their 0-2 year old, or who had only used informal care, were more likely than those who had used formal childcare to say it was their personal preference not to use nursery education providers: 37% of those not using any childcare, and 29% of those using informal care only, said they either preferred to keep/ teach their child at home or that their child did not like it, compared with 12% of those using formal care (Table 6.11). The few families who were using some other form of formal care (e.g. childminders) were more likely than other families to mention problems with availability or that the child was too young.

Table 6.11 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged 0-2 , by childcare use

Base: Families where selected child aged 0-2 and not using nursery education

Reasons	Childcare used by selected child in reference week			
	Used formal	Used informal (or other) childcare only	No childcare used	All
	%	%	%	%
Child too young	64	60	60	60
Personal preference	12	29	37	32
Cost problems	9	22	14	16
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	16	6	8	8
Other reason	11	10	7	8
Weighted bases	*74*	*262*	*477*	*813*
Unweighted bases	*74*	*257*	*444*	*775*

6.7   Parents of disabled children

Ensuring that disabled children have access to affordable, high quality childcare which is also appropriate to their needs has been an important part of Government policy, as expressed in the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative (HM Treasury/ DfES 2007 – see Chapter 1 for further discussion). To assess progress towards those aims, parents in families where the selected child had a longstanding health condition or disability were asked a set of questions regarding their views on the childcare provision that is available for their child.

This analysis focuses on those families where their child's health condition or disability affected everyday life. Overall, 8% of selected children had a longstanding health condition or disability; 6% had a health condition or disability that affected their daily lives (3% to a great extent and 3% to a lesser extent – 2% said it did not affect their daily life).

Children with an illness/ disability which affected their daily lives were as likely as other children to have used childcare in the last week. However, substantial proportions of parents with disabled children felt that local childcare provision did not adequately cater to their particular needs. Only 43% of parents agreed that there were providers in their area who could cater for their child's illness/ disability; only 39% felt that hours available at those providers fitted with their other daily commitments and 21% said it was difficult/ very difficult to travel to a suitable provider (Table 6.12).

However, it is not entirely clear whether this was a problem of availability per se or awareness, as many parents did not give a definitive answer about the availability of appropriate childcare (Table 6.12). For each of these questions, around 10% of parents said that they did not know the answer and around 20%-25% said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements. Furthermore, when asked directly, 35% indicated that it was difficult to find out about childcare providers who could cater for their child's condition. This suggests a fair level of equivocation, and possibly a lack of

knowledge about childcare, on the part of a considerable number of parents with disabled children.

Uncertainty about the availability of suitable provision was related to childcare use: parents who were not currently using formal care were consistently less able to give an answer than those who were, and those who were able to give a substantive answer were much less likely than those using formal care to express positive views (Table 6.12). However it is not possible to tell whether those who were not using formal care were not doing so because of a lack of information or whether they had simply not sought information because they had had no desire to use formal care.

Table 6.12 Views on available provision for children with an illness/ disability

Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affects daily life

Parents' views		Used formal %	Used informal (or other) childcare only %	No childcare used	All %
There are childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability	Agree strongly	19	15	6	13
	Agree	40	30	21	30
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	20	23	19
	Disagree	9	17	16	14
	Strongly disagree	14	6	22	16
	Don't know	4	11	12	9
Hours available at childcare providers that can cater for my child's illness or disability fit with my other daily commitments	Agree strongly	12	8	6	8
	Agree	42	36	18	31
	Neither agree nor disagree	20	23	31	25
	Disagree	9	10	17	12
	Strongly disagree	12	3	16	12
	Don't know	5	19	13	11
How easy to travel to nearest childcare provider who can accommodate health condition or impairment	Very easy	28	32	16	24
	Easy	34	34	18	28
	Neither easy nor difficult	13	14	22	17
	Difficult	8	5	8	7
	Very difficult	14	5	18	14
	DK	4	9	17	10
It is easy to find out about childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability	Agree strongly	5	4	7	6
	Agree	36	26	17	26
	Neither agree nor disagree	19	23	27	23
	Disagree	17	21	15	17
	Strongly disagree	18	10	23	18
	Don't know	4	15	12	10
Weighted base		*134*	*76*	*140*	*350*
Unweighted base		*140*	*74*	*128*	*342*

For a number of parents, concerns over whether available childcare was suitable for disabled children appeared to be based on experience. In over one-third of cases, families had used some form of formal childcare for their disabled child in the reference week (38%), and where they did just 63% agreed that staff at the provider were trained to deal with the health condition (19% agreed strongly, 44% agreed - Table 6.13).

Table 6.13 Views on training for childcare for children with illness/ disability		
Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affects daily life and used formal care in reference week		
Parents' views		%
Staff at childcare providers I use for my child with an illness/ disability are trained in how to deal with this condition	Agree strongly	19
	Agree	44
	Neither agree nor disagree	19
	Disagree	9
	Strongly disagree	7
	Don't know	2
Weighted base		*134*
Unweighted base		*140*

6.8   Summary

If parents are to make informed choices about childcare, they need access to up-to-date and accurate information about all of the childcare available in their local area. However evidence suggests that not all parents feel they have access to good information, and that parents from the most disadvantaged groups in society in particular may struggle to find the information they need (Speight et al. 2010).

Sixty-one per cent of parents said they had used one or more sources of information about childcare in the last year. Among those who had accessed information, most had relied on information from people/ organisations they regularly encountered in daily life, particularly word-of-mouth from friends/ relatives and, for those with school-age children, information provided by their children's school. Sure Start/ Children's Centres were mentioned as a source of information by 10% of parents, and 8% mentioned their Local Authority. Families Information Services (FIS) were familiar to around a third (31%) of parents but less than half of these (13% of all parents) had ever used them.[69]

Accessing information was strongly linked to existing childcare use – those families who did not use formal provision were much less likely to have accessed information. This in turn meant that those groups known to have lower rates of formal care use, in particular low income families were less likely to access information about childcare. Families on very low incomes (less than £10,000 per year) were more likely to say they had received childcare information from Jobcentre Plus, Sure Start/ Children's Centres and health visitors, but they were less likely to have found that information helpful. In turn those groups with lower formal care use were more likely to say they had too little information on childcare and more likely to say they were unsure about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare in the local area.

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[69] Families Information Services are also known as Children's Information Services / Families Information Services / Parents' Information / Information for Parents.

Just over a third (34%) of parents believed there were not enough childcare places in their local area and a similar proportion (36%) believed that affordability was fairly or very poor. Parents were more positive about the quality of local childcare (64%) and this represents an increase in positive views since 2004 (when the equivalent figure was 61%). Similarly, they were less likely to say that there were not enough places available in their local area. Views about the affordability of local childcare show no statistically significant change.

We saw in Chapter 2 that take-up of out-of-school care is relatively high. Here we showed that demand is also reasonably high amongst families who did not have access to out-of-school care. Twenty-one per cent of parents affected said they would use a before-school club if one was available, whilst 42% said they would use an after-school club. This demand was strongly motivated by thinking it would benefit the child, although a substantial minority of parents did say it would help them to work, or work longer hours (41% for before and 21% for after-school clubs). Where parents had these services available but were not using them, this was mostly through personal choice, often because children did not want to go or because family circumstances meant they did not need to use such care at the moment. A minority of families were not using such provision because of problems with cost, timing or accessibility.

Very few parents had not accessed any childcare at all in the last year (11% of all families). Where they had not used childcare, this was often because families had older school-age children or because they preferred to look after their children themselves. A small minority (10%) said they were not using childcare because they could not afford it, and very few parents mentioned problems with availability, transport or quality. This suggests that for many, although not all, families not using childcare in the last year was mainly due to choice rather than constraint. As a result, for the majority of families not using any formal childcare in the last year, it appeared that there were no potential changes to childcare provision which might change their mind. In terms of informal care, most (86%) of these families said it was available to them if they needed it for one-off occasions but fewer (56%) said it was available to help them on a regular basis.

Parents of younger children (0-2 years) who had not used nursery education largely attributed their decision to personal preference, with 60% saying their child was too young and 32% expressing a direct preference for keeping their child with them at home. Only a minority mentioned problems with affordability and availability of childcare, although there was an indication that these might have been more of a concern for working lone parents.

Overall, 8% of selected children had a longstanding health condition or disability; 6% had a health condition or disability that affected their daily life – 2% said it did not affect their daily life. Children with an illness/ disability which affected daily lives were as likely as other children to have used childcare in the last week. However, substantial proportions of parents with disabled children felt that local childcare provision did not adequately cater to their particular needs. For instance, only 43% of parents agreed that there were providers in their area who could cater for their child's illness/ disability; only 39% felt that hours available at those providers fitted with their other daily commitments and 21% said it was difficult/ very difficult to travel to a suitable provider.

7 Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on parents' reasons for using formal childcare and early years providers and their views on their provision. It also looks at children's home learning environment – that is what parents do with their children at home to encourage their educational development – and the extent to which this is promoted by providers. All analysis is carried out using data for the selected child (i.e. one randomly selected child in each family). Since the learning and care needs of older and younger children differ, most of this chapter reports on pre-school and school-age children separately. The distinction between these two groups is defined by age (regardless of actual school attendance), where pre-school children are defined as aged 0-4, and school-age children are defined as aged 5-14.

This chapter examines:

- The reasons why parents chose their main provider, and whether these reasons vary depending on the child's age or the family's working status (section 7.2);
- Which academic and social skills parents think their main provider encourages (section 7.3);
- Parents' views on the feedback that their provider gives them (section 7.4);
- Whether providers encourage parents to engage in learning activities at home, and the frequency with which parents engage in various activities (section 7.5);
- The availability and take-up of other services offered at the provider, and whether parents would like additional services for families to be made available (section 7.6).

Where possible, key findings will be compared with earlier surveys in the Childcare and Early Years Survey series to provide insight into how views and reasons have changed over time.

7.2 Reasons for choosing formal providers

There are a range of reasons why a parent might choose a particular provider: they could be practical, such as cost and convenience, or related to the quality or trustworthiness of the provider. This section reports on why parents decided to use their main formal provider[70] (note that these reasons could be positive choices or made through necessity). Throughout the section, we have grouped these reasons into a number of themes:

- Economic factors included: considerations around affordability or financial incentives;
- Convenience factors related to: the provision fitting into the parents' working hours, and/ or being easy to get to;

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[70] The default position for the survey was that the main formal provider was the provider that was used for the most amount of time by the selected child in the reference week. However, the parent could override the default if they felt that a different provider was their main formal provider.

- Concern with the care given included: parents wanting an affectionate provider or someone properly trained;
- Providers reputation included: parents choosing a provider they knew was well regarded or one that was recommended to them;
- Other e.g. family ties, consisted of factors such as: the provider being a family member, or that the parent had wanted the child to be looked after at home.

Other reasons that did not fit into a particular grouping were: that the child could be educated while being looked after; that the child could mix with other children; that parents could trust the provider, that the provider was the child's choice; or that the child's older sibling had attended the provider. All of these are reported as separate reasons, rather than within a group. Some parents also mentioned that they had no other choices available[71].

Pre-school children

Table 7.1 shows that key considerations for parents of pre-school children were the provider's reputation and their concern with the care given (e.g. whether providers were affectionate or well trained) (62% and 55% respectively). In addition, over half of parents selected providers so that their child could mix with other children or for reasons of convenience (both 52%).

Table 7.1 Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Reasons	%	%	%
Provider's reputation	61	63	62
Concern with care given	66	50	55
Child could mix	59	49	52
Convenience	56	50	52
Child could be educated	39	45	43
Trust	53	34	41
Older sibling went there	24	26	26
Economic factors	29	16	20
No other option	4	4	4
Child's choice	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	16	10	12
Weighted base	*396*	*800*	*1196*
Unweighted base	*476*	*1144*	*1620*

The age of the child also plays a key role in parents' choice of their main provider (see Table 7.1). Parents of children nearing school-age (aged 3-4) were more likely to take

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[71] Unlike in the 2008 report (Speight et al. 2009), the analysis in this chapter is of all reasons reported by the parent, rather than just on the main reason for choosing a provider.

account of the educational opportunities that childcare could provide, while parents of very young children (aged 0-2 years) were more likely to cite trust as a key factor in their decision to use their main formal provider. In fact, parents of 0-2 year olds were more likely to select most reasons than parents of 3-4 year olds. This can be seen in reference to concern with care given (66% to 50%), so that the child could mix (59% to 49%) and economic reasons (29% to 16%).

Table 7.2 shows the variation between parents' reasons for choosing different provider types. We saw in Table 7.1 that the reputation of the provider was the most common reason for choosing a formal childcare provider. Looking across different providers, this was especially the case for playgroups and day nurseries (71% and 68% respectively, compared with 62% for pre-school children overall). In addition, parents typically chose playgroups and day nurseries so that children could mix with others; whilst users of day nurseries also made their choice due to concern over the nature of care (68%).

As with the 2008 results (Speight et al. 2009), a substantial proportion of parents choosing childminders as their main formal provider said that this was due to concern over the nature of care given (83%) and because they could trust them.

Table 7.2	Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week

	Main formal provider						
Reasons	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	Childminder	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Provider's reputation	59	54	61	68	71	60	62
Concern with care given	55	40	36	68	48	83	55
Child could mix	56	46	29	61	70	51	52
Convenience	43	48	35	47	46	36	52
Child could be educated	49	48	41	45	45	20	43
Trust	42	30	19	46	41	74	41
Older sibling went there	18	39	32	19	27	23	26
Economic factors	21	13	9	25	24	33	20
No other option	2	3	6	5	2	1	4
Child's choice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	8	6	12	9	7	33	12
Weighted base	*145*	*182*	*189*	*333*	*199*	*97*	*1196*
Unweighted base	*190*	*261*	*280*	*414*	*295*	*117*	*1620*

The primary reason that parents were likely to choose nursery schools, nursery classes and reception classes was their reputation. Parents were more likely to choose nursery schools, than nursery classes and reception classes, for reasons of trust, concern with care given or so their child could mix (Table 7.2).

One in five (20%) parents cited economic factors among their reasons for choosing their main provider.

Table 7.3 shows parents' reasons for selecting their main formal provider, split by whether they were in couple or lone parent families and by their working status. In general, there were more differences between families of different working statuses than between couple and lone parent families. Working families were more likely than non working families to say that providers' reputation and trust were factors. In addition, convenience emerged as a factor more important to dual earning couples (57%) and working lone parents (52%) than other family types.

Table 7.3	Reasons for choosing main formal provider for pre-school children, by family type and working status

Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week

	Couple families				**Lone parent**		
	Both working	One working	Neither working	All couple	Working	Not working	All lone parents
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Provider's reputation	66	64	46	64	58	53	55
Child could mix	55	54	41	54	44	47	46
Convenience	57	47	41	53	52	47	49
Concern with care given	63	54	40	58	59	32	44
Child could be educated	44	44	40	44	43	38	40
Trust	46	40	34	43	35	27	31
Economic factors	20	12	28	18	34	24	28
Older sibling went there	27	28	24	27	17	22	20
No other option	2	3	7	2	10	6	8
Child's choice	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	14	13	9	13	11	8	9
Weighted base	*582*	*293*	*54*	*928*	*111*	*156*	*268*
Unweighted base	*789*	*407*	*70*	*1266*	*145*	*209*	*354*

Dual earning couples and working lone parents were also more concerned than other parents with the nature of the care given by the provider, with 63% of couple dual working families and 59% of lone-parent workers citing this as a factor. This is likely due to the fact that these parents are more likely to be using providers such as day nurseries or childminders, and using them for longer periods (see Chapter 2), in order to cover their working hours.

The results also show that working lone parents were the most likely to be influenced by economic reasons when choosing their main provider.

School-age children

This section looks at the reasons why parents of school-age children chose their main formal provider. It explores how this varies for children of different ages, and for children attending different types of provider.[72]

Key considerations for parents when choosing childcare for school-age children were the nature of care given, convenience, the providers' reputation, and issues of trust (Table 7.5). This reflects what we saw with pre-school children (Table 7.2) and results from the 2008 survey (Speight et al. 2009).

Parents report different reasons for choosing providers for younger school-age children than they do for older school-age children, and this is likely to be associated with the developmental and life stages of the child. For instance, 45% of parents of 5-7 year olds, 40% of 8-11 year olds and 20% of 12-14 year olds mentioned convenience as a reason for choosing their provider (Table 7.4). Economic factors follow a similar pattern, being more important for younger school-age children than for the oldest school-age children (12-14 years old).

The converse is true of child's choice, with parents of older school children more likely to take this into consideration than parents of younger school-aged children. As with pre-school children, and similar to the 2008 survey, very few parents cited having no other choice as a reason for choosing their main provider (Speight et al. 2009).

Table 7.4	Reasons for choosing a formal provider for school-age children, by age of child

Base: All school-aged children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Reasons	%	%	%	%
Concern with care given	56	40	29	43
Convenience	45	40	20	37
Provider's reputation	49	32	29	36
Trust	42	35	26	35
Child could mix	37	31	26	32
Child could be educated	22	16	18	18
Economic factors	19	17	11	16
Child choice	7	13	25	14
Older sibling went there	17	10	9	12
No other option	5	5	4	5
Other (e.g. family ties)	15	16	18	16
Weighted base	*443*	*721*	*307*	*1471*
Unweighted base	*388*	*667*	*284*	*1339*

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[72] Some parents of school-aged children mentioned reception class as a provider they used for childcare. Since in most cases reception class constitutes compulsory schooling for 5 year olds rather than childcare, results from users of receptions class are not included here.

Parents using different types of formal provider had different reasons for choosing them. One in six parents using out-of-school provision said it was their child's choice; this was rarely the case for childminders who were instead more likely to be chosen due to reasons of reputation, concern with the nature of care, and trust (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5	Reason for choosing main formal provider for school-age children, by provider type

Base: All school-aged children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)

	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast/ after-school club on-site	Breakfast/ after-school club off-site	Childminder	Total
Reasons	%	%	%	%
Concern with care given	36	33	84	43
Convenience	37	25	66	37
Provider's reputation	31	47	69	36
Trust	30	21	70	35
Child could mix	30	39	44	32
Child could be educated	21	12	11	18
Economic factors	14	15	30	16
Child's choice	17	15	1	14
Older sibling went there	10	13	23	12
No other option	4	4	3	5
Other (e.g. family ties)	12	10	27	16
Weighted base	*1023*	*211*	*131*	*1471*
Unweighted base	*929*	*197*	*120*	*1339*

Looking at the reasons given by couples and lone parents (Table 7.6), both family types reported similar reasons for using their providers. The exception was child's choice where couple families were more likely to cite this as a reason than lone parents (15% compared to 10% respectively). Although there were no significant differences between working and non working lone parents' reasons for using providers, among couple families, working families were far more likely to report concern with care given. And economic factors played a role for more dual earning couple families than sole earning or non working couples.

Table 7.6   Reasons for choosing a formal provider for school-age children, by family type and working status

Base: All school-aged children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)

Reasons	Couple families				Lone parent		
	Both working	One working	Neither working	All couple	Working	Not working	All lone parents
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Concern with care given	44	42	[12]	42	48	37	44
Provider's reputation	38	35	[19]	36	40	31	37
Child could mix	29	36	[27]	30	33	39	35
Convenience	39	28	[35]	37	39	37	38
Trust	35	31	[32]	34	39	38	39
Child could be educated	16	25	[19]	18	20	13	17
Economic factors	17	9	[11]	15	23	15	20
Older sibling went there	13	11	[17]	13	9	9	9
No other option	5	3	[2]	4	6	3	5
Child's choice	15	13	[27]	15	9	12	10
Other (e.g. family ties)	17	14	[10]	16	17	14	16
Weighted base	*824*	*253*	*46*	*1122*	*229*	*120*	*349*
Unweighted base	*764*	*230*	*38*	*1032*	*207*	*100*	*307*

7.3   Parents' views on the skills encouraged by their main formal provider

We have seen in the previous section how parents are often motivated to choose a provider because of the educational or social opportunities they provide. This section therefore considers the kinds of academic skills (for example encouraging children to enjoy reading) and social skills (such as interacting with others) that parents think their main provider tries to develop. In this section we focus on childminders and formal group providers, such as nursery classes, playgroups, day nurseries and out-of-school clubs.

Academic Skills

In this section, we will just report on academic skills for pre-school children. School-age children primarily develop their academic skills at school, and so there is little expectation that their childcare providers will encourage them to develop academic skills. In contrast early education providers can start to build pre-school children's base of academic skills. Indeed, early education providers play an important role in this regard and a body of research illustrates that high quality early education can help improve children's outcomes (e.g. Sylva et al. 2004; Smith et al. 2009b).

Table 7.7 shows how different providers aim to develop pre-school children's academic skills. The vast majority of pre-school children were being taught a range of academic skills by their main provider, with only 2% being taught none of the skills listed

(according to their parents). As with the 2008 survey, users of reception classes rated their provider highest on encouraging all the skills listed in the table, including encouraging their children to enjoy books (99%), to recognise letters, words, numbers and shapes (99%) and finding out about animals or plants (91%). Conversely those parents who used childminders as their main formal provider were less likely to report that their provider encouraged their child to find out about animals or plants (80%), find out about people or places (69%) or find out about health and hygiene (82%). Childminders were, however, amongst the most likely provider to encourage recognition of letters, words, shapes and numbers (99%).

Table 7.7	Academic skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	Childminder	Total
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enjoying books	93	93	99	90	94	87	92
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	91	94	99	91	94	99	91
Finding out about health or hygiene	86	89	95	84	90	82	87
Finding out about animals or plants	91	90	91	89	86	80	88
Finding out about people or places around the world	80	78	85	73	72	69	76
Not sure	2	2	0	1	1	4	1
None of these	1	1	0	2	1	4	2
Weighted base	*145*	*182*	*188*	*332*	*198*	*97*	*1165*
Unweighted base	*190*	*261*	*279*	*413*	*293*	*117*	*1583*

Half the parents with children aged 3-4 reported that their main provider gave their child books to look at or read at home at least once a week, with a quarter (24%) stating that they received books most days and another quarter saying that they received books once or twice a week (26%, see Table 7.8).

Table 7.8   How often children bring home books from provider to look at/ read with their parent, by age of child

Base: All children aged 3-4, whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder

How often	%
Every day/ most days	24
Once or twice a week	26
Once a fortnight	3
Once every month or 2 months	1
Once every 3 or 4 months	1
Once every 6 months	+
Once every year or less often	1
Varies too much to say	2
Never	42
Weighted base	*791*
Unweighted base	*1130*

Social skills

Turning to social skills, where we looked at both pre-school and school-age children, parents reported that the majority of formal providers encouraged their children to develop their social skills. This was particularly the case for pre-school children (99% compared with 87% of school-age children, see Table 7.9). Of the skills asked about, parents were most likely to report that children were being encouraged to play with other children, to be well-behaved, and to listen to others (84%, 79% and 77% respectively).

Table 7.9   Social skills encouraged at main provider for by age of child

Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)

	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	Total
Skills encouraged	%	%	%
Playing with other children	97	73	84
Good behaviour	95	66	79
Listening to others & adults	92	64	77
Being independent and making choices	85	57	70
Tackling everyday tasks	88	42	63
Expressing thoughts and feelings	83	46	63
Not sure	2	4	3
None of these	1	13	7
Weighted base	*1165*	*1373*	*2539*
Unweighted base	*1583*	*1257*	*2841*

Table 7.10 shows that the vast majority of parents of pre-school children across all provider types reported that their providers were encouraging their children's social skills. Overall, 97% of parents stated that their provider encouraged children to play with their peers, and 95% said their provider encouraged good behaviour. These proportions did not vary by provider type. However, for each of the other social skills, a greater proportion of parents with children attending group providers (particularly reception classes) reported that these were taught compared with parents whose children went to a childminder.

Table 7.10 Social skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder

| | Main formal provider | | | | | | |
| | Nursery school | Nursery class | Reception class | Day nursery | Playgroup | Childminder | Total |
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Playing with other children	98	97	98	97	99	95	97
Good behaviour	96	95	98	93	96	91	95
Listening to others & adults	92	94	97	90	94	85	92
Tackling everyday tasks	88	89	97	84	92	84	88
Being independent and making choices	84	84	93	82	90	77	85
Expressing thoughts and feelings	84	85	92	80	83	76	83
Not sure	2	2	1	2	1	3	2
None of these	0	0	0	1	0	2	1
Weighted base	*145*	*182*	*188*	*332*	*198*	*97*	*1165*
Unweighted base	*190*	*261*	*279*	*413*	*293*	*117*	*1583*

Table 7.11 shows that parents of school-age children using childminders, were more likely than those using out-of-school provision, to say that their providers encouraged their children to develop the social skills listed. For example 80% of parents whose main formal provider was a childminder reported that they encouraged their child to tackle everyday tasks, compared with just 38% of off-site out-of-school clubs and 37% of on-site clubs. This pattern is seen, to a lesser extent, across all of the other social skills in Table 7.11.

Base: All school-age children whose main provider in the reference week was formal (excluding reception class)

Skills encouraged	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast/ after-school club on-site	Breakfast/ after-school club off-site	Childminder	Total
	%	%	%	%
Playing with other children	71	67	90	73
Good behaviour	63	65	90	66
Listening to others & adults	61	66	80	64
Being independent and making choices	54	57	76	57
Expressing thoughts and feelings	41	46	77	46
Tackling everyday tasks	37	38	80	42
Not sure	4	3	1	4
None of these	14	13	5	13
Weighted base	*1007*	*212*	*130*	*1373*
Unweighted base	*918*	*197*	*119*	*1257*

7.4 Parents' views on the feedback their provider offers

This section reports on parents' views on the feedback that their main formal provider gives them on their child. Feedback includes written reports, being shown paintings and drawings, and verbal feedback from providers. We report on the methods and frequency of feedback that parents received and on whether parents are given information about the activities that their child has been taking part in.

Table 7.12 compares the feedback that providers give parents of pre-school or school-aged children. Nearly all parents with pre-school children said that they got feedback from their providers (98%). This compares with only 78% of parents with school-age children. This is likely due to the fact that pre-school children mainly attend early years settings that have an educational remit and are thereby expected to offer some formal progress reporting (like schools). In contrast, this is not the case for the types of providers attended by school-age children (typically out-of-school providers, see Chapter 2). The most common way of parents getting feedback from providers was by talking with provider staff about how their child is getting (76%) with the second most common being through pictures, drawings or other things their child brings home (51%).

