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Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2010

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Executive Summary

This report provides the main findings of the 2010 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and carried out by Ipsos MORI. The study has two key objectives. The first is to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use of childcare and early years provision, and their views and experiences. The second is to continue the time series – which has now been running for over ten years – on issues covered throughout the survey series. With respect to both of these aims, the study aims to provide information to help monitor the progress of policies in the area of childcare and early years education.

Since the Coalition Government was formed in 2010 there have been a number of other policy initiatives, which are described in the policy document *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years* (DfE 2011). Addressing the recommendations of three independent policy reviews for Government¹, the document outlines plans to reform the Early Years Foundation Stage; retain a national network of Sure Start Children's Centres and consult on a new core purpose; extend free early education to 40 per cent of two-year-olds; revise statutory guidance to increase the flexibility of free early education for three- and four-year-olds; and promote quality and diversity across the early education and childcare sector.

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.

Key Findings

- In 2010 nearly four-fifths (78%) of all families in England with children aged under 15 had used some form of childcare; this equated to 4,154,000 families or 5,725,000 children. Sixty-three per cent had used formal childcare and/or early years provision and 38 per cent had used informal childcare.
- An increase in the use of formal childcare was recorded between 2009 and 2010 (55% to 63%), however, this was largely attributed to alterations to the 2010 questionnaire that were made to capture use of breakfast and after-school clubs/activities separately; in 2009 they were conflated. No change in the level of formal childcare use is shown between 2009 and 2010 when excluding the use of breakfast and after-school clubs/activities from analyses.
- There was a small but significant decrease in use of informal childcare (41% to 38%). No significant change in level of use occurred for any other informal or formal provider type.
- Significant differences in levels of formal childcare use were found when looking at certain characteristics (and remained significant when analysed alongside a range of other factors in regression analysis):

¹ HM Government (2010) *Preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances by Frank Field*. Cabinet Office: London.
HM Government (2011) *Early Intervention: The Next Steps and Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings*. Two Independent Reports by Graham Allen MP. Cabinet Office: London.
Department for Education (2011) *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning. An Independent Report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty's Government by Dame Clare Tickell*. Department for Education: London.

- Age: receipt of formal childcare was most common among three- and four-year-olds (84%) and receipt of informal care was most common among those aged two years or under (33%)
 - Family circumstances: children in couple families, working families and higher income families were all more likely to receive formal childcare than lone parents, workless families or low-income families.
- Take-up of formal childcare also differed significantly by other characteristics (ethnicity, region, deprivation, and rurality) but these were not significant when analysed alongside other factors in regression analysis.
 - Children with special educational needs and disabilities were as likely to receive formal and informal childcare as those without.
 - Reported take-up of free early education for three- and four-year-olds (85%) did not significantly change between 2009 and 2010. Statistics from DfE censuses of providers show that receipt of 'some free early education' as higher (95% for both 2009 and 2010).
 - The vast majority (93%) of parents using the entitlement were fairly or very satisfied with the number of free hours they received.
 - Median amounts paid for formal childcare varied by provider type (£20 per week overall). Parents paid the most in London (£31 per week) and the least in the North East and South West (both £15 per week). Overall parents living in the most deprived areas paid significantly less.
 - A considerable minority (25%) said it was difficult or very difficult to pay for childcare (mainly lone mothers and workless families) but just over half thought it was easy or very easy to pay (51%).
 - Information about formal childcare was mostly accessed via friends and relatives (46%) followed by school (36%). Relatively few parents accessed government, local government or other local sources of information (for example 7% accessed information from Family information services).
 - Parents' perceptions of childcare availability were mixed with 44 per cent saying that there were the right amount of places and 32 per cent saying there were not enough (no change from 2009).
 - Perceptions of childcare quality were positive (61% saying 'fairly good' or 'very good') (no change from 2009).
 - Less than half (40%) of parents with disabled children thought that local childcare providers could cater for their child's illness or disability.
 - Three-quarters (75%) of parents with children aged two to five years old had heard of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and over half of parents knew something about it (56%); one-quarter of parents were not aware of it.
 - Eighty-six per cent of parents with children aged two to five years looked at books or read stories with their children 'every day or most days'.
 - The proportion of families using school holiday childcare reduced between 2009 and 2010 (51% to 45%), mainly because of a reduction in use of informal childcare (37%

to 30%). Overall, around one in five (21%) found it difficult or very difficult to arrange childcare during school holidays.

- Just over half of non-working mothers said that they would prefer to work if they could arrange reliable, convenient, affordable, and good quality childcare.

Methodology

Just over 6,700 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study between September 2010 and April 2011. The sample of parents was ultimately derived using Child Benefit records which given its almost universal take-up, provide a comprehensive sampling frame for families with dependent children.

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

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted around three-quarters of an hour, as in 2009. Following the model of previous surveys in the series, the study used a very inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that their child was not with resident parents, or their current partner, or at school. Hence this covered informal childcare, such as grandparents, as well as formal childcare and early years education. For school-age children, the definition of childcare covered time they spent attending before- and after-school activities.

Among all those selected and eligible for interview (in other words excluding families who did not have a child aged under 15) 57 per cent of parents were interviewed, an increase in the response rate from 52 per cent in 2009. For further details on response see Appendix B.

Use of childcare and early years provision

Changes to the way questions about the use of childcare providers were asked in 2010 mean that comparisons with previous years' estimates of childcare use will not, strictly speaking, be valid, as the additional prompts introduced would be expected to result in higher proportions of families reporting that they used childcare. Bearing these changes in mind, the 2010 results suggest that the use of informal childcare by families in England has fallen slightly since 2009. Families' use of formal childcare appears to have increased, but analysis suggests this was driven by a questionnaire change. When the effect of this change (affecting measures relating to breakfast and after-school clubs) was excluded from analysis, there was no significant change in families' use of formal childcare between 2009 and 2010. The patterns of childcare use by types of provider appear similar, with after-school clubs being the most common type of formal childcare provision overall, and grandparents the most common informal provision.

Use of childcare, and of different types of providers, varied by age. Overall use was highest among three- and four-year-olds, as was use of formal childcare, as this age group were entitled to free early years education. Receipt of informal childcare was highest among children aged under two who are not currently eligible for free places. Twelve- to fourteen-year-olds were least likely to receive childcare, reflecting the relatively greater level of independence among this age group. Pre-school age children tended to use a variety of formal providers, while for school-age children formal provision tended to centre around after-school clubs. Turning to informal providers, use of grandparents decreased as children got older, while use of ex-partners and older siblings increased with the age of the child.

Children from South Asian backgrounds were less likely than those from a White British background to be in formal childcare, and these differences held even after controlling for other individual characteristics, such as the age of the child, and family characteristics (e.g. working status and family income). Children from working families, and from higher income families, were more likely to be in receipt of formal childcare than those from non-working, and lower income families. These relationships held when controlling for other factors.

Turning to informal childcare, after controlling for other factors, family work status, number of children, age and ethnicity of child were independently associated with families' use of formal childcare.

Children who received childcare spent an average of 8.3 hours there (median figure). This is significantly lower than the 2009 figure of 10.8 hours. The median amount of free entitlement hours received by three- and four-year-olds was 15 hours.

Pre-school children spent much longer in childcare than school-age children, reflecting the fact that school-age children spent most of their day at school whereas early years education is counted here as formal childcare provision. Looking at the time children spent at different providers, children in reception class spent on average 31.3 hours per week there, while children attending after-school clubs did so for an average of 2.2 hours per week. Turning to informal provision, children looked after by their non-resident parent spent 15.0 hours with them, those looked after by their grandparent(s) spent 5.7 hours with them, while children spent on average 3.0 hours being looked after by an older sibling, or by a friend or neighbour.

Family type and work status, and age of child were the main factors independently associated with above average use of formal childcare, although family annual income was also a factor. Family type and work status and age of child were the main factors independently associated with above average use of informal childcare.

Reported receipt of free early education for three- and four-year-olds (85%) did not significantly change between 2009 and 2010. (This is in keeping with the trend demonstrated by the DfE Early Years Census and Schools Census statistics which show that receipt of 'some free early education' was stable at 95% during 2009 and 2010.) There was no significant variation by family annual income or family work status. Awareness of the free entitlement to early education was relatively low among parents who were not using it (52%, similar to 2009).

Packages of childcare for pre-school children

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types or 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: formal centre-based childcare only (30%) (e.g. nursery classes, day nurseries); a combination of formal centre-based and informal childcare (18%); or informal childcare only (e.g. ex-partners or grandparents) (13%). Twenty-four per cent of pre-school children were not in childcare at all.

Use of centre-based provision was much more common among three- and four-year-olds than among those aged under two, reflecting the high take-up of their entitlement to free early years provision, and, possibly, parents' inclination to look after young toddlers themselves. Accordingly, younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to be receiving informal childcare only (21% and 3% respectively).

Pre-school children spent an average of 6.0 hours per day in childcare, and 20.5 hours per week. Older pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare on average than younger ones (23.0 and 18.2 hours respectively).

Children receiving a combination of formal centre-based childcare and informal childcare (18% of all pre-school children) were clearly the heaviest users of childcare. While the great majority of pre-school children receiving only one type of childcare attended just one provider, almost one-quarter (24%) of those receiving a combination of childcare attended three or more (the equivalent figure for all children aged 0 to 14 was 1%). 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 both parents in work (or their lone parent), and to attend childcare for economic reasons, illustrating that this heavy childcare use was commonly designed to cover parents' working hours.

Families with one pre-school child only were more likely not to use childcare (17%) than families with two pre-school children only (11%) and families with three or more pre-school children only (13%). Families with three or more pre-school children were significantly more likely to use one of the three main mixed packages (56% used either formal centre-based or informal childcare, formal centre-based only or parental childcare only, or formal centre-based/informal childcare or informal childcare only).

Fifty-nine per cent of pre-school children who attended childcare were doing so for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 60 per cent for child-related reasons (e.g. educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 23 per cent for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise, or look after children). While those aged under two were more likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (68% compared to 52% of three- and four-year-olds) and parental reasons (26% compared to 21%), three- and four-year-olds were more likely to attend for child-related reasons (75% compared to 42%). Across all pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal centre-based childcare, and parental time reasons with informal childcare.

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. Thirty-five per cent of school-age children were not in childcare. Twenty-four per cent were in formal out-of-school childcare only and 14 per cent in informal childcare only. Thirteen per cent were in both formal out-of-school and informal childcare. No other particular type or package of childcare (e.g. centre-based or a leisure-based activity such as a football club) was received by more than two per cent of school-age children.

The likelihood that school-age children were receiving informal childcare only varied across each of the three age groups. Children aged 8 to 11 were significantly more likely than both older and younger school-age children to attend formal out-of-school childcare, either on its own or in combination with informal childcare. Five- to seven-year-olds received 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).

Childcare was received from a single provider for almost two in three (65%) school-age children attending formal out-of-school childcare only; this was also the case for four in five (80%) school-age children receiving informal childcare only. In contrast, three or more providers were attended by 44 per cent of those receiving a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare.

As we would expect given that almost all of these children were in full-time school, the average number of hours of childcare received per day was low – just 2.0 hours. School-age children spent an average of 5.0 hours in childcare per week. Those in formal out-of-school childcare only attended for far fewer hours per week than those in informal childcare only and

those in a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare (2.5 hours on average, compared to 6.0 and 7.0 hours respectively). Those receiving a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare tended to attend some childcare on a greater number of days of the week.

Looking at packages of childcare at the family level among families with school-age children only, 28 per cent used no childcare at all, 35 per cent used one of the two most common packages of childcare for every child (informal childcare or formal out-of-school childcare only), and 37 per cent used other arrangements. Turning to packages of childcare among families with both pre-school and school-age children, there was much more variation in arrangements. Only 12 per cent did not use childcare at all, and only six per cent used the one of the two most common packages for all their children. Eighty-two per cent used some other arrangement.

Forty-three 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); 59 per cent for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 15 per cent for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). Children in formal out-of-school childcare only were less likely than the other groups to be attending a provider for economic reasons, reflecting the fact that these children received only a small amount of childcare each week, and were most commonly there for child-related reasons. Children in a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare were the most likely to be attending a provider for economic reasons, indicating that, even once they start full-time school, a package of childcare can still be required to cover parents' working hours. For school-age children, receipt of formal out-of-school childcare was mostly associated with child-related reasons and informal childcare was most likely to be associated with reasons relating to parental time.

Paying for childcare

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 were often less clear about the details of the financial help they received from others or through tax credits².

Overall, 57 per cent of families who used childcare in the reference week reported that they had paid for some or all of that childcare. More families paid formal providers (63%) than informal providers, although a small proportion of families who used relatives and friends did pay them (6%). There were significant decreases in the proportions of parents paying for nursery schools between 2009 and 2010 (from 68% to 56%) and playgroups (from 68% to 60%).

There were wide variations in the overall median weekly amount paid by families depending on their circumstances and which providers they used. The median weekly amount paid to providers was £20. 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 ages of the children and different patterns of childcare use. Families paid the most for day nurseries that offered childcare for a full day³.

Between 2008 and 2010 there were significant increases in the mean weekly payment for nursery schools (£43 to £70), playgroups (£14 to £28), childminders (£59 to £79), and

² For a full description of these issues see section 5.2 in Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2008* by Speight et al.

³ The figure for nanny/ au-pair was actually higher but the low base makes it less reliable.

babysitters (£21 to £39). Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 show that most providers (88%) said in 2010 that they had increased their fees in the previous two years.

Sixty-nine per cent of families received Child Tax Credit, 41 per cent on its own and 28 per cent with Working Tax Credit (WTC)⁴. Families receiving WTC and Child Tax Credit received a median of £117 per week, whereas families receiving Child Tax Credit only received a median of £41 per week.

Lone parents and low income families were most likely to say they struggled with their childcare costs. There has been a significant increase in the mean weekly payment made by families with annual incomes of under £10,000 between 2008 (£15) and 2010 (£26). However, there were no other significant changes in the mean weekly payment by income group between 2008 and 2010, and no significant changes between 2009 and 2010.

Overall, 25 per cent of families paying for childcare found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs (no significant change from 2009). However, half said it was easy or very easy to pay for their childcare.

Factors affecting decisions about childcare

Seventy-one per cent of parents have used one or more sources of information about childcare in the last year (a significant increase from 63% in 2009). Over one-quarter (29%) accessed no information at all.

The most popular sources were those which parents were likely to encounter regularly such as friends or relatives (word of mouth) and school (39% and 33% respectively). A significant minority of parents used a variety of other information sources including Sure Start/Children's Centres (11%), local advertising (8%), local authorities (7%), local libraries (7%) and health visitors (6%). Family information services (FIS) were familiar to 32 per cent of parents, and 13 per cent had previously used them.

The utilisation of particular information sources was significantly influenced by the type of childcare provider parents used. Parents with a formal childcare provider were much more likely to have accessed information than those using no childcare (78% compared to 53%). Consequently, groups with lower rates of formal childcare usage were less likely to access information about childcare. Low income families were less likely than higher income families to get information from word of mouth and schools but were more likely to access information from Sure Start/Children's Centres and the Jobcentre Plus. Thirty-eight per cent of parents stated that they have too little information about childcare, though this was also affected by family characteristics. After controlling for childcare use and other factors, families less likely to say they had the right amount of information about childcare were those using informal childcare only or no childcare, those with an annual income of under £20,000, those with school-age children only, and those living in urban areas.

As might be expected, groups with lower formal childcare usage were also more likely to report that they were unsure about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare in the local area. Just under one-third of parents believed that there were not enough childcare places in their local area (32%) and a similar proportion believed that childcare affordability was fairly or very poor (33%). Parents were more positive about the quality of local childcare with just 11 per cent reporting it as very or fairly poor (61% perceived it to be good).

⁴ 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 low income.

Since 2004, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents saying the number of childcare places is about right (44% compared to 40% in 2004), with a decline in the proportion of parents reporting there are not enough childcare places (32% compared with 40% in 2004). There has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents who were unsure (23% compared to 19% in 2004). The proportion of families assessing the affordability of childcare as good has significantly increased since 2004 (from 35% to 38%) with a significant decrease in those rating it as poor (from 37% to 33%). Ratings of the quality of childcare have not significantly changed since 2004.

There has been no significant change in opinion about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare since 2009. There was no significant variation in perceptions of availability or affordability between families with one or more parents working atypical hours, other working families and other workless families. Multivariate regressions showed that whether a selected child had SEN was most strongly associated with parents feeling that there was not the right amount of childcare available in their local area, or that it was not good quality.

We also explored why parents did not use particular types of childcare. The majority of parents of 5- to 14-year-olds who did not use a breakfast or after-school club in the reference week had this service available to them but chose not to use it. The most common reasons provided for not using both before-school and after-school clubs were that parents preferred to look after their children at home (31%), their children did not wish to attend (25%), and because parents had no need to be away from their child (24%). Eleven per cent of parents suggested that they did not use before-school clubs specifically because it was too expensive. Therefore, for the majority of parents, not using such clubs seems to be due to choice rather than any particular constraint.

Just under one-quarter (22%) of parents of children aged 0 to 14 reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education in the last year. For the majority of parents, the main reason for this was because they preferred to look after their children themselves (75%). Having children old enough to look after themselves and rarely being away from their children were also reasons suggested by a significant minority of parents (15% and 13% respectively). A further ten per cent stated that they had been unable to afford childcare in the last year. Again, this suggests not using childcare was predominantly down to choice rather than a particular constraint.

Looking at informal childcare, 73 per cent of parents were able to use it as a one-off, and 47 per cent on a regular basis, with grandparents and other relatives the providers of informal childcare most likely to be available for parents to turn to. This suggests that the majority of parents who did not normally use childcare could find alternative forms of childcare elsewhere, at least on an infrequent basis. When parents who had not used formal childcare in the last year were asked if any factors would encourage them to start using it, 11 per cent reported that affordability was a factor. However, for the majority there were no relevant factors with 81 per cent reporting that they did not need to use childcare.

More than half of parents with children aged under two had not used nursery education in the reference week (53%), and for the majority this was again down to personal choice. The most common reasons for not using nursery education were that parents felt their child was too young (57%) and because of personal preference (30%). The most frequently cited constraints preventing nursery education from being used were affordability (17%) and availability of places (9%).

Six per cent of parents had a child with a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability, and four per cent reported that their child's health condition affected the child's

daily life. Whilst these children were as likely as other children to use childcare in the reference week, a significant proportion of parents felt that childcare in their local area did not meet their needs. Under half (40%) of parents believed there were local childcare providers that could cater for their child's illness or disability (no significant change from 2009), and 34 per cent felt that providers were available at times to fit around their other daily commitments. In addition, 40 per cent of parents reported that they found it difficult to find out about suitable childcare providers in their local area. However, 52 per cent found it easy to travel to the nearest childcare provider that could accommodate their child.

For the first time in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series, respondents were asked about their perspectives on the flexibility of childcare. Only a minority (22%) reported they had problems finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs. A multivariate regression showed that families with pre-school children or both pre-school and school-age children, and families where the selected child had a SEN, were most strongly associated with problems finding flexible childcare.

A majority felt that they could fit childcare around their working hours (51%). Parents living in London were significantly less likely than parents from other regions to agree childcare was flexible enough to meet their needs.

The most commonly cited periods where parents feel childcare provision could be improved were the summer holidays (64%), half-term holidays (33%), Easter holidays and weekdays during term time (31%). Furthermore, family annual income, the region where parents reside, and rurality, had a significant influence on the times when parents required improved childcare.

Forty per cent of parents did not require any changes to their childcare provision to make it more suited to their needs. However, the most frequently cited changes were more affordable childcare (32%), childcare available during school holidays (18%) and more information about what childcare is available (17%). Parents in low income families (annual income under £10,000) were more likely to be concerned with the cost and accessibility of childcare than those in high income families (£45,000 or more) for whom the times that childcare was available and flexibility were more significant concerns. In addition, parents in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to mention several changes and parents from London and the South East were more likely than those from other regions to cite several ways in which childcare could be better suited to their needs.

The majority of parents were happy with their current childcare arrangements and did not wish to use, or increase their use of, a particular provider (59%), though after-school clubs and holiday clubs or schemes were the most frequently cited providers that parents would like to use more of (19% and 15% respectively). Again, parents' views were influenced by their household income and those in rural areas were significantly more likely to report that they were happy with their childcare arrangements than those in urban areas (64% compared to 58%).

Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

Parents using formal childcare were likely to choose a childcare provider because of the provider's reputation and convenience. This was the case for parents of both pre-school and school-age children. However, parents were also significantly more likely to select a

particular provider depending on the age of their child. Parents of three- and four-year-olds were more likely to choose providers offering educational opportunities (48%), and whilst convenience was important for parents of five- to seven-year-olds (44%) it was less so for twelve- to fourteen-year-olds (22%). Twenty per cent of parents of 12- to 14-year-olds stated that they selected a provider in accordance with their child's preference, the highest proportion selecting this reason across all age groups.

Some reasons for choosing a provider were more relevant to particular types of childcare providers than others. Regardless of the age of the child, parents who used a childminder as their main formal provider were likely to say this was because of concerns with the nature of care given and trust. Parents using nurseries, day nurseries and playgroups primarily considered the reputation of the provider. Finally, breakfast clubs were chosen by parents of school-age children because they were convenient (62%), whilst it appeared to be the social aspect of after-school clubs that made them attractive (37%).

The vast majority of parents agreed that their provider helped their child to develop academic skills, for example enjoying books and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes. Whilst all formal group providers ranked highly in this regard, as with the 2009 survey, parents felt that reception classes were the most likely to develop all of the skills listed, and childminders the least. More than half of parents of children aged three to four (57%) reported that their child brought home books to read at least once a week. There was significant variation by provider type, parents who chose reception classes as their main provider were least likely to say their child never brought books home. Over three-quarters of parents reported that their main formal provider encouraged playing with other children (84%), good behaviour (80%), and listening to others and adults (77%). Around sixty per cent of parents said their provider encouraged expressing thoughts and feelings (62%) and tackling everyday tasks (59%).

The most common method by which parents received feedback from their formal providers was talking to staff (85%) and seeing pictures, drawings and other things their child brought home (51%). Over half of parents of school-age children received verbal feedback (79%) but less than half received any other form of feedback. Parents of pre-school children were more likely to receive feedback in a variety of ways, with over half reporting that they received feedback in each of five different ways. Most parents received feedback about how their child was getting on at least weekly, with 38 per cent receiving feedback each day or most days.

Parents engaged in a number of home learning activities with their child. The most frequently undertaken were looking at books and reciting nursery rhymes, which 86 per cent and 73 per cent of parents did each day or most days. Painting and drawing and using a computer happened less often, as did visiting the library with 40 per cent of parents saying they had never done this. More than two-thirds of parents (65%) believed they spent the right amount of time on learning and play activities though one-third (35%) would also like to do more. The main sources of information about activities used by parents were friends and relatives (61%) and other parents (44%), though media sources also rated highly with 38 per cent of parents taking ideas from children's TV programmes and 32 per cent using the internet. Around one in five (21%) used Sure Start/Children's Centres, and one in eight (12%) used Children's/Family Information Services as sources of information.