Table 7.12 Method by which parents receive feedback from their formal providers, by age of child

Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)

| | Age of child | | |
| | Pre-school | School-age | Total |
Method of feedback	%	%	
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	90	64	76
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	80	26	51
Parents' evenings/ meeting	55	24	38
Written reports	56	21	37
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	60	16	37
Other	4	6	5
None of these	2	22	13
Weighted base	*1168*	*1360*	*2528*
Unweighted base	*1586*	*1247*	*2833*

Table 7.13 focuses on pre-school children and looks at the ways parents receive feedback from different provider types. As seen in Table 7.12, parents are most likely to get verbal feedback from provider staff rather than other forms of feedback. Looking across the different types of providers, similarly high levels of parents said that they got verbal feedback and reported that their child brings home pictures and drawings (90% and 80% respectively). However different types of providers were more or less likely to provide progress updates via written reports and parents' evenings. For example written reports were given by 70% of day nurseries but only 56% of reception classes, 57% of nursery schools and 45% of nursery classes (the lower proportions for the school based providers may be due to annual school reports not yet having been given at the time of the interview). On the other hand, reception classes were more likely to have parents' evenings (80%) than nursery classes (63%), day nurseries (61%) and nursery schools (58%). This is likely to be due to the fact that reception classes, and to a lesser extent nursery classes, are working within a wider school environment where parents evenings are the norm, hence the higher reporting of these is to be expected.

Table 7.13   Method by which parents receive feedback from their formal providers for pre-school children, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder

Method of feedback	Nursery school %	Nursery class %	Reception class %	Day nursery %	Playgroup %	Childminder %	Total
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	94	91	85	92	88	92	90
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	81	81	82	80	83	67	80
Written reports	57	45	56	70	50	41	56
Parents' evenings/ meeting	58	63	80	61	36	7	55
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	67	63	63	66	56	29	60
Other	1	3	3	2	7	9	4
None of these	2	3	2	2	3	4	2
Weighted base	*145*	*182*	*188*	*332*	*198*	*97*	*1167*
Unweighted base	*189*	*261*	*279*	*413*	*294*	*117*	*1585*

Looking at school-aged children, Table 7.14 shows how the methods of feedback vary between the providers attended by this older age group. Twenty-two per cent of parents of school-age children report that they do not receive any feedback from their child's provider – however this was mainly the case where children attended out-of-school clubs (25% of children who went to out-of-school clubs on a school site compared with 7% of children who went to childminders). This could be due to the nature of out-of-school clubs and the fact that they are often based around pre-determined activities, such as sports, music or drama, meaning that parents do not require as much (or any) feedback on the activity.

Where children attended childminders (as opposed to out-of-school activities), more parents talked to the childminder about how their child was getting on, and it was more common for children to bring home pictures or drawings. In contrast, out-of-school clubs, especially those on a school site, provided feedback typically associated with a school environment. For example written reports were given to 23% of parents using an on-site club, compared with 12% using an off-site club and 11% using a childminder (there is a similar pattern relating to parents' evenings).

Table 7.14   Method by which parents receive feedback from their formal providers for pre-school children, by provider type

Base: All school-age children whose main provider in the reference week was formal (excluding reception class)

| | Main formal provider | | | |
	Breakfast/ after-school club on-site	Breakfast/ after-school club off-site	Childminder	Total
Method of feedback	%	%	%	%
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	60	67	90	64
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	25	21	42	26
Parents' evenings/ meeting	29	12	5	24
Written reports	23	12	11	21
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	17	10	21	16
Other	6	9	3	6
None of these	25	20	7	22
Weighted base	*999*	*208*	*130*	*1360*
Unweighted base	*911*	*194*	*119*	*1227*

Table 7.15 focuses on parents who said they talked to staff about how their child was getting on, and reports on how often parents received this kind of feedback. A much higher proportion of parents of pre-school children had frequent feedback from their provider compared to parents of school-age children. Looking at the proportions who received feedback once or twice a week or more, this shows that parents received feedback this often for 85% of pre-school children but only 56% of school-age children.

Parents were also asked how often their providers gave them information about the activities that their children had been doing, and the pattern of responses was similar to those about getting verbal feedback about how their child was getting on (see Table C7.1 in Appendix C).

Table 7.15   How often parents speak to provider staff about how their child is getting on, by age of child

Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder and talked with staff about how child was getting on (excluding reception class for school-age children)

	Age of child		
How often	Pre-school %	School-age %	Total
Every day/ most days	55	26	42
Once or twice a week	30	30	30
Once a fortnight	5	10	8
Once every month/ 2 months	5	15	9
Once every 3 or 4 months	2	7	4
Once every 6 months	1	3	2
Once a year or less	+	1	0
Varies too much	2	6	4
Never	+	1	1
Weighted base	*1052*	*875*	*1926*
Unweighted base	*1437*	*800*	*2237*

7.5   Home learning activities

In this section we report on pre-school children's home learning environment – that is what parents do with their children at home to encourage their educational development. Home learning activities include activities such as: reading books, reciting nursery rhymes, painting, playing games and using computers. These activities are important, with various studies showing that young children whose parents engage in developmental activities with them achieve higher levels of cognitive development than children whose parents do these activities less often (CMPO 2006, Melhuish et al. 2008, Sammons et al. 2004, Sylva et al. 2004). Here, we report on what parents say they do with their children, with what frequency and how this has changed over time. We also report on the extent to which parents say that their formal provider has encouraged them to engage in home learning activities with their child.

Table 7.16 shows the frequency with which parents engage in various home learning activities with their children aged 2-5. There are some home learning activities in which most parents and children engage on a very frequent basis (everyday or most days). These include looking at books or reading stories (87%), and singing songs and nursery rhymes (73%). There are other activities in which most parents do not engage in as frequently, but tend to do at least once or twice a week. For example only 36% of parents reported that they paint or draw with their children every day, but 48% did so once or twice a week. Most parents use computers with children or go to the library on a less frequent basis, if at all; 42% of parents never took their child to the library and 28% never used a computer with their child. However given the nature of these activities it is not surprising that they are engaged in less frequently; visits to the library are not an activity that we would expect children to do every day and use of a computer can be determined by both availability and appropriateness for the age of the child.

Table 7.16   Frequency with which parents engage in home learning activities with their children

Base: All children aged 2-5

Home learning activities	**Frequency**								
	Every day/ most days	Once or twice a week	Once a fortnight	Once every month or 2 months	Once every 3 or less often	Varies too much to say	Never	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Look at books or read stories	87	10	1	+	+	1	1	*1873*	*2449*
Recite nursery rhymes or sing songs	73	18	2	1	+	1	3	*1873*	*2449*
Play at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	69	24	0	+	1	1	3	*1873*	*2449*
Paint or draw together	36	48	7	2	1	2	4	*1873*	*2449*
Take child to the library	1	12	14	20	9	2	42	*1873*	*2449*
Play indoor or outdoor games	63	31	2	1	+	1	1	*1873*	*2449*
Use a computer	20	34	9	5	2	3	28	*1873*	*2449*

NB: Row percentages

Comparing the results in Table 7.16 with findings from earlier years of this survey (Smith et al. 2009a)[73] the results in 2009 are broadly similar. However, the proportion of parents using computers with their pre-school children has increased over time. In the 2004 and 2007 combined results, 35% of parents reported that their children never used a computer; in 2009 this decreased to 28%. This change is likely to be due to the increased availability and affordability of computers in the home and elsewhere.

Sixty-six percent of parents of children aged 3-4 reported that their main provider gives them information about the types of home learning activities that they can do with their child. This suggests that they play an important role in this regard.

7.6   Other services available at childcare providers

Recent policy initiatives such as Children's Centres have aimed to increase the availability of integrated services for families and children through childcare and early years providers.[74] To assess the extent to which these services are available and whether parents are taking them up, we asked parents using a formal group provider about any additional services available at their provider. By formal group provision, we mean formal childcare which is provided to a relatively large group of children at one time, such as in a nursery class or playgroup, as opposed to individual formal provision such as that given by a childminder or nanny.

Sixty-two per cent of parents who had a pre-school child whose main formal provider was a group provider said that no additional services were available there (Table 7.17). This is a small improvement on the 64% reported last year (Speight et al. 2009). Across all providers, where additional services were available, the most commonly cited types of services available were advice or support for parents (15%) and parent and toddler sessions (15%) with counselling services and job or career advice being the least common, each being cited by only 5% of parents.

However, the figures suggest that among parents using formal childcare for their pre-school children, those using reception classes as their main provider were most likely to have additional services available to them at their school, including courses and training (16%), advice and support for parents (21%) and parenting classes (14%). The availability of these services to reception class users may relate to the fact that a notable proportion of Children's Centres are based on school sites.

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[73] The home learning questions were not asked in the 2008 survey, but were asked in the 2004 and 2007 surveys. The 'Fitting it all Together' report by Smith et al. (2009) merged the home learning data from the 2004 and 2007 report together to give a larger sample for analysis.

[74] In addition, the Extended Services Strategy aims to make integrated services available through schools. Whilst the questionnaire asked about the services available through out-of-school clubs, it did not ask about the services available through schools more generally. This means that the picture of services available for school-age children would be incomplete and so we have not reported on them here.

Table 7.17   Services available to parents at their main formal provider, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider

| | Main formal provider | | | | | |
| | Nursery school | Nursery class | Reception class | Day nursery | Playgroup | Total |
Services available	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advice or support for parents	13	21	21	11	14	15
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	14	16	12	14	19	15
Courses or training	9	23	16	9	9	13
Health services for families	9	16	19	11	10	13
Parenting classes	12	16	14	9	8	11
Help in finding additional childcare	4	9	5	6	8	7
Counselling services	5	8	6	4	3	5
Job or career advice	4	6	5	4	3	5
Other services	1	1	3	3	1	2
No services available	68	53	51	70	66	62
Weighted base	*135*	*166*	*175*	*318*	*193*	*987*
Unweighted base	*176*	*239*	*258*	*396*	*285*	*1354*

While the availability of additional services was relatively low, it is important to consider how this weighs up against the demand for and take-up of additional services among families. Table 7.18 shows that the take-up of services was generally very low, echoing the results of the 2008 survey. For example only 3% of parents of pre-school children took up advice or support, despite this being the most commonly available service.

Table 7.18   Services used by parents at their main formal provider, by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider

| | Main formal provider | | | | | |
| | Nursery school | Nursery class | Reception class | Day nursery | Playgroup | Total |
Services used	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advice or support for parents	2	5	3	2	5	3
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	4	6	5	3	10	5
Courses or training	2	4	2	2	2	2
Health services for families	4	4	7	4	5	5
Parenting classes	2	5	4	1	2	2
Help in finding additional childcare	0	1	1	+	0	+
Counselling services	0	+	+	1	+	+
Job or career advice	0	1	+	1	2	1
Other services	0	1	+	1	1	+
No services used	24	31	31	20	18	24
No services available	68	53	51	70	66	62
Weighted base	*135*	*166*	*175*	*318*	*193*	*987*
Unweighted base	*176*	*239*	*258*	*396*	*285*	*1354*

Table 7.19 shows that demand for services was higher than availability or take-up of services. For example Table 7.17 shows that health services are available at 13% of main formal providers, with only 5% of parents making use of these services (Table 7.18). However Table 7.19 shows that 23% of parents of pre-schoolers would have liked health services (which is similar to the 25% reported in the 2008, see Speight et al. 2009). This pattern can also be seen across other services, such as courses or training and parent and toddler sessions and may suggest that parents overestimate the likelihood that they would use these services if they were available.

Table 7.19   Services parents would like to use at their main formal provider (if not currently available), by provider type

Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider

	Main formal provider					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	Total
Demand for services	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advice or support for parents	12	14	12	17	10	14
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	15	9	11	13	16	13
Courses or training	14	28	21	12	20	18
Health services for families	21	22	20	27	21	23
Parenting classes	5	8	6	9	8	7
Help in finding additional childcare	12	11	11	10	8	10
Counselling services	4	5	8	3	3	4
Job or career advice	6	15	12	7	11	10
Other services	0	+	0	1	2	1
Would not like to use any services that are not currently available	49	43	49	49	46	48
Weighted base	*141*	*176*	*185*	*330*	*197*	*1030*
Unweighted base	*185*	*254*	*274*	*411*	*292*	*1416*

7.7   Summary

Parents using formal childcare were most likely to choose a childcare provider because of the provider's reputation and concern with the care being given e.g. someone who was affectionate or well trained. This applied whether the childcare was for pre-school or school-aged children. However, there was variation in parents' reasons for choosing providers of different types. For example, parents were more likely to choose childminders than other providers for reasons of trust and concern with the nature of care given; they often chose nursery schools and classes for the educational benefits to the child, playgroups so that the child could mix with other children, and breakfast and after-school clubs because of the child's preference. For both pre-school and school-age groups, only a very small proportion of parents said they had no choice over which provider to use.

The reasons that parents gave for choosing their main provider varied depending on the age of their child. Parents of children who were nearing school-age (3-4 years old) were more likely to cite reasons relating to the educational benefits that the childcare could provide, with parents of 0-2 year olds more likely to mention trust, concern with care and so the child could mix. Similarly, parents of school-age children tended to choose factors which related to the life-stage of their child, with trust being more important for younger school children, while parents of older school-age children were more likely to consider the child's choice.

Virtually all parents of pre-school children stated that their provider helped their child develop academic skills e.g. recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes. As with the 2008 survey, reception classes were more likely than other providers to be developing academic skills. When looking at social skills encouraged by providers e.g. playing with other children or behaving well, the providers of pre-school children were more likely to encourage these than the providers of school-age children.

Parents of both pre-school and school-age children said that talking to staff was the most common way of getting feedback from their provider. However this was mentioned more often by parents with pre-school children than those with school-age children. This is likely due to the fact that pre-school children mainly attend early years settings that have an educational remit and are thereby expected to offer some formal progress reporting (like schools). Further, parents of pre-school children said that they spoke to providers more often about how their child was getting on and the activities that their child had been involved in, than parents of school-aged children.

In terms of the home learning activities that parents of children aged 2-5 engage in – that is what parents do with their children at home to encourage their educational development – many activities are engaged in very frequently e.g. reading or singing songs. Only a small number of activities are engaged in less often (if at all) e.g. going to the library or using a computer.

The availability of additional services at formal group-based pre-school providers was generally low, with 62% of parents of pre-school children saying that no additional services were available at their provider. In addition, take-up of services at providers where other services were available was low. However, when asked about which additional services they would use if available, parents mentioned a number of services, most frequently health services, courses or training and advice and support for parents. This demand for services was higher than availability or take-up of services and may suggest that parents overestimate the likelihood that they would use these services if they were available.

8 Use of childcare during school holidays

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the childcare that families used during the school holidays. It focuses on families with school-age children since it is these families that often need to make alternative arrangements during school holidays[75]. Within the chapter we explore:

- The types of holiday providers that families used over the last year, and how this compares to 2008 and to term-time use (section 8.2);
- The differences in use of holiday care between children with different characteristics and families in different circumstances (section 8.3);
- The reasons why families used particular providers (section 8.4), and;
- How much families paid for holiday childcare (section 8.5).

We also report on what parents thought about the holiday childcare available to them, and whether they encountered any difficulties arranging holiday care (sections 8.6 and 8.7). The final part of this chapter looks at families who chose not to use holiday childcare, and explores their reasons for this (section 8.8).

Detailed questions on childcare use during school holidays were first included in the Childcare Survey in 2008, so any time series comparisons are between 2008 and 2009 only.

8.2 Families' use of childcare during school holidays

Table 8.1 shows that, as in 2008, half of families with school-age children used holiday care in the last year (50% of families used holiday care in 2008, and 51% of families did so in 2009). Parents were more likely to use an informal provider (37%) than a formal provider in the holidays (23%). This was similar in both 2008 and 2009.

Table 8.1 Use of childcare during school holidays, 2008-2009

Base: All families with school-age children

	Survey year	
	2008	2009
Use of childcare	%	%
Any childcare	50	51
Formal childcare	22	23
Informal childcare	35	37
No childcare used	50	49
Weighted base	*5538*	*5608*
Unweighted base	*5798*	*5797*

Table 8.2 shows that more families used informal than formal care during the school holidays, irrespective of the type of childcare they used in term-time. For example, if we look at families who used formal provision during term-time, 39% of these families used informal care in the holidays and 33% used formal care (whilst 41% used no childcare at all).

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[75] Our standard definition of school-age children in this report is children who are aged 5-14, regardless of actual school attendance. However, given the stated aims of this chapter, we have defined school-age children differently - that is as a child aged 6-14, or aged 4-5 and in full- or part-time education.

However, there were large differences between the childcare families used in term-time and the holidays:

- Over half of families with school-age children who used childcare during term-time also used childcare during the school holidays, but 42% of families who used term-time childcare used no holiday care (see section 8.3 for a comparison of the types of childcare school-age children used in term-time and the holidays);

- Just over half of families who used informal providers during term-time also used informal provision during the holidays (54%);

- Only one-third (33%) of families who used formal providers in term-time also used formal provision in the school holidays;

- A third (34%) of families who did not use any childcare during term-time did use some type of childcare during the holidays. This shows that whilst a large proportion of families who use childcare in term-time do not use provision during the holidays a substantial proportion of other families have a demand for childcare only during the holiday periods.

Table 8.2 Use of childcare in term-time compared with school holidays				

Base: All families with school-age children

	Use of childcare in term-time			
Use of childcare in school holidays	Any childcare %	Formal childcare %	Informal childcare %	No childcare used %
Any childcare	58	59	64	34
Formal childcare	27	33	24	11
Informal childcare	41	39	54	26
No childcare used	42	41	36	66
Weighted base	*4036*	*3005*	*2207*	*1572*
Unweighted base	*4410*	*3558*	*2283*	*1387*

Use of childcare in different holiday periods

When the users of holiday childcare were asked when they used it (table not shown), 89% said they did so during the summer holidays. Sixty-two per cent used it in the Easter holidays and 57% did so in the May half term. Slightly fewer parents used childcare during October and February half term (55% and 54% respectively), but the Christmas holidays was the period parents were least likely to use childcare (51%). The relatively low figure for use of holiday care over Christmas reflects the fact that formal childcare providers may not be open over this period and that many parents choose to take time off work at this time. This is less possible for the whole of the summer holidays.

8.3   Children's use of childcare during school holidays

This section looks at the types of holiday provider children attended in the school holidays and compares this to children's childcare use during term-time. It then describes how children with different characteristics (e.g. children of different ages and ethnicity, and children with and without special educational needs) use holiday care. In addition, this section looks at variation between families in different circumstances (e.g. household income and work status) and between regions and areas in terms of their relative

deprivation. For these analyses we focus on the proportion of *children* receiving holiday care rather than the proportion of *families*.

Table 8.3 shows that 45% of school-age children attend some type of childcare during the school holidays, compared to 62% during term-time. The major difference between the term and holiday period is that children were much more likely to be cared for by formal providers during term-time (40%) than during the holidays (18%).

In particular the proportion of children who use after-school/ breakfast clubs on the school site massively decreased during the holidays (2% compared with 25% during term-time). It is likely that this reflects the fact that many providers close during the school holidays (see section 8.8). The fact that 2% of children still attend these providers in the school holidays is supported by research which found that whilst there are 38 weeks in a normal school year after-school clubs were open for an average of 42 weeks a year (Kinnaird 2007).

Table 8.3 Use of childcare during term-time and school holidays

Base: All school-age children

	Term/ Holiday	
	Term-time	Holiday
Use of childcare	%	%
Any childcare	**62**	**45**
Formal childcare and early years provision[76]	**40**	**18**
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	25	2
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	6	1
Holiday club	+	10
Childminder	3	3
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Informal childcare	**32**	**33**
Ex-partner	6	4
Grandparent	19	24
Older sibling	4	4
Another relative	4	7
Friend or neighbour	5	6
Other		
Leisure/ sport	10	2
Other childcare provider	4	3
No childcare used	**38**	**55**
Weighted base	*5014*	*5009*
Unweighted base	*4746*	*4742*

Table 8.3 shows that a considerable proportion of children (10%) attended a provider specifically catering for the holiday period (holiday club/ scheme). Otherwise, the formal provider school-age children were most likely to go to during the school holidays were childminders (3%, see Table 8.3).

There was no difference in the use of informal providers overall for holidays and term-time (33% and 32%). However, whilst 19% of children were looked after by their grandparents during term-time, this was the case for 24% of children in the holidays. This suggests that

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[76] As seen in Chapter 2 a small proportion of 5-7 year olds used an early education provider. These have not been listed here but have been included in the total.

grandparents play an important role in providing childcare during the holidays for families with school-age children, possibly stepping in where families' term-time arrangements are not available in the holidays or where parents work school hours and need childcare only when the school is shut. Indeed, findings in section 8.4 show that three-quarters of these children (75%) are looked after by their grandparents for economic reasons.

Other informal providers were used substantially less often. Only 7% of children were looked after by other relatives and 6% were looked after by friends or neighbours.

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

In Table 8.4 we can see that older children were slightly less likely to receive childcare during the holidays compared to younger children (41% of 12-14 year olds compared with 47% of 5-7 year olds and 48% of 8-11 year olds). Children's age was more strongly linked to the receipt of formal provision than informal provision – whereas 21%-23% of younger school-age children were cared for by formal providers, this was only the case for 9% of 12-14 year olds. In particular, whilst 13% of 5-7 year olds and 14% of 8-11 year olds went to a holiday club, this was the case for only 5% of 12-14 year olds.

Levels of use of informal childcare during the holidays were the same for all age groups. However there were some differences for particular types of informal provider. In particular younger school-age children were more likely to receive care from their grandparents whilst older school-age children were more likely to be looked after by their older siblings.

Table 8.4 Use of holiday childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All school-age children

	Age of selected child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%
Any childcare	**47**	**48**	**41**	**45**
Formal childcare and early years provision	**23**	**21**	**9**	**18**
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity - on school site	2	3	1	2
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity - off school site	2	1	1	1
Holiday club	13	14	5	10
Childminder	4	3	1	3
Nanny or au pair	1	1	0	1
Informal childcare	**33**	**34**	**34**	**33**
Ex-partner	3	4	5	4
Grandparent	26	26	22	24
Older sibling	1	3	9	4
Another relative	7	7	6	7
Friend or neighbour	6	7	7	6
No childcare used	**53**	**52**	**59**	**55**
Weighted base	*1340*	*1842*	*1448*	*5009*
Unweighted base	*1177*	*1691*	*1323*	*4742*

Table 8.5 shows that children from different ethnic backgrounds vary in terms of the level and type of childcare they receive during the holidays. In particular children from Asian and Black African backgrounds were amongst the least likely to receive childcare of any type (formal and informal) during the holidays (as discussed in Chapter 2 this may be

partly related to the lower employment rates amongst Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi, Black African and Black Caribbean families). Whilst overall 45% of children received any type of childcare during the holidays, for their Asian counterparts the proportions were between 5% and 30%, and only 23% per cent of children from Black African backgrounds received any holiday childcare.

Table 8.5 Use of holiday childcare, by child characteristics

Base: All school-age children

| | Use of childcare | | | | |
| | Any childcare | Formal childcare | Informal childcare | *Weighted base* | *Unweighted base* |
Ethnicity/ SEN	%	%	%		
All	45	18	33	*5014*	*4746*
Ethnicity of child, grouped					
White British	49	19	37	*3921*	*3799*
Other White	41	22	28	*124*	*107*
White & Black	47	26	33	*94*	*83*
White & Asian	49	33	24	*58*	*52*
Other Mixed	25	14	13	*82*	*72*
Indian	27	10	15	*101*	*95*
Pakistani	20	5	16	*186*	*167*
Bangladeshi	[5]	[1]	[5]	*58*	*49*
Other Asian	30	6	24	*76*	*66*
Black Caribbean	43	19	23	*67*	*52*
Black African	23	12	13	*131*	*105*
Other	25	11	15	*101*	*86*
Whether child has SEN					
Yes	45	19	30	*477*	*448*
No	45	18	33	*4525*	*4288*

NB: Row percentages

Children with SEN were no more or less likely than children without SEN to receive childcare in the holidays (formal and informal).

Use of holiday childcare by families circumstances

Table 8.6 and Table 8.7 show how children's use of holiday childcare varies by their family circumstances such as income, family type, size, and working status. Table 8.6 shows that about the same proportions of children in couple and lone parent households received some kind of holiday childcare (46% and 43%, respectively). However, there was a difference in the use of formal providers, with 19% of children in couple households receiving childcare from formal providers compared to 15% of children in lone parent households. There was no difference in the proportion of children with lone or couple parents who received care from informal providers (both 33%).

The pattern of usage with regard to the families' working status reflects the findings from 2008. Children from couple households where both parents worked and those from working lone parent households were more likely to receive both formal and informal holiday childcare, compared to children of families where only one or no parent(s) were working (see section 8.4 for more details on the reasons that families used holiday care).

Table 8.6 Use of childcare during school holidays in 2009, by family characteristics

Base: All school-age children

| Family characteristics | Use of holiday childcare | | | | |
	Any childcare %	Formal childcare %	Informal childcare %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	45	18	33	*5014*	*4746*
Family type					
Couple	46	19	33	*3732*	*3572*
Lone parent	43	15	33	*1282*	*1174*
Family working status					
Couple – both working	56	23	42	*2306*	*2232*
Couple – one working	31	14	19	*1114*	*1060*
Couple – neither working	24	8	16	*312*	*280*
Lone parent – working	59	21	48	*632*	*582*
Lone parent – not working	27	9	19	*650*	*592*
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	22	7	17	*348*	*313*
£10,000-£19,999	35	11	27	*1252*	*1150*
£20,000-£29,999	46	18	34	*905*	*869*
£30,000-£44,999	50	18	38	*963*	*928*
£45,000+	58	29	41	*1245*	*1207*
Number of children					
1	51	19	39	*1368*	*1264*
2	50	20	37	*2181*	*2120*
3+	32	13	22	*1465*	*1362*

NB: Row percentages

Children from higher income families were more likely to receive both formal and informal holiday care (see Table 8.6). This may indicate that use of formal holiday childcare may be affected by its affordability, although to some degree it will be associated with working status. We should not assume that differences between families with different income levels are *simply* an association with working status. The regression model predicting childcare use during term-time showed that both income and work status are independently associated with childcare use (see Chapter 2).

With regard to the number of children in the household, children in families with three or more children were less likely to receive holiday childcare overall, and they were less likely to receive care from both formal and informal providers, which may be associated with the higher likelihood of parents not working amongst those families (see Chapter 2).

Use of holiday childcare by region and area deprivation

Table 8.7 shows how children's receipt of holiday care varies across those living in different regions and areas of varying levels of deprivation. As in 2008, London stands out from other regions for showing the lowest take-up of informal childcare - 18% of children in London received informal care compared to 31%-42% elsewhere. This finding is similar to that for term-time childcare use (see Chapter 2). The North West and South West of England stand out as the regions with the highest use of informal childcare (both 42%).

In addition, there are some clear regional differences in the use of formal holiday providers with the South East of England and the East Midlands being the regions showing the highest level of formal childcare use (24% and 21% respectively) and Yorkshire showing the least (12% of children in Yorkshire used formal holiday provision, compared to 18% of children overall).