Three-quarters of parents of two- to five-year-olds had heard of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), over half claimed to know something about it, but only one in five claimed to know a lot. Most of those aware of EYFS had spoken to their provider about EYFS or received information about EYFS from their provider.

The majority (57%) indicated that there was no availability of additional services at formal group pre-school providers. In addition, take-up of services at providers where other services were available was low. When parents were asked about which additional services they

would use if available, courses or training (18%), health services (17%) and advice or support (13%) were the most frequently requested. However, parents may have overestimated how much they would use a service if it was available to them.

Use of childcare during school holidays

Less than half of families with school-age children used childcare in the school holidays (45%, compared to 77% in term-time) and they were more likely to use informal providers than formal providers (30% and 22% respectively). This pattern is consistent with the findings from 2008 and 2009, although usage of holiday childcare has decreased since 2009 when 51 per cent of parents used it.

There was a significant decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare in 2010 compared with 2009, but no significant change in the use of formal holiday childcare. Significant decreases in the use of grandparents and older siblings explain the overall decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare.

There were some notable differences between families' use of childcare in term-time and the school holidays. Just under half (49%) of families using childcare during term-time used no childcare during the school holidays; and where families used no childcare during term-time 23 per cent used some holiday childcare. Holiday clubs and schemes were the most common form of formal childcare in the holidays (8%). In terms of informal carers, grandparents played an equally important role in providing childcare during school holidays (16% of children received childcare from grandparents in the holidays) as they did during term-time (15%). This pattern is consistent with the 2009 results.

Use of formal childcare during school holidays varied by children's characteristics and their families' circumstances. Those less likely to receive formal holiday childcare included: older school-age children (in other words those aged 12 to 14), children from Asian and Black African backgrounds, children from non-working families, children in lower income families and children living in deprived areas. These differences are consistent with those reported in the 2009.

Sixty-three per cent of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons (such as working longer hours), 59 per cent of parents for reasons relating to child development or enjoyment, and 14 per cent of parents for reasons relating to how the holiday provision gave them time to do other things (e.g. shop, attend appointments). Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare varied depending on the types of providers used. For example, child development and enjoyment tended to be more important when using holiday schemes and after-school clubs, while economic reasons played a more important role where parents used childminders. All types of informal provider (except ex-partner) were primarily used for economic reasons. In families where ex-partners provided childcare this was mainly for children's enjoyment and/or development.

Most parents were paying formal providers for holiday childcare (between 57% and 86% when looking at different provider types), while few were paying for informal holiday childcare (between 4% and 8%). This is consistent with the findings on paying for childcare during term-time. During holidays parents spent the most money on childminders (a median of £25 per day) and least for after-school clubs (a median of £10.47 per day). Holiday clubs cost on average £15.00 per day.

Just under two-thirds of parents of school-age children who worked in school holidays thought that childcare was easy or very easy to arrange. However 21 per cent 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. Over half (55%) thought it would not be easy to find alternative providers if their normal providers were not available.

Parents views on the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday childcare were mixed – over half (56%) of parents said that they were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available. However, 29 per cent reported difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays, 21 per cent reported having problems finding holiday childcare that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 15 per cent were unhappy with the quality of childcare available. Lack of flexibility and the affordability of available holiday provision caused more difficulties for lone parents than couple parents. A substantial minority of parents also indicated that the availability and affordability of holiday childcare impacted on their capacity to work more hours.

Lastly, focusing on families who did not use holiday childcare, 43 per cent said they would be 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 (53%) said that their providers were not available during the holidays. These figures suggest that there was a considerable level of unmet demand for holiday provision amongst those families who used formal childcare during term-time but not in the holidays. This might be met though term-time formal providers remaining open for business during the holiday periods.

Mothers, childcare and work

The level of maternal employment has been broadly stable over the last few years, following increases around the turn of the century with the expansion of free childcare and introduction of tax credits. This is despite a small increase in unemployment among women aged 16-64 recorded by the LFS between the 2009 and 2010 surveys.

Atypical working (defined as usually working before 8am, after 6pm or at the weekends) was not particularly common, with 16 per cent usually working outside these usual office hours, most commonly in the evenings or on Saturdays. For a substantial minority of these mothers (20% to 27%), working atypical patterns caused difficulties with their childcare arrangements.

Among families as a whole, the most common pattern for couples was to have one partner in full-time employment, with the other in part-time employment (31%). Almost half of lone parents (49%) were workless, compared with seven per cent of couples. Around half of working families had a parent usually working atypical hours (51%). Just under one-third (31%) of lone parents usually worked atypical hours at least sometimes.

Finding a job that enabled mothers to combine work with childcare remained the most common reason for entering work among those mothers who had entered employment in the past two years, and a job opportunity or promotion was the factor most likely to have prompted a move from part-time to full-time work.

A range of factors enabled mothers to be in work, with having reliable childcare and the availability of informal childcare the most commonly reported factors among couples and lone parent families alike. Assistance with childcare costs through tax credits was important for a significant minority of lone mothers (17%).

Financial necessity, and an enjoyment of work, were the most commonly reported influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, and financial necessity was a more important influence for lone mothers than for those in a couple. The availability of family-friendly work appeared to be less of an influence. Lone mothers were also more likely than partnered mothers to report that they would feel useless without a job.

Current views on ideal working arrangements were broadly similar to those from 2009, with a substantial minority of working mothers reporting they would like to give up work to become full-time carers if they could afford it (38%), a slim majority reporting they would like to reduce their working hours to spend more time with their children if they could afford it (55%), and a substantial minority reporting that they would like to increase their working hours if they could secure reliable, affordable, good quality childcare (23%). Lone mothers, and those in routine and semi-routine occupations, were most likely to report that they would like to increase their hours.

Availability of reliable childcare, childcare provision from relatives, and children being at school were all important factors that allowed mothers to study.

Just over half of non-working mothers reported that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange reliable, convenient, affordable, good quality childcare.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims of the study

This report provides the main findings of the 2010 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. The survey was funded by the Department for Education (DfE), and carried out by Ipsos MORI. The study has two key objectives. The first is to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use of childcare and early years provision, and their views and experiences. The second is to continue the time series statistics – which have now been running for over ten years – on issues covered throughout the survey series. With respect to both of these aims, the study aims to provide information to help monitor the progress of policies in the area of childcare and early years education.

1.2 Policy background

Since the 1998 National Childcare Strategy (DfEE, 1998) there have been significant developments which have tended to increase the availability of childcare services, improve the quality of care and make services more affordable to parents. The strategy had the dual objectives of improving children's outcomes through the provision of high quality early education, and supporting parents to enter paid employment, and thereby reduce child poverty. A further ten-year strategy was published in 2004 (HM Treasury 2004). The objectives of this strategy were to create a sustainable framework for childcare provision and support to balance work and family life, with the aim of improving the choice, availability, quality and affordability of childcare. An update was published in 2009 (HM Government 2009).

Since the Coalition Government was formed in 2010 there have been a number of other policy initiatives, which are described in the policy document *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years* (DfE 2011). Addressing the recommendations of three independent policy reviews for Government⁵, the document outlines plans to reform the Early Years Foundation Stage; retain a national network of Sure Start Children's Centres and consult on a new core purpose; extend free early education to 40 per cent of two-year-olds; revise statutory guidance to increase the flexibility of free early education for three- and four-year-olds; and promote quality and diversity across the early education and childcare sector.

The childcare system in England is a mixed economy, with services provided by the public, private, voluntary and independent sectors. It is a well-regulated sector and most providers must register with and be inspected by the regulator Ofsted, although some providers do not have to register (e.g. those caring for children over the age of eight only, and those providing care in the home of the child).

The legislative framework is provided through the Childcare Act 2006 which enacted many of the provisions of the 2004 Strategy. Local authorities play a key role in the provision of childcare through ensuring there is sufficient provision for working families, administering free early education places, supporting the local childcare market through working with providers,

⁵ HM Government (2010) *Preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances by Frank Field*. Cabinet Office: London.
HM Government (2011) *Early Intervention: The Next Steps* and *Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings*. Two Independent Reports by Graham Allen MP. Cabinet Office: London.
Department for Education (2011) *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning. An Independent Report on the Early Years Foundation Stage to Her Majesty's Government by Dame Clare Tickell*. Department for Education: London.

and the provision of information to parents about their entitlements. Many also provide services directly and offer additional subsidies to certain groups of parents.

There is now a wide range of support for families seeking childcare. Since September 2010, when fieldwork for this survey began, all three- and four-year-old children have been entitled to 570 hours of free early education a year, accessed over a minimum of 38 weeks of the year (equating to 15 hours a week). This is largely delivered by nurseries and pre-schools, although some childminders also provide these places. New guidance in September 2010 made the offer more flexible by allowing parents to access the free hours over three days, rather than five days. During 2011 the Government consulted on allowing the offer to be taken over two days, with new guidance planned to be introduced in September 2012.

The Government is also extending free early education places to disadvantaged two-year-olds, with an aim to cover 20 per cent of the cohort by 2013 and 40 per cent by 2014 (DfE, 2012), following a number of pilots involving much smaller numbers of children. However, this policy had not been implemented during the fieldwork for the 2010 survey. At the time of writing the precise definition of disadvantage is yet to be announced, but the Government has indicated that the initial 20 per cent will be based on children who meet the criteria for free school meals (families are on out-of-work benefits or a low income), and looked-after children, with local discretion to include other children. The Government has yet to announce how the definition will change when 40 per cent of children are eligible.

Other Government support for childcare includes the means-tested childcare element of Working Tax Credit, through which parents working 16 hours or more per week can claim up to 70 per cent of their childcare costs. Between April 2006 and April 2011 the proportion of costs covered was 80 per cent, so during the fieldwork a higher level of support was available. Eligible costs are limited to £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children, figures which are unchanged since 2005. Between 2013 and 2017 Working Tax Credit, including the childcare element, will be merged with other benefits and tax credits to form a single payment called Universal Credit. The Government has announced that an additional £300 million will be invested so that families working less than 16 hours per week may also claim help with their childcare costs.

Working parents can also save up to £933 per year by using childcare vouchers to pay for their childcare. These are available from their employer in lieu of salary and are exempt from income tax and national insurance, resulting in a saving to both the employer and employee.

Children's centres are another key part of the local early years landscape. The aim of children's centres was the integration of services offering information, health, parenting support, childcare and other services for children up to the age of five. By 2010 children's centres had been established nationwide with around 3,500 centres in operation, building on early initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Nurseries and Sure Start Local Programmes (Strategy Unit 2002). Children's centres are a key part of the Government's 'early intervention' agenda, which prioritises early identification of problems and provision of support in a child's life in order to prevent problems later on. The National Evaluation of Sure Start impact study results published in November 2010 showed positive results for children and their families living in early Sure Start areas (in other words Sure Start Local Programmes) compared to children and families living in similar areas without such programmes.⁶

⁶ Department of Education (2010) *The impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on five year olds and their families by The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) Team*. Department for Education: London.

Early years research shows that high quality early years provision makes the biggest difference to children's outcomes later in life.⁷ A key study demonstrates that staff characteristics, especially qualifications and training are the key driver of high quality provision. Having trained teachers working with children in pre-school settings (for a substantial proportion of time, and most importantly as the curriculum leader) had the greatest impact on quality, and was linked specifically with better outcomes in pre-reading and social development at age five (Sylva et al). For this reason, there has been substantial investment in improving staff qualification levels. In 2006, the Early Years Professional Status was introduced, which is equivalent to the Qualified Teacher Status. Funding was also made available through the Transformation Fund (2006-2008) and the Graduate Leader Fund (since 2008) to support settings with the additional cost of recruiting and retaining graduate level staff. The Coalition Government has commissioned an independent review, led by Professor Cathy Nutbrown, to consider how best to strengthen qualifications and career pathways in the foundation years.

Childcare services for children aged up to five years (which includes the first year of school – known as reception class) must comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This framework was introduced in 2008 and specifies the ways in which children's learning and development should be supported, and a series of milestones which children can expect to reach by particular ages. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed at age five, which assesses whether the child has achieved a good level of emotional, cognitive and physical development. The EYFS also specifies requirements concerning the welfare of children and the staffing for settings. All registered early years settings are inspected by Ofsted against how well they meet the requirements of the EYFS. The framework has recently been revised following an independent review by Dame Clare Tickell which reported in March 2011. The revised framework, which preserves most of the essential features of the original but reduces the number of Early Learning Goals which children are assessed against, was published in March 2012 and will apply from September 2012.

Although much of the policy focus in relation to childcare is on children under the age of five, parents with school-age children rely on childcare to enable them to work. Services for these families are provided by schools and other providers either side of the school day and during the holidays. Local authorities have a duty to ensure that sufficient childcare is available to allow parents in their area to work or enter training.

In recent years the importance of childcare provision for disabled children of all ages has increasingly been recognised. Parents of disabled children have not always found that appropriate services are available for their children. In 2007, the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) programme announced an additional investment of £35 million to test ways of achieving better access to childcare for disabled children and young people. Ten pilot areas were then identified to work with the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) initiative, which aimed to pilot ways to improve the range and quality of childcare for families of disabled children, and better involve families in shaping childcare services. The findings of the DCATCH evaluation have been published⁸.

As well as the formal services described above, many families also use friends and family to provide informal childcare. In recent years there has been a particular focus on the needs of grandparents who provide childcare.

⁷ Department for Education and Skills (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report. A Longitudinal Study Funded by the DfES 1997-2004 by Sylva et al.* DfES Publications: Nottingham.

⁸ Department for Education (2010) *Impact evaluation of the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare Pilot (DCATCH) by Cheshire et al.* Department for Education: London.

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

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

As discussed by Smith et al, changes to the questionnaire over time mean that in many instances it is not possible to provide direct comparisons that extend to the beginning of the time series. Most of the comparisons in this report examine changes in the results between the 2009 and 2010 surveys, although statistics from earlier surveys in the series are compared where possible. Where statistically significant increases or decreases have been identified between the 2009 and 2010 survey, efforts have been made, using evidence, to explain the changes.

On occasion, statistics from the 2009 and 2010 surveys cannot be compared owing to changes in the way the questionnaire was administered and/or the data were constructed.

1.4 Overview of the study design

The sample

Just over 6,700 parents in England with children under 15 were interviewed for the study between September 2010 and April 2011. The sample of parents was ultimately derived using Child Benefit records, which given its almost universal take-up, provides a comprehensive sampling frame for families with dependent children.

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

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

Among all those selected and eligible for interview (e.g. excluding families who did not have a child aged under 15), 57 per cent of parents were interviewed, an improvement on the response rate of 52 per cent in 2009. For further details on the sample achieved see Appendix A. For further details on the response rate see Appendix B.

The interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted around three-quarters of an hour, as in 2009. The main respondent to the survey was always a parent or guardian with main or shared responsibility for childcare decisions and tended to be the mother of the children (see Appendix A for the gender breakdown of respondents). In addition, any partners at home during the interview were asked personally about their employment and other socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Where this was not possible, the main respondent was asked to provide proxy information about their partner.

The interview was similar to that in 2009 and focused on families' use of both childcare and early years provision. Because of the constraint of interview length, detailed information on the use and needs of all children in the family could not be collected (unless the child was an

only child). Rather, in families where there were two or more children, we obtained a broad picture about the childcare arrangements of all children, before asking more detailed questions about one randomly selected child (referred to as the selected child in relevant sections of the report). If the selected child had received care from more than one childcare or early years provider, we collected some information about all providers, but concentrated on their main provider.

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

The interview broadly covered the following topic areas:

For all families:

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

For one randomly selected child:

- A detailed record of child attendance in the reference week.
- Reasons for using and views of the main formal provider.

Classification details:

- Household composition.
- Parents' education and work details.
- Provider details.

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

Defining childcare

Following the 2009 survey, the study uses a very inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that the child was not with a resident parent or a resident parent's current partner, or at school. In order to remind parents to include all possible people or organisations that may have looked after their children, they were shown the following list:

Formal providers:

- Nursery school.
- Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school.

- Reception class at a primary or infants' school.
- Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs.
- Day nursery.
- Playgroup or pre-school.
- Childminder.
- Nanny or au pair.
- Baby-sitter who came to home.
- Breakfast club.
- After school club/activities.
- Holiday club/scheme.

Informal providers:

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

Other:

- Other nursery education provider.
- Other childcare provider.

In accordance with the 2009 survey, we classified providers according to the service for which they were being used by parents, for example daycare or early years education. Thus we have classified providers and referred to them in analysis according to terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than include forms of integrated provision such as Children's Centres. Reception classes were only included as childcare if it was not compulsory schooling, that is the child was aged under five (or had turned five during the current school term). Further details of the definitions of the above categories are supplied in Appendix B.

This inclusive definition of childcare means that, as in 2009, parents will have included time when their child was visiting friends or family, at a sport or leisure activity, and so on. The term **early years provision** covers both 'care' for young children and 'early years education'.

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

1.5 The report

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

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

Interpreting the results in the report

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

- The family level (e.g. proportions of families paying for childcare, parents' perceptions of childcare provision in their local areas).
- The (selected) child level (e.g. parents' views on the provision received by the selected child from their main childcare provider).

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

Weights

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

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

Bases

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

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

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

Where a base contains fewer than 50 respondents, particular care must be taken, as confidence intervals around these estimates will be very wide, and hence the results should be treated with some caution.

Percentages

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

Derivation of survey estimates

As the primary purpose of this survey was to update the findings of the 2009 survey, every effort was made to derive the survey estimates in the same way as the 2009 survey. Hence, where possible, the SPSS syntax used by Ipsos MORI to derive survey estimates was 'validated' against the 2009 dataset. This was successfully accomplished in the great majority of cases. In cases where this was not possible, the analysis presented was checked against the 2009 findings to ascertain whether there has been any surprising changes.

Statistical significance

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

Symbols in tables

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

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

1.6 Acknowledgements

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

We are also grateful to Steve Hamilton and Michael Dale and the production team at the Department for Education (DfE) for their support throughout the survey and feedback on the report.

A number of Ipsos MORI colleagues have contributed to the study and we would like to extend our thanks to: Sarah Knibbs, Ruth Lightfoot, Fay Nunney, Emma Wallace, and all the operational staff and interviewers who worked on the survey.

This survey was intended to update a similar survey conducted in 2009. We have therefore built heavily on the hard work of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen Social Research), and acknowledge the contribution their previous work has made to this report and the survey series.

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

2. Use of childcare and early years provision

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores families' use of childcare and early years provision, and how the patterns of use varied by children's characteristics (e.g. their age and ethnicity), characteristics of families (e.g. example household income), and geography (e.g. region of residence, area deprivation, and rurality). Childcare is very broadly defined as any time when the child was not with their resident parent (or their resident parent's current partner) or at school. This includes any day of the week and any time of the day and irrespective of the reason the child was away from their resident parent and includes periods where a child was 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 was 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 the 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 used formal and informal providers (sections 2.4 to 2.7);
- the amount (in hours) of childcare families used (section 2.8); and
- early years provision for three- and four-year-olds, exploring patterns of use of their parents' entitlement to free early years provision (section 2.9).

2.2 Use of childcare: trends over time

This section describes families' use of different childcare providers during a term-time reference week in 2010, 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).

Earlier studies have found that there has been little change in the take up of formal childcare since 2004, following a substantial increase over the period 1999 to 2004 due to the roll out of free early years provision to three year olds and the growth in the use of wrap-around care before and after school (Smith et al. 2010). The two most recent surveys in this series found no change in the take-up of either formal or informal childcare between 2008 and 2009.

Because of changes to the questionnaire, direct comparisons with estimates of use of childcare and early years provision made in previous surveys in the series are not possible. This is because additional prompts were used in 2010 to check whether the family had used childcare, following their initial unprompted responses (see Appendix B for further information about their impact).

Table 2.1 shows the patterns of the use of childcare provision in 2010, along with the results of the 2009 survey. In 2010 nearly four-fifths (78%) of parents with a child aged 0 to 14 had used some form of childcare during the reference term-time week, with 63 per cent having used formal childcare and early years provision, and 38 per cent having used informal childcare.

Compared to 2009 the overall use of childcare in 2010 was higher, driven by a recorded increase in the use of formal childcare (from 55% to 63%). However, this can largely be attributed to changes to the questionnaire made in order to record the use of breakfast and after-school clubs and activities separately; in 2009 they were conflated (see Appendix B for further information). Importantly, when excluding breakfast and after-school club and activity usage the levels of overall formal childcare use show no significant change between 2009 and 2010 (32 per cent was recorded for both).

Use of informal childcare was lower than in 2009 despite the additional prompts that were asked in the current questionnaire. This indicates there was a real decrease in use of this sort of provision.

The usage of specific types of childcare was broadly similar to the previous survey, with after-school clubs being the most commonly used form of childcare. Just over one-third (35%) of families had used after-school clubs in 2010, and four per cent had used breakfast clubs.⁹

The pattern of use of other types of formal provision is very similar to the 2009 survey, with reception class and day nursery being the next most commonly used types of provision. Turning to the different types of informal provision, grandparents were the most commonly used provider (24%) which is consistent with the 2009 survey.

⁹ In 2009, 27 per cent of families had used either breakfast or after-school clubs/activities on the school site and six per cent had used such clubs off the school site.

Table 2.1 Use of childcare providers, 2009-2010

	2009	2010 ¹⁰
	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,708)	(6,723)
Any childcare	73	78
Formal providers	55	63
Nursery school	4	5
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	5	4
Reception class ¹¹	8	10
Special day school/ nursery/ unit for children with SEN	1	*
Day nursery	8	8
Playgroup or pre-school	6	6
Other nursery education provider	*	*
Breakfast club	N/A ¹²	4
After-school club	N/A	35
Childminder	5	5
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Babysitter who came to home	2	1
Informal providers	41	38
Ex-partner	7	5
Grandparent	26	24
Older sibling	5	4
Another relative	6	5
Friend or neighbour	7	7
Other¹³		
Leisure/sport	9	5
Other childcare provider	4	2
No childcare used	27	22

¹⁰ Note that the figures for 2009 and 2010 are not directly comparable due changes to the questionnaire made for the 2010 survey (see the commentary above Table 2.1 and Appendix B for further information).

¹¹ The data on the use of reception classes should be treated with caution, as there may be under- and over-reporting of the use of this type of childcare. The potential under-reporting concerns four-year-olds, whose parents may not have considered reception classes a type of childcare, even if their four-year-olds were attending school (hence likely to be in reception). The potential over-reporting concerns five-year-olds who attended reception classes as compulsory school rather than childcare but whose parents thought of it as a type of childcare.

¹² N/A is shown here because the survey questions on breakfast and after-school clubs and activities were different in 2009.

¹³ 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 the 2010 figures reported in section 2.2 are grossed up to national estimates¹⁴, there were 4.2 million families in England who used some type of childcare or early years education during term time (Table 2.2). The number of families using formal childcare was 3.3 million, with 1.9 million using after-school clubs. The number using informal childcare was 2.0 million, with 1.3 million using grandparents to look after their children.

Turning to the number of children using childcare, there were 5.7 million in childcare overall (of which 4.4 million were with formal providers), and 2.4 million were in informal provision. These children were most commonly looked after by grandparents (figures on the proportion of children receiving childcare are discussed in more detail in section 2.4).

Table 2.2 National estimates of use of childcare

Use of childcare	Number of families	Number of children
Any childcare	4,154,000	5,725,000
Formal providers	3,347,000	4,407,000
Nursery school	290,000	303,000
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	222,000	209,000
Day nursery	420,000	438,000
Playgroup or pre-school	333,000	325,000
Breakfast club or activity	212,000	249,000
After-school club or activity	1,877,000	2,411,000
Childminder	264,000	310,000
Informal providers	2,020,000	2,399,000
Ex-partner	285,000	344,000
Grandparent	1,300,000	1,557,000
Older sibling	224,000	206,000
Another relative	269,000	280,000
Friend or neighbour	348,000	347,000

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

¹⁴ National estimates are based on the number of families with children aged 0 to 14 (5,313,000) and the number of children in the age group (8,766,000) who were receiving Child Benefit as of February 2010. This information was provided by HMRC at the time of sampling for the survey.

Since 2005, the Department for Education has commissioned an annual Childcare and early years providers survey to collect information about childcare and early years provision across England. Among other things, the survey collects information on the number and characteristics of providers.

There were 4.2 million families and 5.7 million children who used childcare in 2010. Data from the 2010 Childcare and early years providers survey¹⁵ show that these families and children were served by a total of 105,100 childcare providers and early years providers in maintained schools (Table 2.3). There were 89,500 childcare providers (the great majority of which were childminders) and 15,700 early years providers (the great majority of which were primary schools with reception classes).

Table 2.3 Numbers of childcare providers and early years providers in maintained schools in 2010

	Number of providers
Total providers	105,100
Childcare providers	89,500
Full day care	16,700
<i>In children's centres</i>	800
Sessional	8,300
After-school clubs	9,500
Holiday clubs	7,700
Childminders – working	47,400
Childminders – registered	57,900
Early years providers in maintained schools	15,700
Nursery schools	400
Primary schools with nursery and reception classes	6,700
Primary schools with reception but not nursery classes	8,600

Source: Table 3.1, Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010, Department for Education.

¹⁵ Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London.

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

In this section we explore patterns of childcare use by a range of children's characteristics: age, ethnicity, and whether they have special educational needs or health problems/disabilities. The following two sections explore differences by family characteristics: income and work status¹⁶, and where they live. In this section and the ones that follow, we refer to statistics on the proportion of children receiving childcare, rather than those on the proportion of families that use childcare¹⁷.

The use of childcare varied significantly with the age of the child, being greatest among three- and four-year-olds (89%) and lowest among nought- to two-year-olds and twelve- to fourteen-year-olds (59% and 50% respectively (Table 2.4). The use of formal childcare followed a similar pattern, with 84 per cent of three- and four-year-olds having attended some formal childcare compared with 50 per cent of all children, and only 33 per cent of children aged 12 to 14. The high take-up among three- and four-year-olds is a reflection of the universal entitlement to free early years provision (explored later in section 2.9) while previous studies suggest the low take up of formal childcare by twelve- to fourteen-year-olds reflects both their own independence, and difficulties getting them involved in after-school activities (Smith et al. 2010).

The patterns of formal provision used varied by age. For nought- to two-year-olds, the most common formal provider was a day nursery (17%). Playgroups or pre-schools, nursery schools, and childminders were the other main types of provision used by parents of nought- to two-year-olds. Seven per cent of nought- to two-year-olds attended nursery school. Just over half (51%) were 'rising 3s'.

For three- and four-year-olds a range of providers were typically used: reception class (23%), nursery school (16%), including those attached to a primary or infants' school (15%), playgroup or pre-school (15%), and day nursery (14%). For those aged five and older, after-school clubs were the most commonly used provider, being used mainly by children aged 8 to 11 (45%). The use of other providers tailed off with age.

Turning to informal childcare, take up varied significantly with age although the differences were not so great as with formal provision. Just over one-quarter of children aged three to eleven used informal childcare (27% of children aged three to four, and 28% of those aged five to eleven), while among nought- to two-year-olds this was higher at one-third, and among twelve- to fourteen-year-olds it was lower at 22 per cent. The use of grandparents and other relatives outside of the immediate family fell with the age of the child. Ex-partners were less likely to care for nought- to two-year-olds (2% of whom received childcare from an ex-partner) compared with three- to fourteen-year-olds (4% of three- to eleven-year-olds and 5% of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). Older siblings were more likely to care for children aged 8 to 14 (4% of whom received childcare from an older sibling) than younger children (around 1%).

¹⁶ Income and work status were often inter-related, and section 2.7 attempts to disentangle this using regression analysis.

¹⁷ Childcare use estimates are lower when referring to children's characteristics (and other analyses based on 'all children' bases) compared to family level estimates. For example, 50% compared to 63% for formal childcare use. This is because only one child per family was included for the child characteristics analysis (there was only sufficient interview time to collect detailed information on one child) whereas each child in each family was counted for the family level analysis. Following this, families with more than one child had a greater probability of recording childcare use compared to individual children, hence the higher estimates for families.

Table 2.4 Use of childcare providers, by age of child

Use of childcare	Age of child					
	0-2	3-4	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children</i>	(1,225)	(1,456)	(1,282)	(1,577)	(1,183)	(6,723)
Any childcare	59	89	69	67	50	65
Formal providers	39	84	54	50	33	50
Nursery school	7	16	*	0	0	3
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	1	15	*	0	0	2
Reception class	*	23	10	0	0	5
Day nursery	17	14	*	*	0	5
Playgroup or pre-school	8	15	*	*	0	4
Breakfast club	*	2	6	5	*	3
After-school club	*	7	37	45	31	27
Childminder	6	6	5	3	*	4
Nanny or au pair	1	1	1	1	*	1
Informal providers	33	27	28	28	22	27
Ex-partner	2	4	4	4	5	4
Grandparent	27	20	20	15	10	18
Older sibling	*	1	1	4	4	2
Another relative	5	3	3	3	2	3
Friend or neighbour	2	3	5	5	4	4
No childcare used	41	11	31	33	50	35

Looking specifically at two-year-olds (not shown separately in Table 2.4), 69 per cent were in receipt of some form of childcare, with 55 per cent receiving formal childcare, and 34 per cent receiving informal childcare. The most common form of childcare received by two-year-olds was grandparents (27%), followed by day nurseries (19%), playgroups or pre-schools (15%) and nursery schools (12%).

Table 2.5 shows the proportions of children from different ethnic backgrounds, with special educational needs (SEN) or health problems or a disability who received different forms of childcare.

As was the case in 2009, there was a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and receipt of childcare, both formal and informal. Children from Asian backgrounds were least likely to receive formal childcare, with only around one-quarter (24%) of those from Asian Bangladeshi, and around one-third of those from all other Asian backgrounds (33% of children from Indian and Pakistani backgrounds, and 34% of those from other Asian backgrounds) receiving formal childcare, compared with half or more of children (53%) from White British, Black Caribbean (62%) or mixed backgrounds. Similarly children from Asian backgrounds (with the exception of Asian Indian) were less likely than average to have received informal childcare, as were children from Black African backgrounds.

These differences in take-up of childcare between children from different ethnic backgrounds may be due in part to other socio-economic characteristics. For example, it may be that Asian Bangladeshi children with working mothers were just as likely to use formal childcare as White British children of working mothers, and that the overall difference between the two groups was caused by the higher employment rate among White British women. For this reason, the findings in Table 2.5 should be interpreted in combination with the regression analysis presented in section 2.7. The regression analysis shows that children from South Asian backgrounds were less likely than White British children to use formal childcare, even when other factors such as the age of the child and the work status and annual income of the family were taken into account, and this was the case for both pre-school and school-age children.

Table 2.5 Use of childcare, by child characteristics

Child characteristics	Use of childcare			Unweighted base
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	<i>(6,723)</i>
Ethnicity of child, grouped				
White British	70	53	31	<i>(5,169)</i>
Other White	53	44	14	<i>(267)</i>
Black Caribbean	69	62	17	<i>(73)</i>
Black African	47	39	11	<i>(211)</i>
Asian Indian	55	33	23	<i>(145)</i>
Asian Pakistani	43	33	13	<i>(281)</i>
Asian Bangladeshi	29	24	8	<i>(130)</i>
Other Asian	47	34	12	<i>(98)</i>
White and Black	63	50	23	<i>(129)</i>
White and Asian	71	60	19	<i>(78)</i>
Other mixed	68	54	28	<i>(70)</i>
Other	46	43	6	<i>(65)</i>
Whether child has SEN				
Yes	62	46	26	<i>(448)</i>
No	66	51	27	<i>(6,271)</i>
Whether child has health problem/disability				
Yes	67	52	28	<i>(373)</i>
No	65	50	27	<i>(6,350)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

There were no significant differences between children with SEN and those without, in the take-up of childcare, whether formal or informal. The regression analysis presented in section 2.7 shows that, when other factors were controlled for, SEN classification had no significant impact on their likelihood of receiving formal childcare.

Children with a health problem or disability were also as likely to receive both formal and informal childcare as those without a health problem or disability (section 6.7 looks at how parents of disabled children perceive childcare provision).

2.5 Use of childcare by families' circumstances

Children's receipt of childcare was associated with a range of family characteristics (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Firstly with regard to family type (in other words whether children belonged to a couple or a lone parent family), children in couple families were significantly more likely to receive formal childcare than children of lone parents (52% compared with 45%), whilst the reverse was true for informal childcare where 34 per cent of children of lone parents received informal childcare compared with 25 per cent of children from couple households. However, there was no significant difference by household type in terms of the overall take-up of childcare.

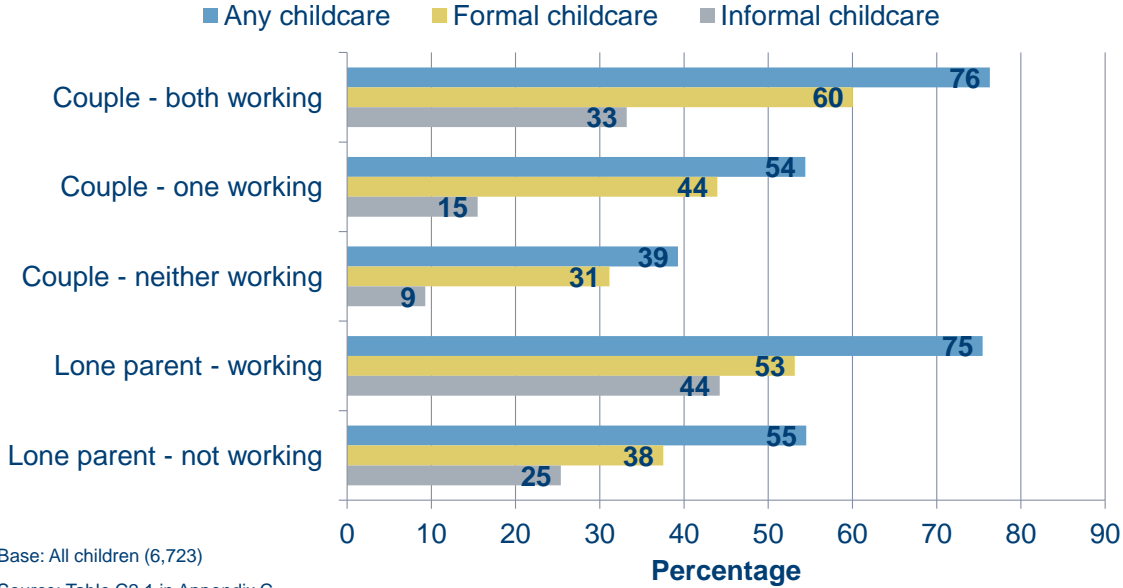
It is likely that the increased use of informal childcare by children of lone parents was related to the greater likelihood that they spent time with their non-resident parent¹⁸). However, as the proportion of children receiving childcare from the ex-partner of a parent is relatively low (see Table 2.4), this does not entirely explain the increased use of informal childcare by children of lone parents.

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

Figure 2.1 presents the proportion of children using childcare by both family type and work status.

Around three-quarters of children from couple families where both parents worked and working lone parent families used some form of childcare, with children from couple families where both parents worked most likely to receive formal childcare (60%). Those from working lone parent families were the most likely to receive informal childcare (44%). The proportions receiving any childcare were similar for children from couples with one working parent and children from non-working lone parent families, but the former were more likely to receive formal childcare and the latter more likely to receive informal childcare. Children from couple families with neither parent working were least likely to receive childcare: just under one-third received formal childcare, and under one in ten received informal childcare (for more detail on the reasons families used childcare, see Chapters 3 and 4).

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



¹⁸ Respondents were asked whether their ex-partner provided childcare, and, since this will usually (although not exclusively) be a child’s non-resident parent, this section will refer to ‘ex-partners’ as children’s non-resident parent (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C).

Looking at family type and working arrangements in more detail, there were also significant variations in the use of childcare (see Table C2.3 in Appendix C):

- Use of formal childcare was highest among couple families where both parents worked part-time (62%), where both parents worked full-time (61%), where one parent worked full-time and one worked part-time under 16 hours (61%), and where one parent worked full-time and one worked part-time for 16 hours or more (59%).
- Children in non-working lone parent families were just as likely to receive formal childcare as children in lone parent families where the parent worked part-time under 16 hours (38%). Use of formal childcare was lowest among children in non-working couple families (31%).
- Use of informal childcare was highest among children of lone parents working part-time under 16 hours, at 55 per cent, followed by children of lone parents working part-time for 16 hours or more (44%), and children of lone parents working full-time (42%).
- Around one-third of children in couple families where both parents worked used informal childcare.
- One-quarter of children in non-working lone parent families used informal childcare, compared to around one in six children in couple families with one parent working, and around one in ten children in non-working couple families.

Table C2.4 shows that children in couple families where both parents worked were most likely to use the following forms of formal childcare: after-school clubs (35%), day nurseries (8%), and childminders (5%). Turning to informal childcare, children in couple families where both parents worked and children of working lone parents were most likely to use grandparents (24% for both).

Children in working lone parent families were most likely to use after-school clubs (30%) and, when using informal carers, they were most likely to use friends and neighbours (see Table C2.4 in Appendix C). In addition, children of working lone parents were more likely to spend time with their non-resident parent than children of non-working lone parents (16% and 9% respectively).

Use of both formal and informal childcare varied substantially and significantly by household income, although this might be expected as income was correlated with work status (29% of families with an annual income under £10,000 were working compared with 98% of those earning £30,000 or more – table not shown). However, the regression analysis in section 2.7 shows that both the working status and income level of the family independently help predict the use of formal childcare.

Formal childcare was used more than informal childcare for all income groups (see Table 2.6). Use of formal childcare provision increased with household income, from 38 per cent of children in families with an annual income of less than £10,000 to 65 per cent of those in families with an income of £45,000 or more. The use of informal childcare was higher among children in families with incomes of £20,000 or more than among children in families with lower incomes, although the relationship was not as consistent as it was for formal childcare: use of informal childcare was highest among children in families with an income of between £30,000 and £45,000, and lowest among children in families with an income of between £10,000 and £20,000.

Table 2.6 Use of childcare, by family annual income

	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	<i>(6,723)</i>
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	54	38	26	<i>(698)</i>
£10,000 - £19,999	54	40	23	<i>(1,628)</i>
£20,000 - £29,999	65	49	28	<i>(1,174)</i>
£30,000 - £44,999	70	53	32	<i>(1,219)</i>
£45,000+	79	65	29	<i>(1,670)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

Family size was a significant influence on the use of childcare (see Table C2.1 in Appendix C). Children who had two or more siblings aged up to 14 were less likely to receive childcare (55%) than those who had only one sibling (69%) or no siblings (70%). Only children were most likely to receive informal childcare (35%, compared with 28% of those with one sibling and 18% of those with two or more). Children with one sibling were more likely to receive formal childcare (54%, compared with 50% of only children and 45% of those with two or more siblings). Family size is related to a number of factors, such as age(s) of the child and the family income level, and work status, and when these factors were controlled for the size of family was not a significant influence on the take-up of formal childcare among school-age children. However, among pre-school children there was a significant difference with only children more likely to be in formal childcare than those with two or more siblings (see section 2.7). One hypothesis to explain this is that the practical difficulties of organising formal childcare for multiple children outweighed the benefits for such families. Another factor may be the cost of childcare. Providers that were typically used by parents of pre-school children (e.g. day nurseries) costed more than those used by parents of school-age children (e.g. after-school clubs) (see Table 5.3), because pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare than school-age children (see Table 2.9). Costs for pre-school providers may also be higher because of a lower ratio of adults to children among those providers. Hence for parents of larger families with pre-school children, cost may have been an important factor as well.

Use of childcare (formal and informal) varied significantly by the occupational group of the working parent(s). Use of childcare was higher among children of managerial and professional parent(s), and lower among children with parent(s) working in routine or semi-routine occupations (see Table C2.3 in Appendix C). Use of any childcare was highest among families with parents in traditional professional (78%) and senior managerial and administrative roles (76%) but lowest among families with parents in routine (56%) or semi-routine (59%) occupations. A similar pattern was evident for use of formal childcare. However, use of informal childcare was highest among families with parents in middle management roles (34%) and technical and craft occupations (33%). It was lowest for

families with parents in routine occupations, senior roles, traditional professions and semi-routine occupations.

2.6 Use of childcare by area characteristics

Previous surveys in the series have consistently found variation in take-up of childcare in different regions (Smith et al. 2010) with lower take up in London than elsewhere in the country. The 2010 survey found similar significant results; take-up of childcare was lowest in London (50% of children living in London received childcare compared to 65% of children overall) which can largely be attributed to the lower take-up of informal childcare (11% of children living in London were looked after by informal carers compared with 27% of children overall) (Table 2.7).

Take-up of formal childcare was lowest in the East Midlands: 42 per cent compared to 50 per cent of children overall. This may reflect the large Asian population in the region who reported low take-up of formal childcare (see Table 2.5). Children in the South East, the South West, the North East and the East of England regions were most likely to receive childcare. Those in the southern regions (South East and South West) and the East of England were most likely to receive formal childcare, and those in the North East were most likely to receive informal childcare.

Table 2.7 Use of childcare, by Government Office Region

	Use of childcare			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	<i>(6,723)</i>
Government Office Region				
North East	72	49	45	<i>(346)</i>
North West	63	48	26	<i>(974)</i>
Yorkshire and the Humber	68	50	36	<i>(730)</i>
East Midlands	59	42	24	<i>(581)</i>
West Midlands	65	49	28	<i>(741)</i>
East of England	71	55	34	<i>(678)</i>
London	50	43	11	<i>(967)</i>
South East	75	57	29	<i>(1,054)</i>
South West	73	57	32	<i>(652)</i>

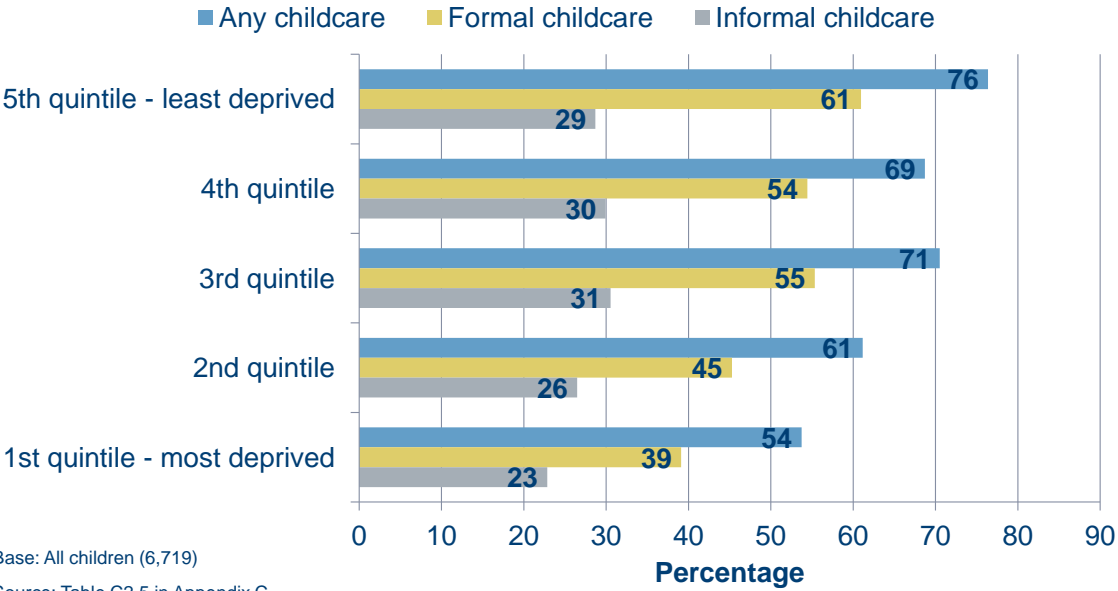
NB: Row percentages.

Another important characteristic was the level of deprivation¹⁹ in the families' area of residence. Figure 2.2 shows take-up of childcare (both formal and informal) by area deprivation and shows a clear and significant relationship 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, a pattern that was observed in 2009. The pattern is clearer for formal childcare, with 61 per cent of children in the least deprived areas receiving formal childcare compared with 39 per cent of those in the most deprived areas. These differences may be driven by the association between deprived areas and low employment rates (65% of families in the most deprived areas were in work compared with 94% of those in the least

¹⁹ For each family we established the overall Index of Multiple of Deprivation (IMD) score for their area. We then grouped families into area deprivation quintiles according to the following schema: most deprived quintile (score of 34.15 or more), 2nd quintile (score of 21.34 to 34.14), 3rd quintile (score of 13.78 to 21.33), 4th quintile (score of 8.47 to 13.77) and 5th (least deprived) quintile (score of 1.14 to 8.46).

deprived areas – table not shown) and the corresponding lower need for childcare in the more deprived areas. This interpretation is supported by the results of the regression analysis (section 2.7), where area deprivation was not found to be a significant factor once other factors had been controlled for.

Figure 2.2 Use of childcare, by area deprivation



The final area characteristic we look at is rurality of the area. Table 2.8 shows that children in rural areas were significantly more likely than those in urban areas to receive childcare, particularly formal childcare. However, rurality was not found to be a significant factor once other factors had been controlled for (section 2.7).

Table 2.8 Use of childcare, by rurality

	Use of childcare			Unweighted base
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	(6,723)
Rurality				
Rural	71	56	30	(1,285)
Urban	64	49	27	(5,432)

NB: Row percentages.

2.7 Key characteristics associated with the use of childcare

Key characteristics associated with use of formal childcare

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

The analysis showed that the age of the selected child, family type and work status, family annual income, the number of children in the family, and ethnicity of the selected child were independently associated with the use of formal childcare. The SEN status of the selected child, area deprivation and rurality were not significant when other factors were taken into account (see Table C2.6 in Appendix C for more details). Age of the selected child, family type and work status, and family annual income were associated most strongly with use of formal childcare.

Among families with school-age children, families with annual incomes under £20,000 were less likely to use formal childcare than families with annual incomes of between £20,000 and £44,999, who in turn were less likely than families with incomes of £45,000 or more to use formal childcare. Among families with pre-school children the picture was different, with all families with annual incomes under £45,000 being less likely than those with annual incomes of £45,000 or more to use formal childcare.