Table 8.7 Use of childcare during school holidays, by region and area deprivation

Base: All school-age children

Region/ area deprivation	Use of holiday childcare			*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Any childcare %	Formal childcare %	Informal childcare %		
All	45	18	33	*5014*	*4746*
Government Office Region					
North West	48	14	42	*253*	*265*
North East	45	17	35	*688*	*670*
Yorkshire & the Humber	43	12	34	*513*	*516*
East Midlands	49	21	36	*408*	*406*
West Midlands	43	17	31	*548*	*535*
East	47	19	35	*569*	*553*
London	31	16	18	*759*	*582*
South East	51	24	36	*813*	*766*
South West	52	18	42	*463*	*453*
Index of Multiple Deprivation					
1st quintile – least deprived	52	24	38	*944*	*966*
2nd quintile	54	22	40	*969*	*957*
3rd quintile	51	21	38	*915*	*854*
4th quintile	38	13	29	*989*	*920*
5th quintile – most deprived	32	11	24	*1197*	*1049*

NB: Row percentages

Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Table 8.7 shows that the overall pattern of holiday childcare take-up (both formal and informal) is higher in less-deprived and lower in more-deprived areas. As discussed in Chapter 2 it is likely that the lower take-up of holiday care in disadvantaged areas reflects lower employment rates in these areas.

8.4 Reasons for using holiday childcare

In this section we return to looking at *families'* use of childcare, and in particular the reasons that they chose to use holiday care (parents were able to name more than one reason)[77]. Overall, 68% of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons (e.g. so that they could go to work, work longer hours, or study/ train) and 61% mentioned child development or enjoyment reasons. Far fewer parents (18%) said they used it for personal reasons (e.g. so that they could go shopping, attend appointments). This represents a similar pattern to 2008.

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[77] Note that parents were able to give reasons for why they used holiday providers for children of any age in the family and not only those attending school (even though it was only families with school-age children who were asked these questions).

Figure 8.1 shows how these reasons for using holiday care varied between parents using formal and informal childcare. Parents who used informal care were most likely to mention economic factors for choosing their childcare (75%) compared with child- (57%) or parent-related reasons (21%). Parents using formal provision were slightly less likely to mention economic factors than parents using informal care (69% compared with 75%) and instead child-related reasons appeared to be relatively more important (65% compared with 57%). Also, where parents used formal providers they were also less likely to say that they did so to enable them to do other things (e.g. shop, attend appointments) compared to parents who used informal providers (15% compared with 21%). So there is some evidence that the use of informal providers in the school holidays is related more to parents' economic needs, whereas benefits to the child appear to play a more important role in the use of formal providers.

Figure 8.1 Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare, by type of holiday childcare used

Base: All families with school-age children
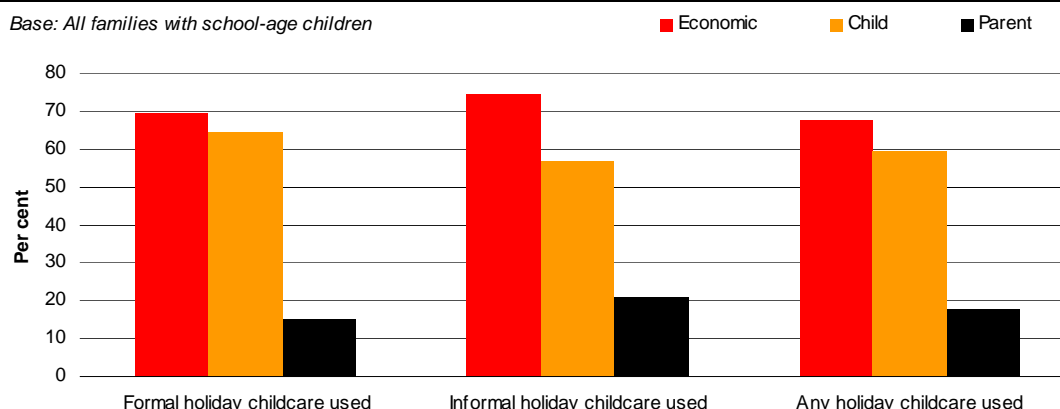
Source: Table C8.1 in Appendix C

Table 8.8 and Table 8.9 show parents' reasons for using particular formal and informal childcare providers during school holidays. Looking first at formal providers (Table 8.8), holiday clubs or schemes were typically chosen for reasons relating to children's enjoyment or development (72%). For example, 60% of parents used a holiday club because it provided an opportunity for the child to take part in a leisure activity, and 38% used it because the child enjoyed spending time with the provider. Child enjoyment factors were similarly key reasons for choosing breakfast/ after-school clubs (both on and off a school site, 60% and 70% respectively).

In contrast, most parents using childminders said that they were using their provider for economic reasons, such as being able to go to work, look for work, train or study (98%, see Table 8.8)[78]. This may be because childminders are more likely to be available all year round and during working hours.

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[78] In 2009 parents were given a greater number of 'economic' reasons to choose from than in 2008 so the figures can not be directly compared.

Table 8.8 Parents' reasons for using formal providers of holiday childcare, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children using the types of formal holiday childcare

Reasons	Formal holiday provider			
	Holiday club or scheme %	Breakfast or after-school club, on school site %	Breakfast or after-school club, off school site %	Childminder %
Economic reasons	**50**	**59**	**48**	**98**
So that I could work/ work longer hours	47	55	48	94
So that my partner could work/ work longer hours	15	15	17	36
So that I could look for work	1	3	0	2
So that my partner could look for work	+	0	0	1
So that I could train/ study	2	2	0	3
So that my partner could train/ study	+	0	0	+
Child development/ enjoyment	**72**	**60**	**70**	**21**
For the child's educational development	17	22	27	4
Child likes spending time with provider	38	28	39	19
Child could take part in a leisure activity	60	42	43	2
Parental time	**7**	**4**	**3**	**5**
Parent could look after the home/ other children	5	3	3	2
Parent could go shopping/ attend appointments/ socialise	4	3	3	4
Other reason	4	4	1	1
Weighted base	*622*	*165*	*67*	*222*
Unweighted base	*640*	*148*	*73*	*235*

Comparing the reasons for using formal and informal providers it appears overall that child development reasons play more of a role in choosing formal group provision, whereas economic reason are the stronger factor behind choosing informal provision and childminders.

Table 8.9 shows some notable variation in the reasons that different types of informal providers looked after children during holidays. As previously mentioned, most informal providers primarily looked after children in the school holidays for economic reasons (67%-75%). The only exception was ex-partners (who are likely to be children's non-resident parents) who were most likely to provide care for child-related reasons (71%), such as that the child enjoyed spending time with them. In addition though, around half of parents using grandparents, other relatives, and friends and neighbours during the school holidays (48%-52%) did so for children's development and/ or enjoyment. Families where older siblings helped with childcare were the exception, being much less likely than other informal providers to be linked to child development reasons (29%). Instead, older siblings were the most likely to look after children so that parents could have more time to do other things, such as shopping, suggesting that they play a very practical role in providing ad-hoc childcare help to parents as and when their parents need it.

Table 8.9 Parents' reasons for using informal providers of holiday childcare, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children using the types of informal holiday childcare

| Reasons | Informal provider | | | | |
	Grandparent %	Older sibling %	Another relative %	Friend or neighbour %	Ex-partner %
Economic reasons	**75**	**75**	**69**	**67**	**47**
So that I could work/ work longer hours	71	72	63	64	46
So that my partner could work/ work longer hours	29	23	26	21	3
So that I could look for work	2	2	4	1	+
So that my partner could look for work	1	1	+	1	0
So that I could train/ study	3	2	4	3	1
So that my partner could train/ study	+	+	+	+	0
Child development/ enjoyment	**48**	**29**	**49**	**52**	**71**
Child likes spending time with the provider	1	1	3	2	1
Child could take part in a leisure activity	47	26	48	49	68
For the child's educational development	7	8	7	13	5
Parental time	**16**	**22**	**21**	**17**	**10**
Parent could go shopping/ attend appointments/ socialise	3	2	3	3	2
Parent could look after the home/ other children	15	22	20	17	9
Other reason	4	2	4	4	13
Weighted base	*1527*	*314*	*418*	*394*	*267*
Unweighted base	*1559*	*228*	*412*	*370*	*247*

8.5 Paying for holiday childcare

Parents who used childcare during school holidays were asked whether they were charged for the service. Table 8.10 shows that most parents were paying formal providers, while predictably, few parents paid for informal holiday care. This is consistent with the findings on paying for childcare during term-time (Chapter 5).

Table 8.10 Whether payment made for holiday childcare, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children using the types of holiday childcare

Use of childcare	Paid for holiday care %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Formal providers			
Breakfast/ after-school club, on school or activity site	75	*165*	*148*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	85	*67*	*73*
Holiday club/ scheme	86	*622*	*640*
Childminder	99	*222*	*235*
Informal providers			
Grandparent(s)	3	*1527*	*1559*
Older sibling	12	*314*	*228*
Another relative	5	*418*	*412*
Friend or neighbour	6	*394*	*370*

NB: Row percentages

Table 8.11 shows how much parents paid their providers per day of holiday childcare, by the type of provider they used (so this amount paid per family could cover more than one child). In terms of the average amount families paid per day of holiday childcare parents spent most money on childminders (a median of £26 per day), and parents paid less for breakfast or after-school clubs on the school site (a median of £17), holiday clubs or schemes (a median of £16), and breakfast or after-school clubs not on the school site (a median of £15).

Table 8.11 Amount paid for holiday care per day of, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare

	Amount paid per day				
Use of childcare	Median £	Mean £	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Formal providers					
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	17	20	2.08	*120*	*109*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	15	17	2.07	*54*	*60*
Holiday Club	16	21	1.19	*525*	*536*
Childminder	26	32	1.62	*203*	*214*

To put these figures into context, Table 8.12 shows for how many hours per day these providers were typically used. On the whole the difference between the number of hours per day children spent with different providers is quite small (the main exception being breakfast or after-school clubs off the school site where children spent less time). This suggests that on the whole the differences in daily cost highlighted above genuinely reflect differences in the cost of these provider types rather than in the time children spent there.

Table 8.12 Hours of holiday care used per day, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare

	Hours per day				
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Use of childcare	Hrs	Hrs			
Formal providers					
Childminder	7.0	7.2	0.16	*218*	*229*
Holiday Club	6.0	6.7	0.18	*536*	*547*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	7.0	7.0	0.45	*123*	*112*
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	4.0	5.8	0.84	*46*	*54*

8.6 Availability of holiday childcare

Ease of finding holiday care for working parents

Twenty-four per cent of working parents with school-age children reported that they were able to work during school term-time only (table not shown). Working parents with school-age children who *did not only* work during school term-time were asked about how easy or difficult it was to arrange childcare for the school holidays. The majority of these parents reported that they found arranging holiday childcare easy or very easy (63%)[79], and 17% thought it was neither easy nor difficult, or said that it varied too much to say (Figure 8.2). However, 20% of parents said that they found arranging holiday childcare difficult or very difficult.

Figure 8.2 Ease/ difficulty of arranging childcare in the school holidays

Base: All families with school-age children where the respondent was in work (and did not only work during term-time)

Very difficult 7%
Varies 1%
Very easy 27%
Difficult 13%
Neither easy nor difficult 16%
Easy 36%
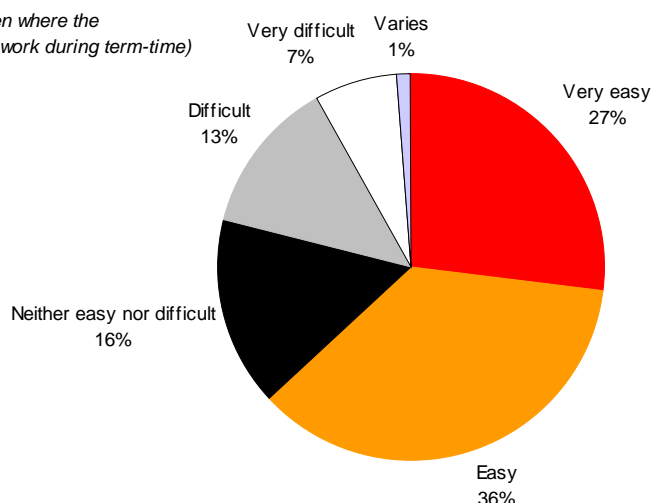
Source: Table C8.2 in Appendix C

When looking at family work status (see Table C8.3 in Appendix C) fewer working lone parents said it was easy or very easy to find holiday provision than couple parents where one or both parents were working (57% compared with 66% and 65% respectively). Correspondingly, whilst 24% of working lone parents thought it was difficult or very difficult to arrange holiday care, this was the case for only 19% of couples where both parents worked, and 11% where only one parent worked. This may indicate that the logistics of

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[79] The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

arranging holiday care are easier for couples where one parent was not working, or it could reflect a lack of need for childcare in couples where one parent was not working.

Those parents who said it was difficult or very difficult to arrange childcare during the school holidays were asked about the reasons for these difficulties (Table 8.13)[80]. Friends or family not being available to help with childcare was one of the biggest difficulties reported by parents (59%). The other key factors parents mentioned were that holiday care was difficult to afford (36%), that there were a lack of holiday childcare places (27%) and difficulties finding out what holiday provision was available (24%).

Table 8.13 Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare

Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/ very difficult

Reasons	%
Friends/ Family not always available to help	59
Difficult to afford	36
Not many places/ providers in my area	27
Difficult to find out what childcare/ holiday clubs are available in my area	24
Quality of some childcare/ clubs is not good	11
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	4
No Holiday places/ providers for my child's age group	3
Other reasons	17
Weighted base	*198*
Unweighted base	*206*

There were no notable differences in the reasons given by couple and lone parents (see Table C8.4 in Appendix C).

Sufficiency of the hours available at formal providers

Parents who had used formal providers during the holidays were asked whether their providers were available for enough time during the holidays. As parents could have used more than one provider of the same type, we asked about the availability of each one and then calculated whether all, some, or none of the providers of the specific type they used were available for enough time in the holidays. The findings replicate those reported in 2008 – parents reported being relatively happy with the availability of formal holiday providers (Table 8.14), and the highest levels of satisfaction were with the availability of childminders (90%). However, a substantial minority of parents using on-site and off-site breakfast and after-school clubs and those using holiday clubs/ schemes said that these providers were not available enough during the school holidays (28%, 19% and 22% respectively).

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[80] For the early part of 2009 fieldwork questions this question was routed incorrectly in the questionnaire. This analysis therefore focuses on the second half of fieldwork in Autumn 2009, where the question was asked of all families who said that if was difficult or very difficult to arrange holiday care.

Table 8.14 Whether formal provider available for enough time during school holidays, by provider type

Base: All families with school-age children using the types of formal holiday childcare

	Holiday provider			
Whether available for enough time	Holiday club scheme	Breakfast or after-school club, on school site	Breakfast or after-school club, off school site	Childminder
	%	%	%	%
All providers were available for enough time in holidays	74	71	81	90
Some providers were available for enough time in holidays	4	+	0	0
No providers were available for enough time in holidays	22	28	19	10
Weighted base	*616*	*165*	*67*	*221*
Unweighted base	*635*	*148*	*73*	*234*

Perceptions of how easy it would be to find alternative holiday provision

Parents who had used any holiday provision were also asked how easy they thought it would be to find alternative providers if their holiday providers were not available. A large proportion (56%) said that it would not be easy to find alternatives for any of the providers that they used (table not shown). Forty-four per cent said it would be easy or very easy to find alternatives for all or for some of the holiday providers they used.

8.7   Parents' views of childcare used during school holidays

Table 8.15 shows parents' views on the quality of childcare available during school holidays, and their perceptions of the flexibility and affordability of holiday childcare. These views are shown separately for parents using some formal holiday care, only informal holiday care and no childcare in the holidays, because as we saw in Chapter 6 parents' views on childcare are often associated with their pattern of use.

Overall, over half (57%) of parents strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the quality of childcare available in their local area. Just over half (52%) of parents were happy with their ability to find flexible holiday care. Under half (43%) reported no problems with affordability.

However, the flip side of this is that 16% of parents were not happy with the quality of childcare available in the holidays, 20% of parents reported having problems finding holiday care that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 30% reported difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays. This suggests that from parents' point of view holiday childcare provision has some way to go with regard to quality, flexibility and affordability, and that this causes a substantial number of parents difficulties.

Parents who had not used any holiday care were less likely to express an opinion about quality, flexibility and affordability, with 35%-39% saying they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements in Table 8.15. It is important to recognise that at least a proportion of those not using holiday care do so because they have no need for it. This would explain why parents who did not use holiday childcare were less likely to report difficulties with flexibility and affordability of provision that parents who did use holiday childcare. For example, while 16% of parents who had not used childcare reported

difficulties finding flexible childcare this was the case for 22-29% of those who used holiday childcare. Similarly 28% of parents who had not used any childcare in the holidays agreed that they have difficulties affording holiday childcare, compared to 35% of parents who had used formal holiday provision. However, this is not to say that the difficulties reported by parents who had not used any holiday childcare are unimportant, as the group of families who had not used any holiday childcare is likely to be made up both of families where there was and was not demand.

Table 8.15 Views of parents about childcare during school holidays, by use of holiday childcare

Base: All families with school-age children

		Whether used holiday childcare			
		Used formal	Used informal (or other) care only	No holiday childcare used	All families
Parents' views		%	%	%	%
I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays	Strongly agree	24	32	16	22
	Agree	48	34	30	35
	Neither agree nor disagree	12	18	39	27
	Disagree	12	12	11	12
	Strongly disagree	4	5	4	4
I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs	Strongly agree	7	8	5	6
	Agree	22	14	11	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	15	19	38	27
	Disagree	44	43	33	38
	Strongly disagree	12	16	13	14
I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays	Strongly agree	12	14	12	13
	Agree	23	15	16	17
	Neither agree nor disagree	21	20	35	27
	Disagree	37	36	27	32
	Strongly disagree	7	15	10	11
Weighted base[81]		1267	1605	2683	5550
Unweighted base		1366	1536	2840	5739

Over six in ten couples where both parents worked and working lone parents were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available (63% and 62%, see Table C8.5 in Appendix C). The proportions who said they were happy with the quality of available holiday provision were lower for couples where only one parent worked (51%), couples where neither parent worked (49%), and lone parents not in employment (44%). This again may reflect a lack of demand, and indeed the proportions not expressing an opinion are higher within these groups (34%-37%) compared to families with all parents in employment (18%-23%). Lone parents were more likely than couples to say they were unhappy with the quality of available holiday childcare (20% for both working and non working lone parents, compared with 13%-15% of couples).

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[81] Where the bases across the three statements are not exactly the same the highest base out of three has been presented in the table. The smallest difference is that one observation is missing for the base of the other two statements; the biggest difference is 39 observations missing.

The proportion of couple parents (see Table C8.5 in Appendix C) saying that flexibility was a problem was highest for couples where both parents worked (21%), and lower where only one parent worked (17%) and where neither parent worked (14%). Similarly, lone parents in employment were more likely to say that flexibility was a problem compared with lone parents who were not working (29% compared with 20%).

Lone parents seem to have more difficulties with finding flexible holiday care than couples – 21% of dual earning couples and 17% of couples with one partner working had problems finding flexible holiday care whilst this was the case for 29% of lone parents. Lone parents stand out even more as a group when looking at problems with affording childcare – 37% of working lone parents said that affordability is a problem and 39% of lone parents who did not work, compared to 27%-28% of couple parents. These figures indicate that affordability poses a particular problem for lone parents and may act as barrier to accessing holiday provision.

Turning to parents who were in work, they were asked whether they were able to find holiday childcare that fitted in with their working hours. Overall, 56% of families said that they could find holiday care that fitted their working hours (Table 8.16). Parents who used formal holiday care were the most likely to have reported problems with finding holiday childcare that fitted their working hours (23%) compared with those who used only informal provision and those who did not use any childcare in the holidays (both 18%).

Table 8.16 Views of working parents on holiday childcare hours, by use of holiday childcare

Base: All families with school-age children where respondent worked

		Whether used holiday childcare			
		Used formal	Used informal (or other) care only	No holiday childcare used	All families
Working parents' views		%	%	%	%
I am able to find holiday care that fits in with my/ (mine and my partner's) working hours	Strongly agree	16	22	14	17
	Agree	49	45	29	39
	Neither agree nor disagree	13	16	39	24
	Disagree	18	13	13	14
	Strongly disagree	5	5	5	5
Weighted base		*988*	*1224*	*1432*	*3648*
Unweighted base		*1031*	*1111*	*1343*	*3488*

The survey also asked whether working parents would increase their working hours if holiday care were (a) cheaper or (b) if it were available for more hours per day.

The majority of parents (62%) said they would keep their working hours the same *if holiday care was cheaper*, although 19% said that they would increase their working hours (table not shown). Eighteen per cent neither agreed nor disagreed that more affordable childcare would make them increase their working hours.

In terms of whether holiday childcare *being available for more hours per day* would affect the hours that parents work, again, most parents (67%) said they would keep their hours the same. Fifteen per cent of working parents said they would increase their working hours, and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed (table not shown). These figures indicate that the availability and cost of holiday childcare affects the capacity of a substantial minority of parents to work more hours.

8.8 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, almost half of families (49%) did not use any holiday care. When these parents were asked about the likelihood of their using holiday care if suitable care could be found – 37% said that this would make them likely or very likely to use holiday childcare (table not shown).

Furthermore, we saw in section 8.2 (Table 8.2), that only 33% of families who had used formal childcare during term-time also used formal childcare in the holidays. Parents who only used formal provision during term-time were asked whether any of their providers remained open during the school holidays: 26% said that this was the case, 3% said this was sometimes the case, but 59% said that none of their formal term-time providers were open during the holidays[82] (table not shown)[83]. Amongst those families whose formal term-time providers were not open in the holidays 40% said that they would be likely or very likely to use holiday childcare if suitable care could be found. These figures suggest that there is a considerable level of unmet demand for holiday provision amongst those families who used formal childcare during term-time but not in the holidays, which might be met through term-time formal providers remaining open during the holiday periods.

Parents who used formal childcare during school term-time but not in the holidays and whose term-time provider *was* open during the holidays were asked why they had not used childcare in the school holidays in the last year. Table 8.17 shows that these parents were most likely to say that they wanted to look after their children themselves (61%). Parents also mentioned that they or their partner were at home during school holidays (28%), and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (19%). As such, where families' formal term-time provider was available but not used during the holidays this was mainly because they had no need for holiday childcare. However, 11% of those parents also said that they did not use their formal term-time providers during the holidays because this was too expensive for them, so affordability appears to be a barrier to a substantial minority of parents whose formal term-time provision is available during the holidays.

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[82] This represents 8% of all families with school-age children (who only used formal childcare during the term-time and whose term-time providers were not open in the holidays.
[83] In addition, 12% of families were not sure whether their providers remained open during the holidays.

Table 8.17 Reasons for not using holiday care[84]	

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

Reasons	%
Preferred to look after children myself	61
Respondent/ partner is at home during school holidays	28
Rarely needed to be away from children	19
Too expensive/ cost	11
Children old enough to look after themselves	3
Did not fit my/ partner's working hours	3
Children need special care	2
Had a bad childcare experience in past	1
Would have had transport difficulties	1
No providers available I could trust	1
Couldn't find a place/ local providers full	+
Quality not good enough	+
Other	9
Weighted base	*331*
Unweighted base	*416*

8.9 Summary

Just over half of families with school-age children used childcare in the school holidays (51%), and they were more likely to use informal providers than formal providers (37% and 23% respectively). This represents no change since 2008.

There were some notable differences between families' use of childcare in term-time and the school holidays. Where families used childcare during term-time, 42% used no childcare during the school holidays; and where families used no childcare during term-time, 34% used some holiday care. The major difference between the term and holiday period was that children were much more likely to be cared for by formal providers during term-time (40%) than during the holidays (18%). Holiday clubs and schemes were the most common form of formal childcare in the holidays (11%). In terms of informal carers, grandparents played a particularly important role in providing childcare during school holidays (24% of children received grandparental care in the holidays compared with 19% during term-time).

Use of formal childcare during school holidays varied by children's characteristics and their families' circumstances. Those less likely to use formal holiday care included: older school-age children (i.e. those aged 12-14), children from Asian and Black African backgrounds, children in lone parent families, children from non working families, children in lower income households, and children living in disadvantaged areas.

Two-thirds (68%) of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons, 59% of parents gave reasons around their child's development or enjoyment reasons, and 18% of parents gave reasons relating to how the holiday provision gave them time to do other things (e.g. shop, attend appointments). Parents' reasons for using holiday care varied depending on the types of providers used. For example, child development and enjoyment reasons tended to be more important when using holiday schemes and breakfast and after-school clubs, while economic reasons played a more important role where parents used childminders. All types of informal provider (except ex-partners) were primarily used for

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[84] The information in Table 8.16 is not directly comparable to the findings from 2008, because parents had two additional answer options to choose from in 2009 (that childcare did not fit their working hours and the respondent/ partner being able to be at home during school holidays).

economic reasons. In families where ex-partners provided care this was mainly for children's enjoyment and/ or development.

The majority (63%) of parents of school-age children who worked in school holidays thought that childcare was easy or very easy to arrange. However, 20% thought that it was difficult or very difficult. Lone parents were more likely to report difficulties than couple parents. Not having family or friends available to help with childcare was the biggest difficulty, followed by: difficulties with affording the cost of holiday childcare, a perceived lack of places and difficulties finding out about holiday provision. When parents who had used formal provision were asked how easy they thought it would be to find alternative providers if theirs were not available over half thought this would not be easy.

Parents' views on the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday care were mixed – over half (57%) of parents said that they were happy with the quality of childcare available. However, 30% reported difficulties finding childcare that they can afford during the school holidays, 20% reported having problems finding holiday care that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 16% were unhappy with the quality of care available. Lack of flexibility and the affordability of the available holiday provision caused difficulties for more lone parents than for couple parents. A substantial minority of parents also indicated that the availability and affordability of holiday childcare impacts on their capacity to work more hours.

Lastly, focusing on families who did not use holiday childcare, 37% said they were likely to use childcare in the holidays if it was available. Where parents used formal providers during term-time but not in the holidays, over half (59%) said that their providers were not available during the holidays[85] – and of those families - 40% said that they would be likely or very likely to use holiday childcare if suitable care could be found. These figures suggest that there is a considerable level of unmet demand for holiday provision amongst those families who used formal childcare during term-time but not in the holidays, which might be met through term-time formal providers remaining open for business during the holiday periods.

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[85] This represents 8% of all families with school-age children (who only used formal childcare during the term-time and whose term-time providers were not open in the holidays.

9 Mothers, childcare and work

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter we explore the interface between childcare and work. For the majority of the chapter we focus on mothers who were in paid employment at the time of the survey. The chapter starts with an overview of mothers' employment patterns to show the extent that these have changed since the survey series began in 1999 (section 9.2). The following sections discuss influences on transitions into the labour market (section 9.3), and on moves from part-time to full-time work (section 9.4). Next we examine the inter-play of factors that shape mothers' decisions to go out work - including financial influences, work orientation, availability of family-friendly employment and access to childcare (section 9.5). Section 9.6 reports on mothers' ideal working arrangements. We then focus on two specific groups of working mothers: firstly those who were self-employed - where we report on what influenced this choice (section 9.7); and secondly those who were studying - where we look at the childcare arrangements which made this possible (section 9.8). Finally we turn to mothers who were not employed at the time of the survey and examine the factors that shaped their decisions to stay at home and not enter employment at this time (section 9.9).

Previous research has shown that whether mothers have a partner is associated with their employment experiences and the choices available to them. This is partly explained by the fact that lone mothers typically have lower educational and occupational levels than partnered mothers. Their weaker labour market position means that lone mothers can face greater difficulties in securing a job and gaining access to family-friendly employment (Bell et al. 2005b: Butt et al. 2007: La Valle et al. 2008; Cabinet Office 2008). Lone mothers are less likely than their partnered counterparts to be able to rely on their children's father as a source of childcare and this can impact on their employment decisions and experiences. This problem is compounded by the difficulties, mainly concerning cost, which lone parents have in accessing childcare services (Bell et al. 2005b, Butt et al. 2007; La Valle et al. 2008; Kazimirski et al. 2008). For these reasons, in this chapter, we explore separately the experiences and decisions of lone and partnered mothers, unless sample sizes are too small to do this. Educational attainment and occupational level are both important determinants of labour market experiences and employment choices. These factors are discussed briefly in the chapter, with further analysis provided in Appendix C.

The focus of this chapter is mothers. Therefore lone father households (1% of the sample, 68 cases) have been excluded from the analysis. In addition, as questions asking about attitudes, influences and reasons could only be covered when the mother was the respondent, two-parent families where the father was the respondent have also been excluded from the majority of the analysis (these comprise 6% of the sample, 381 cases).

9.2 Overview of maternal work patterns

Figure 2.1 shows how the trend in mothers' employment has changed since 1999 when the survey series began. In 1999 56% of mothers were employed. By 2004 this had risen to 62% and has stayed fairly consistently at this level (63% in 2009). The proportion of mothers who were employed full-time rose from 22% in 1999 to 27% in 2007 and through to 2009.

Base: All mothers

Legend:
- Mother working FT
- Mother working PT(1-15 hrs/wk)
- Mother working PT(16-29 hrs/wk)
- Mother not working
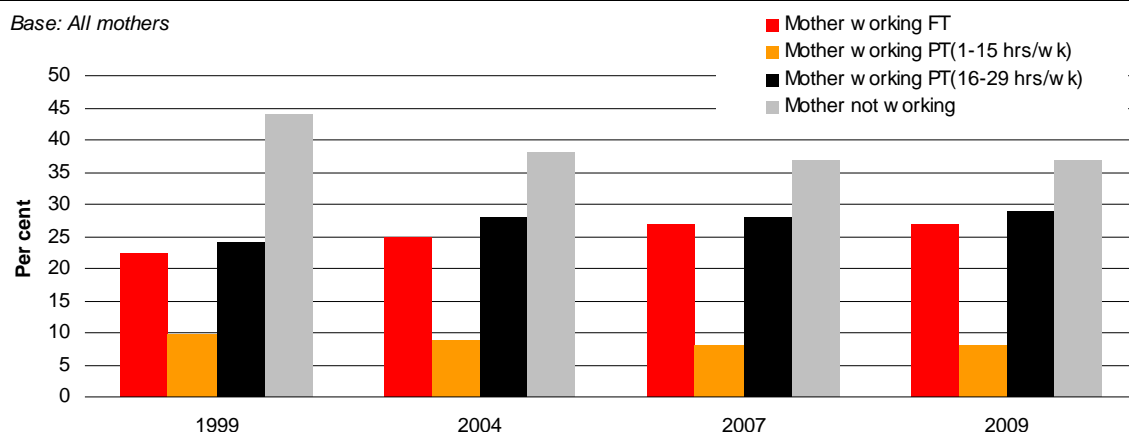
Source: Table C9.1 Appendix C.

Table 9.1, shows that in 2009, couple mothers were more likely to be working than lone mothers, (68% compared to 50%). This compares to 61% of couple mothers and 41% of lone mothers who were in work in 1999 (table not shown).

Table 9.1   Maternal employment, by family type

Base: All mothers

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Work status	%	%	%
Mother working FT	28	22	27
Mother working PT(1-15 hrs/ wk)	10	3	8
Mother working PT(16-29 hrs/ wk)	30	24	29
Mother not working	32	50	37
Weighted base	*4861*	*1759*	*6621*
Unweighted base	*5046*	*1594*	*6640*

Sixty-three per cent of working mothers worked atypical hours (Table 9.2). Atypical hours were defined as usually or sometimes working early morning and/ or evening during the week, and/ or usually or sometimes working at any time during the weekend.

The most common patterns of atypical work were working evenings - with 46% of mothers usually or sometimes working after 6pm. This was followed closely by Saturday work – 41% of mothers usually or sometimes worked Saturdays. Working mornings (before 8am) or Sundays was less common with a little over one-quarter of mothers working at these times (both 28%). The prevalence of atypical working was similar for partnered and lone mothers with the only difference being that partnered mothers were somewhat more likely to work evenings (47% compared with 42%).

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Table 9.2 Atypical working hours, by family type

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Atypical working hours	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
	%	%	%
Any atypical hours usually or sometimes	**64**	**61**	**63**
Before 8am usually or sometimes	29	26	28
After 6pm usually or sometimes	47	42	46
Saturdays usually or sometimes	41	41	41
Sundays usually or sometimes	29	28	28
Weighted base	*3293*	*868*	*4161*
Unweighted base	*3206*	*693*	*3899*

Mothers who usually or sometimes worked atypical hours were asked whether working these atypical hours had caused problems with their childcare arrangements. The findings are displayed in Figure 9.2. Twenty-seven per cent of mothers who worked before 8am, and 25% of mothers who worked past 6pm reported having difficulties with their childcare arrangements at these times. Lone mothers who worked early morning and evenings were more likely than partnered mothers to report associated childcare problems which may be related to the lack of availability of shift parenting (i.e. through working at alternate times to eliminate the need for non-parental childcare).

As indicated by Figure 9.2, overall, mothers reported fewer problems with childcare required for weekend working than early morning or evening working. However the difference between lone mothers and partnered mothers is still present: 28% of lone mothers who worked Saturdays and 31% who worked Sundays reported childcare problems, the respective figures for partnered mothers were 17% and 13%.

Figure 9.2 Whether atypical working hours caused problems with childcare, by family type

Base: All mothers who worked different atypical hours
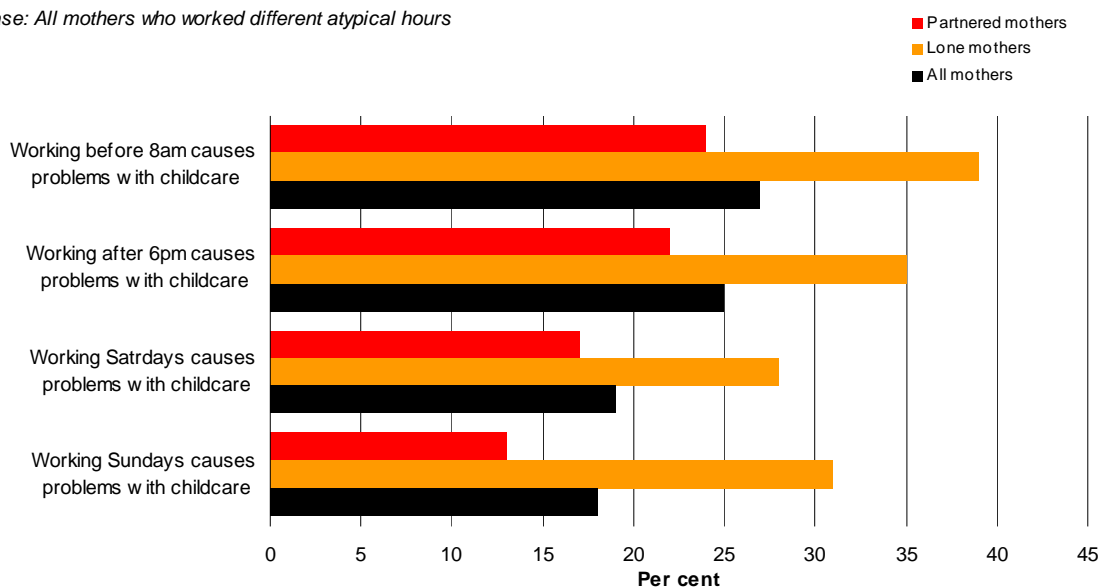
Source: Table C9.2 Appendix C.

9.3   Transition into work

Mothers who had entered paid employment at some point in the last two years[86] were asked what had prompted their decision to enter work at that particular time. The largest group (29%) said they went out to work because they found a job that enabled them to combine work with their caring responsibilities. Other reasons were reported by a smaller proportion of mothers: 16% said the family's financial circumstances prompted the decision, 14% wanted to get out of the house, 12% wanted financial independence and 11% started work when their children started attending school (Table 9.3). The wide range of factors which shaped mothers' decision to enter employment can be seen by the number of other factors in Table 9.3; the remaining factors were cited by less than 10% of mothers.

Lone mothers were more likely to mention finding a job that enabled them to combine work and children as a reason for entering employment than partnered mothers (38% and 26% respectively), and were similarly more likely to mention wanting to get out of the house (23% and 10% respectively).

Table 9.3 Reasons for entering paid employment, by family type

Base: All mothers who entered employment in past two years

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Reasons	%	%	%
Found job that enabled me to combine work and child(ren)	26	38	29
Financial situation (e.g. partner lost job)	18	12	16
Wanted to get out of the house	10	23	14
Wanted financial independence	10	17	12
Child(ren) started school	12	11	11
End of maternity leave	11	4	9
Finished studying/ training/ education	10	6	9
Job opportunity arose	8	8	8
Child(ren) old enough to use childcare	6	6	6
Family became available/ willing to help with childcare	3	5	3
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/ herself/ themselves	2	5	3
Appropriate childcare became available	3	3	3
Became eligible for tax credits	1	5	2
My health improved	2	2	2
Became eligible for other financial help with childcare cost	0	2	1
Other	6	16	9
Weighted base	*329*	*144*	*473*
Unweighted base	*369*	*127*	*496*

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[86] Eight per cent of mothers who were in paid employment at the time of the survey had entered work in the past two years.

9.4 Transition from part-time to full-time employment

If mothers had increased their working hours from part-time to full-time in the past two years[87] they were asked what had influenced this decision. Table 9.4 shows that just over a third of mothers (35%) reported that this increase in hours was due to a job promotion or opportunity, and around a quarter (24%) said that this decision was driven by the family's financial situation. For a substantial minority of mothers the move into full-time work was linked to their children's life stage, including 8% who said their children had started school, 8% who said that their children were old enough to look after themselves and 6% who said that their children were old enough to be in childcare. It is clear that the move into full-time work was influenced by a wide range of factors overall.

Table 9.4 Reasons for moving from part-time to full-time work

Base: Mothers who moved from part-time to full-time work in the past two years

Reasons	%
Job opportunity/ promotion[88]	35
Financial situation (e.g. partner lost job)	24
Found job that enabled me to combine work and child(ren)	12
Child(ren) started school	8
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/ herself/ themselves	8
Child(ren) old enough to use childcare	6
Family became available/ willing to help with childcare	5
Wanted financial independence	4
Employer enforced/ demanded full-time hours	4
Self-employed and business required FT hours	4
Wanted to get out of the house	3
Appropriate childcare came available	2
Finished studying/ training/ education	2
Became eligible for financial help with childcare cost	1
Other	8
Weighted base	*202*
Unweighted base	*182*

9.5 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work

Table 9.5 shows how different types of childcare arrangements helped mothers to go out to work. Mothers were asked about a range of childcare related arrangements including both the role played by childcare, and also childcare provided by relatives, friends and ex-partners.

Forty-four per cent of mothers reported that their child being in full-time education influenced their decision to go out to work. This links with previous research (Brewer and Paull, 2006) that shows a link between maternal employment and children being in education.

As discussed in previous chapters, many families use informal childcare and this is highlighted in Table 9.5: 44% of mothers stated that the childcare provided by relatives

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[87] Three per cent of mothers had moved from part-time hours (i.e. fewer than 30 weekly hours) to full-time hours (i.e. 30 hours per week or more) in the past two years.
[88] The reasons 'Job opportunity', 'Employer enforced/demanded full-time hours', and 'Self-employed and business required FT hours', were edit codes in the 2008 survey and included on the showcard this year, so aren't comparable.

enabled them to go out to work and 13% mentioned that friends provided childcare. Reliance on the childcare provision of friends is more likely to be reported by those mothers in lone parent families (16%) than their partnered counterparts (12%).

However the factor most commonly reported as enabling mothers to go to work was having reliable childcare available to them, reported by half of lone mothers (50%) and slightly fewer partnered mothers (46%). Whether a mother reported having reliable childcare also varied by their educational level: the most highly qualified mothers, those who achieved A-levels or above were more likely to report having reliable childcare (52%) than those who had low or no qualifications (37%, see Table C9.3 Appendix C).

In terms of access to free/ cheap childcare, 27% of mothers reported that this enabled them to go out to work. This was more commonly reported by lone mothers than partnered mothers (31% compared with 26%). This seems to fit with earlier research on multiple disadvantage which showed that mothers in more deprived households were more likely to have access to reliable free/ cheap childcare than those in less deprived households (Speight et al. 2010). Alternatively, it could illustrate that less deprived families are better able to pay for childcare, and that free/ cheap childcare is not as important a factor for facilitating work for these families.

Further, a substantial minority of lone parents reported that the childcare subsidies provided through Working Tax Credit enabled them to work, whilst a far lower proportion of partnered mothers reported this.

Lastly, shift-parenting in two-parent families was a factor which enabled mothers to go to work e.g. 11% of mothers reported working when their partner was available to provide childcare and 20% stated that the childcare arrangements fitted around their partner's working hours.

Table 9.5 Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by family type

Base: Mothers in paid employment

| | Family type | | |
| | Partnered | Lone | All |
Childcare arrangements that enabled mothers to go out to work	mothers %	mothers %	mothers %
All mothers			
Have reliable childcare[89]	46	50	47
Child(ren) at school	44	44	44
Relatives help with childcare	43	46	44
Childcare fits with working hours	36	40	37
Have good quality childcare	36	37	36
Have free/ cheap childcare	26	31	27
Friends help with childcare	12	16	13
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/ herself/ themselves	11	14	12
Help with childcare costs through tax credits	5	18	8
Employer provides/ pays for childcare	2	+	1
Partnered mothers			
Childcare fits partner's working hours	20	n/a	n/a
Partner helps with childcare	19	n/a	n/a
Mother works when partner does not work	11	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	18	n/a
Other	1	1	1
None of these	9	1	7
Weighted base	*3088*	*868*	*3956*
Unweighted base	*3026*	*693*	*3719*

The other influences on mothers' decisions to go to work are shown in Table 9.6. It is clear that financial factors are some of the most frequently reported factors influencing women's decision to work, especially financial need, mentioned by 68% of mothers, and the desire to be financially independent, mentioned by 48% of mothers. A quarter of mothers (25%) reported that the continuing need to contribute to their pension was a reason for them to work. These financial factors varied by household type, with lone mothers being more likely to mention financial necessity as a reason to work (78%) than partnered mothers (65%).

Another frequently reported set of reasons for mothers' working focussed on their work orientation. Enjoying work was the most commonly reported of these reasons, though lone mothers were slightly more likely to mention this (70%) than partnered mothers (68%). Similarly lone mothers were also more likely to say that they would feel useless without a job, reported by 35% of lone mothers and 22% of partnered mothers. This reflects what

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[89] 'Have reliable childcare', and 'Have free/cheap childcare' was one code in the 2008 survey, and two codes in 2009 so there are no comparable figures for this.

has been shown by earlier research, that some lone mothers feel that it is less socially acceptable for them to be unemployed because this would mean reliance on state benefits (Bell et al, 2005b). It also reflects research which shows that mothers in more deprived households were more likely to report that they would feel useless without a job than mothers in less deprived households (Speight et al. 2010).

A final set of reasons for working focus on the accessibility of family friendly employment, for example the right to request flexible working. Table 9.6 shows that a substantial proportion of mothers mentioned the access to family friendly employment, with 22% mentioning access to flex-time, 19% mentioning term-time work and 11% being able to work at home some of the time. Recent research has highlighted the fact that lone mothers are less likely to have access to family-friendly arrangements than partnered mothers, something which is associated with the fact that lone mothers are more likely to be found in low income occupations which in turn are less likely to offer family-friendly arrangements (La Valle et al. 2008). This is also illustrated in Table 9.6 where lone mothers were less likely to have access to flexi-time (18% compared with 23%) and term-time work (15% compared with 21%) than partnered mothers.

Table 9.6   Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by family type

Base: Mothers in paid employment

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Influences on mothers' decision to go out to work	%	%	%
All mothers			
I need the money	65	78	68
I like to have my own money	50	40	48
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	25	22	25
I enjoy working	68	70	68
I want to get out of the house	30	36	31
I would feel useless without a job	22	35	25
My career would suffer if I took a break	17	14	16
I can work flexi-time	23	18	22
I don't have to work during school holidays	21	15	19
I can work from home some of the time	12	9	11
I can work from home most/ all of the time	6	5	6
Partnered mothers			
Partner can work from home some of the time	4	n/a	n/a
Partner can work flexi-time (couple only)	4	n/a	n/a
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	2	n/a	n/a
Partner can work from home most/ all of the time	2	n/a	n/a
Other	1	3	2
None of these	1	1	1
Weighted base	*3088*	*866*	*3955*
Unweighted base	*3026*	*692*	*3718*

There are some clear differences in the extent to which work orientation, financial considerations and family-friendly arrangements enabled the employment of mothers' with

different levels of educational attainment. For example, more educated mothers, that is those with A-levels or higher, were more likely to report working because they needed to contribute to their pension (32%) than less educated mothers (12%-20%, see Table C9.5 in Appendix C).

More highly educated mothers seem to have a stronger commitment to work orientation than lesser educated mothers:

• 73% of mothers with A-levels and above said they enjoy working, compared with 64%-63% of those with GCSE's and O-levels or lower/ no qualifications;

• 26% of more educated mothers said that their career would suffer if they did not work, compared to only 5%-6% of less educated mothers.

More highly educated mothers were also more likely to report that access to family friendly arrangements influenced their decisions to work:

• 26% of highly-qualified mothers reported that flexi-time helped enable them work compared with 15%-20% of other mothers;

• 15% of the more educated mothers could work from home some or all of the time compared with only 7% of less educated mothers.

Furthermore, partnered mothers who had higher educational qualifications were more likely to say that their partner's working arrangements helped them to work with 6% reporting that their partners could work from home some of the time, compared with 2%-3% of less educated mothers.

Socio-economic status was also associated with access to family friendly arrangements. For instance, mothers in lower level occupations were less likely to report that access to these arrangements was an influence on their decision to work (see Table C9.6 in Appendix C). This is in line with other research which has shown that mothers in weaker labour market positions are less likely to have access to family-friendly arrangements, (La Valle et al. 2008). This relationship also reflects research on multiple disadvantage which shows that employed women in more disadvantaged households were less likely to report having family-friendly arrangements than mothers in less deprived households (Speight et al. 2010).

9.6   Ideal working arrangements

Mothers who were in employment were asked what their ideal working arrangements would be (Table 9.7):

• 38% said they would prefer to give up work and stay at home to look after children;
• 57% said they would like to work fewer hours;
• 18% said they would like to increase their working hours, if good quality, reliable, convenient and affordable childcare was available.

Ideal working arrangements were similar for lone and partnered mothers. However, lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to say that they would increase their working hours if they could afford good quality childcare, which was convenient, reliable and affordable (Table 9.7).

Table 9.7 Views on ideal working arrangements , by family structure

Base: Mothers in paid employment

	Family structure		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Ideal working arrangements	%	%	%
If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home and look after the children			
Agree strongly	19	17	19
Agree	19	18	19
Neither agree nor disagree	16	13	15
Disagree	37	39	38
Disagree strongly	9	13	10
If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children			
Agree strongly	23	27	24
Agree	33	32	33
Neither agree nor disagree	14	9	13
Disagree	26	26	26
Disagree strongly	4	6	5
If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours			
Agree strongly	3	4	3
Agree	14	20	15
Neither agree nor disagree	11	13	12
Disagree	52	45	50
Disagree strongly	20	18	20
Weighted base	*3088*	*868*	*3956*
Unweighted base	*3026*	*693*	*3719*

In addition, there were some small differences by education level and socio-economic status. For example, more educated mothers were less likely to say they would like to give up work if they could (35% compared with 40%-41% of less educated mothers). However, they were also more likely to say that they wanted to decrease their hours (59% compared with 51%-55%, see Table C9.7 in Appendix C). Women in managerial and professional occupations were more likely to say that they would decrease their working hours if they could afford it (see Table C9.8 in Appendix C).

9.7 Mothers and self-employment

The experiences of self-employed mothers can differ from those of employees. Indeed research has shown that self-employment can give mothers more flexibility and freedom to organise work around the needs of children (Bell and La Valle 2003). This hypothesis, linking self-employment and increased work flexibility, was explored in the survey.

Ten per cent of working mothers were self-employed. When asked why they had chosen self-employment, 46% said it was because it fitted with bringing up children and a further 27% mentioned that they had chosen self-employment because of work related reasons and that it fitted with bringing up children (table not shown).

The ways in which these mothers felt that being self-employed was family friendly are shown in Table 9.8. Flexibility emerges as being the main advantage of self employment seen by these mothers, with 77% reporting flexibility over the number of hours worked, 66% over the times of day and 59% over the days worked. Fifty-seven per cent had chosen self-employment because it allowed them to work from home and 46% of mothers believed that as an employee they would not have the same level of flexibility.

Table 9.8 Child-rearing related reasons for choosing self-employment

Base: Mothers who chose self-employment for child-rearing reasons

Reasons	%
Flexibility over the number of hours I work	77
Flexibility over the times of day I work	66
Flexibility over which day(s) of the week I work	59
Allows me to work from home	57
I could not get work as an employee with the same flexibility	46
No need for childcare	43
I can earn more	24
Allows me to work term-time only	21
Other	4
Weighted base	*304*
Unweighted base	*302*

Despite the fact that many mothers reported that they had chosen self-employment because it reduced the need for non-parental care (43%, see Table 9.8), there were only small differences between the childcare use of mothers who were employees and those who were self employed. Seventy-three per cent of self-employed mothers had used childcare, compared with 79% of mothers who were employees. Use of formal provision followed this pattern (58% and 59% respectively), but more employee mothers than self-employed mothers used informal childcare (48% compared with 38% of self-employed mothers, table not shown).

9.8   Mothers who study

Fourteen per cent of mothers reported that they were studying or undertaking training at the time of the survey. Lone mothers were more likely to report studying than their partnered counterparts (19% and 12% respectively – table not shown).

Having children at school, as indicated by Table 9.9, was the most commonly cited influence on the mothers' decision to study (30%). However childcare reasons were also mentioned as playing a role, notably the availability of reliable childcare (25%), and the help of relatives (23%). Lone mothers were more likely than couple mothers to mention all of the reasons relating to childcare, apart from having good quality childcare.

In two-parent families, partners also played a role in enabling mothers to study. For example 19% said they could study because their partner helped with childcare, and 16% of mothers studied when their partner was not working.

Base: Mothers who were studying

Childcare arrangements that help mother to study	Family type		
	Partnered mothers %	Lone mothers %	All mothers %
All mothers			
Children are at school	29	32	30
Have reliable childcare	21	33	25
Relatives help with childcare	21	27	23
Have good quality childcare	18	20	19
Childcare which fits with hours of study	14	26	18
Have free/ cheap childcare	13	22	16
Children are old enough to look after themselves	7	8	7
Friends help with childcare	7	8	7
College provides/ pays for some/ all of my childcare	2	7	4
Partnered mothers			
Partner helps with childcare	19	n/a	n/a
Studies when partner is not working	16	n/a	n/a
Childcare fits with partner's working hours	8	n/a	n/a
Other	1	2	1
None of these	29	22	26
Weighted base	*552*	*333*	*885*
Unweighted base	*561*	*288*	*849*

9.9 Mothers who were not in paid employment

Finally we look at those mothers who were not in paid employment at the time of the survey.[90] Mothers who were not in employment were asked to respond using a five point scale to the statement *"if I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would prefer to go out to work"*. Fifty-three per cent of these mothers agreed with the statement, 33% disagreed and 14% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (table not shown).

Table 9.10 displays the child and childcare related reasons that mothers gave for staying at home. Wanting to stay at home with their children was the reason given by the largest number of mothers (47%) though partnered mothers were more likely to mention this (55%) than lone mothers (34%). Over a quarter of mothers (28%) reported that they were not working because their children were too young, with partnered and lone mothers equally likely to give this reason. A substantial minority of mothers mentioned problems with accessing childcare as a reason for not working. Most notably 17% said that they there was a lack of free/ cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile, 9% stated that there was a lack of affordable good quality childcare and 6% cited the lack of childcare available at suitable times. Overall 26% of mothers said that they were not working for one or more of the *childcare* reasons listed in Table 9.10[91], though lone

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[90] Thirty-seven per cent of all mothers in the respondent households were not working at the time of the survey.
[91] These included mothers who selected one or more of the following: lack of free/cheap childcare which makes work worthwhile; lack of affordable, good quality childcare; lack of childcare at suitable times; lack of good quality childcare; lack of reliable childcare; lack of childcare in the local area.

mothers were more likely to mention this than their partnered counterparts (33% and 22% respectively). This reflects research which shows that mothers in the most disadvantaged households were more likely to report one or more childcare related barriers to working than less deprived mothers (Speight et al, 2010).

There has been a decline in the number of mothers reporting childcare as a barrier to work since the survey series began in 1999. If we look at mothers who said they could not find free/ cheap childcare which would make work worthwhile, this was reported by 23% of mothers in 1999, but 17% of mothers in 2009. This trend is particularly pronounced for lone mothers, where for example 20% of non working lone mothers reported this in 2009, compared with 31% reporting this in 1999.