Children in couple families where only one parent worked, or neither parents worked, were less likely than children in families where both parents worked to use formal childcare, while children in working lone parent families were even more likely than those in couple families where both parents worked to use formal childcare, controlling for all other factors.

Moving from family characteristics to individual characteristics, the age of the child was a highly significant influence on their receipt of formal childcare. Among pre-school children, those aged three or four were much more likely than those aged under three to receive childcare, largely reflecting the entitlement to the free early years provision. It may also reflect the reluctance of some parents with children aged nought to two to put their children in childcare because they felt they were too young (see Table 6.9). Among school-age children those aged 12 to 14 were much less likely than 5- to 7-year-olds to receive childcare, likely driven by parents trusting 12- to 14-year-olds to be unsupervised.

Key characteristics associated with use of informal childcare

We demonstrated earlier that family and area characteristics had an impact on the use of informal childcare, and that many of these factors were inter-related. For example, as with formal childcare, use of informal childcare was higher among higher income families, and also among working families. To disentangle these effects, we have undertaken multivariate logistic regression analysis for informal childcare, separately for pre-school and school-age children.

The analysis showed that the age of the selected child, family type and work status, the number of children in the family, and ethnicity of the selected child were independently associated with the use of formal childcare. The family annual income, SEN status of the selected child, area deprivation and rurality were not significant when other factors were

taken into account (see Table C2.7 in Appendix C for more details). Age of the selected child, family type and work status, and number of children were associated most strongly with use of informal childcare.

The age of the selected child, working status of the family and the number of children were independently associated with the use of informal childcare for families with both pre-school and school-age children.

Children in couple families where only one parent worked, or neither parents worked, were much less likely than children in families where both parents worked to receive informal childcare.

School-age children in working lone parent families were even more likely to receive informal childcare than those in couple families where both parents worked after controlling for all other factors. Pre-school children of workless lone parents were however much less likely to receive informal childcare than those in families where both parents worked.

The number of children in the household was a significant influence on informal childcare use. Only children were more likely to receive informal childcare than children with one sibling, who in turn were more likely than children with two or more siblings to receive informal childcare.

Moving from family characteristics to individual characteristics, as with formal childcare, the age of the child was a highly significant influence on likelihood of receipt of informal childcare. Among pre-school children, those aged three or four were less likely than those aged under three to use informal childcare, largely reflecting the entitlement to the free early years provision. Among school-age children those aged 12 to 14 were much less likely than five- to seven-year-olds to use informal childcare.

2.8 Hours of childcare used

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

Overall, children who attended childcare spent an average of 8.3 hours per week there (Table 2.9). This was significantly less than the median figure in 2009 of 10.8. There was a significant fall in the number of hours spent by school-age children in childcare from 2009 to 2010 (from 6.5 to 5.0), but no significant difference in the number of hours spent by pre-school children in childcare.

Those receiving formal childcare received an average of 6.0 hours per week, a significant fall from the 8.0 hours received in 2009. This was principally driven by a significant fall in the hours of formal childcare received by children aged five to seven (from 5.0 hours per week to 3.5 hours per week). All other age groups saw no significant fall in the average hours of formal childcare received.

Those receiving informal childcare also received an average of 6.0 hours per week, and this was also a significant fall from the figure of 7.0 hours in 2009. There was a significant fall in the number of hours of informal childcare received by children aged 5 to 11. Among five- to seven-year-olds, there was a decrease from 6.0 hours per week in 2009 to 5.0 hours in 2010, and among eight- to eleven-year-olds, a decrease from 6.0 hours per week in 2009 to 4.5 hours in 2010.

Pre-school children spent much longer in formal childcare than school-age children (17.9 hours compared to 3.0 hours), which reflects the fact that school-age children spend most of their day at school whereas early years education is included in the formal childcare provision for pre-school children. Pre-school children also spent longer in informal childcare than school-age children (9.5 hours compared to 5.0 hours). They also spent a greater amount of time in formal childcare than in informal childcare, whereas the opposite was found for school-age children.

Looking at age groups among pre-school children, three- and four-year-olds spent the longest in childcare, 23.0 hours, and also the longest in formal childcare, 18.0 hours, although nought- to two-year-olds spent the longest in informal childcare, 10.9 hours. Among school-age children, five- to seven-year-olds spent the longest in formal childcare, (3.5 hours) while twelve- to fourteen-year-olds spent the longest in informal childcare (6.5 hours).

Table 2.9 Hours of childcare used per week, by age of child

	Age of child							
	0-2	3-4	All pre-school children	5-7	8-11	12-14	All school-age children	All
<i>Base: All children</i>	(724)	(1,226)	(1,950)	(848)	(1,017)	(576)	(2,441)	(4,391)
Any childcare								
Median	18.2	23.0	20.5	5.5	4.0	4.8	5.0	8.3
Mean	20.7	24.2	22.7	11.5	8.0	9.3	9.5	14.1
Standard error	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2
<i>Base: All children receiving formal childcare</i>	(504)	(1,169)	(1,673)	(679)	(763)	(373)	(1,815)	(3,488)
Formal childcare								
Median	16.5	18.0	17.9	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	6.0
Mean	18.2	21.4	20.2	9.5	4.7	4.8	6.4	11.6
Standard error	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2
<i>Base: All children receiving informal childcare</i>	(399)	(374)	(773)	(332)	(423)	(261)	(1,016)	(1,789)
Informal childcare								
Median	10.9	8.0	9.5	5.0	4.5	6.5	5.0	6.0
Mean	14.9	12.7	14.0	9.3	9.8	12.6	10.4	11.7
Standard error	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.3

Table 2.10 shows that there was substantial variation in how much time children spent with different types of provider.

Looking firstly at the providers typically used by pre-school children, those attending nursery school or nursery classes typically did so for 15 hours per week. This reflected the increased level of the free early years entitlement from September 2010 (when fieldwork for the 2010 survey began). In 2009 it was also the case that those attending nursery classes did so for the prevailing free entitlement, then 12.5 hours per week. Children attending reception class for an average of 31.3 hours per week, that is equivalent to a full-time school place. Children attending day nurseries spent longer there (19.0 hours per week) than those attending playgroup or pre-school (9.0 hours), or those who were cared for by a childminder or nanny or au pair (10.2 hours – note low base size).

Turning to out-of-school provision, children who attended breakfast clubs or after-school clubs tended to do so for only a few hours a week (3.0 hours at breakfast clubs and 2.2 hours at after-school clubs).

Finally, looking at informal provision, children who were looked after by a non-resident parent spent on average 15.0 hours with them. Other informal childcare was for a much shorter time, typically between three and six hours per week.

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

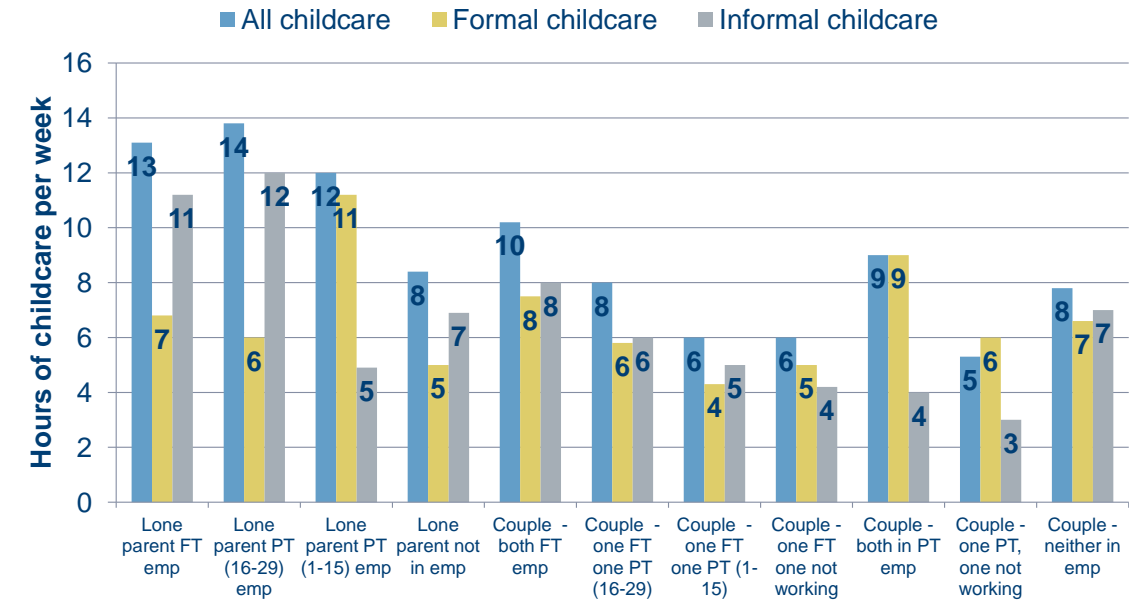
Table 2.10 Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type

	Hours of childcare used per week			
	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Any childcare	8.3	14.1	0.2	(4,391)
Formal providers	6.0	11.6	0.2	(3,488)
Nursery school	15.0	17.4	0.6	(310)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	15.0	16.6	0.5	(226)
Reception class	31.3	28.0	0.4	(478)
Day nursery	19.0	21.1	0.6	(402)
Playgroup or pre-school	9.0	9.8	0.4	(339)
Breakfast club	3.0	5.5	0.7	(178)
After-school club	2.2	3.8	0.2	(1,605)
Childminder	10.2	14.6	0.8	(249)
Nanny or au pair	[10.2]	[16.0]	[2.2]	(49)
Informal providers	6.0	11.7	0.3	(1,789)
Ex-partner	15.0	19.9	1.3	(225)
Grandparent	5.7	10.2	0.3	(1,211)
Older sibling	3.0	5.3	0.5	(139)
Another relative	4.5	9.1	0.8	(212)
Friend or neighbour	3.0	6.3	0.6	(239)

Figure 2.3 presents information on the hours of childcare used per week by family type and detailed work status. Children in working lone parent families spent the longest time in any form of childcare, at least 12 hours per week. This compares with children in couple families with both parents working full-time who spent 10 hours per week in childcare, and children in couple families with both parents working part-time who received childcare for nine hours per week. Children in couple families with one parent working part-time and the other not working spent the shortest time in childcare, around five hours per week.

Looking at the differences between formal and informal childcare, children of lone parents who worked for less than 16 hours per week spent the longest time in formal childcare, 11 hours. Turning to informal childcare, children in lone parent families where the parent worked for 16 hours per week or more spent the longest in informal childcare, at 11 hours or more per week.

Figure 2.3 Hours of childcare used per week, by family type and detailed work status



Base: All children who used childcare (4,391)
 Source: Table C2.9, C2.10, C2.11 in Appendix C

We have undertaken a multivariate logistic regression analysis for hours of formal childcare used, separately for pre-school and school-age children.

Key characteristics associated with formal childcare hours used

For pre-school children we looked at the key drivers of using formal childcare for more than the median number of hours per week (17.9)²⁰. The analysis showed that the age of the selected child, family type and work status, and family annual income were independently associated with using more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. There was a weak association for pre-school children (but not for school-age children) with ethnicity of the selected child, and no association with number of children, SEN and area

²⁰ Analysis of the data for formal hours of childcare used showed that it was quite “lumpy”, in other words grouped around whole numbers. Hence we decided to run the regression based on a binary dependent variable rather than continuous data. We chose the median number of hours as the cut-off.

deprivation for pre-school or school-age children (see Table C2.14 in Appendix C for further details)

Families where the selected child was three- or four-years-old were more likely than those where the selected child was aged nought to two to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. Families where one or more parents did not work were less likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. Families with annual incomes of under £45,000 were much less likely than those with annual incomes of £45,000 or more to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week.

For school-age children the analysis showed that the main independent association was with the age of the selected child. Families where the selected child was aged 8 to 11 or 12 to 14 were much less likely to use more than the median number of hours (3.0) of formal childcare per week than families where the selected child was five- to seven-years-old. Couples where one parent did not work were less likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. However, working lone parents were more likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week. Lastly, families with annual incomes of £10,000 to £19,999 and £30,000 to £44,999 were less likely than families with annual incomes of £45,000 or more than the median number of hours of formal childcare per week.

Key characteristics associated with informal childcare hours used

For pre-school children the median use of informal childcare was 9.5 hours or more per week. The analysis showed that age of the selected child and family type and work status were the main variables independently associated with using more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week (see Table C2.15 in Appendix C for further details).

Looking at families with pre-school children, couples with one parent working were much less likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week. Working lone parents were much more likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week. Families where the selected child was aged three to four were less likely than those where the selected child was aged nought to two to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week.

Looking at families with school-age children (the median number of hours of informal childcare used was 5.0), lone parents (whether working or not) were much more likely than working couples to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week. Those with one or two children were more likely than those with three or more children to use more than the median number of hours of informal childcare per week, with those with one child being particularly more likely to do so.

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

This section focuses on the entitlement to free early years provision (at the time of fieldwork 15 hours per week) by eligible three- and four-year-olds²¹. Respondents were asked whether

²¹ 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 two years (six terms) of free provision before reaching statutory school age, which is the first term following their 5th birthday. 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

their child received any early years provision, as well as a separate question specifically about whether they received any 'free hours' of early years provision²². As the responses were based on parents' own awareness of their child receiving free provision, and as we were looking at a specific reference week during which there may have been one-off reasons why the child did not attend (e.g. sickness), there may be a degree of under-reporting of take-up of free early years provision.

Table 2.11 shows the receipt of free early years provision among three- and four-year-olds who were eligible for the entitlement. Reported take-up of the entitlement to free early education (85%) did not significantly change between 2009 and 2010. Nearly all four-year-olds (98%) received their entitlement in the reference term-time week, compared to 70 per cent of three-year-olds. Take-up among three-year-olds was significantly lower than in the 2009 survey, when 75 per cent received their free entitlement.

If we look at the proportion of children who received some early years provision (in other words 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 80 per cent of three-year-olds and 98 per cent of four-year-olds received some early years provision. Again the former figure is significantly lower than the 2009 figure of 87 per cent of three-year-olds who received some early year provision.

Table 2.11 Receipt of the entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds</i>	(588)	(728)	(1,316)
Receipt of free early years provision			
Received free entitlement (or attended school)	70	98	85
Received early years provision but not free hours	9	*	4
Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	2	*	1
Received no early years provision	20	2	10

While these estimates indicate reductions in receipt of free early education for three-year-olds between 2009 and 2010 this was not reflected in the figures provided by the Department for Education Early Years Census and Schools Census which show that receipt of 'some free early education' as higher and stable among three-year-olds (92% for both 2009 and 2010); the equivalent figure for three- and four-year-olds was also higher (95% for 2009 and 2010)²³.

Table 2.12 shows receipt of the entitlement by family type and work status. There was no significant variation by family type and work status.

attending school are included here in the proportion of children receiving their entitlement (even though they were not asked the question about free hours).

²² 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 three to four who attended school (full- or part-time) are also considered to be receiving early years provision.

²³ Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England – January 2011, Department for Education (June 2011).

Table 2.12 Receipt of the entitlement to free early years provision, by family type and work status

	Family type and work status					
	Couple families			Lone parents		All
	Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds</i>	(541)	(376)	(72)	(122)	(205)	(1,316)
Receipt of free early years provision						
Received free entitlement (or attended school)	87	83	77	89	85	85
Received early years provision but not free hours	3	5	6	4	4	4
Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	1	1	2	1	1	1
Received no early years provision	9	11	15	6	10	10

There was no significant variation in receipt of the free entitlement by family annual income (see Table C2.12 in Appendix C).

There was variation in the take up of the free entitlement by ethnicity. Just under ninety per cent (88%) of children from White British backgrounds received the free early years entitlement, compared with around 57 to 74 per cent of children from Asian (with the exception of Pakistani (92%)) backgrounds.

There were differences between regions in the take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision. Take-up was lowest in London (73%) followed by the West Midlands and East of England (both 82%), while take-up was highest in the South East and South West, at 93 per cent and 92 per cent respectively. Children in rural areas were more likely than those in urban areas to receive the free entitlement (take-up of 92% and 84% respectively).

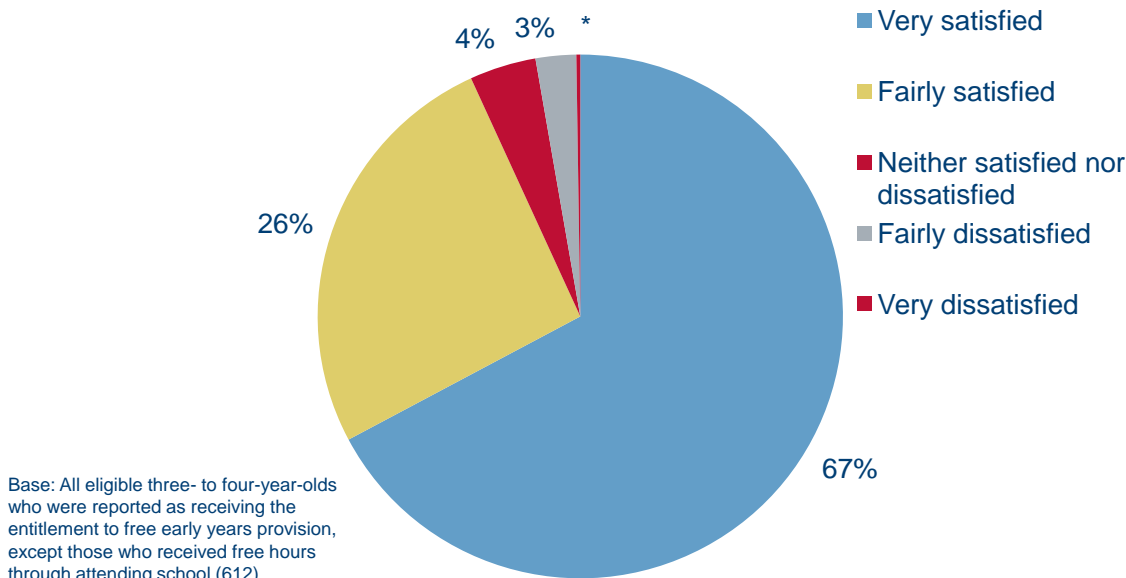
Respondents who said that their children were not receiving the free entitlement were asked whether they were aware the government paid for some hours of nursery education per week for three- and four-year-olds. Over one half of these parents (52%) said they were not aware of the scheme (table not shown), which suggests that there remains considerable scope to improve information to parents about the free early years entitlement.

In terms of the number of hours of free early years provision received per week, around two-thirds (68%) of children received 15 hours or more (see Table C2.13 in Appendix C). There was no significant difference between three-year-olds and four-year-olds (66% and 72% respectively). The median amounts of free hours received were the same for both three- and four-year-olds (15 hours each).

Most commonly children eligible for the free entitlement received between three and four hours of free hours per day (56% did so). Just under one in five (18%) received an average of between five and six hours per day. The median number of free hours received per day was 3.0 and the mean 3.7. There was no significant difference in the average number of free hours received per day by age (table not shown).

On the whole parents were satisfied with the number of free hours available, with 93 per cent reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied and only three per cent reporting that they were dissatisfied (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Whether parents satisfied with the number of free hours



Base: All eligible three- to four-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school (612)
 Source: Table C2.16 in Appendix C

Respondents with children who received some free early years provision but less than the full entitlement of 15 hours were asked why their child did not receive more free hours in the reference week (see Table 2.13). Four out of ten parents thought that more hours would have to be paid for, and 30 per cent reported that they did not need childcare for more hours. Around one in seven parents (14%) reported that they felt their child was too young to be in childcare for any more hours than they were currently receiving, and one in ten parents reported that the provider did not have any extra sessions available. There were no significant differences by age of child.

The proportion of parents who said they thought that more hours would have to be paid for was significantly higher than 2009 (26%). This may be partly due to the number of free hours increasing between the fieldwork for the 2009 and 2010 surveys. There was also a significant difference in the number of parents reporting one-off circumstances, down from 14 per cent in 2009 to four per cent in 2010.

Table 2.13 Reasons for receiving less than 15 free hours, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds who received less than 15 free hours</i>	(123)	(46)	(169)
More hours would have to be paid for	39	42	40
Didn't need childcare for the child for longer	29	34	30
The setting had no extra sessions available	10	13	10
One-off circumstance (e.g. holiday, sickness)	5	3	4
The child is too young to go for longer	15	9	14
The child would be unhappy going for longer	2	3	3
The setting had extra sessions available but not at convenient times	2	3	3
The setting is difficult to get to	2	0	2
Other reason	2	3	3

Respondents were asked on which days of the week they received free hours, and so we can look at how many days per week children received the entitlement (see Table 2.14). Most commonly children received their free hours over five days per week. There was a significant difference in the average number of days free hours were received by age. Around half (49%) of four-year-olds received free hours over five days a week, compared to 40 per cent of three-year-olds; 33 per cent of three-year-olds received the free hours over three days.

There was a significant increase between 2009 and 2010 in the proportion of parents of four-year-olds saying they were unsure because the free hours were received as part of a longer childcare package (from 6% in 2009 to 15% in 2010).

Table 2.14 Number of days per week over which three- and four-year-olds received their entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school</i>	(412)	(199)	(611)
Number of days			
1 day	1	1	1
2 days	9	7	8
3 days	33	16	27
4 days	10	12	11
5 days	40	49	43
Unsure – free hours received as part of a longer childcare package	6	15	9
Median	4.0	5.0	4.0
Mean	3.8	4.2	3.9

Over three-quarters (78%) of children who received free hours over more than one day per week received the same number of hours per day, while 20 per cent of children attended for different numbers of hours on different days, and for three per cent their parents were unable to say because the hours were received as part of a longer childcare package (table not shown)²⁴.

Table 2.15 shows the type of provider that three- and four-year-olds attended for their entitlement to free early years provision. The majority of four-year-olds (92 per cent) received their free hours from a reception class, while three-year-olds received their entitlement from a range of providers: 27 per cent received free hours at a nursery school, 26 per cent at a playgroup, 25 per cent at a day nursery, and 21 per cent at a nursery class.

Table 2.15 Use of childcare providers for three- and four-year-olds receiving their entitlement to free early years provision, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, or attended school</i>	(405)	(713)	(1,118)
Providers			
Nursery school	27	8	15
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	21	7	12
Reception class	*	92	59
Day nursery	25	5	13
Playgroup or pre-school	26	6	13
Childminder	1	0	*
Other	4	1	2

2.10 Summary

Changes to the way questions about the use of childcare providers were asked in 2010 mean that comparisons with previous years' estimates of childcare use will not, strictly speaking, be valid, as the additional prompts introduced would be expected to result in higher proportions of families reporting that they used childcare. Bearing these changes in mind, the 2010 results suggest that the use of informal childcare by families in England has fallen slightly since 2009. Families' use of formal childcare appears to have increased, but analysis suggests this was driven by a questionnaire change. When the effect of this change (affecting measures relating to breakfast and after-school clubs) was excluded from analysis, there was no significant change in families' use of formal childcare between 2009 and 2010. The patterns of childcare use by types of provider appear similar, with after-school clubs being the most common type of formal childcare provision overall, and grandparents the most common informal provision.