Table 9.10 Childcare-related reasons for not working, by family type

Base: Mothers not in paid employment excluding those on maternity leave and long-term sick/ disabled

| | Family type | | |
| | Partnered mothers | Lone mothers | All mothers |
Childcare-related reasons for not working	%	%	%
I want to stay with my child(ren)	55	34	47
Child(ren) too young	28	28	28
Lack of free/ cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	14	20	17
Child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	16	10	14
Child(ren) has/ have a long term illness/ disability/ special needs and need a lot of attention	9	12	10
Lack of affordable good quality childcare	7	13	9
Lack of childcare at suitable times	5	9	6
Lack of good quality childcare	3	6	4
Lack of reliable childcare	3	5	4
Lack of childcare in the local area	1	3	2
Other reasons	3	4	3
None of these	21	23	21
Weighted base	*1152*	*741*	*1893*
Unweighted base	*1409*	*766*	*2175*

Looking at the other factors that influenced mothers' decisions to stay at home, we find that financial circumstances affected partnered and lone mothers' decisions to stay at home in very different ways (Table 9.11). Sixteen per cent of partnered mothers stated that they were not working because they could stay at home (i.e. they had enough money to do so) whereas only 1% of lone mothers mentioned this as a reason. Conversely more lone mothers cited that they could not afford to work because they would lose benefits (13% compared with 6% of partnered mothers). However in the past decade the proportion of lone mothers who said they were not working because they would lose benefits has declined considerably from 31% in 1999.

A notable proportion of mothers reported that a lack of family friendly working arrangements was an obstacle to work with just under a quarter saying that they could not find a job with suitable hours (23%) and 13% being unable to find a job that they could combine with bringing up children. Further, among partnered mothers a significant minority (14%) said that their partners' job was too demanding for them to also be in employment.

A substantial minority of mothers reported that they were not employed for reasons linked to low employability such as not being well qualified (14%) and a lack of job opportunities (10%). Lone mothers were more likely to mention both of these as reasons than partnered mothers.

Table 9.11 Reasons for not working, by family type

Base: Mothers not in paid employment

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
Reasons for not working	%	%	%
All mothers			
Would not earn enough to make working worthwhile	23	27	25
Enough money	16	1	10
Would lose benefits	6	13	8
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	21	27	23
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up child(ren)	15	10	13
Cannot work unsocial hours/ at weekends	4	4	4
Not very well-qualified	10	19	14
Lack of job opportunities	8	13	10
Having a job is not very important to me	7	3	5
Been out of work for too long	7	6	6
On maternity leave	4	1	3
Caring for disabled person	9	10	10
Studying/ training	6	13	9
Illness or disability	10	15	12
I am ill (temporary illness)	+	1	1
Retired	+	+	+
Starting work soon	+	+	+
I was made redundant	+	+	+
Partnered mothers			
Spouse/ partner's job too demanding	14	n/a	n/a
Other reasons	7	7	7
None of these	13	10	12
Weighted base	*1344*	*875*	*2219*
Unweighted base	*1604*	*886*	*2490*

Around one in ten mothers were not working because they were looking after a disabled, sick or elderly friend or relative (10%) and a similar number reported it was because they were sick or disabled themselves (12%).

9.10 Summary

Since the survey series began, ten years ago, there has been an increase in maternal employment which is likely to have been influenced by the range of childcare and family-work reconciliation policies that have been introduced during this decade.

The majority of mothers reported that they worked atypical hours at some point during the week (63%); this was focussed around working on Saturdays and during the evenings. A significant minority of mothers, especially lone mothers, reported that working at atypical hours has caused problems with childcare.

With regard to entering employment in the past two years, these mothers most commonly reported that their reason for doing so was that they had secured a job that enabled them to combine work with caring. A job opportunity or promotion was most likely to have prompted a move from part-time to full-time employment.

Having reliable childcare, children's life stages and the availability of informal care were all factors which enabled mothers to be in employment. Children's fathers played a role in supporting maternal employment, but, in addition, the role of other relatives seemed important for both couple and lone parent households. A substantial minority of lone parents reported that the childcare subsidies provided through Working Tax Credit enabled them to work; a far lower proportion of partnered mothers reported this.

Mothers frequently reported that financial considerations influenced their decisions around maternal employment: a substantial proportion of mothers mentioned financial necessity as a factor related to their employment, with lone mothers more commonly reporting this. Work orientation was also an important influence with a substantial number of mothers saying they enjoyed working. Compared with other factors, the availability of family friendly employment seems to have had a smaller influence on mothers' decisions to work. This is particularly true of lone mothers and may reflect difficulties in securing these arrangements rather than a lack of demand for these arrangements.

When asked about their ideal working arrangements, a substantial minority of working mothers would like to give up work to become full-time carers (38%), and this was particularly the case for less educated mothers. A slim majority would like to reduce their working hours (57%) and the most likely to want to do so were those in higher-level occupations. In contrast, 18% of mothers said they would increase their hours if good quality, convenient, reliable and affordable childcare were available. This was most often the case for lone mothers, and for routine and semi-routine workers.

Self-employment also seems to play a considerable role in helping mothers to combine employment with parenting. The proportion of self-employed mothers was small, but most of these had chosen it because it fitted with bringing up children, providing flexibility over the number of hours worked and the times of day worked.

A small proportion of mothers were studying and, as with those who were working, the child's life cycle, the availability of reliable childcare and childcare provision from relatives were all key factors that helped them study.

The analysis of mothers who were not in employment shows that a substantial proportion reported childcare as a barrier to work. However examining past data, we can see a decline throughout the past decade in the proportion of mothers saying that they could not go to work due to difficulties in accessing suitable childcare. Financial considerations influenced the decisions of a substantial minority of mothers to remain out of work, though mothers in couple families were more likely to report that there was no financial need for them to work, they had enough money, whereas lone mothers were more likely to claim that they could not afford to work, that is they would not earn enough money to make working worthwhile. The proportion of mothers who were not working because they did

not want this to result in a loss of benefits has declined considerably since 1999, which is likely to be due to the introduction of policies, such as tax credits, which make work more financially attractive to low earning families.

10 Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, we pull out a number of themes that flow through the previous chapters and discuss how the findings from the survey relate to childcare and early years policy. We focus on:

- Early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds (section 10.2);
- Out-of-school and holiday childcare for school-age children (section 10.3);
- Providing information and support to parents (section 10.4);
- Childcare provision for disabled children (section 10.5).

10.2 Early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds

It is now over a decade since the entitlement to free early years provision for 4 year olds was introduced, and a little less than that since it became available to all 3 year olds.[92] More recently free early years provision has also been made available to 2 year olds who are disadvantaged in some way; and in September 2010 the number of free hours for 3 and 4 year olds was increased from 12.5 hours each term-time week to 15 hours; and parents became able to use these hours flexibly over the week. In light of this, based on the findings from the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, we draw some conclusions here about:

- Ten years in, how universal is take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision? Where are the gaps?
- Prior to the introduction of flexible provision, how do parents use early years provision alongside other childcare, particularly if they are working?
- What role do parents feel that early years providers are having in developing their children's educational and social skills?

In 2009, the survey estimates that 97% of 4 year olds and 87% of 3 year olds were in early years provision. Although these levels are encouragingly high, and show how well the strategy has worked, the fact that families with low incomes are disproportionately likely to be among those not using early years provision is of concern. Over one-third of those who were eligible but not taking up the entitlement to free early years provision were unaware that the entitlement existed, so lack of awareness seems to be an important explanatory factor.

Half of 3 and 4 year olds combined early years provision with another childcare provider, usually an informal carer. So, currently, many parents of 3 and 4 year olds are reconciling their childcare needs by using different providers. This was more often the case when the early years provider was one traditionally providing short hours (e.g. playgroups and reception classes). It was less so when the early years provider was an extended day provider like a day nursery. As the median hours spent in day nursery well exceed the entitlement to free early years provision, parents are using day nurseries as both the early years education and the childcare provider, without the need to enlist the help of a second (or third) childcare provider. It is difficult to extrapolate from this what parents would do with greater choice over when to use 15 free hours of early years provision. What is clear is that a high proportion of parents use (and therefore presumably need) more than 15 hours per week of early years provision and childcare. So, even if they are able to use the free hours flexibly, they will still need to supplement these hours either by paying for more hours from their early years provider or by using it alongside other formal or informal

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[92] Free places for 4 year olds were introduced in 1998 and for three year olds in 1999 with the roll out complete by 2004.

childcare. However, being able to take the free hours in longer periods – and on particular chosen days – may well make arranging childcare easier for parents.

The survey shows how important early years provision is to parents regarding their children's educational and social development. More than eight in ten parents using playgroups, nursery classes and reception classes said that their children attend to further their development, and six in ten parents using nursery schools said this[93]. When asked about specific areas of development, large majorities of parents say that their provider is helping their child to develop academically and socially. What is more, many early education providers play a role in encouraging parents to help their children develop, through advising around the kinds of activities that parents can do with their children at home.

10.3 Out-of-school and holiday childcare for school-age children

Over the last five years the Extended Services Strategy (DfES 2005; HM Government 2007) has been working towards primary schools offering (or facilitating) access to both childcare and a range of positive activities on weekdays from 8am until 6pm for 48 weeks each year; and towards secondary schools offering access to a range of positive activities during the same hours during term-time and flexibly during the school holidays. We can use the survey data to look at whether there is demand for this from families, and whether this demand is currently being met.

Term-time provision

So, thinking firstly about the role of out-of-school care during term-time in 2009, the first set of questions for which we provide evidence are:

- What proportion of school-age children were using it, and who were they?
- Why were they using it? Were they attending it as childcare to enable parents to work (one of the strategy's aims), or as positive activities that they made a positive choice to go to for their enjoyment or development (another strategic aim)?
- What kinds of positive activities were children attending at out-of-school providers?

In 2009, a third (33%) of families with school-aged children had used a breakfast or after-school club on the school premises and 7% had used one off-site in a reference week. Across England 1.63 million families had used an on-site out-of-school club and 397 thousand had used one off-site. Among school-age children, these clubs were the most common form of childcare, with the proportions of children using on-site out-of-school clubs three times higher than the proportions using childminders, and a few percentage points higher than the proportions of children being looked after by their grandparents. These clubs do appear to be catering for school children across the age range (at least to 14, the upper age limit for the survey). Although more primary than secondary school children went to out-of-school clubs, still a fifth of children aged 12-14 had been to an on-site club in the reference week. The proportions of children from couple and lone parent families attending these clubs were very similar.

However, the median number of hours that children attend out-of-school clubs, the reasons that they attend and the way in which they are used alongside other childcare all point to the fact that maybe the primary role that they currently play is in providing positive activities for children, with childcare being a role that it played for a minority of its users. The median number of hours that children spent in an on-site club was 2 hours per week – much lower than the median numbers spent with childminders and grandparents, for example. Around four in ten went only once a week to the out-of-school club, and only one in five went five times per week. Asked whether children were attending to facilitate

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[93] These data refer to children aged under 5, rather than just 3 and 4 year olds.

parental employment, or for the development of the child, only a minority of parents said that children were there so they themselves could work. If parents were working they tended to use these clubs in addition to other care. Half of children in out-of-school clubs used them in combination with other formal or informal childcare, notably informal care.

Out-of-school clubs appear to be providing children with a wide range of development opportunities. Parents using out-of-school clubs talked about a wide variety of activities that their children did at these clubs – from sport (60%) to creative activities such as art or cooking (28%) to music (20%) and dance (17%).

Another set of questions for which we can provide some evidence from the survey are around the affordability and availability – and in turn unmet demand – of out-of-school provision, that is:

- Is out-of-school care being offered at a price that parents can afford?
- Is it universally available to all families?
- Is there unmet demand for out-of-school care?

On the first issue, it seems that only half of parents whose children attended on-site provision paid anything towards it, while four in ten paid for off-site provision. Among the half of parents that said they paid for on-site provision, only four in ten said they were paying for childcare. This is another indication that a fair proportion of these activities are being provided by schools as after-school activities rather than childcare. The median weekly cost of on-site provision was £7, equating to £2.50 per hour, lower than the hourly rate of childminders.

Whether parents say that out-of-school care is available to them is a measure of the progress of the Extended Services Strategy (DfES 2005; HM Government 2007). Eight in ten parents not using out-of-school care said that it was available after-school, and over half said it was available before school. So, at least in terms of after-school care, it seems as if progress has been going fairly well. Furthermore, where it is available and parents are not using it, *in the main* this is not to do with barriers such as cost, opening hours or availability of places, but rather that parents or children do not want or need to use it. However, around half of those parents who do not have out-of-school services available say that they would use after-school clubs if they could (demand for before school clubs was lower). That said, again it appears that out-of-school clubs have a bigger role to play in providing positive activities for children than childcare. Only a quarter of those wanting after-school clubs would use it to enable them to work.

School holiday provision

The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents can provide evidence to answer the following questions around providing group holiday childcare and positive activities in the holidays:

- What proportion of school-age children are using holiday care? Are they using it for their own enjoyment or as childcare while parents work?
- Do more families need holiday care than can get it? What are the barriers to accessing holiday care?
- Does the holiday care that is available match the needs of families using or wanting to use it?

Around one in eight school-age children had been in group holiday childcare in the past year. This was much higher for primary school children than secondary school children. Where secondary school children were in childcare, they were much more likely to be looked after by their grandparents than formal carers. Only half of those who had spent

time in holiday clubs had been there so that their parents could work; being there for their own development or enjoyment was much more common.

Holiday clubs are clearly fulfilling more than a childcare role for many children. But, as childcare for working parents, current availability appears not to meet current demand. Substantial minorities of parents, particularly lone parents, report finding it difficult to find holiday care that is affordable and meets their needs. Six in ten parents who only used their formal providers in term-time said that they were not open during the holidays – and of those 40% said they would be likely or very likely to use holiday care if something suitable could be found. Around a quarter of parents using out-of-school clubs during term-time said that the clubs were not open for a sufficient number of hours during the holidays. Furthermore, among parents who had used holiday care, some felt that the cost or opening hours meant that they were not working as many hours as they would have liked to (19% and 15% respectively).

That said, for those who had arranged holiday care, it was fulfilling a role that parents did not think could be filled otherwise. Over half of those using formal holiday provision said that it would not be easy to replace.

10.4 Providing information and support to parents

Supporting parents through the provision of information and services has been an important element of the National Childcare Strategy and the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare (DfEE 1998; HM Treasury 2004; HM Government 2009):

- One element of this has been the provision of information about local childcare. Mechanisms were put in place for parents to find out about the childcare that is available to them in their local area, and since 2008 Local Authorities were charged with this task via the Families Information Service. It recognised that this is a crucial part of ensuring that parents can access good quality childcare at a cost they can afford: to use childcare, parents need to know what is available and how to assess whether it meets their needs;

- Another strand to the strategy, with a quite different set of aims, has been to provide advice to parents on a wider range of issues, as well as practical support or services. Sure Start Children's Centres and Extended Services aim to ensure that families have easy access to a range of advice and support services which are there to help them and their children on a range of issues. By providing services at places where families are coming for other reasons (e.g. school, early years provision) they hope to increase take-up of services and, in turn, help families in need.

The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents can provide evidence on the extent of progress in both these areas.

The extent to which local and national Government has played a significant role in helping parents to find out about the childcare in their area is open to question. Only a minority of parents had heard of Families Information Services, with one in eight parents saying that they had used them – although this proportion is higher than it was in 2004. Schools were a more common source of information, which raises the question of whether more weight might be put to promoting childcare via local places that parents might visit. Other local providers, such as Jobcentre Plus and health visitors were also playing some role in providing information. However, a third of parents felt that they did not have enough information about local childcare provision. Substantial minorities of parents were not able to give a view on whether their local childcare was affordable or of sufficiently high quality, although this includes parents who were not using childcare, some of whom may not have had reason to seek or absorb information that was available. However, on a more positive

note, where parents had sought information, in the main they thought that the advice they got was helpful (although ratings were lower for Jobcentre Plus).

Currently, the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents asks parents about advice or support services available at early years providers and out-of-school activities. However, it may be that these questions should be extended to ask about whether these services are available via schools more generally, given that this has been the intention of the Extended Services Strategy (DfES 2005; HM Government 2007). Among families using pre-school providers, use of these additional services is low, despite the fact that two in five parents said that services were available. These tended to be advice, parent and toddler sessions, courses and training, parenting classes or health services. However, among parents whose providers did not have these additional services, demand for them was relatively high. It seems that some work needs to be done to reconcile the low take-up with the high demand, which may suggest that parents overestimate the likelihood that they would use these services if they were available.

10.5 Provision for disabled children

The Aiming High for Disabled Children paper (HM Treasury/ DfES 2007) included a commitment to ensure that disabled children had access to affordable, high quality childcare which is also appropriate to their needs. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents found that children with an illness or disability which affected their daily lives were as likely as other children to use childcare. However, this basic headline finding masked the fact that substantial proportions of parents with disabled children feel that local childcare provision does not adequately cater to their particular needs – those specific to their child's illness/ disability, at the hours they required or at a distance that it was suitable to travel. This finding endorses the work that has been done to increase the provision of suitable childcare for disabled children. Moreover, where parents were using formal childcare for their disabled child, one-third thought that the staff were not properly trained to deal with the child's condition. This suggests that, currently, when parents do find provision it does not always meet their needs.

Moreover, the survey also pointed to the need for better information for parents with disabled children, as substantial proportions of parents were not able to give an answer (or answered neither agree nor disagree) to questions about the availability or suitability of local provision for their child, although this includes parents who were not using formal childcare, some of whom may not have had reason to seek or absorb information that was available.

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Appendix A   Socio-demographic profile

Respondent characteristics

Sex
Almost all parents who answered the questionnaire for this survey were female (93%).

Age
The mean age of respondents was 38, and of their partners, 41. Table A.1 shows the age bands of respondents by family type, and demonstrates that respondents in couple families tended to be older than lone parent respondents.

Table A.1   Age of respondent, by family type

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Age	%	%	%
20 and under	+	2	1
21 to 30	14	26	17
31 to 40	45	40	44
41 to 50	36	28	34
51+	4	4	4
Mean (years)	39	36	38
Weighted bases	*4845*	*1819*	*6665*
Unweighted base	*5034*	*1637*	*6671*

Marital status
A large proportion of respondents were married and living with their partner (59%) (Table A.2). Twenty-five per cent of respondents were single. This category includes persons who were cohabiting.

Table A.2   Marital status

Base: All families

Marital status	%
Married and living with husband/ wife	59
Single (never married)	25
Divorced	9
Married and separated from husband/ wife	6
Widowed	1
Weighted base	*6708*
Unweighted base	*6708*

Qualifications

We asked respondents about the highest academic qualification they had received, and found that respondents in lone parent 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, and more lone parents than respondents in couple families had no academic qualifications.

Table A.3   Qualifications, by family type

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Highest qualification	%	%	%
GCSE grade D-G/ CSE grade 2-5/ SCE O Grades (D-E)/ SCE	9	14	10
GCSE grade A-C/ GCE O -level passes/ CSE grade 1/ SCE O	28	26	27
GCE A -level/ SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	10	9	10
Certificate of Higher Education	7	6	7
Foundation degree	3	3	3
Honours Degree (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd)	16	8	14
Masters Degree (e.g MA, PGDip)	7	2	6
Doctorates (e.g. PhD)	1	1	1
Other academic qualifications	3	3	3
None	14	28	18
Weighted base	*4865*	*1830*	*6695*
Unweighted base	*5048*	*1644*	*6692*

Family characteristics

Size of the household

The mean household size was four people, the smallest household was two people, and the largest had 12 people.

Number of children aged 0-14 in the household

Forty-six per cent of families had one child aged 0-14 (Table A.4), 39% had two children, and 15% had three or more children. Lone parents tended to have fewer children than couple families.

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

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Number of children	%	%	%
1	42	56	46
2	42	30	39
3+	16	14	15
Weighted base	*4875*	*1833*	*6708*
Unweighted base	*5061*	*1647*	*6708*

Just over a half the families in the survey (58%) had only school-age children (Table A.5). One-fifth had both pre-school and school-age children (21%) and just one-fifth had only pre-school children (21%).

Table A.5 Presence of preschool and school-age children in the household, by family type

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Age of children in household	%	%	%
Only pre-school children (0-4 years)	21	22	21
Both pre-school and school-age children	22	17	21
Only school-age children (5-14 years)	57	61	58
Weighted base	4875	1833	6708
Unweighted base	5061	1647	6708

Household income

Table A.6 shows family yearly income[94], and demonstrates that lone parents in this survey tended to come from poorer households compared with couple families.

Table A.6 Family yearly income, by family type

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Income	%	%	%
Up to £9,999	4	25	10
£10,000-19,999	16	50	25
£20,000-29,999	18	17	18
£30,000-44,999	26	5	20
£45,000 or more	35	3	26
Weighted base	*4561*	*1752*	*6313*
Unweighted base	*4748*	*1584*	*6332*

Family work status

Table A.7 shows family work status. A large proportion of respondents were from couple families where both parents worked (46%) or where one parent was working (21%). However, in 19% of families no-one was working (14% were non working lone-parent families and 5% were couple families where neither parent was in work).

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[94] There are 395 families which we do not have income data for, these families have been excluded from this table.

Table A.7 Family work status

Base: All families

Family work status	%
Couple - both working	46
Couple - one working	21
Couple - neither working	5
Lone parent working	14
Lone parent not working	14
Weighted base	*6708*
Unweighted base	*6708*

Tenure

The tenure of the family is shown in Table A8. Overall the two most common tenures were buying the property with a mortgage or loan (57%) and renting the property (33%) The majority of couple families were in the process of buying their place of residence with the help of a mortgage or loan (69%), while the majority of lone parents were renting (67%, see Table A.8).

Table A.8 Tenure status, by family type

Base: All families

	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
Tenure	%	%	%
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	69	26	57
Rent it	20	67	33
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
Weighted base	*4856*	*1823*	*6679*
Unweighted base	*5042*	*1641*	*6683*

Access to a car

Respondents who were in relationships were more likely to hold a current driving licence (82%) than those respondents who were lone parents (59%). Of those respondents who held driving licences, the majority had access to a car (96%) - within couple families, 98% had a car available, and among lone parent families, 91% had a car available.

Selected child characteristics

Sex

There was an 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 A.9).

Table A.9 Age of selected child, by family type

Base: All children

| | Family type | | |
| | Couple family | Lone parent | Total |
Age of selected child	%	%	%
0-2	17	17	17
3-4	14	13	14
5-7	21	18	20
8-11	27	29	28
12-14	21	23	22
Weighted base	*5004*	*1704*	*6708*
Unweighted base	*5061*	*1647*	*6708*

Ethnic group

The majority of selected children in the survey were White British (77%) (Table A.10). Non-white children were more likely to come from lone parent families.

Table A.10   Ethnicity of selected child, by family type

Base: All children

| | Family type | | |
| | Couple family | Lone parent | Total |
Ethnicity	%	%	%
White British	79	73	77
White Irish	+	+	+
Other White	3	2	2
White and Caribbean	1	4	1
White and Black African	+	1	1
White and Asian	1	2	1
Other mixed	2	2	2
Indian	2	1	2
Pakistani	4	2	4
Bangladeshi	2	1	1
Other Asian	2	1	1
Caribbean	1	3	1
African	2	5	3
Other Black	+	2	1
Chinese	+	+	+
Other	1	1	1
Weighted base	*4993*	*1698*	*6691*
Unweighted base	*5051*	*1641*	*6692*

Special educational needs and disabilities

Eight per cent of selected children had a special educational need, and 14% of selected 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 (19%), or a SEN (11%) compared with children in couple families (13% and 6% respectively, see Table A.11).

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

Base: All children

SEN	Family type		
	Couple family	Lone parent	Total
	%	%	%
Child has a SEN	6	11	8
Child has a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness, or disability	13	19	14
Weighted base	*5004*	*1704*	*6708*
Unweighted base	*5061*	*1647*	*6708*

Region and area deprivation

Table A.12 shows the geographical spread of the surveyed families according to Government Office region.

Table A.12 Government Office Region

Base: All families

Government Office Region	%
North East	5
North West	14
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
East Midlands	9
West Midlands	11
East	11
London	16
South East	15
South West	9
Weighted base	*6708*
Unweighted base	*6708*

Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) we can see that the affluence of the sample varied across all areas (Table A.13).

Table A.13 Area deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

Base: All families

Area deprivation	%
1st quintile – least deprived	19
2nd quintile	19
3rd quintile	18
4th quintile	20
5th quintile – most deprived	23
Weighted base	*6708*
Unweighted base	*6708*

Appendix B   Technical appendix

B.1 Questionnaire content and the interview

The 2009 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents was the fourth in a new survey series, the first of which was conducted in 2004, the second in 2007 and the third in 2008. This new series is a combination of two previous studies – 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 2-5, while the Childcare series focused on children aged 0-14.

The interviews in the 2009 survey lasted an average of 46 minutes and consisted of questions on the family's use of childcare in the reference term time week (which was the most recent term-time week) and during school holidays, details of the payments for this childcare, and a complete attendance diary for one child in the family. This child was randomly selected by the computer programme, and 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 also gathered information about the respondent's economic activity, as well as their partner's if applicable. If the partner was not there or was unwilling to take part then the respondent could answer as their proxy. Socio-demographic information was also collected.

While the 2008 and 2009 questionnaires covered similar issues, there were some changes and additions made in 2009. For example, the 2009 questionnaire expanded the section on holiday care. It introduced a section on how children's disabilities affects childcare and also new in 2009 was a section on information given to parents by providers about their children's activities and information about activities to do at home. Other changes in 2009 included the reintroduction of questions asking about the home learning environment, removing questions about ChildcareLink and 'Birth to Three Matters' and changing the codes for ethnicity and academic and vocational qualifications.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted on a laptop computer, using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI was programmed using Blaise. A set of showcards and a weekly calendar were provided as aids 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. This was necessary in 3% of interviews. If using a family member as an interpreter was not possible, the interview was not carried out.

The interview broadly 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;
- Use of and demand for out-of-school clubs (for families with school-age children)
- Use of childcare during school holidays in the past year (for families with school-age children);
- Take-up of entitlement to free early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds;
- Awareness and receipt of tax credits and subsidies;
- Sources of information about local childcare;
- Views on affordability, quality and availability of childcare in the local area;
- 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 main provider;
- Skills encouraged at the provider;
- Additional services offered at the main provider.

- *Classification details for all families:*
- Household composition;
- Socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. 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 special educational needs and disability or long-standing illness;
- Housing tenure;
- Contact details for childcare providers and admin questions.

B.2 Sampling

The target population for the Childcare Survey was parents of children under the age of 15. The sample was selected from the Child Benefit records by the Department for Work and Pensions[95]. Child Benefit is a universal benefit with a high rate of take up (around 98%), which makes the Child Benefit records a highly comprehensive sampling frame. 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 0-14 years and included a boost sample of parents of 2-4 year olds.

A small number of Child Benefit recipients (hereafter referred to as recipients) are excluded from the sampling frame before selection takes place. The exclusions are made according to HM Revenue and Customs 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 of the recipient with the Child Benefit Centre (because the reason for correspondence cannot be ascertained and may be sensitive). These exclusions amount to 2% of the sampling frame and are weighted for later (see Section B.9).

A sample of recipients was selected in two stages. At the first stage 454 Primary Sampling Units[96] (PSUs) were sampled with probability proportional to the weighted number of children aged 0-14 years within them. At the second stage 29 recipients were sampled from each selected PSU. Recipients were selected with probability proportional to the weighted number of children aged 0-14 years for which they receive benefits.

The weighted design was used to increase the number of children aged 2-4 in the sample. Each child aged 2-4 on the CB records was given a weight of 1.73. All other children were given a weight of one. This gave children aged 2-4 a 73% higher chance of being selected than they would otherwise have had, increasing their overall numbers in the sample.

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[95] HM Revenue and Customs own the Child Benefit records, however DWP have access to a version. This version can be used for sampling purposes where the correct permissions are granted.

[96] PSUs were postcode sectors or groups of postcode sectors. Sectors that contained fewer than 250 eligible children were grouped with neighbouring sectors to reduce clustering. These grouped sectors were treated as single areas for the purposes of sampling and fieldwork.

Two recipients in each PSU were put into a reserve sample; the other 27 were allocated to either the main sample or boost sample. (Recipients with children aged 2-4 were allocated to the boost with a probability depending on their family distribution). Due to low response rates, the reserve sample was eventually added to the main sample and issued.

At each responding household a single child was selected at random by the CAPI program (selected from all children aged 0-14 if the recipient was in the main sample, but only from all children between 2-4 if the recipient was in the boost). This child was the focus of the attendance diary questions. The household selection procedure allowed any babies born since the start of fieldwork to be included in the sample; these children would otherwise have been excluded[97].

B.2.1 Sampling Errors

Unfortunately two errors occurred when the sample was selected by the Department for Work and Pensions that affect how representative the sample is of the population:

1) Any updates to Child Benefit record addresses that occurred since November 2007 were not included in the sample file.

2) Any people who had not been on any DWP benefits since 2002 and had had their first child after November 2007 were not included on the sample frame. This means that the survey under-represents first time parents, with children aged 0-1, who had not been on benefits in the last seven years.

The first sampling error meant that a notable proportion of addresses were out of date. This contributed towards the high proportion of non-contacts during fieldwork (see Table B.6).

The second sampling error introduces bias into the estimates presented throughout the report which cannot be removed by weighting the data. As such, section B.3 presents some of the key tables with estimates for the amount of bias in each estimate.

B.3 Estimates of bias and margins of error

As mentioned in section B.2.1, an error occurred during the sampling and some recipients were not included in the sampling frame. These were any recipient who had not been on any DWP benefits since 2002 <u>and</u> had had their first child after November 2007. This means that the survey under-represents first time parents, with children aged 0-1, who had not been on benefits in the last seven years.

The weighting of the data cannot remove bias caused by their exclusion, so there is some bias in the estimates presented throughout the report. In this section we have produced some of the key tables with estimates for the amount of bias in each estimate (section B.3.1); we have explained the calculations used (section B.3.2); and also presented a table to help judge which comparisons are likely to be affected by the bias (section B.3.3).

B.3.1 Estimates of bias

The sampling error means that there will be some bias in all the estimates produced in this report. We have chosen to examine four analyses here. These illustrate the likely size of the bias and show how it varies depending on the questions and sub-groups analysed.

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[97] Firstborn children born after the start of fieldwork will not be included, this means the sample will not be representative of all children aged less than 6 months. This may introduce a small amount of bias into the sample.

In each of the tables below we provide an estimate of the bias of the quoted figure. The bias is the expected value of the estimator minus the true value[98]. Negative values of bias imply that the quoted figure underestimates the true value; positive values imply that they overestimate them.

It should be noted that the estimates of bias given here are based on the assumption that the characteristics of the excluded group will be similar to the equivalent group from 2008 and this assumption might not be completely accurate. Moreover, the Childcare Survey contains data on current receipt of benefits and not historic receipt of benefits. As such, we can only use proxy information to identify the equivalent group from 2008 and cannot identify this group completely accurately (see section B.3.1 for more information on how the estimates of bias were calculated).

Use of childcare providers by families (Table 2.1)

The figures in Table B.1 show the estimates of the biases in Table 2.1. We can see that Table 2.1 over-estimates the proportion of recipients using a breakfast or after-school club on site. This is not surprising because the 0-1 year-olds who were excluded from the sampling frame do not use this type of child care. Table 2.1 under-estimates the proportion using a day nursery or using grandparents for informal care, which again is unsurprising since these are the more common types of childcare used by families with 0-1 year olds. For most of the other questions the bias is quite small.

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[98] For example, if the true value of prevalence is 5% and the survey is designed so that it will provide an estimate of 4% on average, then the bias is -1%.

Table B.1 Use of childcare providers

Base: All families

Use of childcare	Published estimate %	Estimated bias %
Any childcare	**73**	0.1
Formal childcare and early years provision	**55**	0.4
Nursery school	4	0.1
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	5	0.1
Reception class	8	0.2
Special day school/ nursery/ unit for children with SEN	1	0.0
Day nursery	8	-0.5
Playgroup or pre-school	6	0.1
Other nursery education provider	+	0.0
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	27	0.7
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	6	0.1
Childminder	5	0.0
Nanny or au pair	1	0.0
Babysitter who came to home	2	0.0
Informal childcare	**41**	-0.1
Ex-partner	7	0.1
Grandparent	26	-0.4
Older sibling	5	0.1
Another relative	6	0.0
Friend or neighbour	7	0.2
Other		
Leisure/ sport	9	0.2
Other childcare provider	4	0.1
No childcare used	**27**	-0.1
Weighted base	*6708*	
Unweighted base	*6708*	

Use of childcare providers by age of child (Table 2.3)

Table B.2 below reproduces some figures from Table 2.3 and gives an estimate of the amount of bias in them.

The final column reinforces the message in Table B.1 above. The main biases seem to be in the questions concerning use of a day nursery, the use of grandparents and the use of a breakfast/after-school club on a school site. Table 2.3 under-estimates the first two, and over-estimates the third. There is only a small amount of bias in the estimates of take-up for other childcare providers.

As expected, an analysis of the 0-2 year-old subgroup will yield larger biases than the equivalent analysis of all children aged 0-14, and this is apparent from the table[99]. The headline figure that 58% of children aged 0-2 use some childcare cannot be taken as accurate. The true figure is likely to be slightly higher. (We have estimated that the bias is -1.6%, though that cannot be regarded as a perfectly precise estimate because as mentioned above our estimates are based on the assumption that the characteristics of the excluded group will be similar to the equivalent group from 2008. Our methodology will be valid if this is the case, though even then, using 2008 data to derive an estimate will introduce some sampling error).

In addition, as reported above there are biases in the estimates for use of a day nursery, and for grandparents providing informal care.

Table B.2 Use of childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All children

	Age of selected child			
	0-2		Total	
Use of childcare	Published estimate	Estimated bias	Published estimate	Estimated bias
Any childcare	**58**	**-1.6**	**63**	**-0.1**
Formal childcare and early years provision	35	-0.5	43	0.1
Nursery school	3	0.3	2	0.0
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	1	0.1	3	0.1
Reception class	0	0	5	0.1
Day nursery	17	-1.6	5	-0.8
Playgroup or pre-school	7	1.0	4	0.1
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	+	0.0	19	0.7
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	0	0.1	5	0.1
Childminder	6	-0.4	4	-0.1
Nanny or au pair	1	0.2	1	-0.0
Informal childcare	**37**	-1.3	**33**	-0.3
Ex-partner	5	0.4	5	0.1
Grandparent	30	-2.1	21	-0.6
Older sibling	1	0.1	3	0.1
Another relative	6	-0.2	4	-0.1
Friend or neighbour	1	0.4	5	0.2
No childcare used	**42**	**1.6**	**37**	**0.1**
Weighted base	*1137*		*6708*	
Unweighted base	*1180*		*6708*	

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[99] For child level analysis of children aged 3-14 there is no bias, since all families with a child aged 3 or older had a known chance of selection for the survey.

Hours of childcare used per week by age of child (Table 2.6)

Here we focus on estimates of the bias in the published figures in Table 2.6. Table B.3 shows that the figures published in Table 2.6 under-estimate the amount of childcare used. The table shows that the published estimates of childcare use among 0-2 year-olds could have quite a large bias and these estimates should be treated with caution. There is a much smaller bias in the estimates of childcare used by all children. For this group we believe the published figures under-estimate the true usage of childcare, but the bias will be small.

Table B.3 Hours of childcare used per week, by age of child

Base: All children receiving any/formal/informal childcare

	0-2		All children	
Childcare (mean hours)	Published estimate of the mean	Estimated bias[100]	Published estimate of the mean	Estimated bias
Any childcare	20.0	-1.0	16.7	-0.3
Formal childcare and early years provision	18.3	-0.7	12.7	-0.3
Informal childcare	14.1	-1.1	13.1	-0.2
Childcare (median hours)	Published estimate of the median	Maximum estimated bias	Published estimate of the median	Maximum estimated bias
Any childcare	17.0	-1.6	10.8	-0.6
Formal childcare and early years provision	15.0	-1.0	8.0	-0.3
Informal childcare	10.0	-0.9	7.0	-0.5
Weighted base for any childcare	635		3881	
Weighted base for formal childcare	383		2626	
Weighted base for informal childcare	404		2055	
Unweighted base for any childcare	703		4067	
Unweighted base for formal childcare	458		2878	
Unweighted base for informal childcare	436		2132	

Hours of childcare used per week by provider type (Table 2.7)

The sampling error is unlikely to have much of an effect in the estimates in Table 2.7 since only a small proportion of children using most of these types of care would have been in the excluded group. The two exceptions are usage of day nurseries, and informal care provided by grandparents. However, even for these providers, our analysis suggests that the estimates of bias in each of these estimates is quite small.

Our analysis of the 2008 dataset shows that the excluded group were quite similar to the overall population in their use of day nurseries. Children who used day nurseries were mainly under 4 years old, and there was not a large amount of variation in the time they spent at these nurseries. The estimates quoted in Table B.4 below, that there is no bias in the mean or medians, should be treated with caution, but it implies that any bias is likely to be small.

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[100] The estimate of the biases in the analysis of 0-2 year-olds are based on small data sets and should be treated with caution. Estimates of the error in estimating the median are harder to produce and are particularly sensitive to sampling variation. This is why the *maximum* estimated bias has been presented for medians (for more details see section B.3.1).

The excluded group were less similar to the overall population in their use of grandparents for informal care, and as a result we have estimated there is a slightly larger bias in this question. It is likely that the figures in Table 2.7 slightly underestimate the true figure.

Table B.4 Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type

Base: All children receiving any/formal/informal childcare

	All children			
Childcare	Published estimate of the mean	Estimated bias	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Day nursery	20.7	0.0	*335*	*418*
Grandparent	10.9	-0.2	*1321*	*1417*
Childcare	Published estimate of the median	Maximum estimated bias		
Day nursery	18.0	0.0	*335*	*418*
Grandparent	6.0	-0.5	*1321*	*1417*

B.3.2 Calculations of bias

This section describes the technical calculations used to derive the estimates of bias in Tables 2.1, 2.3, 2.6 and 2.7.

First we need to define three populations relevant to the survey:

- The target population: the population which we aimed to study (all children/ recipients in England)
- The study population: the population which actually studied.
- The excluded population: the difference between the two (children in England whose parent had not been on any DWP benefits since 2002 <u>and</u> had had their first child after November 2007).

We shall write N_1 for the size of the study population and N_2 for the size of the excluded population[101], so the size of the target population is then $N = N_1 + N_2$.

Bias in estimating a mean or a proportion

Here we illustrate the calculation of bias by looking at one analysis, the proportion of children whose grandparent provided informal care in the reference week (Table 2.3).

In Table 2.3 we estimate the proportion of children who had a grandparent providing informal care in the reference week. Let t, t_1 and t_2 be the number of children in the relevant populations who had a grandparent providing informal care and p, p_1 and p_2 be the corresponding proportions. We have seen in Table 2.3 that our estimate of p_1 is 21%. We need to convert this into an estimate of:

$$p = \frac{t_1 + t_2}{N_1 + N_2}.$$

---

[101] For example, the analysis in Table 2.3 refers to populations of children. DWP figures show that the target population consisted of 8,773,000 children. Of these only 8,647,000 children were accessible through the sampling frame and 126,000 were excluded, so N_1=8,647,000 and N_2=126,000.

The bias in the estimates in Table 2.3 is $p_1 - p$, which equals:

$$p_1 - p = \frac{t_1}{N_1} - \frac{t_1 + t_2}{N_1 + N_2} = \frac{p_2 - p_1}{1 + N_1/N_2}.$$

This shows that the bias will be small if either p_2 is close to p_1 (i.e. if the excluded population is similar to the study population) or N_1/N_2 is large (i.e. if the excluded population is small relative to the study population).

Figures from the DWP show that N_1/N_2 is approximately equal to 30, so the excluded population is about 1/30th, or about 3.3% of the study population[102]. As this is fairly small, any bias must also be small. It is not possible to calculate the bias exactly, but we can estimate it using 2008 data. We make the assumption that the value of $p_1 - p_2$ will not change much in two years. This is a reasonable assumption, though it cannot be verified. Our estimate is simply:

$$\frac{estimate\ of\ (p_2 - p_1)\ from\ 2008\ data}{1 + 30}. \qquad (*)$$

In order to estimate $p_1 - p_2$ we ran additional analysis on the 2008 data where we identified (as closely as possible) the group of respondents that had zero selection in 2009, and then ran some key tables with and without the affected group.

The group of respondents with zero chance of selection were identified as those:

- Who had one child only;
- Whose child was born between July 06 and September 07[103];
- Who were not *currently* receiving: Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit, Sickness or Disability Benefit, or other state benefits[104].

The estimates of $p_1 - p_2$ from the 2008 data were substituted into equation (*) and the resulting figures were shown in Tables Table B.1 – Table B.2 above.

As the relative size of the missing group will be greater when performing subgroup analysis on younger children, notably on the 0-2 year age-group, the magnitude of the error is likely to be greater when performing subgroup analyses on this age-group[105]. DWP figures show that in the 0-2 year-old population N_1/N_2 is approximately equal to 5.2, so the size of the excluded group is 1/5.2=19% of that of the study population. As discussed, this larger figure means the bias could be larger so we estimate it as:

$$\frac{estimate\ of\ (p_2 - p_1)\ from\ 2008\ data}{1 + 5 \cdot 2}$$

Bias in estimating a median

Estimating the bias in a median of a continuous variable (for example, the hours of childcare used a week) is a harder task. To give an example: Table 2.6 show that in the study population the median number of hours using formal childcare was 8 hours per week. The excluded population tended to spend more time using formal childcare than average, and we estimate (based on 2008 data) that only about 12% of the excluded

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[102] This refers to an overall analysis. For the analysis of Table 2.7, for example, we estimate that of those using day nurseries, the size of the excluded group is about 14% the size of the study population
[103] The sample for 2008 was selected in October 2007, so these dates are equivalent to the key dates affecting the 2009 sample.
[104] This was the best proxy available for not having received any DWP benefits in the last seven years.
[105] It is possible that the error could be smaller, as the excluded group will be more like other 0-2 year-olds than the general population, so the numerator in (*) could be small. However, it is unlikely that this will compensate for the large amount of missingness

population would have spent less than the median of the target population. It can be shown that if these figures are valid for 2009 the median of the *target* population would be between the

$$50^{th} \text{ and } \left(50 \times \left(1 + \frac{(0 \cdot 88 - 0 \cdot 12) \times N_2}{N_1}\right)\right)^{th} \text{ percentiles of the } study \text{ population.}$$

Once again, it is worth noting that when the excluded population is small relative to the study population (when N_1/N_2 is large), the median of the study population will be a good estimate of the median of the target population.

The maximum bias can be estimated as the difference of these two quantities. The results quoted in Table B.3 and Table B.4 were obtained in this way.

B.3.3 Margins of error

Table B.5 shows the approximate margin or error for a number of analyses of the children data. The table shows the type of analysis, the sample size, the effective sample size[106], and the approximate margin of error for different values of the survey estimate.

Table B.5 Approximate margins of error

Base: All children

			Survey estimate		
	N	NEFF	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
Overall	6708	6000	0.8%	1.2%	1.3%
Family work status	3025	2733	1.1%	1.7%	1.9%
Couple both working	1629	1426	1.6%	2.4%	2.6%
Couple none working	407	366	3.1%	4.7%	5.1%
Couple neither working	720	660	2.3%	3.5%	3.8%
Lone Parent working	927	820	2.1%	3.1%	3.4%
Lone Parent not working					
Income					
Up to £9,999	558	483	2.7%	4.1%	4.5%
£10,000 to £19,999	1605	1443	1.5%	2.4%	2.6%
£20,000 to £29,999	1192	1081	1.8%	2.7%	3.0%
£30,000 to £44,999	1285	1142	1.7%	2.7%	2.9%
£45,000+	1692	1519	1.5%	2.3%	2.5%

For example, the table shows that an analysis of the overall child sample (based on 6,708 interviews) has an effective sample size of 6,000. If the estimate of a proportion of interest is 30% the margin of error will be approximately 1.2%. This means the confidence interval for the estimate would be 28.8% to 31.2%.

The degree to which the sampling error will affect analyses will depend on our estimate of the bias. In the example above, if the estimated bias is considerably less than 1.2% then we can conclude that most of the error in our estimates will be due to the sampling variation and not the bias. With a larger estimated bias we would have to treat our results with caution as the bias would be the major component of error.

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[106] The effective sample sizes will usually be lower than the actual sample size. This is because of the effect of the weighting, stratification and clustering. We have calculated the effective sample size by taking into account the selection and non-response weighting only, and have not considering the effect of stratification, clustering and calibration. The actual figures are likely to be slightly lower once the clustering is taken into account.

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 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 any childcare that the child(ren) in the household may have received. All interviews were conducted by NatCen interviewers.

Each sampled individual received an opt-out letter introducing the survey in either June or August 2009 and was allowed at least two weeks to respond to refuse to take part. 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. 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 attended either a full day or refresher briefing led by the NatCen research team. Full day briefings were held for interviewers new to the survey, and 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 interview exercise, designed to familiarise interviewers with the questions and flow of the questionnaire. Refresher briefings were held with interviewers who had previously worked on the survey, and were designed to refresh the interviewer on the aims and procedures of the survey, and to highlight the aspects of the questionnaire that were new or had changed from 2008. All briefing sessions covered discussion on conducting research with parents, issues of sensitivities and practical information.

B.6 Fieldwork response rates

There were two periods of fieldwork for this survey due to the timing of the long school summer break; fieldwork took place from, June to August 2009 in the summer term and September to December 2009 in the autumn term. 13,112 addresses were included in the sample and went through to the opt-out stage. After this period, a total of 12,244 addresses were issued to interviewers and advance letters were sent out.

In order to ensure that final response rates are calculated using consistent definitions across all surveys, NatCen has recently started to use Standard Outcome Codes (SOC). The overall response rate for the 2009 childcare survey in the field using SOCs was **52%**, seen in Table B.6. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews of all eligible addresses issued to interviewers. The overall response rate for all addresses in scope of the study was **56%**. The different rates of response to the survey in the field are also summarised in Table B.7.

Table B.6 Survey response figures

		Population in scope of study	Population in scope of fieldwork
		%	%
Full sample pre opt-out	**13112**		
Ineligible	**307**		
No children of relevant age	242		
Other ineligible[107]	65		
Eligible sample	**12805**	100	
Opt-outs before fieldwork started	**868**	7	
Eligible sample – issued to interviewers	**11937**	93	100
Non-contact	**2804**	22	23
Respondent moved	2180		
Other non-contact	624		
Refusals	**2197**	17	18
Office refusal	278		
Refusal to interviewer	1866		
Information about eligibility refused	53		
Other unproductive	**228**	2	2
Ill at home during survey period	110		
Language difficulties	71		
Other unproductive	47		
Productive interviews	**6708**	52	56
Full interview - lone parent	1646		
Full interview - partner interview in person	1150		
Full interview - partner interview by proxy	3693		
Full interview – unproductive partner	213		
Partial interview	6		

Table B.7 Fieldwork response figures

Base: All parents who did not opt-out during the opt-out period

	%
Overall response rate	56
Full response rate	56
Co-operation rate	73
Contact rate	77
Refusal rate	18
Eligibility rate	97

NatCen's standard field quality control measures were adhered to in this survey. Every interviewer is accompanied in the field by a supervisor for a full day's work twice a year, which means that approximately 10% of interviewers will have been supervised on this particular survey. In addition, one in ten interviews are routinely back-checked by NatCen's Quality Control Unit. Back-checking is carried out by telephone where possible,

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[107] This refers to invalid addresses (for example, non-residential addresses, communal establishments or institutions, and not yet built/under construction).

or by post. Apart from thanking the respondent for taking part, these calls check whether various procedures were carried out correctly and whether the interviewer left a good impression. No significant problems were revealed by the back-checking of this survey and the feedback on interviewers was overwhelmingly positive.

B.7 Coding and editing of data

The CAPI program ensures that the correct routing is followed throughout the questionnaire and applies range checks, which prevent invalid values from being entered in the program, as well as consistency checks, which prompt interviewers to check answers that are inconsistent with information provided earlier in the interview. These checks allow 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 coding/ editing tasks included:

1) Coding employment information to standard industrial and occupational classifications – SIC (2003) and SOC (2000) – as well as to NS-SEC;

2) Back-coding of 'other' answers (this is carried out when a respondent provides an alternative answer to those that are pre-coded; this answer is recorded verbatim during the interview and is coded during the coding stage using the original list of pre-coded responses and sometimes additional codes available to coders only);

3) Checking notes that interviewers made during interviews.

Coding is completed by a team of coders who are managed by the NatCen Operations team. The coders were briefed on the survey and were given an opportunity to go through examples. If the coder or the Operations team 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. Tables used in analysis were generated in SPSS and significance testing was undertaken using survey commands in SPSS 15.0 and STATA 10.0.

B.8 Provider checks

In all four surveys in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series (2004, 2007, 2008 and 2009), checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the childcare providers they used in order to improve the accuracy of the classifications. These checks were restricted to providers used in the reference term time week (rather than the whole year), as these were the focus of most analysis. During the main survey, parents were asked to classify the childcare providers they used for their children into types (e.g. nursery school, playgroup etc). 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.

Only formal group providers were contacted. These are as follows:

- Nursery school;
- Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school;
- Reception class;
- Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs
- Day nursery;
- Playgroup or pre-school;
- Breakfast club or after-school club/activities;
- Holiday club/scheme.[108]

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 NatCen contacting their providers. Each provider remained linked to the parent interview so that they could be compared and later merged to the main parent interview data.

We received information on 5,060 settings from interview data. Because different parents may have used the same provider, the contact information for that provider was potentially the same. As such, we completed an initial process of de-duplicating the list of providers, which was done both manually and automatically. 1,384 providers were duplicates and were therefore removed from the checks. In addition, 587 providers were removed from the provider checks because of incomplete or invalid telephone numbers.

A full list of 3,089 providers with valid telephone numbers was generated, and telephone interviewers were briefed. Interviews with providers were approximately five minutes long, and covered: the age range of the children who attended the provider, the services provided, the organisation responsible for funding the services, and whether the provider was linked to or part of an integrated care setting. We achieved productive interviews with 2,684 providers, which constitutes a response rate of **87%**.

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. Table B.8 shows the parents' classification of providers compared with the final classification of providers after all checks.

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[108] While the reference week in the main interview should always have been during the school term (and not in school holidays), 'holiday club/scheme' most likely came up as a misclassification. For this reason, we contacted providers classified as holiday clubs, but did not ask any other providers whether they provided the holiday club service.

Table B.8 Classification of providers before and after provider checks

Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents

Provider type	Parents' classification %	Final classification after all checks %
Nursery school	9	5
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	9	8
Reception class	14	15
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with SEN	1	1
Day nursery	8	12
Playgroup or pre-school	10	10
Breakfast/after-school club or activity, on school site	41	40
Breakfast/after-school club or activity, off school site	9	9
Holiday club/scheme	+	+
Leisure/sport	n/a	+
Unweighted base	*5060*	*5060*

B.9 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 childcare sample was designed to be representative of the population of children on the CB records, rather than the population of CB recipients. This design feature means the sample is biased towards larger households; hence the data needs to be weighted before any analyses can be carried out on household level data. In addition, the design included a boost sample of children aged 2-4 years. These children need to be down-weighted if they are to be included in the core sample analysis. The selection weights will also correct the selection probabilities for cases where the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the household 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[109] and random chance in the selection process.

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

Selection weights

1) Household selection weight
The sample design means households that contain either a large number of eligible children, or children aged 2-4 years, were more likely to be included in the sample. The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children on the CB records

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[109] The DWP exclude a number of cases from the sampling frame before the sample can be drawn. These exclusions include cases which may have participated in previous surveys and sensitive cases (where the child may have died or been removed from the family). These exclusions, coupled with differential non-response, could make the sample unrepresentative of the general population of households with children.

and is not representative of recipients or households. To make the sample representative of households a weight needs to be applied, this weight should be used for all household-level analyses.

Recipients were selected with probability proportional to the weighted number of eligible children for whom they claim CB. In some households different adults could be claiming CB for different children within the same household[110]. In these instances the households could be selected via either recipient on the sampling frame, hence the household selection probability was equal to the total weighted number of eligible children in the household.

The household selection weight for each household is the inverse of the household's selection probabilities, it weights larger households and households containing children aged 2-4 years down

$w_1 = 1/Pr(h)$

2) Pre-calibration household 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 the:

- Recipient's Government Office Region;
- Number of children age 0-14 in their household;
- Deprivation level of their area (measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and;
- Proportion of adults in their postcode sector who were living in a privately rented property.

A non-response weight (w_{NR}) was calculated as the reciprocal of the modelled response probability. The household weight (w_h) was then simply the product of the non-response weight and the household selection weight (w_1)

$w_h = w_{NR}*w_1$

3). Child selection weight
At each responding household a single child was selected at random during interview. This child was the focus of the detailed childcare section of the questionnaire. In boost households, children were eligible if they were aged 2-4 at the time of interview, for core households eligible children were aged 0-14.