Use of childcare, and of different types of providers, varied by age. Overall use was highest among three- and four-year-olds, as was use of formal childcare, as this age group were entitled to free early years education. Receipt of informal childcare was highest among children aged under two who are not currently eligible for free places. Twelve- to fourteen-year-olds were least likely to receive childcare, reflecting the relatively greater level of

²⁴ For instance, if a child attended an early years provider for 30 hours per week they may have received a discount off their bill equivalent to the cost of 15 hours, and may not have been able to identify which of the 30 hours were free, and which were paid for.

independence among this age group. Pre-school age children tended to use a variety of formal providers, while for school-age children formal provision tended to centre around after-school clubs. Turning to informal providers, use of grandparents decreased as children got older, while use of ex-partners and older siblings increased with the age of the child.

Children from South Asian backgrounds were less likely than those from a White British background to be in formal childcare, and these differences held even after controlling for other individual characteristics, such as the age of the child, and family characteristics (e.g. working status and family income). Children from working families, and from higher income families, were more likely to be in receipt of formal childcare than those from non-working, and lower income families. These relationships held when controlling for other factors.

Turning to informal childcare, after controlling for other factors, family work status, number of children, age and ethnicity of child were independently associated with families' use of formal childcare.

Children who received childcare spent an average of 8.3 hours there (median figure). This is significantly lower than the 2009 figure of 10.8 hours. The median amount of free entitlement hours received by three- and four-year-olds was 15 hours.

Pre-school children spent much longer in childcare than school-age children, reflecting the fact that school-age children spent most of their day at school whereas early years education is counted here as formal childcare provision. Looking at the time children spent at different providers, children in reception class spent on average 31.3 hours per week there, while children attending after-school clubs did so for an average of 2.2 hours per week. Turning to informal provision, children looked after by their non-resident parent spent 15.0 hours with them, those looked after by their grandparent(s) spent 5.7 hours with them, while children spent on average 3.0 hours being looked after by an older sibling, or by a friend or neighbour.

Family type and work status, and age of child were the main factors independently associated with above average use of formal childcare, although family annual income was also a factor. Family type and work status and age of child were the main factors independently associated with above average use of informal childcare.

Reported receipt of free early education (85%) did not significantly change between 2009 and 2010. This confirms the trend shown in statistics generated by the DfE Early Years Census and Schools Census which show that receipt of 'some free early education' as stable (95% for both 2009 and 2010). There was no significant variation by family annual income or family work status. Among parents of children who did not receive the free early years entitlement the proportion who were unaware of it was similar to 2009, at just over one-half (52%).

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 59 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds and 89 per cent of three- and four-year-olds were in some form of childcare (see Table 2.4). For the youngest age group, two provider types stood out as the most frequently used: grandparents (27%), followed by day nurseries (17%). The picture for three- and four-year-olds was more varied, with 20 per cent cared for by a grandparent; 23 per cent and 15 per cent respectively attending a reception class or nursery class; 16 per cent attending a nursery school; 15 per cent a playgroup; and 14 per cent a day nursery.

In Chapter 2, following the 2009 survey report (Smith et al 2010) 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;
- after-school club;
- holiday club/scheme²⁵.

Formal: Leisure/Other

- other childcare provider;
- leisure/sport activity.

As in Chapter 2, the category 'informal providers' includes: children's non-resident parent²⁶, 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

²⁵ Whilst this chapter focuses on the childcare children used in the term time reference week, a small number (fewer than 0.5 per cent) of parents said they used a holiday club or scheme during term-time.

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

received childcare from more than one formal provider, and that sometimes families combined formal provision with informal childcare. This classification of formal providers will help us explore the ‘packages’ of childcare parents arrange for their children, for example the proportion of parents who combined centre-based childcare with informal childcare. This chapter also investigates how the types and packages of childcare used for pre-school children relate to: the children’s ages (nought- to two-year-olds compared with three- and four-year-olds, see section 3.2); the number of providers used (section 3.3); patterns of use in terms of days and hours (section 3.4); the use of childcare packages for pre-school children at the family level (section 3.5) and parents’ reasons for using particular providers (section 3.6).

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 analysis draws on information about all children in the household rather than just a selected child (see Appendix B for further information about the selected child). This approach was taken here, and in Chapter 4, because most of the relevant 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 a selected child 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 packages by age of pre-school child

Table 3.1 shows that the most common childcare arrangement for pre-school children was formal centre-based childcare only (30%), followed by a formal centre-based childcare and informal childcare package (18%), and then informal childcare only (13%). No more than three per cent of parents of pre-school children used any of the other types or packages of childcare and 24 per cent used no childcare at all.

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

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family</i>	<i>(2,474)</i>	<i>(2,492)</i>	<i>(4,966)</i>
Package of childcare			
Formal: Centre-Based only	18	46	30
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal	14	22	18
Informal only	21	3	13
Formal: Individual only	4	1	3
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Individual	1	5	3
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Individual and Informal	1	2	1
Formal: Individual and Informal	2	1	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School	*	5	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	*	3	2
Formal: Centre-Based and Leisure/Other	1	1	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Leisure/Other and Informal	0	1	*
Other	*	*	*
No childcare used	38	8	24

The types and packages of childcare that were used varied significantly between younger and older pre-school children, perhaps reflecting the high take-up of the entitlement to free early years provision for three- and four-year-olds. Forty-six per cent of three- and four-year-

olds attended formal centre-based childcare only, whilst 22 per cent attended this type of childcare in combination with informal provision. The equivalent figures for nought- to two-year-olds were 18 per cent and 14 per cent. In contrast, 21 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds were cared for by informal providers only, compared to three per cent of three- and four-year-olds.

In total, three per cent of pre-school children went to a formal individual provider only (for instance a childminder) and a further three per cent went to both a formal individual provider and centre-based childcare. It was mainly nought- to two-year-olds who went to a formal individual provider only (4% compared with 1% of three- and four-year-olds) and mainly three- and four-year-olds who went to both a formal individual provider and centre based childcare (5% compared to 1% of nought- to two-year-olds). This corresponds to the findings in Chapter 2 which demonstrated that very few three- and four-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 could incorporate more than one type of provision as well as more than one provider of the same type (e.g. children using formal childcare only could go to a number of different formal providers such as a playgroup and a nursery class). In order to develop a good understanding of how parents used childcare it is therefore helpful to look at the number of providers used, as well as the type of provision.

Table 3.2 shows that the number of providers attended differs depending on the age of the child. Younger pre-school children were more likely to attend a smaller number of providers than older pre-school children. For example, 62 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds attended just one provider, compared to 52 per cent of three- and four-year-olds. And while 16 per cent of three- and four-year-olds attended three or more providers, this was true of eight per cent of their younger counterparts.

Table 3.2 Number of providers, by age of child

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,372)	(2,252)	(3,624)
Number of providers			
1	62	52	56
2	31	32	31
3+	8	16	13

Table 3.3 shows the number of providers attended by the type or package of childcare used by parents of pre-school children²⁷. The number of providers attended varied by type or package of childcare used. The great majority of children in centre-based childcare only attended just one centre-based provider (94%). This suggests that when parents needed to supplement the childcare offered by one centre-based provider they tended 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). Similarly, pre-school children who attended informal childcare only were usually looked after by just one person (83%) although 16 per cent were looked after by two informal carers.

Whilst very few children in one type of care attended more than two providers, 24 per cent of pre-school children in a package of centre-based and informal care attended more than two providers (1% of all children aged 0 to 14). Families that used combinations of childcare may have found arranging and maintaining a package of childcare that meets their needs to be challenging, and it is likely that their children experienced a range of different childcare environments (section 3.4 provides details on whether these providers were used on the same or different days).

Table 3.3 Number of providers, by package of childcare

	Package of childcare		
	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based and Informal
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,608)	(530)	(795)
Number of providers			
1	94	83	0
2	6	16	76
3+	*	1	24

Playgroups were the least likely of the centre-based providers to be used as sole childcare providers for pre-school children (40%, see Table C3.1 in Appendix C). Instead they were mostly likely to be used in combination with two or more other providers (24%). In contrast, nursery schools, nursery classes, and day nurseries were the most likely to be sole providers (53%, 50%, and 49% respectively) and nursery schools and day nurseries were the least likely to be used in combination with two or more other providers (13% and 12% respectively).

Grandparents (29%) were more likely than other informal providers (18% to 23%) to be the only source of childcare for a pre-school child. Non-resident parents (43%), and friends or neighbours (41%) were more likely to be used in combination with three or more providers (see Table C3.2 in Appendix C).

²⁷ Throughout the chapter, where analysis by package of childcare 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 section 2.8.

3.4 Patterns of childcare use for pre-school children

This section explores patterns of childcare used for pre-school children, in other words the number of days of childcare used per week and the number of hours used per day. The text refers to the median values (referred to as averages).

Table 3.4 shows that, on average, pre-school children spent 6.0 hours per day in childcare (on days that childcare was used), and 20.5 hours per week. Older pre-school children typically spent more time in childcare per week than their younger counterparts (23.0 hours compared to 18.2). Children aged three to four were also more likely than their younger counterparts to attend childcare on a greater number of days (e.g. 53% of three- and four-year-olds attended childcare on five days of the week, compared to 19% of nought- to two-year-olds). This very likely reflects the fact that the entitlement to early years provision was typically offered across five days of the week (see section 2.9). It may also reflect the reluctance of some parents with children aged nought to two to put their children in childcare because they felt they were too young (see Table 6.9).

Table 3.4 Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

Days and hours of childcare received	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(731)	(1,244)	(1,975)
Days per week			
1	18	3	10
2	23	6	13
3	24	15	19
4	14	15	15
5	19	53	38
6	2	5	4
7	1	2	2
Median hours per day	6.8	5.8	6.0
Median hours per week	18.2	23.0	20.5

Table 3.5 shows that pre-school children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare were the heaviest users of childcare by a number of measures. They received a substantially greater number of hours of childcare per week: 26.0 on average, compared to 17.0 for those in centre-based childcare only and 15.0 for those in informal childcare only. They also spent the most hours per day in childcare (on days when childcare was received): 6.6 hours on average, compared to 5.5 for those in centre-based childcare only and 6.0 for those in informal childcare only.

The heavier use of childcare by children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare reflected the greater likelihood that their parents were in work. The parents of 71 per cent of children in a combination of childcare all worked (one parent in work if a lone parent household or two if a two parent household) compared with 59 per cent of those who went to informal childcare only and 45 per cent of those who went to centre-based childcare 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 childcare was reflected within each of the two age groups (see Table C3.3 in Appendix C).

The fact that approximately half the pre-school children in centre-based childcare only received their childcare on exactly five days per week (46%) and that very few received it for six or seven days per week (less than 0.5%), reflects the fact that formal childcare settings were typically not open at weekends. This is in contrast with pre-school children who received a combination of centre-based and informal childcare, 12 per cent of whom attended childcare on six or seven days per week.

Table 3.5 Patterns of childcare use, by package of childcare

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-Based and Informal		
			Total	Centre-based	Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(836)	(251)	(480)	(462)	(405)
Days per week					
1	8	32	2	12	42
2	13	23	10	25	27
3	20	20	20	21	17
4	13	8	20	10	6
5	46	14	36	31	7
6	*	1	8	*	1
7	0	1	4	*	1
Median hours per day	5.5	6.0	6.6	5.2	5.0
Median hours per week	17.0	15.0	26.0	15.0	9.0

Table 3.6 indicates that the number of hours that pre-school children spent in childcare during the term-time reference week varied with the work status of their parent(s). Those pre-school children whose parents were both working (if two parent household), or whose only parent was working (if a lone parent), attended the most hours of childcare during the week (25.5 hours and 29.6 hours respectively). This compares to the 15.0 hours of childcare received by pre-school children with only one parent who was working (if a two parent household) or with no parents working. Interestingly, when comparing all couple families to all lone parent families there was no significant difference in the number of hours that the pre-school child attended childcare in the reference week: both groups of children attended for around 20 hours.

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

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(1,624)	(994)	(526)	(104)	(351)	(144)	(207)
Days per week							
1	9	6	16	15	10	3	15
2	13	12	17	13	14	12	15
3	20	23	14	15	14	16	13
4	15	17	13	9	12	10	13
5	37	37	36	43	41	47	38
6	3	4	3	4	5	7	4
7	1	1	2	1	3	5	2
Median hours per day	6.0	6.9	3.8	4.9	5.8	6.9	4.2
Median hours per week	20.6	25.5	15.0	15.0	20.0	29.6	15.0

Table 3.7 shows how the number of hours that pre-school children aged nought to two and aged three to four spent in childcare during the term-time reference week varied with the work status of their parent(s).

The significant differences by family work status found for all pre-school children were still evident when the nought to two age group and three to four age group were looked at in isolation. For both age groups, children whose parents were both working (if a couple family) or whose only parent was working (if a lone parent family) attended the most hours of childcare during the week.

There were significant differences between the two age groups. In couple families, children aged three to four where one parent or no parents worked attended more hours of childcare per week than their counterparts aged nought to two. For lone parent families children aged three to four were more likely to attend more hours of childcare per week than children aged nought to two, and this was the case whether or not the parent was in work.

Table 3.7 Patterns of childcare use of nought- to two-year-olds and three- and four-year-olds by family type and work status

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children aged nought to two who received childcare</i>	(627)	(429)	(162)	(36)	(104)	(46)	(58)
Pre-school children aged nought to two							
Median hours per day	7.0	8.0	3.1	4.5	5.9	8.7	3.8
Median hours per week	19.5	24.3	6.5	7.8	16.0	20.0	8.4
<i>Base: All pre-school children aged three to four who received childcare</i>	(997)	(565)	(364)	(68)	(247)	(98)	(149)
Pre-school children aged three to four							
Median hours per day	5.8	6.4	4.0	5.3	5.6	6.7	4.8
Median hours per week	22.3	26.5	16.0	18.4	25.1	31.6	16.5

As shown in Table 3.8, the number of hours that pre-school children spent in childcare during the term-time week also varied according to the total annual income of the family and the number of children. Pre-school children belonging to families in the highest annual income band of £45,000 or more spent the most time in childcare during the term-time reference week (26.3 hours), followed by children in families from the second highest band of £30,000 to £44,999 with 20.0 hours and then 17.9 hours for the middle income band (£20,000 to £29,000). Children from families in the two lowest income brackets (£9,999 and £10,000 to £19,000) spent fewer hours in childcare (15.0 and 16.6 hours respectively). This is likely to be related to the finding at Table 3.6 that children whose parents were both working (if a two parent household), or whose only parent was working (if a lone parent), tended to spend more time in childcare on average and significantly more than children in families where no parents were working.

Pre-school children in families with only one child aged 0 to 14 were the heaviest users of childcare. On average, these children received 24 hours of childcare per week compared with only 15.3 hours of childcare received by pre-school children in families with three or more children aged 0- to 14-years-old.

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

	Family annual income					Number of children in family aged 0-14		
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 – £19,999	£20,000 – £29,999	£30,000 – £44,999	£45,000 +	Only 1	2	3 or more
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(188)	(373)	(347)	(402)	(589)	(603)	(949)	(423)
Days per week								
1	15	12	11	9	6	9	9	11
2	18	12	15	15	12	14	14	12
3	11	14	18	21	24	21	18	17
4	12	11	15	16	18	16	15	12
5	36	45	38	34	36	34	39	44
6	6	4	3	4	3	4	4	3
7	2	3	*	1	1	2	1	2
Median hours per day	4.0	5.4	5.5	6.0	7.0	6.7	6.0	4.7
Median hours per week	15.0	16.6	17.9	20.0	26.3	24.0	21.0	15.3

Children attending reception classes received the greatest number of hours of centre-based childcare per week on average (31.3), suggesting that most of the four-year-olds attending a reception class were doing so full-time (see Table C3.4 in Appendix C)²⁸. Those attending nursery classes were receiving an average of 15.0 hours of centre-based childcare per week, reflecting the entitlement to free early years provision for all three- and four-year-olds.

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 childcare per week (19.5 hours on average, compared to 15.0 for those attending nursery schools and 11.9 for those attending playgroups). They were also receiving more hours of centre-based childcare on each day that they were there (7.7 hours on average, compared to 4.7 and 3.0 respectively for nursery classes and playgroups).

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 (17.8 hours, compared to between 4.5 and 11.4 hours among pre-school children receiving childcare from other informal providers, see Table C3.5 in Appendix C).²⁹ On each day that they were with their non-resident parent they spent an average of 6.2 hours there. This is higher than the number of hours per day spent with other informal providers. The longer time pre-school children spend with non-resident parents probably reflects joint parenting and access for non-resident parents to see their children.

²⁸ We have looked at hours spent in centre-based childcare rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received childcare from more than one type of centre-based provider.

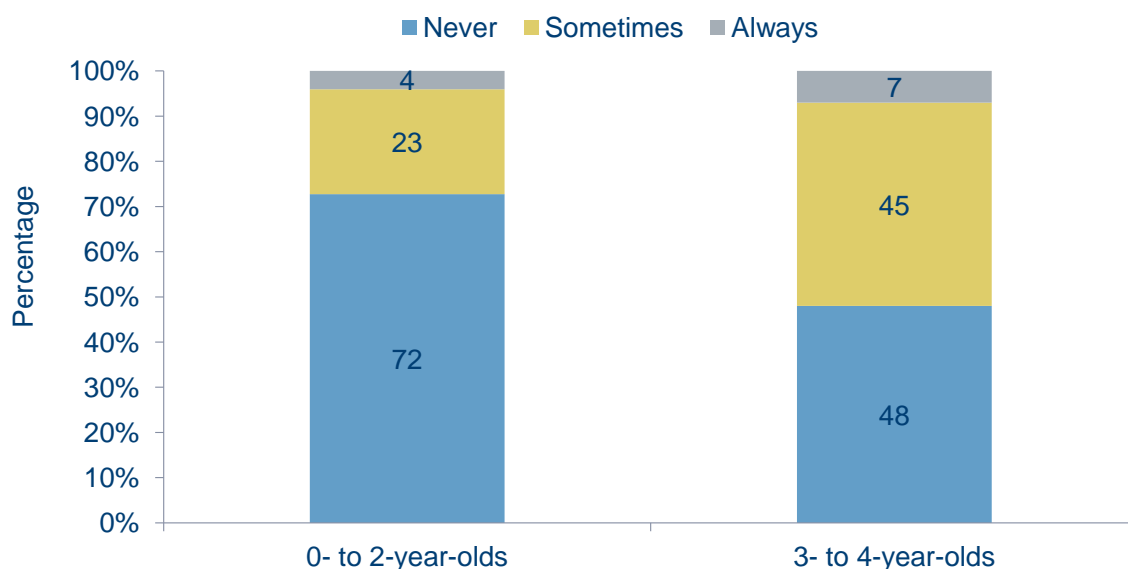
²⁹ We have looked at hours spent in informal childcare rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received childcare from more than one type of informal provider.

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

We now focus on the pre-school children who typically received the greatest amounts of childcare, in other words those in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare, to explore their patterns of childcare use in 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 24 per cent of these children were attending three or more providers (this represents 4% of all pre-school children). Figure 3.1 shows the proportions of these children who attended more than one provider **on the same day**. Fifty-two per cent of three- and four-year-olds in a combination of centre based and informal childcare always or sometimes attended more than one provider on the same day, compared to 28³⁰ per cent of nought- to two-year-olds receiving this package of childcare.

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



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

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

Unlike the previous sections in this chapter, this section looks at childcare packages for pre-school children at the family level. The previous sections looked at packages related to individual children, but families with more than one child may make decisions about packages of childcare for a child taking into account the needs of other children. For example families may make joint arrangements for two or more children (an informal carer may look after two or more children simultaneously). Parents with multiple children may struggle most with affording and juggling their arrangements, and this may influence the arrangements chosen.

³⁰ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Figure 3.1 because of rounding.

Overall, 15 per cent of families with pre-school children only did not use any childcare (see Table C3.7 in Appendix C). Four in ten families used the same package of childcare for every child. One-quarter used formal centre-based childcare only for every child, while 15 per cent relied on informal childcare only for every child. Forty-five per cent of families used mixed arrangements.

There were significant variations by number of children. Families with one pre-school child only were more likely not to use childcare (17%) than families with two pre-school children only (11%) and families with three or more pre-school children only (13%).

As one might expect families with two or more pre-school children were less likely to use informal childcare only or centre-based childcare only for all their children. However, the differences between families with two children and those with more were not large. For example 13 per cent of families with three or more pre-school children used centre-based childcare only for all of them, compared with 16 per cent of families with two pre-school children.

Families with three or more pre-school children were significantly more likely to use one of the three main mixed packages (56% used one of: formal centre-based or informal childcare; formal centre-based only or parental childcare only; or formal centre-based/informal childcare or informal childcare only) than families with two or more children (41%).

3.6 Reasons for using childcare providers for pre-school children

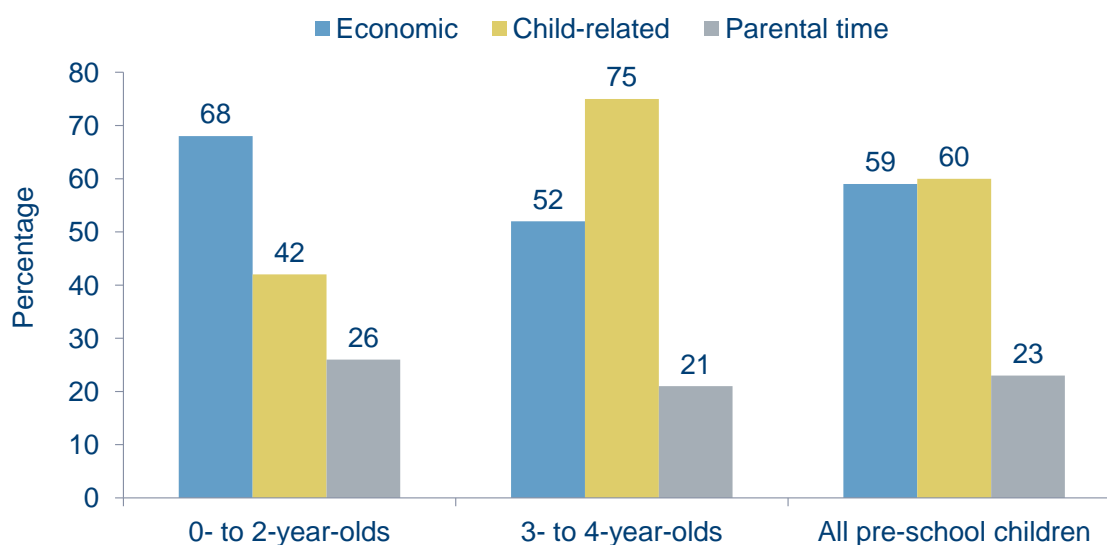
For each childcare provider used, respondents were asked why they had used them in the reference term-time week (they were able to give as many reasons as they wanted from a pre-coded list). These reasons have been grouped into three categories:

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

Figure 3.2 shows that 59 per cent of pre-school children who went to childcare were doing so for economic reasons; 60 per cent for child-related reasons; and 23 per cent for parental time reasons.³¹ There were clear differences between the age groups. Whilst 68 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds attended childcare for economic reasons, this applied to 52 per cent of three- and four-year-olds. Similarly, whilst 26 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds attended childcare for parental-time related reasons, this applied to 21 per cent of three- and four-year-olds. In contrast, 75 per cent of three- and four-year-olds were attending providers for child-related reasons, compared to 42 per cent of nought- to two-year-olds. Furthermore, the differences may have been exacerbated by the fact that some four-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 five).