The probability a child had of being selected depended on whether their household was in the core or boost sample. Households containing a child aged 2-4 years on 9th February 2009 were allocated at random to either the core or boost sample. The chance that a child in these households had of being selected depended on their allocation.

The child selection weight (w_2) is the inverse of the child selection probabilities

$w_2 = 1/Pr(c)$

As before the assumption was made that all children in the household were living with the adult who claimed their CB.

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[110] To calculate the selection weights we have made the assumption that all children are living in the same household as the adult receiving their CB. We were required to make this assumption as we are unable to identify households on the CB records; the records only allow children and recipients to be identified. If this assumption is made then the probability of a household being selected under our design is equal to the number of eligible children within that household, regardless of which recipient was selected during sampling. For the vast majority of cases this assumption will hold true.

4). Pre-calibration child weight
A child weight (w_c) was then calculated as the product of the household weight (w_h) and the child selection weight (w_2).

$$w_c = w_h{}^*w_2$$

Calibration

The final stage of the weighting procedure was to adjust the weights using calibration weighting (Deville & Sarndal, 1992). The aim of the 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 will be weighted, these estimates are known as control totals. The DWP provided NatCen 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 Table B.9 and Table B.10 below.

Table B.9	Comparison of recipient-level population figures to weighted sample

Base: All recipients

	Distribution of recipients	
	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only
Variables from sampling frame	%	%
Government Office Region		
North East	5.0	5.2
North West	13.8	14.0
Yorkshire & Humber	10.1	9.8
East Midlands	8.5	8.5
West Midlands	10.9	10.9
South West	9.3	11.4
Eastern	10.9	15.4
London	15.7	15.4
South East	15.8	9.3
Weighted base	*n/a*	*6,708*
Unweighted base	*5,110,000*	*6,708*

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Table B.10 Comparison of child level population figures to weighted sample

Base: All eligible children

	Distribution of children	
	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only
Variables from sampling frame	%	%
Government Office Region		
North East	4.8	5.4
North West	13.6	13.7
Yorkshire & Humber	10.1	10.8
East Midlands	8.4	8.8
West Midlands	11.0	11.1
South West	9.3	11.5
Eastern	11.0	12.8
London	15.9	15.8
South East	15.9	10.1
Selected child's age		
0-1	9.8	9.4
2-4	21.0	21.2
5-7	20.0	19.7
8-11	27.5	28.0
12-14	21.6	21.7
Selected child's sex		
Male	51.2	51.0
Female	48.8	49.0
Weighted base	*n/a*	*6,708*
Unweighted base	*8,636,000*	*6,708*

Calibration weighting works by adjusting 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 whilst giving survey estimates for the control totals that match the population distribution exactly.

The calibration was run twice; once to calibrate the household weight and once to calibrate the child weight. Analysis of data weighted by the household weight will match the population of CB recipients[111] 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 CB records in terms of the variables used in weighting.

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[111] Recipients were used as a proxy for households.

The control totals for the household weight (w_h) were:[112]

- Number of children for whom the recipient claims benefit.

The control totals for the child weight (w_c) were:

- Age;
- Sex, and;
- Regional distribution of the population of children on the CB records.

The distribution of the sample weighted by the calibration weights is shown below in Table B.11 and Table B.12. It can be seen that the distribution of the sample weighted by the final calibrated weights matches that of the population (see Table B.9 and Table B.10).

Table B.11 Weighted distribution of variables used in household-level calibration	

Base: All recipients

	%
Government Office Region	
North East	5.0
North West	13.8
Yorkshire & Humber	10.1
East Midlands	8.5
West Midlands	10.9
South West	9.3
Eastern	10.9
London	15.7
South East	15.8
Unweighted base	*6,708*

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[112] In the previous survey method of payment was also used. This variable has been dropped because only 1% of the sample was not claiming benefit via automatic payments.

Table B.12 Weighted distribution of variables used in child-level calibration

Base: All recipients

	%
Government Office Region	
North East	4.8
North West	13.6
Yorkshire & Humber	10.1
East Midlands	8.4
West Midlands	11.0
South West	9.3
Eastern	11.0
London	15.9
South East	15.9
Selected child's age	
0-1	9.8
2-4	21.0
5-7	20.0
8-11	27.5
12-14	21.6
Selected child's sex	
Male	51.2
Female	48.8
Unweighted base	*6,708*

The final calibrated household weight should be used for all analyses of household-level data. The final calibrated child weight should be used for all analyses of data collected on the selected child. The final weights were scaled to the achieved sample size.

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, 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.13.

Table B.13 Effective sample size and sample efficiency

Base: All cases

Child weight	
Effective sample size	5,929
Sample efficiency	88%
Household weight	
Effective sample size	5,318
Sample efficiency	79%
Unweighted base	*6,708*

Appendix C   Additional tables

Table C2.1	Use of childcare, by family characteristics

Base: All children

	Use of childcare				
Family characteristics	Any childcare %	Formal childcare %	Informal childcare %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	63	43	33	*6708*	*6708*
Family type					
Couple	63	44	31	*5004*	*5061*
Lone parent	65	40	40	*1704*	*1647*
Family work status					
Couple – both working	72	50	38	*2951*	*3025*
Couple – one working	54	38	22	*1623*	*1629*
Couple – neither working	38	24	17	*429*	*407*
Lone parent – working	79	48	54	*750*	*720*
Lone parent – not working	54	33	29	*955*	*927*
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	55	36	27	*583*	*558*
£10,000-£19,999	53	32	31	*1654*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	63	40	36	*1179*	*1192*
£30,000-£44,999	66	45	35	*1260*	*1285*
£45,000+	76	58	37	*1644*	*1692*
Number of children					
1	67	42	41	*1792*	*1756*
2	68	47	35	*2978*	*3040*
3+	54	37	24	*1938*	*1912*

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.2   Use of childcare providers, by family type and work status

Base: All children

	Couple families				Lone parents		
	Both working	One working	Neither working	All couples	Working	Not working	All lone parents
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Formal childcare and early years provision							
Nursery school	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	3	4	4	3	2	4	3
Day nursery	7	3	1	5	7	3	5
Playgroup or pre-school	4	4	4	4	1	4	3
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, on school site	23	14	10	19	26	12	18
Breakfast/ after-school club or activity, off school site	6	4	2	5	5	2	3
Childminder	6	1	+	4	7	2	4
Nanny or au pair	2	1	0	1	+	0	+
Informal childcare							
Ex-partner	2	1	3	2	22	12	16
Grandparent	28	15	9	22	27	14	20
Older sibling	4	2	2	3	6	3	4
Another relative	4	3	4	4	7	5	6
Friend or neighbour	6	3	2	5	8	2	5
Weighted base	*2951*	*1623*	*429*	*5004*	*750*	*955*	*1704*
Unweighted base	*3025*	*1629*	*407*	*5061*	*720*	*927*	*1647*

Table C2.3 Use of childcare, by area deprivation

Base: All children

	Use of childcare				
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Area deprivation	%	%	%		
All	63	43	33	*6708*	*6708*
1st quintile – least deprived	70	51	36	*1243*	*1355*
2nd quintile	70	49	37	*1255*	*1316*
3rd quintile	66	45	34	*1205*	*1198*
4th quintile	58	38	31	*1334*	*1298*
5th quintile – most deprived	56	34	30	*1671*	*1541*

NB: Row percentages

Table C2.4   Logistic regression models for use of formal childcare

Base: All pre-school and school-age children

	Pre-school		School-age	
	Odds ratio	SE	Odds ratio	SE
Child's age (0-2/ 5-7)				
3-4	***15.64	2.07	n/a	
8-11	n/a		0.85	0.08
12-14	n/a		***0.33	0.03
Family type and work status (Couple – both working)				
Couple – one working	***0.43	0.06	*0.80	0.08
Couple – neither working	***0.32	0.09	**0.57	0.12
Lone parent – working	*1.92	0.54	***1.65	0.21
Lone parent – not working	***0.43	0.10	0.89	0.14
Family annual income (£45,000+)				
Under £10,000	***0.32	0.08	***0.50	0.10
£10,000-£19,999	***0.46	0.10	***0.36	0.05
£20,000-£29,999	***0.40	0.07	***0.51	0.06
£30,000-£44,999	*0.65	0.12	***0.60	0.06
Income unknown	0.62	0.16	***0.54	0.08
Number of children (3+)				
1	***1.83	0.30	1.09	0.11
2	*1.41	0.19	1.11	0.10
Ethnicity (White British)				
Other White	0.91	0.29	1.55	0.39
Black Caribbean	1.86	1.13	0.64	0.21
Black African	0.82	0.40	1.22	0.41
Asian Indian	1.01	0.45	0.95	0.28
Asian Pakistani	***0.36	0.10	0.79	0.25
Asian Bangladeshi	**0.49	0.12	0.64	0.16
Other Asian	**0.32	0.13	0.65	0.27
White and Black	1.38	0.52	1.55	0.39
White and Asian	1.00	0.47	1.17	0.28
Other mixed	0.67	0.22	0.54	0.20
Other	0.49	0.21	1.35	0.33
Special educational needs (No)				
Yes	1.60	0.55	1.06	0.13
Area deprivation (least deprived)				
2nd quintile	0.76	0.14	1.07	0.12
3rd quintile	0.83	0.15	0.91	0.12
4th quintile	0.70	0.14	*0.76	0.10
5th quintile – most deprived	*0.67	0.14	0.79	0.11
Weighted base		2064		4622
Unweighted base		2504		4184

Note: *p<0.05, ** p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odd ratio >1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odd 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 income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large proportion of missingness at this variable).

Table C2.5 Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type and age

Base: All children receiving care from provider types

Use of childcare	Pre-school				School-age			
	Median	Mean	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*	Median	Mean	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Any provider	20.0	22.8	*1394*	*1787*	6.5	13.2	*2487*	*2280*
Formal providers								
Childminder	16.0	17.5	*120*	*151*	7.0	8.9	*133*	*121*
Nanny or au pair	[20.1]	[22.4]	*30*	*38*	[9.6]	[11.4]	*26*	*23*
Informal providers								
Ex-partner	11.6	16.1	*84*	*96*	20.7	24.8	*241*	*217*
Grandparent	8.0	11.8	*549*	*693*	5.0	10.3	*773*	*724*
Older sibling	[3.5]	[6.6]	*16*	*22*	3.0	4.3	*185*	*180*
Another relative	5.0	10.1	*107*	*127*	4.0	12.3	*159*	*143*
Friend or neighbour	3.0	4.6	*45*	*58*	3.0	4.9	*230*	*216*

Table C2.6 Receipt of the entitlement to free early years provision, by family income

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds

Receipt of free early years provision	Family annual income					Total
	Under £10,000	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£29,999	£30,000-£44,999	£45,000+	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Received free hours (or attended school)	79	80	87	91	95	87
Received early years provision but not free hours	8	6	4	3	2	4
Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	1	4	1	1	0	1
Did not receive any early years provision	12	10	9	5	4	8
Weighted base	*107*	*186*	*150*	*148*	*219*	*810*
Unweighted base	*141*	*263*	*220*	*212*	*318*	*1154*

Table C2.7 Number of free hours per week, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school

Number of hours	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
	%	%	%
Less than 12.5 hours	37	25	32
12.5 to 14.9 hours	37	45	40
15 hours or more	27	29	28
Median	12.5	12.5	12.5
Mean	12.3	13.2	12.6
Standard error	0.2	0.3	0.2
Weighted base	*281*	*162*	*443*
Unweighted base	*397*	*235*	*632*

Table C2.8 Whether parents satisfied with the number of free hours, by age of child

Base: All eligible 3 and 4 year olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Satisfaction	%	%	%
Very satisfied	69	66	68
Fairly satisfied	21	25	22
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	5	5
Fairly dissatisfied	5	3	4
Very dissatisfied	1	+	1
Weighted base	*292*	169	461
Unweighted base	*411*	244	655

Table C3.1 Number of providers, by specific centre-based provider types

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received centre-based childcare

	Provider type				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
1	44	45	43	50	37
2	37	34	32	35	38
3+	20	21	25	15	25
Weighted base	*273*	*331*	*348*	*593*	*434*
Unweighted base	*364*	*498*	*524*	*695*	*630*

Table C3.2 Number of providers, by specific informal provider types

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received informal childcare

	Provider type			
	Non-resident parent	Grandparent	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
	%	%	%	%
1	18	28	20	18
2	49	45	39	35
3+	34	27	41	47
Weighted base	*152*	*1051*	*217*	*98*
Unweighted base	*168*	*1310*	*259*	*141*

Table C3.3 Patterns of childcare use, by age of child and Package of care

Base: All pre-school children who received childcare

| | Age of child and Package of care | | | | | |
| | 0-2 | | | 3-4 | | |
Days and hours of childcare received	Formal: Centre-Based only %	Informal only %	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal %	Formal: Centre-Based only %	Informal only %	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal %
Days per week:						
1	16	40	0	2	[32]	+
2	31	25	9	7	[20]	2
3	27	11	27	19	[15]	8
4	5	10	29	9	[11]	17
5	21	11	21	63	[12]	50
6	0	1	9	+	[0]	15
7	0	1	5	+	[9]	7
Median hours per day	6.0	5.0	7.4	4.5	[4.0]	6
Median hours per week	16.0	8.7	28.0	15.0	[12.6]	28.5
Weighted base	*167*	*244*	*119*	*372*	*24*	*220*
Unweighted base	*201*	*237*	*151*	*516*	*34*	*326*

Table C3.4 Hours of centre-based childcare received, by specific centre-based provider types

Base: All pre-school children who received centre-based childcare

| | Provider type | | | | |
| | Nursery school % | Nursery class % | Reception class % | Day nursery % | Playgroup % |
Hours of use					
Median hours per day	4.0	3.0	6.3	7.2	3.0
Median hours per week	15.0	13.3	31.3	20.0	10.0
Weighted base	*143*	*183*	*180*	*334*	*221*
Unweighted base	*186*	*262*	*266*	*417*	*333*

Table C3.5 Hours of informal childcare received, by specific informal provider types

Base: All pre-school children who received informal childcare

| | Provider type | | | |
| | Non-resident parent % | Grandparent % | Other relative % | Friend/ neighbour % |
Hours of use				
Median hours per day	6.4	5.0	4.5	3.0
Median hours per week	19.4	9.0	12.1	5.0
Weighted base	*84*	*549*	*107*	*45*
Unweighted base	*96*	*693*	*127*	*58*

Table C3.6 Whether pre-school child attended more than one provider on the same day, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children who received a package of centre-based and informal childcare

| Whether attended more than one provider | Age of child | |
| on same day | 0-2 | 3-4 |
	%	%
Never	50	33
Sometimes	46	57
Always	5	10
Weighted base	*119*	*220*
Unweighted base	*151*	*326*

Table C3.7 Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare

| | Age of child | | |
| | 0-2 | 3-4 | Total |
Reasons/ combinations	%	%	%
Economic only	33	15	23
Child-related only	11	26	19
Parental time only	13	3	8
Economic and child-related	18	28	23
Economic and parental time	5	2	3
Child-related and parental time	11	16	14
Economic, child-related and parental time	7	9	8
Other	2	1	1
Weighted base	*1193*	*1390*	*2584*
Unweighted base	*1363*	*2042*	*3405*

Table C3.8 Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received childcare

| | Age of child | | |
| | 0-2 | 3-4 | Total |
Reasons for using	%	%	%
Economic	63	54	58
Child-related	47	79	64
Parental time	35	31	33
Weighted base	*1194*	*1390*	*2585*
Unweighted base	*1364*	*2042*	*3406*

Table C3.9 Reasons for using centre-based providers, by specific centre-based provider type

Base: All pre-school children in the household who received centre-based childcare

| | Provider type | | | | |
| | Nursery school | Nursery class | Reception class | Day nursery | Playgroup |
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
Economic	50	33	26	79	31
Child-related	62	82	89	49	87
Parental time	27	21	15	14	24
Weighted base	*227*	*280*	*247*	*536*	*364*
Unweighted base	*301*	*422*	*382*	*619*	*522*

Table C4.1   Number of providers, by specific informal provider types

Base: All school-age children in the household who received informal childcare

| | Provider type | | | | |
| | Non-resident parent | Grandparent | Older sibling | Other relative | Friend/ neighbour |
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
1	28	34	38	28	15
2	36	34	36	35	33
3	22	18	15	22	25
4+	14	13	12	15	27
Weighted base	*483*	*1544*	*404*	*329*	*464*
Unweighted base	*503*	*1799*	*351*	*363*	*496*

Table C4.2 Patterns of childcare use, by age of child and Package of care

Base: All school-age children who received childcare

Days and hours of childcare received	Age of child and Package of care								
	5-7			**8-11**			**12-14**		
	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based & Informal
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Days per week:									
1	45	26		40	24	3	44	26	3
2	21	30	27	20	27	23	23	21	24
3	10	13	23	15	18	23	12	18	21
4	5	9	20	7	8	19	12	12	23
5	19	18	24	17	17	23	9	19	25
6	1	1	5	1	6	5	0	2	4
7	0	2	1	0	1	4	1	2	0
Median hours per day	1.0	3.0	2.3	1.3	3.0	3	1	3	3
Median hours per week	2.0	8.0	7.9	2.0	7.5	8.3	2.5	8.0	8.6
Weighted base	*149*	*189*	*103*	*284*	*260*	*197*	*152*	*215*	*81*
Unweighted base	*126*	*169*	*94*	*256*	*247*	*184*	*138*	*207*	*73*

Table C4.3 Hours of informal childcare received, by specific informal provider types

Base: All school-age children who received informal childcare

| | Provider type | | | | |
| | Non-resident parent | Grandparent | Older sibling | Other relative | Friend/ neighbour |
Hours of use	%	%	%	%	%
Median hours per day	8.9	2.9	2.0	3.1	2.5
Median hours per week	24.0	6.0	4.0	7.5	4.5
Weighted base	*241*	*773*	*185*	*159*	*230*
Unweighted base	*217*	*724*	*180*	*143*	*216*

Table C4.4 Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare

| | Age of child | | | |
| | 5-7 | 8-11 | 12-13 | Total |
Reasons/ combinations	%	%	%	%
Economic only	23	21	17	20
Child-related only	32	34	43	36
Parental time only	5	4	6	5
Economic and child-related	22	22	17	21
Economic and parental time	3	2	2	2
Child-related and parental time	9	9	10	9
Economic, child-related and parental time	5	5	2	4
Other	2	2	3	2
Weighted base	*1489*	*2090*	*1226*	*4805*
Unweighted base	*1936*	*2434*	*1206*	*5576*

Table C4.5   Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

Base: All school-age children in the household who received childcare

| | Age of child | | | |
| | 5-7 | 8-11 | 12-14 | Total |
Reasons for using	%	%		%
Economic	52	50	38	48
Child -related	68	71	72	70
Parental time	22	20	20	21
Weighted base	*1489*	*2090*	*1226*	*4806*
Unweighted base	*1936*	*2435*	*1206*	*5577*

Table C4.6 Reasons for using informal providers, by specific informal provider type

Base: All school-age children in the household who received informal childcare

| | Provider type | | | | |
| | Non-resident parent | Grandparent | Older sibling | Other relative | Friend/ neighbour |
Reasons for using	%	%	%	%	%
Economic	42	69	64	59	62
Child-related	75	42	19	37	47
Parental time	23	23	42	34	26
Weighted base	*370*	*1162*	*319*	*256*	*315*
Unweighted base	*390*	*1333*	*279*	*282*	*339*

Table C5.1 Weekly payment for childcare, by service paid for

Base: Families who paid provider type

Provider type	Family paid provider for Education/ Childcare			Family paid provider for other services only		
	Median	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*	Median	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Formal						
Nursery School	45	*143*	*179*	[4]	*30*	*43*
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	23	*53*	*79*	2	*78*	*115*
Day Nursery	78	*449*	*497*	[4]	*23*	*30*
Playgroup or pre-school	15	*219*	*311*	4	*58*	*76*
Breakfast/ After-school club - on-site	9	*687*	*728*	5	*292*	*303*
Breakfast/ After-school club - off-site	4	*77*	*85*	7	*358*	*395*
Informal						
Grandparents	[25]	*[30]*	*[28]*	10	*68*	*63*

Table C5.2 Weekly payment for childcare, by family characteristics

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week

Family characteristics	Total weekly amount paid by family				
	Median £	Mean £	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	21	50	1.64	*2828*	*3070*
Family type					
Couple	23	53	1.92	*2170*	*2448*
Lone parent (LP)	17	43	2.76	*657*	*622*
Family working status					
Couple – both working	29	59	2.11	*1582*	*1695*
Couple – one working	15	38	3.20	*508*	*657*
Couple – neither working	6	12	2.15	*80*	*96*
LP – working	29	54	3.39	*433*	*371*
LP– not working	7	23	3.19	*225*	*251*
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	8	20	3.48	*152*	*145*
£10,000-£19,999	10	27	2.06	*489*	*519*
£20,000-£29,999	18	45	3.38	*448*	*514*
£30,000-£44,999	22	45	3.06	*591*	*640*
£45,000+	35	72	3.35	*975*	*1077*
Number of children					
1	20	45	3.04	*1106*	*668*
2	24	54	2.06	*1273*	*1545*
3+	20	53	3.57	*448*	*857*
Age of children					
Pre-school child(ren) only	50	77	3.73	*696*	*669*
Pre-school and school-age children	27	62	2.88	*718*	*1154*
School-age child(ren) only	15	31	2	*1413*	*1247*

Table C5.3   Weekly payment for childcare, by region/ area deprivation

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week

Region/ area deprivation	Total weekly amount paid by family				
	Median £	Mean £	Standard Error	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Government Office Region					
North East	19	39	6.70	*99*	*113*
North West	17	43	4.23	*383*	*427*
Yorkshire & the Humber	15	32	3.47	*284*	*303*
East Midlands	22	46	3.48	*241*	*282*
West Midlands	23	47	4.43	*310*	*352*
East	23	53	4.81	*308*	*349*
London	33	89	6.67	*414*	*360*
South East	22	46	2.96	*499*	*545*
South West	20	38	3.87	*289*	*339*
Index of multiple deprivation					
1st quintile – least deprived	27	55	3.17	*672*	*793*
2nd quintile	23	53	3.75	*606*	*685*
3rd quintile	22	53	3.99	*579*	*589*
4th quintile	18	47	3.70	*484*	*501*
5th quintile – most deprived	13	41	3.25	*486*	*502*

Table C5.4 Difficulty paying for childcare, by family characteristics

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week

	How easy/ difficult to meet childcare costs					*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very Difficult		
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	%		
All	21	29	26	18	6	*2752*	*2980*
Family type							
Couple	23	31	26	16	4	*2120*	*2383*
Lone parent (LP)	12	25	28	23	11	*633*	*597*
Family working status							
Couple – both working	23	32	27	16	4	*1545*	*1657*
Couple – one working	25	27	27	17	5	*496*	*634*
Couple – neither working	32	31	11	20	6	*78*	*92*
Lone parent – working	11	26	31	22	10	*432*	*368*
Lone parent – not working	17	22	22	25	14	*200*	*229*
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	11	27	25	23	14	*146*	*136*
£10,000-£19,999	19	25	24	23	9	*463*	*493*
£20,000-£29,999	20	22	25	24	9	*433*	*493*
£30,000-£44,999	19	31	29	18	3	*579*	*624*
£45,000+	26	34	25	12	2	*965*	*1063*
Number of children							
1	22	31	24	17	6	*1079*	*653*
2	22	28	29	17	4	*1237*	*1498*
3+	16	29	26	20	8	*436*	*829*
Age of children							
Pre-school child(ren) only	14	26	27	25	8	*686*	*656*
Pre-school and school-age children	16	27	31	18	7	*703*	*1125*
School-age child(ren) only	27	32	24	14	4	*1363*	*1199*

NB: Row percentages

Table C5.5 Difficulty paying for childcare, by weekly family payment (quintiles)

Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week

	How easy/ difficult to meet childcare costs					*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Weekly payment	Very easy %	Easy %	Neither %	Difficult %	Very difficult %		
Less than £5	53	29	9	7	2	*511*	*550*
£5 to £14.99	26	34	26	13	2	*585*	*633*
£15 to £29.99	16	33	28	17	6	*469*	*501*
£30 to £79.99	10	30	33	21	6	*617*	*655*
£80 or more	4	21	35	29	11	*568*	*640*

NB: Row percentages

Base: All families

Family characteristics	**Main sources of information**									*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Word-of-mouth %	School %	Sure Start/ Children's Centres %	Local Authority %	Local Adverts %	Jobcentre Plus %	Health Visitors	All other sources	None %		
All	37	23	10	8	8	5	5	25	38	*6702*	*6702*
Childcare use in reference week											
Used formal	44	27	11	10	9	4	6	29	30	*3685*	*4182*
Used informal/ other only	29	19	11	6	8	5	6	20	47	*1223*	*972*
No childcare	28	17	8	5	5	7	4	19	49	*1795*	*1548*
Family type											
Couple	39	24	9	8	8	1	5	26	38	*4869*	*5055*
Lone parent (LP)	32	20	12	7	6	14	6	21	38	*1833*	*1647*
Family working status											
Couple – both working	40	26	8	8	9	0	4	27	38	*3079*	*3023*
Couple – one working	40	23	11	8	8	2	7	25	37	*1428*	*1626*
Couple – neither working	27	17	10	6	4	8	9	22	46	*361*	*406*
LP – working	32	22	9	9	6	5	3	23	42	*909*	*720*
LP– not working	32	17	15	5	5	23	9	20	33	*924*	*927*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.1b Main information sources, by family characteristics

Base: All families

Family Characteristics cont	Word-of-mouth %	School %	Sure Start/ Children's Centres %	Local Authority %	Local Adverts %	Jobcentre Plus %	Health Visitors %	All other sources %	None %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
Main sources of information											
Family annual income											
Under £10,000	33	17	16	8	4	19	10	26	34	*641*	*557*
£10,000-£19,999	31	19	12	5	5	9	6	19	42	*1602*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	39	24	11	7	7	3	5	26	37	*1128*	*1191*
£30,000-£44,999	41	29	10	9	9	1	5	27	34	*1289*	*1283*
£45,000+	41	26	6	9	10	0	4	29	37	*1648*	*1691*
Number of children											
1	33	19	8	8	7	5	4	22	44	*3083*	*1755*
2	42	27	11	8	8	4	6	28	32	*2598*	*3037*
3+	38	27	12	7	7	6	7	23	35	*1021*	*1910*
Age of children											
Pre-school only	52	10	20	12	8	7	15	41	19	*1396*	*1265*
Pre- and school-age	45	24	15	8	7	6	9	29	28	*1394*	*2234*
School-age only	29	27	5	6	7	4	1	17	49	*3912*	*3203*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.2   Awareness and use of Families Information Services, 2008-09

Base: All families

	Survey year		
	2004	2008	2009
Awareness and use of FIS	%	%	%
Not aware	78	68	69
Aware but not used	12	17	18
Used FIS	10	15	13
Weighted base	*7802*	*7062*	*6697*
Unweighted base	*7802*	*7059*	*6694*

Table C6.3 Level of information about childcare, by family characteristics

Base: All families

| | Level of information about childcare in local area | | | | | |
Family characteristics	About right %	Too much %	Too little %	Not sure %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	45	1	38	16	*6708*	*6708*
Childcare use in reference week						
Used formal	47	1	39	12	*3690*	*4187*
Used informal (or other) care only	43	1	38	18	*1223*	*973*
No childcare used	40	1	36	22	*1795*	*1548*
Family type						
Couple	46	1	36	17	*4875*	*5061*
Lone parent	41	2	45	13	*1833*	*1647*
Family working status						
Couple – both working	47	1	36	16	*3081*	*3025*
Couple – one working	44	1	36	19	*1431*	*1629*
Couple – neither working	42	1	35	23	*362*	*407*
Lone parent – working	40	1	45	14	*909*	*720*
Lone parent – not working	42	2	44	11	*924*	*927*
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	43	2	41	14	*642*	*558*
£10,000-£19,999	41	1	41	16	*1602*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	43	1	40	16	*1130*	*1192*
£30,000-£44,999	47	1	38	14	*1291*	*1285*
£45,000+	48	1	34	16	*1649*	*1692*
Number of children						
1	43	1	38	18	*3085*	*1756*
2	46	1	39	14	*2600*	*3040*
3+	47	1	38	14	*1022*	*1912*
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	49	1	39	10	*1396*	*1265*
Pre-school and school-age children	49	2	39	11	*1395*	*2236*
School-age child(ren) only	41	1	38	20	*3917*	*3207*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.4 Perceptions of local childcare availability, 2004-2009

Base: All families

| | **Survey year** | | | |
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
	%	%	%	%
Too many	1	1	1	1
About the right number	40	44	40	42
Not enough	40	37	37	34
Not sure	19	18	22	23
Weighted base	*7798*	*7134*	*7075*	*6707*
Unweighted base	*7797*	*7135*	*7074*	*6707*

Table C6.5 Perceptions of local childcare availability, by family characteristics

Base: All families

	Availability of childcare places in local area					
Family characteristics	Too many %	About the right number %	Not enough	Not sure %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	1	42	34	23	*6707*	*6707*
Childcare use in reference week						
Used formal	1	45	37	17	*3689*	*4186*
Used informal (or other) only	1	42	29	28	*1223*	*973*
No childcare used	1	37	31	31	*1795*	*1548*
Family type						
Couple	1	44	32	23	*4874*	*5060*
Lone parent (LP)	1	37	39	22	*1833*	*1647*
Family working status						
Couple – both working	1	45	33	22	*3081*	*3025*
Couple – one working	1	43	32	24	*1431*	*1628*
Couple – neither working	1	38	29	32	*362*	*407*
LP – working	1	38	39	21	*909*	*720*
LP– not working	1	37	39	23	*924*	*927*
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	1	38	36	24	*642*	*558*
£10,000-£19,999	1	39	37	23	*1602*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	1	45	32	22	*1130*	*1192*
£30,000-£44,999	2	45	32	20	*1291*	*1285*
£45,000+	1	44	34	21	*1649*	*1692*
Number of children						
1	1	40	32	27	*3085*	*1756*
2	1	44	36	19	*2600*	*3040*
3+	2	43	35	20	*1022*	*1911*
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	2	47	34	17	*1396*	*1265*
Pre-school and school-age	2	46	38	15	*1395*	*2235*
School-age only	1	39	33	28	*3917*	*3207*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.6 Perceptions of local childcare availability, by region/ area deprivation

Base: All families

	Availability of childcare places in local area				*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Too many	About right	Not enough	Not sure		
Region/ area deprivation	%	%	%	%		
All	1	42	34	23	*6707*	*6707*
Government Office Region						
North West	1	45	36	18	*340*	*356*
North East	2	44	32	23	*931*	*933*
Yorkshire & the Humber	2	45	33	21	*680*	*720*
East Midlands	2	40	34	24	*574*	*598*
West Midlands	1	38	39	21	*723*	*750*
East	1	44	35	21	*739*	*760*
London	2	34	33	31	*1052*	*866*
South East	1	46	34	19	*1035*	*1058*
South West	1	45	33	21	*633*	*666*
Index of multiple deprivation						
1st quintile – least deprived	1	46	34	19	*1278*	*1355*
2nd quintile	1	46	30	23	*1268*	*1316*
3rd quintile	2	42	35	21	*1223*	*1198*
4th quintile	1	41	35	23	*1367*	*1298*
5th quintile – most deprived	1	36	36	27	*1572*	*1540*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.7   Perceptions of local childcare quality, 2004-2009

Base: All families

	Survey year			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%
Very good	19	20	19	21
Fairly good	42	43	41	43
Fairly poor	9	9	9	7
Very poor	2	3	5	4
Not sure	28	26	27	25
Weighted base	*7797*	*7135*	*7075*	*6707*
Unweighted base	*7796*	*7134*	*7074*	*6707*

Table C6.8 Perceptions of local childcare quality, by family characteristics

Base: All families

Family characteristics	Quality of childcare places in local area					*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure		
	%	%	%	%	%		
All	21	43	7	4	25	*6707*	*6707*
Childcare use in reference week							
Used formal	25	47	8	3	18	*3689*	*4186*
Used informal (or other) only	17	38	7	4	34	*1223*	*973*
No childcare used	15	37	7	5	36	*1795*	*1548*
Family type							
Couple	22	44	6	3	25	*4874*	*5060*
Lone parent (LP)	18	39	10	6	27	*1833*	*1647*
Family working status							
Couple – both working	24	45	7	2	22	*3081*	*3025*
Couple – one working	20	44	6	3	28	*1431*	*1628*
Couple – neither working	14	40	8	4	36	*362*	*407*
LP – working	18	41	10	5	26	*909*	*720*
LP– not working	17	36	11	8	28	*924*	*927*
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	19	38	9	6	28	*642*	*558*
£10,000-£19,999	16	39	9	5	31	*1602*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	20	45	7	3	24	*1130*	*1192*
£30,000-£44,999	23	46	7	3	21	*1291*	*1285*
£45,000+	27	45	6	2	19	*1649*	*1692*
Number of children							
1	19	41	7	4	29	*3085*	*1756*
2	23	45	8	3	22	*2600*	*3040*
3+	22	41	7	4	25	*1022*	*1911*
Age of children							
Pre-school child(ren) only	24	46	7	3	20	*1396*	*1265*
Pre-school and school-age	25	44	7	3	20	*1395*	*2235*
School-age only	18	41	8	4	29	*3917*	*3207*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.9 Perceptions of local childcare quality, by region/ area deprivation

Base: All families

Region/ area deprivation	Quality of childcare places in local area					Weighted base	Unweighted base
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure		
	%	%	%	%	%		
All	21	43	7	4	25	*6707*	*6707*
Government Office Region							
North West	21	44	10	2	23	*340*	*356*
North East	20	43	8	4	25	*931*	*933*
Yorkshire & the Humber	21	40	7	4	27	*680*	*720*
East Midlands	22	38	8	4	28	*574*	*598*
West Midlands	20	43	8	5	25	*723*	*750*
East	21	49	8	3	19	*739*	*760*
London	17	38	8	4	34	*1052*	*866*
South East	25	44	7	2	22	*1035*	*1058*
South West	24	46	5	4	22	*633*	*666*
Index of multiple deprivation							
1st quintile – least deprived	27	45	7	3	19	*1278*	*1355*
2nd quintile	25	45	6	3	22	*1268*	*1316*
3rd quintile	24	45	6	3	22	*1223*	*1198*
4th quintile	16	41	8	5	30	*1367*	*1298*
5th quintile – most deprived	15	39	9	5	32	*1572*	*1540*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.10   Perceptions of local childcare affordability, 2004-2009

Base: All families

	Survey year			
	2004	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%
Very good	6	7	6	7
Fairly good	29	31	30	31
Fairly poor	25	24	22	22
Very poor	12	12	15	14
Not sure	28	26	27	27
Weighted base	*7797*	*7136*	*7075*	*6707*
Unweighted base	*7796*	*7136*	*7074*	*6707*

Table C6.11 Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by family characteristics

Base: All families

Family characteristics	Affordability of childcare places in local area					*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure		
	%	%	%	%	%		
All	7	31	22	14	27	*6707*	*6707*
Childcare use in reference week							
Used formal	9	37	23	13	17	*3689*	*4186*
Used informal (or other) only	4	24	22	14	34	*1223*	*973*
No childcare used	3	22	17	16	41	*1795*	*1548*
Family type							
Couple	7	33	22	12	26	*4874*	*5060*
Lone parent (LP)	5	25	21	19	29	*1833*	*1647*
Family working status							
Couple – both working	7	35	23	12	23	*3081*	*3025*
Couple – one working	6	31	20	13	30	*1431*	*1628*
Couple – neither working	6	21	18	16	39	*362*	*407*
LP – working	6	27	24	18	25	*909*	*720*
LP– not working	5	23	19	20	33	*924*	*927*
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	5	27	19	16	32	*642*	*558*
£10,000-£19,999	5	23	20	19	33	*1602*	*1605*
£20,000-£29,999	6	28	23	16	28	*1130*	*1192*
£30,000-£44,999	5	34	25	13	23	*1291*	*1285*
£45,000+	10	41	21	10	18	*1649*	*1692*
Number of children							
1	7	29	20	13	31	*3085*	*1756*
2	6	34	23	13	23	*2600*	*3040*
3+	6	27	22	20	24	*1022*	*1911*
Age of children							
Pre-school child(ren) only	7	37	23	15	19	*1396*	*1265*
Pre-school and school-age	7	34	23	17	19	*1395*	*2235*
School-age only	6	27	21	13	33	*3917*	*3207*

NB: Row percentages

Table C6.12 Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by region/ area deprivation

Base: All families

Affordability of childcare places in local area

Region/ area deprivation	Very good %	Fairly good %	Fairly poor %	Very poor %	Not sure %	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
All	21	43	7	4	25	*6707*	*6707*
Government Office Region							
North West	21	44	10	2	23	*340*	*356*
North East	20	43	8	4	25	*931*	*933*
Yorkshire & the Humber	21	40	7	4	27	*680*	*720*
East Midlands	22	38	8	4	28	*574*	*598*
West Midlands	20	43	8	5	25	*723*	*750*
East	21	49	8	3	19	*739*	*760*
London	17	38	8	4	34	*1052*	*866*
South East	25	44	7	2	22	*1035*	*1058*
South West	24	46	5	4	22	*633*	*666*
Index of multiple deprivation							
1st quintile – least deprived	27	45	7	3	19	*1278*	*1355*
2nd quintile	25	45	6	3	22	*1268*	*1316*
3rd quintile	24	45	6	3	22	*1223*	*1198*
4th quintile	16	41	8	5	30	*1367*	*1298*
5th quintile – most deprived	15	39	9	5	32	*1572*	*1540*

NB: Row percentages

Table C7.1 How often providers give parents information about the activities their children have taken part in, by age of child

Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)

	Age of child		
How often	Pre-school %	School-age %	Total
Every day/ most days	32	9	20
Once or twice a week	34	14	23
Once a fortnight	6	5	6
Once every month or 2 months	8	10	9
Once every 3 or 4 months	4	8	6
Once every 6 months	1	1	1
Once every year or less often	+	2	1
Varies too much to say	4	7	6
Never	10	43	28
Weighted base	*1158*	*1356*	*2513*
Unweighted base	*1571*	*1243*	*2814*

Table C8.1 Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare, by type of holiday childcare used

Base: All families with school-age children

	Use of childcare in holidays		
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare
Reasons	%	%	%
Economic	68	69	75
Parent	18	15	21
Child	59	65	57
Weighted base	*2870*	*1261*	*2065*
Unweighted base	*2898*	*1357*	*2032*

Table C8.2 Ease/ difficulty of arranging holiday childcare, by age of child

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

	Age of selected child			
Ease/ difficulty of arranging holiday childcare	5 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 14	Total
	%	%	%	%
Very easy	27	25	30	27
Easy	37	35	35	36
Neither easy nor difficult	12	18	16	16
Difficult	15	13	10	13
Very difficult	6	7	7	7
Varies depending on holiday	2	2	1	1
Weighted base	*400*	*633*	*549*	*1891*
Unweighted base	*388*	*554*	*413*	*1801*

Table C8.3 Ease/ difficulty of arranging holiday childcare by working status and income

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

	Ease/ difficulty of arranging holiday childcare							
Working status and income	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very difficult	Varies	*Weighted base*	*Unweighted base*
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Family working status								
Couple – both working	28	36	15	13	6	2	*1355*	*1352*
Couple – one working	23	43	23	7	5	0	*88*	*85*
Lone parent – working	27	36	16	13	7	1	*448*	*364*
Family annual income								
Under £10,000	[10]	[40]	[34]	[9]	[4]	[2]	*20*	*19*
£10,000-£19,999	26	34	17	12	10	1	*284*	*241*
£20,000-£29,999	29	34	16	13	6	1	*379*	*357*
£30,000-£44,999	28	36	14	15	8	1	*482*	*460*
£45,000+	24	40	17	12	5	1	*637*	*649*

NB: Row percentages

Table C8.4 Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare by family type

Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/ very difficult

	Family type	
	Couple	Lone parent
Reasons for difficulties	%	%
Difficult to find childcare/ holiday clubs in my area	26	19
Not many places/ providers in my area	25	32
Friends/ Family not always available to help	59	60
Difficult to afford	35	38
Quality of some childcare/ clubs is not good	13	6
My children need special care	4	9
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/ clubs in the past	4	5
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/ clubs	6	2
Other reasons	18	15
No Holiday places/ providers for my child	5	0
Weighted base	*138*	*60*
Unweighted base	*153*	*53*

Table C8.5 Views of parents about childcare during school holidays, by work status

Base: All families with school-age children

Working status

Parents' views		Couple both working %	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %	All families %
I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays	Strongly agree	26	20	16	26	12	22
	Agree	37	31	33	36	32	35
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	34	37	18	36	27
	Disagree	10	12	9	15	13	12
	Strongly disagree	4	3	4	5	7	4
I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs	Strongly agree	6	5	4	10	7	6
	Agree	15	12	10	19	13	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	22	34	42	20	38	27
	Disagree	42	35	32	37	34	38
	Strongly disagree	15	14	11	15	8	14
I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays	Strongly agree	10	10	13	19	19	13
	Agree	17	18	15	18	20	17
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	33	37	21	32	27
	Disagree	36	29	27	33	23	32
	Strongly disagree	13	11	8	10	6	11
Weighted base[113]		*2606*	*1171*	*294*	*793*	*694*	*5550*
Unweighted base		*2612*	*1390*	*353*	*638*	*750*	*5739*

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[113] Where the bases across the three statements are not exactly the same the highest base out of three has been presented in the table. The smallest difference is that one observation is missing for the base the other two statements; the biggest difference is 16 observations missing.

Table C9.1 Changes in maternal employment, 1999 - 2009

Base: All mothers

	Year			
	1999	2004	2007	2009
Maternal employment	%	%	%	%
Mother working FT	22	25	27	27
Mother working PT (1-15 hrs/ wk)	10	9	8	8
Mother working PT (16-29 hrs/ wk)	24	28	28	29
Mother not working	44	38	37	37
Weighted base	*n/a*	*7670*	*7027*	*6621*
Unweighted base	*4779*	*7696*	*7044*	*6640*

Table C9.2 Whether atypical working hours caused problems with childcare, by family type

Base: Mothers who worked atypical hours

	Family type		
	Partnered	Lone	All
Whether atypical hours cause problems with	mothers	mothers	mothers
childcare	%	%	%
Working before 8am caused problems with childcare	24	39	27
Working after 6pm caused problems with childcare	22	35	25
Working Saturdays caused problems with childcare	17	28	19
Working Sundays caused problems with childcare	13	31	18
Weighted bases for working before 8am	*689*	*190*	*879*
Weighted bases for working after 6pm	*1134*	*314*	*1448*
Weighted bases for working Saturdays	*927*	*304*	*1232*
Weighted bases for working Sundays	*656*	*207*	*863*
Unweighted bases for working before 8am	*687*	*151*	*838*
Unweighted bases for working after 6pm	*1162*	*248*	*1410*
Unweighted bases for working Saturdays	*952*	*245*	*1197*
Unweighted bases for working Sundays	*661*	*160*	*821*

Table C9.3 Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Childcare arrangements that enabled mothers to go out to work	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A-level and above %	GCSE grade A-C/ O-Level and equivalent %	Lower/ no academic qualifications %	Total %
All mothers				
I have reliable childcare	52	45	37	47
Children are at school	46	46	35	44
Relatives help with childcare	43	50	38	44
Have childcare which fits with my working hours	43	35	25	37
Have good quality childcare	42	36	22	36
Have free/ cheap childcare	26	29	26	27
Friends help with the childcare	15	11	11	13
My child(ren) is/ are old enough to look after themselves	12	11	12	12
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	8	9	5	8
My employer provides/ pays for some/ all of my childcare	2	1	+	1
Other	+	1	1	1
None of these	6	8	9	7
Partnered mothers				
Partner helps with childcare	18	12	12	15
Childcare fits partner's working hours	20	14	9	16
Mother works when partner does not work	8	9	9	9
Partner's employer provides/ pays for childcare	1	1	+	1
Lone mothers				
Children's father is able to help with childcare	3	5	4	4
Weighted base for all mothers	*1922*	*1156*	*770*	*3978*
Weighted base for partnered mothers	*1570*	*912*	*526*	*3106*
Weighted base for lone mothers	*352*	*245*	*244*	*872*
Unweighted base for all mothers	*1846*	*1104*	*668*	*3737*
Unweighted base for partnered mothers	*1572*	*898*	*471*	*3041*
Unweighted base for lone mothers	*274*	*206*	*197*	*696*

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work	Mothers' NS-SEC classification					
	Managerial and professional occupations	Intermediate occupations	Small employers and own account workers	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	Semi-routine and routine occupations	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
All mothers						
Have reliable childcare	55	51	32	49	37	47
Child(ren) at school	46	45	43	39	40	44
Relatives help with childcare	46	47	33	48	41	44
Have childcare which fits with my working hours	45	40	28	31	27	37
Have good quality childcare	46	39	26	27	25	36
Have free/ cheap childcare	26	30	22	36	26	27
Friends help with childcare	14	14	11	12	12	13
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/ herself/ themselves	13	11	11	11	11	12
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	8	11	3	10	7	8
My employer provides/ pays for some/ all of my childcare	3	1	+	0	+	1
Other	1	1	+	0	1	1
None of these	4	7	18	3	10	7
Partnered mothers						
Childcare fits partner's working hours	22	14	9	12	10	16
Partner helps with childcare	19	12	13	15	12	15
Mother works when partner does not work	8	6	10	15	9	9
Partner's employer provides/ pays for childcare	1	1	0	0	+	1
Lone mothers						
Child(ren)'s father is able to help with childcare	3	5	1	8	4	4
Weighted base for all mothers	1621	703	299	233	1102	3978
Weighted base for partnered mothers	1354	569	248	159	765	3106
Weighted base for lone mothers	267	135	51	73	337	872
Unweighted base for all mothers	1537	694	296	199	995	3737
Unweighted base for partnered mothers	1338	576	256	142	720	3041
Unweighted base for lone mothers	199	118	40	57	275	696

Table C9.5 Influences that helped mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Influences that helped mothers' decision to go out to work	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A-level and above %	GCSE grade A-C/ O-Level and equivalent %	Lower/ no academic qualifications %	Total %
All mothers				
I need the money	66	71	67	68
I like to have my own money/ the extra money	48	50	44	48
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	32	20	12	25
I enjoy working	73	64	63	68
I want to get out of the house	29	33	35	31
I would feel useless without a job	24	25	25	25
My career would suffer if I took a break	26	5	6	16
I can work flexi-time	26	20	15	22
I don't have to work during school holidays	20	18	19	19
I can work from home some of the time	15	7	7	11
I can work from home most/ all of the time	7	5	4	6
Other	2	2	2	2
None of these	1	1	1	1
Partnered mothers				
Partner can work from home some of the time	6	2	3	4
Partner can work flexi-time	5	2	3	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	3	1	0	2
Partner can work from home most/ all of the time	3	1	2	2
Weighted base for all mothers	*1908*	*1154*	*765*	*3955*
Weighted base for partnered mothers	*1557*	*909*	*526*	*3088*
Unweighted base for all mothers	*1834*	*1102*	*665*	*3718*
Unweighted base for partnered mothers	*1561*	*896*	*471*	*3026*

Table C9.6 Influences that helped mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' NS-SEC classification

Base: Mothers in paid employment

	Mothers' NS-SEC classification					
Influences that helped mothers' decision to go out to work	Managerial and professional %	Intermediate %	Small employers and own account workers %	Lower supervisory and technical %	Semi-routine and routine %	Total %
All mothers						
I need the money	71	68	60	74	65	68
I like to have my own money/ the extra money	48	47	50	45	48	48
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	35	23	13	12	15	25
I enjoy working	73	61	62	69	67	68
I want to get out of the house	27	33	19	44	36	31
I would feel useless without a job	24	23	27	23	27	25
My career would suffer if I took a break	31	8	12	7	3	16
I can work flexi-time	26	21	40	16	13	22
I don't have to work during school holidays	16	13	15	16	30	19
I can work from home some of the time	17	6	22	6	2	11
I can work from home most/ all of the time	5	5	32	1	1	6
Other	2	2	1	1	2	2
None of these	1	+	+	0	1	1
Partnered mothers						
Partner can work from home some of the time	7	3	5	3	2	4
Partner can work flexi-time	5	2	5	3	2	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	3	1	1	2	1	2
Partner can work from home most/ all of the time	2	1	5	+	1	2
Weighted base for all mothers	*1611*	*702*	*297*	*231*	*1096*	*3955*
Weighted base for partnered mothers	*1345*	*568*	*246*	*157*	*761*	*3088*
Unweighted base for all mothers	*1528*	*693*	*295*	*197*	*990*	*3718*
Unweighted base for partnered mothers	*1330*	*575*	*255*	*140*	*717*	*3026*

Table C9.7 Views on ideal working arrangements, by mothers' highest qualification level

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Views on ideal working arrangements	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A-level and above %	GSCE grade A-C/ O-Level and equivalent %	Lower/ no academic qualifications %	Total[114] %
If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home				
Agree strongly	17	21	21	19
Agree	18	20	19	19
Neither agree nor disagree	14	17	14	15
Disagree	41	34	35	38
Disagree strongly	10	8	11	10
If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children				
Agree strongly	26	23	20	24
Agree	33	32	31	33
Neither agree nor disagree	12	13	14	13
Disagree	26	28	26	26
Disagree strongly	3	4	9	5
If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours				
Agree strongly	2	3	5	3
Agree	11	16	22	15
Neither agree nor disagree	11	13	12	12
Disagree	52	51	45	50
Disagree strongly	23	17	16	20
Weighted base	*1908*	*1154*	*767*	*3956*
Unweighted base	*1834*	*1102*	*666*	*3719*

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[114] Total includes mothers who reported 'other ' academic qualifications

Base: Mothers in paid employment

Views on ideal working arrangements	Mothers' NS-SEC classification					
	Managerial and professional occupations %	Intermediate occupations %	Small employers and own account workers %	Lower supervisory and technical occupations %	Semi-routine and routine occupations %	Total %
If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home						
Agree strongly	17	21	22	19	19	19
Agree	18	20	18	21	18	19
Neither agree nor disagree	13	17	20	19	15	15
Disagree	40	35	30	28	39	38
Disagree strongly	11	7	10	12	8	10
If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children						
Agree strongly	28	23	23	25	19	24
Agree	33	35	32	35	30	33
Neither agree nor disagree	10	13	20	13	14	13
Disagree	25	25	21	19	32	26
Disagree strongly	4	4	4	8	6	5
If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours						
Agree strongly	2	3	5	4	5	3
Agree	9	13	15	22	23	15
Neither agree nor disagree	9	13	16	14	14	12
Disagree	55	52	47	46	43	50
Disagree strongly	26	19	18	14	14	20
Weighted base	1611	702	297	231	1096	3956
Unweighted base	1528	693	295	197	990	3719

Table C9.9 Childcare-related reasons for not working, by mothers' highest qualification

Base: Mothers not in paid employment excluding those on maternity leave and long-term sick/ disabled

	Mothers' highest qualification			
Childcare-related reasons for not working	A-level and above %	GCSE grade A-C/ O-Level and equivalent %	Lower/ no academic qualifications %	Total %
I want to stay with my child(ren)	51	48	43	47
Child(ren) too young	24	32	29	28
Lack of free/ cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	15	16	18	17
Child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	18	15	10	14
Child(ren) has/ have a long term illness/ disability/ special needs and need a lot of attention	5	12	12	10
Lack of affordable good quality childcare	8	11	9	9
Lack of childcare at suitable times	5	7	7	6
Lack of good quality childcare	4	4	5	4
Lack of reliable childcare	2	5	4	4
Lack of childcare in the local area	2	3	2	2
Other reasons	4	3	4	3
None of these	24	19	22	21
Weighted base	*525*	*495*	*822*	*1893*
Unweighted base	*594*	*584*	*942*	*2175*

Table C9.10 Reasons for not working, by mothers' highest qualification

Base: Mothers not in paid employment

Reasons for not working	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A-level and above %	GCSE grade A-C/ O-Level and equivalent %	Lower/ no academic qualifications %	Total %
All mothers				
Would not earn enough to make working worthwhile	22	29	24	25
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	21	25	23	23
Not very well-qualified	2	12	22	14
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up child(ren)	20	13	10	13
On maternity leave	9	10	12	11
Enough money	19	10	3	10
Lack of job opportunities	6	8	14	10
Caring for disabled person	5	11	12	10
Studying/ training	14	7	7	9
Would lose benefits	3	9	11	8
Been out of work for too long	4	7	8	6
Having a job is not very important to me	6	5	5	5
Cannot work unsocial hours/ at weekends	5	4	3	4
Illness or disability	5	6	3	4
I am ill (temporary illness)	+	1	+	1
Retired	+	0	+	+
Starting work soon	+	0	+	+
Other reasons	7	6	7	7
None of these	12	12	12	12
Partnered mothers				
Spouse/ partner's job too demanding	17	12	11	14
Weighted bases for all mothers	*614*	*681*	*966*	*2219*
Weighted bases for partnered mothers	*409*	*297*	*305*	*1045*
Unweighted bases for all mothers	*670*	*668*	*1089*	*2490*
Unweighted bases for partnered mothers	*479*	*350*	*395*	*1263*