³¹ 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 Table C3.8 in Appendix C.

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



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

Source: Table C3.9 in Appendix C

Table 3.9 shows parents' reasons for using different packages of childcare for their pre-school children.³² More than three-quarters of children in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare were attending a provider for economic reasons (77%), compared to over half of those in informal childcare only (57%) and less than half of those in centre-based childcare only (42%). This, together with the earlier finding that these children were the heaviest users of childcare (see section 3.4) illustrates that a combination of childcare could be required to cover parents' working hours.

Children who were cared for by informal providers only were substantially less likely than other children to be receiving childcare for child-related reasons (26% compared to 69% of those in centre-based childcare only and 70% of those in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare). 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 childcare. Thirty-eight per cent of children in a combination of childcare went to their informal carer for child-related reasons compared with 63 per cent who went to their centre-based carer for child-related reasons.

In contrast, children in informal childcare only were more likely than either of the other groups to attend for reasons relating to parental time (36% compared to 14% of children in centre-based childcare only and 31% of those in a combination of centre-based and informal childcare). Similarly, those in a combination of childcare were more likely to go to their informal providers for reasons relating to parental time (25%) than their centre-based ones (12%).

³² 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 Table C3.8 in Appendix C.

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

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Centre-Based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-based and Informal		
			Total	Centre- based	Informal
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,608)	(530)	(795)	(795)	(795)
Reasons					
Economic	42	57	77	59	65
Child-related	69	26	70	63	38
Parental time	14	36	31	12	25

Day nurseries were the most likely of the centre based providers to be used for economic reasons (83% compared to between 19% and 53% for those attending other centre-based providers) (see Table C3.10 in Appendix C).³³ This reflects the findings described in section 3.4, where it was shown that, on average, day nurseries were used for more hours per week and for longer days, in other words hours suitable to cover parents' working hours.

Table 3.10 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 25.7 hours of childcare per week, compared to 20 hours for those whose parents used a provider for child-related reasons and 15.0 for those whose parents mentioned parental time as a reason. The findings concerning hours of use per day are also notable – children attending a provider for economic reasons received 7.0 hours per day on average, compared to 5.5 for those attending for child-related reasons and 4.8 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 were only small differences between economic and child-related reasons in terms of the number of days a child was in childcare. The fact that fewer 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.³⁴

³³ 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 childcare from more than one centre-based provider.

³⁴ The findings in Chapter 9 broadly support this hypothesis, showing that 38 per cent of all mothers worked part-time (see Table 9.1).

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

	Reasons		
	Economic	Child-related	Parental time
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(1,142)	(1,262)	(440)
Days per week			
1	5	8	18
2	13	12	16
3	22	15	15
4	17	14	13
5	37	44	30
6	4	6	4
7	2	2	3
Median hours per day	7.0	5.5	4.8
Median hours per week	25.7	20.0	15.0

3.7 Summary

This chapter looked at parents' use of different types or 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: formal centre-based childcare only (30%) (e.g. nursery classes, day nurseries); a combination of formal centre-based and informal childcare (18%); or informal childcare only (e.g. ex-partners or grandparents) (13%). Twenty-four per cent of pre-school children were not in childcare at all.

Use of centre-based provision was much more common among three- and four-year-olds than among those aged under two, reflecting the high take-up of their entitlement to free early years provision, and, possibly, parents' inclination to look after young toddlers themselves. Accordingly, younger pre-school children were more likely than their older counterparts to be receiving informal childcare only (21% and 3% respectively).

Pre-school children spent an average of 6.0 hours per day in childcare, and 20.5 hours per week. Older pre-school children spent more hours per week in childcare on average than younger ones (23.0 and 18.2 hours respectively).

Children receiving a combination of formal centre-based childcare and informal childcare (18% of all pre-school children) were clearly the heaviest users of childcare. While the great majority of pre-school children receiving only one type of childcare attended just one provider, almost one-quarter (24%) of those receiving a combination of childcare attended three or more (the equivalent figure for all children aged 0 to 14 was 1%). 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 both parents in work (or their lone parent), and to attend childcare for economic reasons, illustrating that this heavy childcare use was commonly designed to cover parents' working hours.

Families with one pre-school child only were more likely not to use childcare (17%) than families with two pre-school children only (11%) and families with three or more pre-school children only (13%). Families with three or more pre-school children were significantly more likely to use one of the three main mixed packages (56% used either formal centre-based or

informal childcare, formal centre-based only or parental childcare only, or formal centre-based/informal childcare or informal childcare only).

Fifty-nine per cent of pre-school children who attended childcare were doing so for economic reasons (e.g. to enable parents to work, look for work, or study); 60 per cent for child-related reasons (e.g. educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 23 per cent for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise, or look after children). While those aged under two were more likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (68% compared to 52% of three- and four-year-olds) and parental reasons (26% compared to 21%), three- and four-year-olds were more likely to attend for child-related reasons (75% compared to 42%). Across all pre-school children, child-related reasons were associated with formal centre-based childcare, and parental time reasons with informal childcare.

4. Packages of childcare for school-age children

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on parents' use of childcare for their children aged 5 to 14, in term-time, outside school hours.³⁵ We will use the classification of formal providers outlined in section 3.1 to explain in 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); use of childcare packages for school-age children at the family level (section 4.5) and parents' reasons for choosing particular providers (section 4.6). We divide school-age children into three age groups: five- to seven-year-olds, eight- to eleven-year-olds, and twelve- to fourteen-year-olds, to reflect their differing childcare needs. These categories roughly represent the infant, junior and early secondary stages.

In Chapter 2 (see Table 2.4), we showed that the oldest school-age children (twelve- to fourteen-year-olds), were considerably less likely to be in childcare (50%) than their younger counterparts (69% of five- to seven-year-olds and 67% of eight- to eleven-year-olds), probably because most children of this age do not require constant adult supervision. School-age children most commonly used an after-school club (37% of five- to seven-year-olds, 45% of eight- to eleven-year-olds, and 31% of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). Only small percentages of school-age children used any other formal provider type. As with pre-school children, around one-quarter of school-age children received some informal childcare, and grandparents were the most commonly-used provider (20% of five- to seven-year-olds, 15% of eight- to eleven-year-olds and 10% of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds).

As in Chapter 3, all 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 a 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 children

Table 4.1 shows that 35 per cent of school-age children were not receiving any childcare and 14 per cent were in informal childcare only. Twenty-four per cent were in formal out-of-school childcare only (in other words a breakfast and/or after-school club), and 13 per cent were in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare. No more than two per cent of school-age children were receiving any other particular package of childcare.

The likelihood that school-age children received informal childcare only varied by age group (12% of five- to seven-year-olds, 14% of eight- to eleven-year-olds and 16% of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). Additionally, children aged eight to eleven were significantly more likely than both younger and older school-age children to attend out-of-school childcare, either on

³⁵ Use of childcare in the school holidays is explored in Chapter 8.

its own (27% compared to 21% for both five- to seven-year-olds and twelve- to fourteen-year-olds) or in combination with informal childcare (16% compared to 13% and 9% for five- to seven-year-olds and twelve- to fourteen-year-olds respectively).

The other main difference between school-age children of different ages is that parents of five- to seven-year-olds used a wider range of childcare packages than parents of other school-age children. Twenty-five per cent of five- to seven-year-olds received an uncommon childcare package (in other words not parental childcare, formal out-of-school childcare only, informal childcare only or a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare) compared with 13 per cent of eight- to eleven-year-olds and seven per cent of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds³⁶. This reflects the fact that some five- to seven-year-olds received centre-based childcare (usually a reception class) and a greater proportion of children this age were looked after by formal individuals, in other words by childminders (see Table 2.4 in Chapter 2).

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

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family</i>	<i>(3,058)</i>	<i>(3,521)</i>	<i>(2,305)</i>	<i>(8,884)</i>
Package of childcare				
Informal only	12	14	16	14
Formal: Out-of-School only	21	27	21	24
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	13	16	9	13
Formal: Leisure/Other only	2	2	3	2
Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other	1	3	2	2
Formal: Leisure/Other and Informal	1	1	1	1
Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other and Informal	1	1	1	1
Formal: Individual only	2	2	1	1
Formal: Centre-Based only	7	*	0	2
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School	2	2	*	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal	2	0	0	1
Formal: Individual and Informal	1	*	*	*
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	1	1	*	1
Formal: Centre-Based and Formal: Out-of-School	2	*	*	1
Formal: Individual and Formal: Out-of-School and Formal: Leisure/Other	*	*	*	*
Formal: Centre Based and Formal: Out-of-school and Informal	1	0	0	*
Formal: Individual and Formal: Leisure/Other	*	*	*	*
Other	*	*	0	*
No childcare used	29	31	47	35

³⁶ The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

4.3 Number of providers used for school-age children

As mentioned in Chapter 3, packages of childcare could incorporate more than one type of provision as well as more than one provider of the same type (for example children using out-of-school provision only 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 used childcare it is helpful to look at the number of providers used, as well as the type of provision.

Table 4.2 shows that the number of providers attended varied with the age of the child. More than half of school-age children in childcare attended two or more providers (51%). Children aged twelve to fourteen were the least likely to attend two or more providers (43% compared to 55% of five- to seven-year-olds and 54% of eight- to eleven-year-olds), and only 15 per cent attended three or more providers compared to 23 per cent of five- to seven-year-olds and 23³⁷ per cent of eight- to eleven-year-olds.

Table 4.2 Number of providers, by age of child

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,067)	(2,298)	(1,103)	(5,468)
Number of providers				
1	45	46	57	49
2	32	30	29	30
3	14	14	9	13
4+	9	10	6	9

³⁷ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

Table 4.3 shows the number of providers used by package of childcare.³⁸ Two in three of those receiving out-of school childcare only (65%) and four in five of those in informal childcare only (80%) attended just one provider. Those in out-of-school childcare only were more likely than those in informal childcare only to attend three or more providers (12% compared to 3%). Forty-four³⁹ per cent of school-age children in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare attended three or more providers.

Table 4.3 Number of providers, by package of childcare

	Package of childcare		
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,047)	(1,088)	(1,025)
Number of providers			
1	65	80	0
2	22	17	56
3	8	2	25
4+	4	1	18

Turning to informal childcare providers, older siblings were the most likely to be the only source of childcare for a school-age child (44%, see Table C4.1 in Appendix C), followed by non-resident parents (33%) and other relatives (32%). Friends and neighbours were more likely than other informal carers to be used in combination with at least one other provider (80% compared to 56% to 71%).

4.4 Patterns of childcare use for school-age children

Table 4.4 shows that 49 per cent of school-age children who attended childcare did so for just one or two days a week, whilst 17 per cent attended on five days per week. As we might expect given that almost all of these children attended full-time school, the average amount of time spent in childcare per day was relatively small (an average of 2.0 hours per day that childcare was used). School-age children who received childcare attended an average of 5.0 hours of childcare per week.

On average, five- to seven-year-olds in childcare spent the greatest number of hours per week there (5.5, compared to 4.0 hours for eight- to eleven-year-olds and 4.8 hours for twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). Children aged five to seven were also more likely than their older counterparts to receive some childcare on more days of the week; for example 30 per cent of five- to seven-year-olds who received childcare went on five or more days of the week, compared to 19 per cent of eight- to eleven-year-olds and 18⁴⁰ per cent of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds. This pattern of childcare use for five- to seven-year-olds probably reflected the fact that a notable minority attended reception classes and childminders (far fewer older school-age children attended childminders), and that these providers were typically used for far longer periods of time than either out-of-school providers or the majority of informal providers (see section 2.8 in Chapter 2).

³⁸ Throughout the chapter, where analysis by package of childcare is presented, only figures for the three most commonly-used types/packages are shown, as the bases for other types and packages were too small.

³⁹ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

⁴⁰ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

Table 4.4 Patterns of childcare use, by age of child

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(871)	(1,053)	(594)	(2,518)
Days per week				
1	22	28	30	26
2	20	23	26	23
3	17	20	15	18
4	12	11	11	11
5	25	14	11	17
6	4	3	4	4
7	1	2	2	2
Median hours per day	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.0
Median hours per week	5.5	4.0	4.8	5.0

The mean number of hours of childcare received by school-age children per day and per week both fell significantly between 2009 and 2010 (from 3.6 hours to 3.0 and from 13.2 to 9.5 hours respectively).

Table 4.5 breaks down patterns of use according to the package of childcare used. School-age children in out-of-school childcare only typically attended far fewer hours (2.5) of childcare per week than those receiving informal childcare only (6.0) or a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare (7.0). They also attended far 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 childcare only and 2.1 for those in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare). The same pattern was seen for those aged five to seven and 12 to 14⁴¹ (see Table C4.2 in Appendix C).

School-age children receiving a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare were substantially less likely than the other groups to attend childcare on just one or two days per week (30%), compared to those in out-of-school childcare only (64%) and those in informal childcare only (61%)⁴². However, they generally received **each** type of childcare (out-of-school or informal) on only one or two days per week. For instance, children receiving a combination of childcare were more likely to receive their out-of-school childcare on just one or two days per week than children receiving out-of-school childcare only (72%, compared with 64%). Similarly, they were more likely to receive their informal childcare on just one or two days per week than children receiving informal childcare only (69% compared with 61%)⁴³.

⁴¹ The fact that age did not emerge as a particularly significant predictor of patterns of childcare use once childcare package was taken into account supports the view that the significant variation in hours of childcare received per week by age group (see Table 4.4) mainly reflected the 10 per cent of five- to seven-year-olds in reception class and the five per cent who go childminders (see Table 2.4).

⁴² The total may differ from the sum of the individual numbers in the table because of rounding.

⁴³ 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 childcare

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal		
			Total	Out-of-School	Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(885)	(479)	(492)	(473)	(409)
Days per week					
1	38	36	8	45	43
2	26	26	22	27	26
3	17	14	26	15	15
4	6	8	18	5	6
5	10	11	18	6	8
6	2	3	5	2	1
7	*	2	3	*	1
Median hours per day	1.3	3.0	2.1	1.3	2.5
Median hours per week	2.5	6.0	7.0	2.0	4.2

Mirroring the pattern we observed in relation to pre-school children (see Table C3.5 in Appendix C), 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 (18.0 hours, compared to 4.0 to 5.0 hours among school-age children receiving childcare from other informal providers) (see Table C4.3 in Appendix C)⁴⁴. On each day they were with a non-resident parent, they spent an average of 7.3 hours there. This is markedly higher than the number of hours spent with other informal providers. The greater amount of time that children spent with non-resident parents probably reflected joint parenting and access for non-resident parents to see their children.

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

This section looks at childcare packages for school-age children at the family level, using a similar type of analysis to that found in section 3.5. First families with school-age children only are analysed, then families with both pre-school and school-age children.

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

Overall, 28 per cent of families with school-age children only did not use any childcare, with 35 per cent using one of the two main packages of childcare for every child (see Table C4.5 in Appendix C). Around one in five (21%) used formal out-of-school childcare only for every child, while 14 per cent relied on informal childcare only for every child. Thirty-seven per cent of families used mixed arrangements.

There were significant variations by number of children. Families with one school-age child only were most likely not to use childcare (31%), followed by families with three or more

⁴⁴ We have looked at hours spent in formal childcare rather than hours spent with particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received childcare from more than one type of informal provider.

school-age children only (28%). However, families with two school-age children only were much less likely to be non-users of childcare (22%).

As one might expect families with two or more school-age children only were less likely to use informal childcare only or out-of-school childcare only for all their children. While 18 per cent of families with one school-age child only used informal childcare only, three per cent of families with three or more school-age children only relied entirely on informal childcare. One-quarter of families with one school-age child only used out-of-school childcare only, compared with 15 per cent of families with two school-age children only and 11 per cent of families with three or more.

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

Overall, 12 per cent of families with both pre-school and school-age children used no childcare, with only small numbers (6%) using the two main packages of childcare for every child (see Table C4.6 in Appendix C). Over four in five (82%) of families used mixed arrangements, suggesting that families with both pre-school and school-age children used a wide variety of childcare packages to meet their childcare needs.

There were significant variations by number of children. Families with three or more pre-school/school-age children were less likely to use childcare (14% did not do so) compared with families with two pre-school/school-age children (11%).

Families with two pre-school/school-age children were more likely to use informal childcare only or centre-based childcare only than families with three or more pre-school/school-age children (both 4% compared with 2% respectively). Families with three or more pre-school/school-age children were more likely to use a mixture of parental childcare and centre-based childcare only for all their children (22%) compared with families with two pre-school/school-age children (15%).

4.6 Reasons for using childcare providers for school-age children

As described in Chapter 3, respondents 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-defined list). These reasons have been grouped into three categories:

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

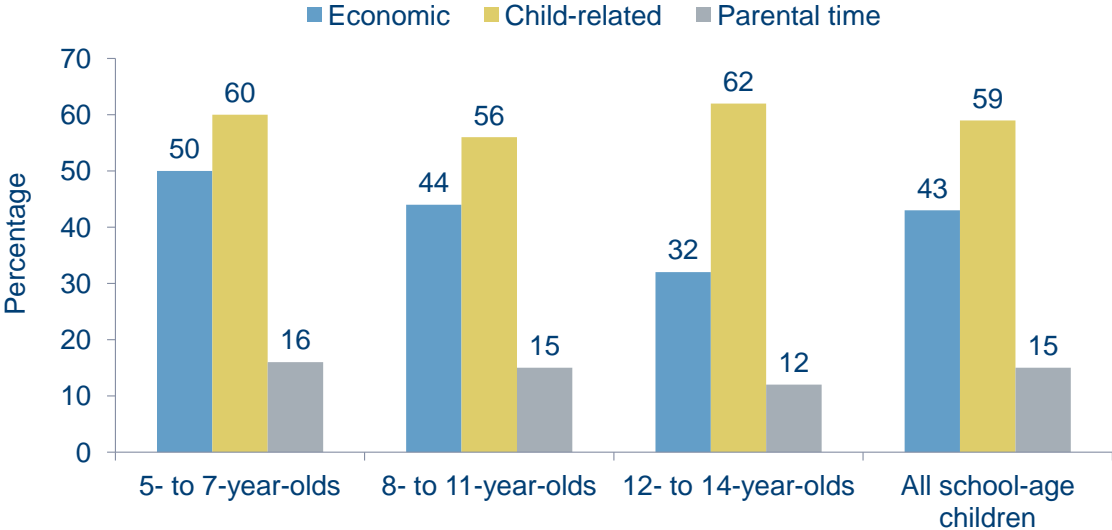
Figure 4.1 shows that when school-age children were in childcare 43 per cent attended for economic reasons; 59 per cent for child-related reasons; and 15 per cent for parental time reasons.⁴⁵ We saw in Chapter 3 that child-related reasons were the most commonly given reasons for using providers for pre-school children (60%), and this pattern is repeated in the childcare use of school-age children (59%).

The proportions of children who attended childcare for economic, child-related and parental-time related reasons all varied depending on the age of the child. Children aged eight to

⁴⁵ The percentages of parents who gave different combinations of reasons for using their provider(s) (for example economic and child related; child related and parental-time) are shown in Table C4.4 in Appendix C.

eleven were less likely than older or younger school-age children to be attending childcare for child-related reasons (56% compared to 60% of five- to seven-year-olds and 62% of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). Children aged 12 to 14 were less likely than younger school-age children to be attending childcare for parental-time reasons (12% compared to 16% of five- to seven-year-olds and 15% of eight- to eleven-year-olds). Children aged 12 to 14 were also considerably less likely than younger school-age children to be receiving their childcare for economic reasons (32%, compared to 44% of eight- to eleven-year-olds and 50% of five- to seven-year-olds in childcare). The findings relating to 12- to 14-year-olds probably reflect 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 or domestic activities (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
 Source: Table C4.7 in Appendix C

Table 4.6 shows the reasons that school-age children were receiving particular packages of childcare.⁴⁶ Those children in out-of-school childcare only were least likely to attend a provider for economic reasons (19%, compared to 55% of those in informal childcare only and 67% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare). This reflects the small average number of hours of out-of-school childcare used per week (see Table 4.5), as a couple of hours of childcare per week was 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 childcare were most likely to be receiving childcare for economic reasons suggests that, even once children start full-time school, a package of childcare could still be required to cover parents’ working hours.

As with pre-school children (see Table 3.9), school-age children who received informal childcare only were the least likely to receive childcare for child-related reasons (41%, compared to 62% of those in out-of-school childcare only and 70% of those in a combination

⁴⁶ We look in more detail at the reasons parents chose one type of provider rather than another in Chapter 7.

of out-of-school and informal childcare). A similar pattern can be seen if we look at the separate reasons that children in a combination of childcare attended their out-of-school provider compared with their informal carer. Thirty-seven per cent of children in a combination of childcare went to their informal provider for child-related reasons, compared to 58 per cent who attended their out-of-school provider for child-related reasons.

Children in out-of-school childcare only were substantially less likely than those in the other groups to be attending a provider for reasons relating to parental time (4%, compared to 21% of those only in informal childcare and 24% of those in a combination of out-of-school and informal childcare). Accordingly, those in a combination of childcare were more likely to receive their informal childcare for reasons relating to parental time (21%) compared with reasons for out-of-school childcare (5%). This association between informal childcare and parental time reasons also echoes the finding for pre-school children (see Table 3.9).

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

	Package of childcare				
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal		
			Total	Out-of-School	Informal
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,047)	(1,088)	(1,025)	(1,025)	(1,025)
Reasons					
Economic	19	55	67	23	63
Child-related	62	41	70	58	37
Parental time	4	21	24	5	21

Children cared for by a non-resident parent were more likely than those cared for by other informal providers to be receiving informal childcare for child-related reasons (71%, compared to 25% to 40% - see Table C4.8 in Appendix C)⁴⁷. They were also less likely to be receiving informal childcare for economic reasons (34%, compared to 58% to 68%). 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, 26 per cent of children attending providers for economic reasons did so for five days of the week, compared to 17 per cent of those attending for child-related reasons and 15 per cent of those attending for reasons related to parental time.

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

⁴⁷ We have looked at reasons for using formal providers rather than reasons for using particular provider types because only a small proportion of children received childcare from more than one type of informal provider.

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

	Reasons		
	Economic	Child-related	Parental time
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(1,024)	(1,501)	(356)
Days per week:			
1	13	24	22
2	17	23	23
3	20	18	18
4	15	12	12
5	26	17	15
6	6	5	6
7	3	2	4
Median hours per day	2.2	1.9	2.4
Median hours per week	7.3	5.0	6.0

4.7 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. Thirty-five per cent of school-age children were not in childcare. Twenty-four per cent were in formal out-of-school childcare only and 14 per cent in informal childcare only. Thirteen per cent were in both formal out-of-school and informal childcare. No other particular type or package of childcare (e.g. centre-based or a leisure-based activity such as a football club) was received by more than two per cent of school-age children.

The likelihood that school-age children were receiving informal childcare only varied across each of the three age groups. Children aged 8 to 11 were significantly more likely than both older and younger school-age children to attend formal out-of-school childcare, either on its own or in combination with informal childcare. Five- to seven-year-olds received 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).

Childcare was received from a single provider for almost two in three (65%) school-age children attending formal out-of-school childcare only; this was also the case for four in five (80%) school-age children receiving informal childcare only. In contrast, three or more providers were attended by 44 per cent of those receiving a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare.

As we would expect given that almost all of these children were in full-time school, the average number of hours of childcare received per day was low – just 2.0 hours. School-age children spent an average of 5.0 hours in childcare per week. Those in formal out-of-school childcare only attended for far fewer hours per week than those in informal childcare only and those in a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare (2.5 hours on average, compared to 6.0 and 7.0 hours respectively). Those receiving a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare tended to attend some childcare on a greater number of days of the week.

Looking at packages of childcare at the family level among families with school-age children only, 28 per cent used no childcare at all, 35 per cent used one of the two most common

packages of childcare for every child (informal childcare or formal out-of-school childcare only), and 37 per cent used other arrangements. Turning to packages of childcare among families with both pre-school and school-age children, there was much more variation in arrangements. Only 12 per cent did not use childcare at all, and only six per cent used the one of the two most common packages for all their children. Eighty-two per cent used some other arrangement.

Forty-three 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); 59 per cent for child-related reasons (e.g. for educational or social development, or because the child liked going there); and 15 per cent for reasons relating to parental time (e.g. so that parents could engage in domestic activities, socialise, or look after other children). Children in formal out-of-school childcare only were less likely than the other groups to be attending a provider for economic reasons, reflecting the fact that these children received only a small amount of childcare each week, and were most commonly there for child-related reasons. Children in a combination of formal out-of-school and informal childcare were the most likely to be attending a provider for economic reasons, indicating that, even once they start full-time school, a package of childcare can still be required to cover parents' working hours. For school-age children, receipt of formal out-of-school childcare was mostly associated with child-related reasons and informal childcare was most likely to be associated with reasons relating to parental time.

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 Ten Year Strategy for Childcare⁴⁸ and the Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare⁴⁹. With a view to achieving affordable childcare for all, the Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare reinforced a commitment to using a mixture of demand-side and supply-side subsidies (see Smith et al 2010):

- Increasing participation in part-time early years education has, in the main, been addressed by the entitlement to 15 hours of free early year's provision for all three- and four-year-olds from September 2010. Increasing participation will be further addressed by the extension of the free entitlement to disadvantaged two-year-olds from 2013, with 40 per cent of the cohort to be covered by 2014. Free entitlement is 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.

During the fieldwork period for the 2010 survey, UK households experienced a challenging economic climate. Figures from Her Majesty's Treasury⁵⁰ show that CPI inflation rose from 3.1 per cent at the start of fieldwork (September 2010) to 4.5 per cent by the end of fieldwork (April 2011). At the start of fieldwork, average earnings were rising at 2.2 per cent (0.9 percentage points below CPI), and by the end of fieldwork were rising at 2.0 per cent (2.5 percentage points below CPI). Thus there was a real squeeze on incomes during the survey fieldwork.

Just prior to fieldwork for the 2010 survey the Coalition Government introduced a new code of practice for local authorities. It imposed flexibility on providers so that parents could choose between using their 15 hours of free early year's provision over three hours for five days a week or over five hours for three times a week.

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 paying for and how much they paid for all the childcare 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).

⁴⁸ HM Treasury (2004) *Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children: a Ten Year Strategy for Childcare*. London: The Stationery Office.

⁴⁹ HM Government (2009) *Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare. Building on the 10-Year Strategy*. DCSF Publications: Nottingham.

⁵⁰ HM Treasury (14 May 2010) *Pocket Databank*. London: HM Treasury.

Where possible, comparisons are made with previous surveys in the 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. Whilst this made it easier for respondents to answer the questions and improved the quality of the information collected, it does mean that reliable comparisons can be made only between 2008 and 2010.

We also, where possible, cross-check our findings with those from the Department for Education's annual Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey⁵¹. Differences in the classifications used in the reporting mean the findings are not directly comparable, but they do provide useful context for the findings of this survey.

5.2 Family payments for childcare

This section focuses on what families paid for the childcare they used during the reference week. For each provider that they used, respondents 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 took account of 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 2010, 57 per cent of families who used childcare in the reference week reported that they had paid for some or all of that childcare (see Table 5.1). There was no significant change in the proportion of families paying for childcare compared to 2009.

Parents were much more likely to pay formal providers than informal providers: 63 per cent of families using formal providers paid for the childcare they received compared with only six per cent of families using informal providers.

For formal providers, whether parents were paying them and what they were paying for varied according to the provider type. Ninety per cent of families using childminders and 85 per cent of families using day nurseries were paying for their childcare. This may well be related to the fact that day nurseries typically offer childcare for the full day so parents of three- and four-year-olds who attend day nurseries for their entitlement to free early years provision are likely to be paying for additional hours.

In contrast, parents were less likely to pay for nursery schools⁵², playgroups and nursery classes (56%, 60% and 37% respectively) since these providers are primarily used by three- and four-year-olds who are eligible for the entitlement to free early year's provision. There has been a significant fall since 2009 in the proportion of parents paying for nursery schools (from 68% to 56%) and playgroups (from 68% to 60%). It seems unlikely that the increase in the number of hours of free entitlement from 12.5 hours (as it was at the time of the 2009 survey) to 15 hours (as it was at the time of the 2010 survey) has prompted this fall, as the mean number of hours used per week at nursery school and playgroup has barely changed since 2009. Nor has the mean weekly payment for either of these providers changed significantly since 2009.

Looking at the types of providers more commonly used by school-age children, just under two-thirds of families using after-school clubs reported that they paid for that childcare (64%).

⁵¹ Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London.

⁵² Nursery schools were not defined in more detail in the questionnaire. For example we do not know whether they were private or state sector.

This is possibly because free sports, arts or music clubs run by the school (for instance through the Extended Schools programme) were included in this category. Small numbers of parents used breakfast clubs but 79 per cent paid.

Among families using informal childcare, only seven per cent paid an older sibling or relative to care for their child(ren) and just five per cent paid grandparents. It is clear that grandparents play an important role in the lives of working families, providing free childcare in the main, for their grandchildren.

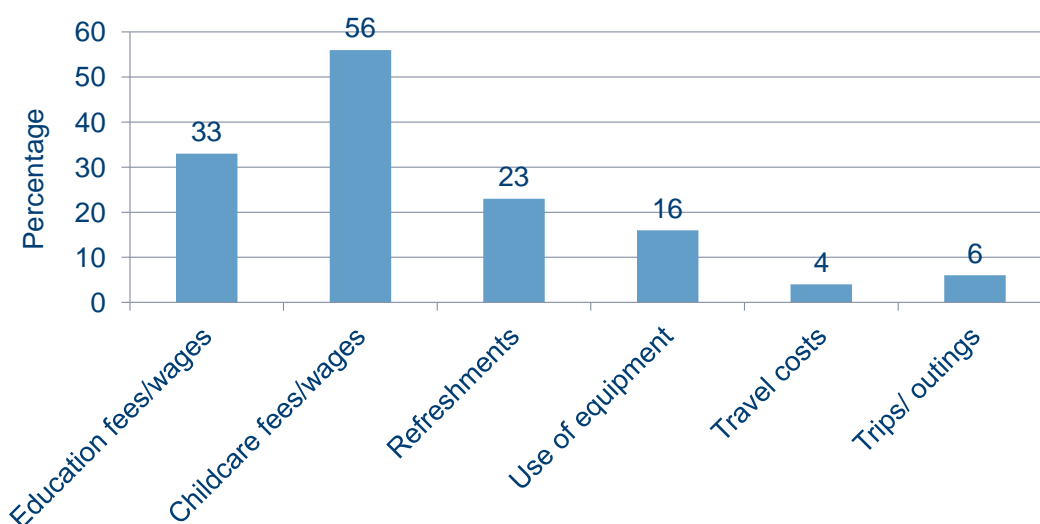
Table 5.1 Family payment for childcare, by provider type

	Family paid provider	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families using provider type</i>		
Any childcare provider	57	(5,504)
Formal childcare and early years provider	63	(4,745)
Nursery school	56	(509)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants school	37	(449)
Day nursery	85	(564)
Playgroup or pre-school	60	(569)
Breakfast club	79	(295)
After-school club	64	(2,501)
Childminder	90	(339)
Nanny or au pair	84	(61)
Babysitter who came to house	62	(83)
Informal childcare provider	6	(2,484)
Grandparent	5	(1,669)
Older sibling	7	(198)
Another relative	7	(336)
Friend or neighbour	10	(393)
Other		
Leisure/ sport activity	91	(321)
Other childcare provider	61	(117)

NB: Row percentages.

Figure 5.1 shows what aspects of childcare families believed they were paying for (parents selected the relevant aspects of childcare from a showcard). Overall, families who paid providers were most commonly paying for childcare fees/ wages (56%), followed by education (33%) and refreshments (23%). Sixteen per cent of families paid for the use of equipment whilst fewer than 10 per cent of families paid for travel costs, or trips/ outings.

Figure 5.1 What families were paying provider for



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,157)

Source: Table 5.2

Table 5.2 shows that the aspects of childcare for which families paid for differed by type of provider. Childminders generally provide childcare rather than early years education. As a result, payments to childminders were predominantly for childcare fees (92%).

We saw in Table 5.1 that families using nursery schools and nursery classes were less likely to pay for them than families using other formal providers (56% and 37% respectively compared to 85% of families using day nurseries for example); however a substantial proportion of these parents did make some payment. Two-thirds of parents paying for nursery schools paid for childcare fees and 38 per cent for refreshments. This contrasts with nursery classes attached to a primary or infant school where only one-third paid childcare fees and 58 per cent paid for refreshments. Payment for day nurseries typically included childcare costs (86%). Education fees were paid by less than 30 per cent of families using: playgroups (29%), nursery schools (25%) and day nurseries (16%).

Where parents paid for out-of-school provision, payments for breakfast clubs were more likely to be for childcare and refreshments (64% and 45% respectively) than after-school clubs where the equivalent figures were 37 per cent and 13 per cent. Education and use of equipment made up a larger proportion of the cost of after-school clubs (43% and 23% respectively). Finally, we can see from Table 5.2 that 34 per cent of parents paying grandparents paid them for refreshments.

Table 5.2 Services paid for, by type of provider paid

Provider type	Services paid for							Unweighted base
	Childcare fees/ wages	Education fees/ wages	Refreshments	Use of equipment	Trips/ outings	Travel costs	Other	
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>								
All	56	33	23	16	6	4	10	<i>(3,157)</i>
Formal provider								
Nursery school	67	25	38	8	5	1	2	<i>(274)</i>
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	33	19	58	8	5	1	4	<i>(156)</i>
Day nursery	86	16	27	6	1	1	2	<i>(462)</i>
Playgroup or pre-school	61	29	32	9	2	*	4	<i>(335)</i>
Breakfast club	64	11	45	3	3	*	2	<i>(229)</i>
After-school club	37	43	13	23	6	3	13	<i>(1,605)</i>
Childminder	92	7	19	3	4	4	*	<i>(309)</i>
Nanny or au pair	83	14	29	1	17	25	3	<i>(53)</i>
Babysitter	95	6	4	0	6	2	0	<i>(53)</i>
Informal provider								
Grandparent	37	6	34	1	10	16	17	<i>(71)</i>
Older sibling	[52]	[0]	[20]	[13]	[13]	[26]	[15]	<i>(16)</i>
Another relative	[50]	[0]	[31]	[5]	[16]	[31]	[5]	<i>(25)</i>
Friend or neighbour	[71]	[8]	[18]	[3]	[13]	[5]	[6]	<i>(43)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

How much were families paying per week?

Respondents 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 or 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 by others such as the funding of 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.
- 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 number of hours used or number of children in the household. Our analysis also takes no account of the fees policies of the relevant providers (because we did not collect this information). Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 suggest that it is common for providers to vary their fees from child to child (for reasons such as the age of the child, whether the child's siblings attends that provider too, and the number of hours per week the child attends for). For example, in 2010, 34 per cent of childminders varied their fees, as did 34 per cent of after-school clubs and 48 per cent of providers offering 'full day care'⁵³.
- The questionnaire asked respondents to state how much they had paid each of the childcare providers they had used during the reference week. They were then asked if the total amount they had paid for childcare in the reference week was the amount they usually paid. If the amount they had paid in the reference week was unusual, respondents were asked for the usual amount they paid for childcare per week.

Overall, the median amount families paid was £20 per week (see Table 5.3). The mean weekly payment was £48 and this reflected the fact that some families spent a very large amount on childcare (because means are more influenced by outlying values than medians). This figure was not significantly different from the 2009 mean weekly payment of £50.

There are of course large differences between the amounts paid to different types of providers. Families paying for a day nursery spent the highest median weekly amount (£82) followed by childminders (£60)⁵⁴. Childminders typically provide childcare for the full day, which means that parents can potentially pay for a much larger number of hours than for other providers who provide childcare outside the home like nursery classes and nursery schools.

The median weekly payments that families made to nursery schools⁵⁵ were lower than those made to day nurseries and childminders (£43, compared with £82 and £60). Since most

⁵³ See Table 9.3 and Table 9.4 in Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010 by Brind et al.* Department for Education: London.

⁵⁴ The figure for nanny/ au pair was higher (£154 median weekly payment) but the low number of respondents using a nanny/au pair (53) means that this estimate should be treated with caution.

⁵⁵ The questionnaire did not ask respondents whether the nursery school(s) they used were in the state or private sector.

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 childcare) and greater use of the entitlement to free early years provision by three- and four-year-olds.

Similarly the lower medians for playgroups (£11) and nursery classes (£8) reflect the fact that many children using these providers received at least some of their childcare 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 (33% compared with 67%) and the lower number of hours that parents used playgroups compared to nursery schools (a median of nine hours compared to 15 hours, see Table 2.10).

Table 5.3 Weekly payment for childcare, by provider type

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Use of childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>				
All	20	48	1.66	<i>(3124)</i>
Formal provider				
Nursery school	43	70	5.40	<i>(274)</i>
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	8	31	5.73	<i>(156)</i>
Day nursery	82	107	6.89	<i>(462)</i>
Playgroup or pre-school	11	28	5.09	<i>(335)</i>
Childminder	60	79	4.18	<i>(309)</i>
Nanny or au pair	154	190	18.97	<i>(53)</i>
Babysitter who came to home	25	39	8.83	<i>(53)</i>
Breakfast club	8	16	2.27	<i>(229)</i>
After-school club	9	19	1.28	<i>(1,605)</i>
Informal provider				
Grandparents	25	36	4.56	<i>(71)</i>

Generally there were no significant differences in the mean weekly payments for childcare by provider type between 2009 and 2010. However, the mean weekly payment for day nurseries did increase significantly (from £91 in 2009 to £107 in 2010), as did the mean weekly payment for grandparents (who typically received £26 in 2009, rising to £36 in 2010).

Looking over a two-year period (from 2008 to 2010) there was not a significant change in the mean weekly payment for day nurseries or grandparents. However, over this period there were significant increases in the mean weekly payment for nursery schools (£43 to £70), playgroups (£14 to £28), childminders (£59 to £79), and babysitters (£21 to £39). Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 show that most providers (88%) said in 2010 that they had increased their fees in the previous two years⁵⁶.

The difference in patterns of use between different provider types can make these overall weekly payments difficult to interpret. As discussed, nursery classes and playgroups were generally used for fewer hours than other providers such as day nurseries and catered for a higher proportion of three- and four-year-olds who were eligible for the entitlement to free

⁵⁶ See Table 9.10 in Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London.

early years provision. To help account for this Table C5.1 in Appendix C examines how these median weekly costs varied according to whether parents said that any payments were made for education/ childcare fees, or whether payments covered other services (refreshments, equipment, travel or trips) exclusively.

As shown earlier in Table 5.2, payments to nursery classes were usually for refreshments and other items. Where parents were only paying for these things, weekly medians were much lower, whilst the minority of parents who said they were paying education or childcare fees had a much higher weekly cost (see Table C5.1 in Appendix C). However, these findings should be treated with caution due to the low number of respondents using nursery classes.

Similarly, median payments to breakfast clubs were around twice as high when families were paying for childcare or education fees (£10 compared with £6 when families were just paying for refreshments, equipment and so on). The picture was similar with respect to after-school clubs (£11 for childcare or education fees compared with £5 for refreshments, equipment and so on). The median amount paid to grandparents was £30 for education and childcare and £20 for refreshments, equipment and so on. However, it must be remembered that only five per cent paid a grandparent for childcare at all (see Table 5.1).

Another way to understand the differences between the costs of different providers is to look at the amounts parents were paying per hour⁵⁷ (see Table 5.4). These findings mirror those described above. Parents paid the most for day nursery (£4.22 per hour) and childminders (£4.19 per hour)⁵⁸. Playgroups and nursery classes were significantly cheaper, with median hourly costs of £2.00 and £0.50 respectively - probably because these providers were often used solely for the entitlement to free early years provision for three- and four-year-olds (or for only a few hours above and beyond those that were free) and because, in the case of nursery classes, the majority of the costs were for refreshments (see Table 5.2).

⁵⁷ 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 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 (the denominator) but not in the cost paid by parents (the numerator).

⁵⁸ Again, nannies and au pairs were associated with the highest median hourly cost (£6.43) but the low base means that caution needs to be applied in interpreting this result.

Table 5.4 Amount family paid per hour, by provider type

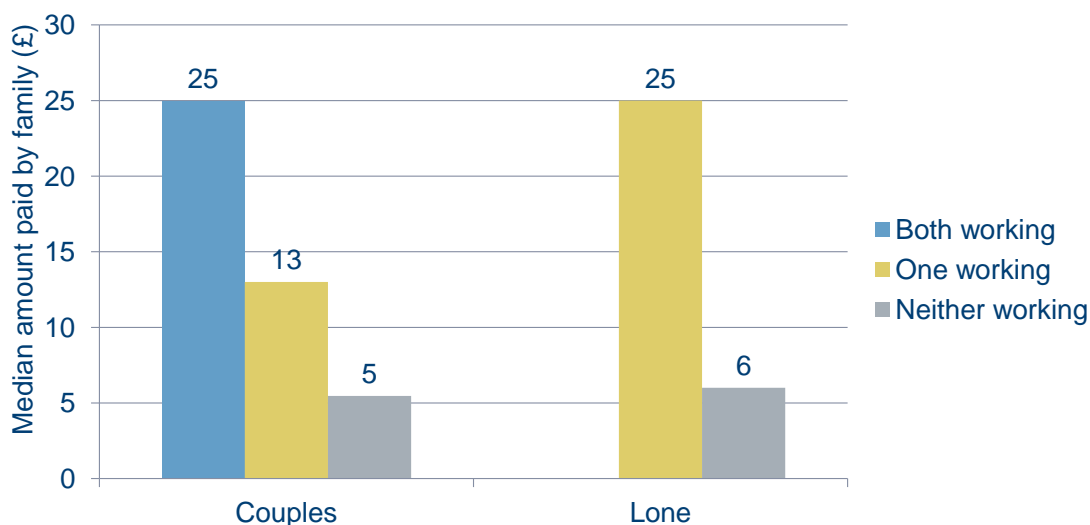
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Use of childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: Families paying for provider type</i>				
Formal provider				
Nursery school	3.61	3.88	0.24	(273)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	0.50	1.81	0.26	(153)
Day nursery	4.22	5.51	0.73	(462)
Playgroup or pre-school	2.00	2.60	0.27	(334)
Childminder	4.19	5.05	0.24	(309)
Nanny or au pair	6.43	15.82	0.81	(53)
Babysitter who came to home	3.04	3.92	0.31	(53)
Breakfast club	2.59	3.48	0.32	(229)
After-school club	2.60	4.77	0.34	(1,603)
Informal provider				
Grandparents	1.67	2.25	0.30	(71)

Did weekly payment vary by family characteristics?

The weekly payments varied for different types of family. This reflected differences in patterns of childcare use, the age of children in the household, the extent to which parents were working (see Chapter 2) and therefore how likely they were to be using formal childcare.

As can be seen from Figure 5.2, amongst families who paid for childcare, couples where both parents were working, and working lone parents reported identical weekly costs (£25). Where just one parent within a couple was working the median weekly costs dropped to £13 and amongst non-working parents (couples or lone parents) the median cost of weekly childcare fell to £5 and £6 respectively. There were no significant changes in the mean weekly payments by family work status between 2008 and 2010 or between 2009 and 2010.

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



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,124)

Source: Table C5.2 in Appendix C

Table C5.2 (in Appendix C) 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 their increased ability to pay. There has been a significant increase in the mean weekly payment made by families with annual incomes of under £10,000 between 2008 (£15) and 2010 (£26). However, there were no other significant changes in the mean weekly payment by income group between 2008 and 2010, and no significant changes between 2009 and 2010.

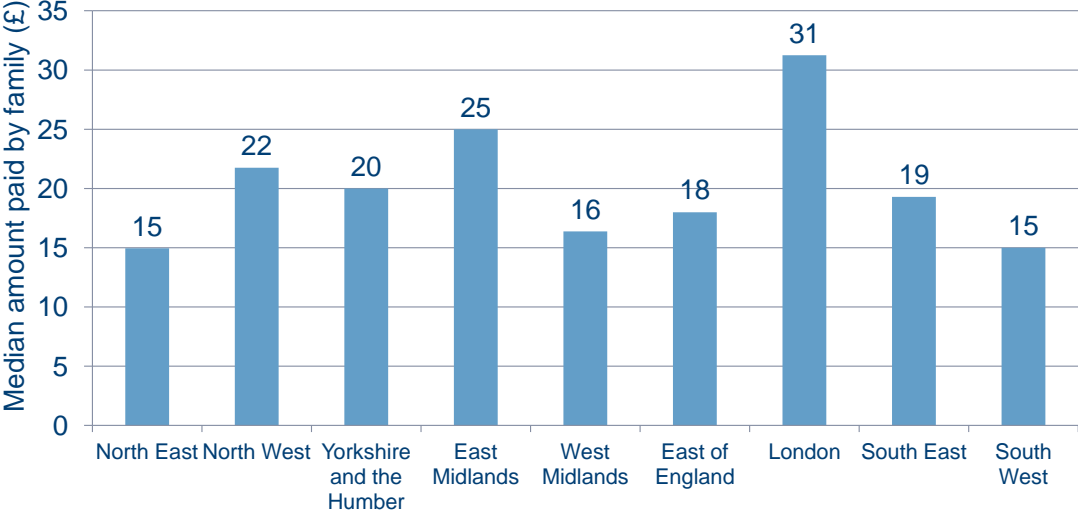
Families with pre-school children had higher median weekly payments than those with school-age children: £58 for those with pre-school children only, £25 for those with both pre-school and school-age children, compared with £12 for families with school-age children only. This reflects the fact that families with pre-school children were likely to be using more hours of paid childcare (see Chapter 2).

Figure 5.3 shows a wide variation in median weekly payments depending on where families lived. Family payments were highest in London (£31 per week) which reflects findings from earlier surveys in the series. The Childcare Affordability Programme has been working to address these higher costs. Families living in the North East and South West spent the lowest – an average (median) of £15 per week. There were no significant changes in the mean weekly payments by region from 2009, with the exception of the East of England, where the mean weekly payment fell from £53 to £39 in the 2010 survey. There were no significant changes in the mean weekly payments by region between 2008 and 2010.

Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 suggest that average hourly fees charged by providers do not entirely explain regional variation. London had the highest average hourly fees in 2010, and Figure 5.3 below shows that the median weekly payment made by parents was highest in London too. However, while average hourly fees were relatively high in the South East, South West and East of England in 2010 compared

with other regions, parents in these regions tended to make lower weekly payments for their childcare compared with other regions⁵⁹.

Figure 5.3 Median weekly payment for childcare, by Government Office Region



Base: Families who paid for childcare in reference week (3,124)
 Source: Table C5.3 in Appendix C

Families in the most deprived areas paid significantly less (almost half the amount) than those in all other areas (a median of £11 per week compared with £21 in the other 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. Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 suggest that average hourly fees charged by providers were lower in the 30 per cent most deprived areas in 2010, compared with the 70 per cent least deprived areas.⁶⁰

There were no significant changes in the mean weekly payments by area deprivation quintile between 2008 and 2010 and between 2009 and 2010. In 2010 there was no significant difference by rurality (analysis by rurality was not carried out in earlier surveys in the series).

⁵⁹ See Table 9.7 in Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London.
⁶⁰ See Table 9.6 in Department of Education (2011) *Childcare and early years providers survey 2010* by Brind et al. Department for Education: London

5.3 Financial help with childcare costs⁶¹

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.

As can be seen from Table 5.5⁶² childcare vouchers were the most popular form of financial help received from employers among families who paid for childcare (74%), followed by a direct contract with the formal provider (14%). Most employer support was implemented through salary sacrifice schemes (84%), with nine per cent as a flexible benefits package and eight per cent of parents receiving help in addition to salary. This kind of support predominantly benefited high earners: 73 per cent of families who received help from employers had a household income of £45,000 or more and a further 13 per cent earned between £30,000 and £44,999 (Table 5.7).

Table 5.5 Employer assistance with childcare costs

Financial help/income	%
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare and received financial help from employer</i>	<i>(340)</i>
Type of financial help from employer	
Childcare vouchers	74
Employer pays childcare provider directly	14
Childcare provider is at respondent's/ partner's work	3
Other	11
Nature of financial help	
Salary sacrifice	84
Flexible benefits package only	9
Addition to salary	8
Family annual income	
Under £10,000	1
£10,000 - £19,999	4
£20,000 - £29,999	9
£30,000 - £44,999	13
£45,000+	73

⁶¹ Respondents were asked whether they received any financial help towards childcare costs from a list of sources, such as: the local authority (e.g. the entitlement to free early years provision for three- and four-year-olds); an employer; or an ex-partner (financial assistance through the tax credit system was asked separately and is discussed in section 5.4). There was a problem with the routing of the questionnaire which led to too few people being asked the question and hence the results cannot be reliably reported.

⁶² The results are not directly comparable to 2009 because of a change in the routing of the relevant questions. In 2009 respondents were asked if they received help from an employer (among other organisations) with payments made to any providers they used. The follow-on questions asked about the type of financial help and its nature. In 2010 respondents were asked about the type of financial help and its nature **prior** to being asked a question about whether they received help from an employer (among other organisations).

5.4 How many families reported receiving tax credits?

Sixty-nine per cent of all families received Child Tax Credit, either on its own (41%) or along with Working Tax Credit (28%, see Table 5.6)⁶³. The proportion of all families who were receiving Child Tax Credits has not varied greatly since 2009. However, the proportion receiving Child Tax Credit only has significantly decreased since 2009 (from 46% to 41%), whilst the proportion receiving both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit has significantly increased (from 25% to 28%).

Table 5.6 Receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, 2004-2010

Tax credits received	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,691)	(7,054)	(7,004)	(6,667)	(6,675)
None	36	34	32	29	31
Child Tax Credit only	38	42	43	46	41
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	27	25	25	25	28

Looking just at working families, Table 5.7 shows that a similar proportion of working families were receiving Child Tax Credit only compared to both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (32% and 33% respectively). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of working lone parents were in receipt of both forms of credit, compared to 39 per cent of couples with one parent working and 19 per cent of dual-working couples.

Table 5.7 Working families' receipt of Working Tax Credit

Tax credits received	Couple both working	Couple one working	Lone parent working	All working families
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Working families</i>	(2,855)	(1,734)	(740)	(5,329)
Child Tax Credit only	36	32	18	32
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	19	39	73	33

5.5 How much tax credit were families receiving?

Nine in ten (89%) families were able to state how much Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit they received (table not shown). Just over one-third (36%) of respondents who said they received either Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit were able to look at an HMRC statement while answering the questions (table not shown). It is assumed that these respondents gave more accurate information about their Tax Credits than they may have done otherwise. Indeed 95 per cent of those able to look at an HMRC statement were able to state how much Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit they received, compared with 88 per cent of those who did not look at an HMRC statement (table not shown).

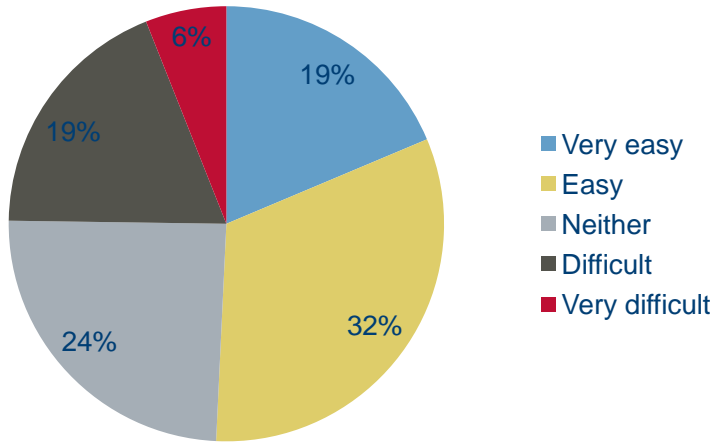
⁶³ Families are eligible for Child Tax Credit if they have at least one child and an income of less than £50,000 per year. Families are eligible for Working Tax Credit if they have children and at least one partner works for 16 hours or more a week and are on a low income. Since not all families interviewed would have been eligible to receive tax credits, these figures reflect the overall proportion of the entire population of families with children aged 0 to 14 who were receiving tax credits, not the take-up rate of Tax Credits among the eligible population.

Families receiving both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit received a median of £117 per week (the mean figure was only a few pence different) (table not shown). Families receiving Child Tax Credit only received a median of £41 per week (the mean was £55) (table not shown). The mean figures were not significantly different from the 2009 figures.

5.6 Difficulties with childcare costs

Respondents who had paid for childcare in the last week were asked how easy or difficult they found it to meet their costs given their family income. One-quarter of families found it difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs: around half said it was easy or very easy to pay for their childcare, whilst around one-quarter said they found it neither easy nor difficult to meet their childcare costs (Figure 5.4). There was no significant change in the proportion of families reporting it was difficult or very difficult to cover their childcare costs from 2009.

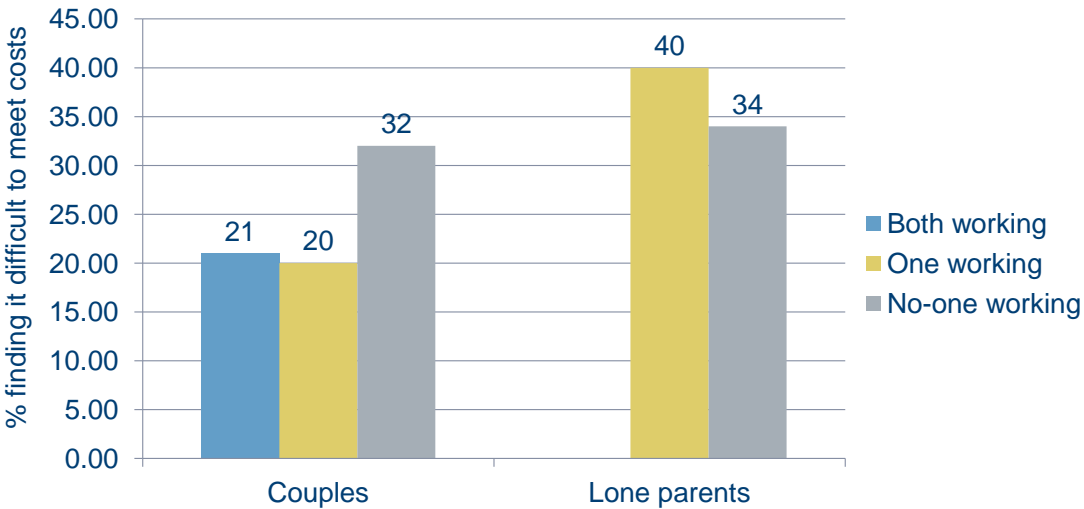
Figure 5.4 Difficulty paying for childcare



Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week (2,360)
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 to find it difficult or very difficult to cover childcare costs (38%⁶⁴ compared to 21%, 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 (40%⁶⁵ compared to 21%⁶⁶ of couples where both were working, see Figure 5.5). There were no significant changes in difficulty paying for childcare by family work status between 2009 and 2010.

Figure 5.5 Difficulty paying for childcare, by family work status



Base: All families who paid for childcare in last week (2,360)

Source: Table C5.4 in Appendix C

As might be expected the level of difficulty families experienced in paying for childcare varied by family annual income. Families with annual incomes of £45,000 or more were least likely to experience difficulty and those with incomes of under £10,000 were most likely to have difficulties (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 most likely to find it difficult to pay (Table C5.5 in Appendix C), and those with the lowest bills least likely. This is despite the fact that higher spending on childcare was associated with families being in work and having higher incomes – in other words characteristics that are associated with reduced difficulty in paying.

⁶⁴ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C5.4 because of rounding.
⁶⁵ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C5.4 because of rounding.
⁶⁶ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C5.4 because of rounding.

5.7 Summary

A major finding from earlier years of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 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 were often less clear about the details of the financial help they received from others or through tax credits⁶⁷.

Overall, 57 per cent of families who used childcare in the reference week reported that they had paid for some or all of that childcare. More families paid formal providers (63%) than informal providers, although a small proportion of families who used relatives and friends did pay them (6%). There were significant decreases in the proportions of parents paying for nursery schools between 2009 and 2010 (from 68% to 56%) and playgroups (from 68% to 60%).

There were wide variations in the overall median weekly amount paid by families depending on their circumstances and which providers they used. The median weekly amount paid to providers was £20. 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 ages of the children and different patterns of childcare use. Families paid the most for day nurseries that offered childcare for a full day⁶⁸.

Between 2008 and 2010 there were significant increases in the mean weekly payment for nursery schools (£43 to £70), playgroups (£14 to £28), childminders (£59 to £79), and babysitters (£21 to £39). Data from The Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010 show that most providers (88%) said in 2010 that they had increased their fees in the previous two years.

Sixty-nine per cent of families received Child Tax Credit, 41 per cent on its own and 28 per cent with Working Tax Credit (WTC)⁶⁹. Families receiving WTC and Child Tax Credit received a median of £117 per week, whereas families receiving Child Tax Credit only received a median of £41 per week.

Lone parents and low income families were most likely to say they struggled with their childcare costs. There has been a significant increase in the mean weekly payment made by families with annual incomes of under £10,000 between 2008 (£15) and 2010 (£26). However, there were no other significant changes in the mean weekly payment by income group between 2008 and 2010, and no significant changes between 2009 and 2010.

Overall, 25 per cent of families paying for childcare found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs (no significant change from 2009). However, half said it was easy or very easy to pay for their childcare.

⁶⁷ For a full description of these issues see section 5.2 in Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents 2008* by Speight et al.

⁶⁸ The figure for nanny/ au-pair was actually higher but the low base makes it less reliable.

⁶⁹ 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 low income.

6. Factors affecting decisions about childcare

6.1 Introduction

Over the last decade the availability of formal childcare has increased⁷⁰ and the introduction of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit aimed to make childcare more affordable. Understanding what factors influence the take-up of childcare has become a key issue for policy-makers, particularly as evidence suggests that disadvantaged families are less likely to use formal childcare (see section 2.5 and section 2.6). Previous surveys in the series have demonstrated that the decision-making process of parents is complex as it is often interconnected with decisions about income and employment (e.g. whether to work and how much to work). Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain whether parents do not use childcare because they do not want or need it, or because they feel they are unable to afford it. Indeed, in the current economic climate there has been significant interest in whether the cost of childcare inhibits parents from working.

Previously, a preference for parental childcare has been presented as the core reason why parents decided not to use childcare (Smith et al 2010). This may have been due to the parent's family life and values, or opinions about the childcare available in their local area. Therefore, this chapter seeks to gauge the levels of knowledge and perceptions that parents held about locally available childcare. For the first time in the survey series, parents' assessments about the flexibility of childcare were also explored. They were asked a series of questions to determine how suitable childcare provision is for their needs, with a focus on particular periods where they require childcare, and what changes would make childcare more convenient.

The chapter begins by outlining what information sources were used by parents and how useful they found them (section 6.2). Parents' perceptions of childcare in their local area in relation to availability, quality and affordability are discussed in section 6.3. Further sections then focus on specific sub-groups of parents who reported that they did not use childcare and their reasons for doing so. These sub-groups include families with school-age children who were not using breakfast and after-school clubs (section 6.4); families who did not use any childcare in the last year (section 6.5); parents of children aged nought to two who were not in nursery education (section 6.6); and families with ill or disabled children (section 6.7). Finally, the chapter ends with parents' perspectives on the flexibility of childcare with reference to how well provision met their needs and whether there were any other providers they wished to use (section 6.8).

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

⁷⁰ This policy initiative was outlined in the 1998 National Childcare Strategy aimed at helping families access good quality childcare by improving affordability, availability and the quality of care.

6.2 Access to information about childcare

Providing detailed and easily accessible information about the local availability of childcare has been a key element of government policy during the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series. Local authorities have a duty to provide information to parents, though there are a range of additional sources available including Children's Centres, other government-funded organisations (e.g. Jobcentre Plus), as well as the internet.

Information sources used by parents

Seventy-one per cent of parents accessed at least one source of information about childcare in the last year (see Table 6.1), with over one-quarter (29%) accessing no information at all. There was a significant increase in the proportion of parents accessing at least one source of information about childcare between 2009 (63%) and 2010 (71%). This was largely accounted for by a significant increase in the proportion accessing information via schools. Twenty-three per cent did so in 2009, rising to 33 per cent in 2010. The only other sources of information significantly more likely to be accessed more in 2010 than 2009 were libraries, and other internet sites. Several sources were accessed significantly less in 2010 compared with 2009: Jobcentre Plus, Childcare Link⁷¹, employers and Yellow Pages.

Parents were most likely to seek advice from individuals or organisations that they were familiar with and encounter on a regular basis, such as friends or relatives (classed here as word of mouth) and school (39% and 33% respectively). Schools were likely to be mentioned frequently because of the large proportion of families who used breakfast and after-school clubs (see section 2.2) which were often based on a school site.

Only small proportions of parents accessed official sources of information. In the last year Sure Start/Children's Centres (11%), local authorities (7%), Family Information Services (6%) and health visitors (6%) were used by a significant minority of parents. In addition, local advertising and libraries were used by almost one in ten parents (8% and 7% respectively), as was the internet (7%). A smaller proportion of parents used their childcare providers (5%).

Parents who used formal childcare providers were more likely to have accessed a source of information about childcare in the last year. More than three-quarters of parents (78%) who had used a formal provider in the reference week had used at least one source of information compared to 67 per cent of informal childcare users and 53 per cent of parents who had used no childcare.

Generally, the sources of information used by parents varied depending on the type of provider they used. Parents using a formal childcare provider were significantly more likely than other parents to access information from 11 of the sources listed: word of mouth, school, Sure Start/Children's Centres, local authorities, Family Information Services, ChildcareLink, the Direct.Gov website, local advertising, local libraries, childcare providers and other internet sites.

⁷¹ Childcare Link was a government website providing information on local and national childcare. It closed in October 2009.

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

	Childcare used in reference week			
	Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No provider used	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(4,740)	(759)	(1,215)	(6,714)
Source of information				
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	46	35	23	39
School	36	31	26	33
Local Authority/ NHS				
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	12	10	8	11
Local Authority	9	5	4	7
Family Information Services	7	4	2	6
Health visitor/ clinic	7	6	5	6
Doctor's surgery	3	2	2	3
Other National Government Sources				
Jobcentre Plus/ Benefits Office	2	2	2	2
ChildcareLink (national helpline/ website)	2	1	1	2
Direct.Gov website	5	4	2	4
Other Local Sources				
Local advertising	9	6	5	8
Local library	8	5	5	7
Childcare provider	7	3	1	5
Employer	2	2	2	2
Yellow Pages	1	*	*	*
Other Internet site	9	5	4	7
Other	2	3	3	2
None	22	33	47	29

Formal childcare usage was also related to family characteristics (see Table C6.1 and Table C6.2 in Appendix C). As demonstrated in section 2.4, families with children aged three to four were more likely to use childcare than families with older children, because of the universal entitlement to free early years provision. It therefore follows that parents with pre-school children had a greater need to access information sources. They were particularly more likely to use word of mouth and Sure Start/Children's Centres than parents of school-age children. In contrast, as might be expected, parents of school-age children were more likely to use schools as a source of childcare information, again, this is because they were likely to receive information from the school about breakfast and after-school clubs.

Factors such as work status and family annual income also had a bearing on the sources of childcare information accessed by parents. Section 2.7 demonstrated that use of formal childcare (for pre-school and school-age children) was independently related to the work status and annual income of a family. Correspondingly, families on lower incomes (less than £19,000) were less likely than higher income families to mention word of mouth as a source of information, and those with incomes of less than £10,000 were much less likely to mention schools (Table C6.2 in Appendix C). This followed the same pattern of results as the 2009 survey (Smith et al 2010).

Families on very low annual incomes (less than £10,000) were significantly more likely than higher income families (£45,000 or more) to mention Sure Start/Children's Centres (13%

compared to 8%), health visitors (8% compared to 5%) and the JobCentre Plus (7% compared to 1%). Disadvantaged families were more likely to contact these sources because some were not working and therefore may have received benefits through Jobcentre Plus, or because Children's Centres were initially situated in disadvantaged areas.

Helpfulness of the sources of information about childcare

Respondents were asked how useful they found the most commonly used sources of information about childcare. Overall, parents were relatively pleased with the help they received. Table 6.2 illustrates that word of mouth, health visitors, Family Information Services, schools and Sure Start or Children's Centres were all described as very or quite helpful by over 80 per cent of parents. The remaining sources: local authorities, local advertising and the Jobcentre Plus were still perceived as very/quite helpful by over 70 per cent of parents. There was a significant increase in 2010 in the proportion saying the following were helpful: word of mouth (89% saying they were helpful compared with 81% in 2009), health visitors (89% compared with 84%), schools (86% compared with 83%), and local advertising (78% compared with 73%).

The source of information regarded the least helpful by parents was the Jobcentre Plus with 73 per cent suggesting it was very or quite helpful and one in ten (10%) describing it as not very or not at all helpful. Given that this source was one of the most likely to be used by low income families, this is of concern (see Table C6.2 in Appendix C).

Table 6.2 Helpfulness of main childcare information sources

Source of information	Very/ quite helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Not very/ not at all helpful	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families using particular information source</i>				
Word of mouth	89	9	3	(2,792)
Family Information Services	84	9	7	(404)
Health visitor	89	5	5	(474)
School	86	9	4	(2,357)
Sure Start/ Children's Centres	84	10	6	(833)
Local Authority	77	13	10	(469)
Local Advertising	78	14	8	(498)
Jobcentre Plus	73	17	10	(186)

NB: Row percentages.

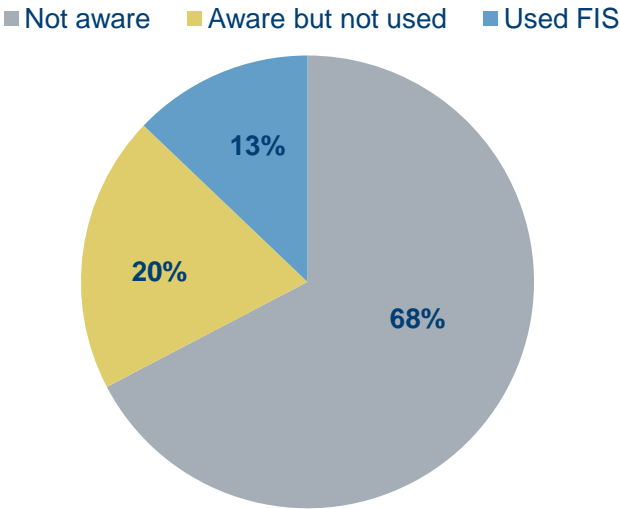
Awareness and use of Family Information Services (FIS)

The Childcare Act 2006 obliges local authorities to provide information about childcare providers (both registered and non-registered) to parents. This is most commonly delivered through individual Family Information Services (FIS)⁷² which are funded and run (or subcontracted) by local authorities. Family Information Services act as a central information point for parents by providing information about childcare and early years services in the local area, the entitlement of free early years provision, and childcare settings that are suitable for children with disabilities or special educational needs.

⁷² Prior to April 2008, local authorities ran a precursor to the FIS, the Children's Information Services. Therefore questions in the survey refer to both Children's Information Services and Family Information Services.

Around one-third of parents (32%⁷³) had heard of the Family Information Services, and 13 per cent had previously used it. However, overall awareness was low with over two-thirds (68%) of parents reporting they were not aware of the service (see Figure 6.1). It is possible that some respondents received information about the service but had either not recalled this, or had not been aware it was provided by the FIS or similar service. There was no significant change from 2009. Those who had used the FIS to get information about childcare in the local area were satisfied with the service they received, with 84 per cent reporting that it was very or quite helpful (Table 6.2).

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



Base: All families (6,723)
 Source: Table C6.3 in Appendix C

The 2009 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (Smith et al 2010) found that disadvantaged families were less likely to use any type of formal childcare, and were therefore less likely to contact the FIS. They were less likely than higher income families to be aware of FIS (27 per cent of families with a family annual income under £10,000 were familiar with the service compared with 40 per cent of families whose income was £45,000 or more) (table not shown).

⁷³ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Figure 6.1 because of rounding.

Levels of information parents receive

Just under half of parents (45%) reported that they had received enough information about childcare services in their local area (see Table 6.3). Thirty-eight per cent of parents felt they had too little information, though a very small proportion (1%) state they have too much. These figures show no significant difference compared to those for 2009.

Table 6.3 Level of information about childcare in local area, 2004-2010

	Survey year				
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010
Level of information	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,797)	(7,136)	(7,074)	(6,708)	(6,722)
About right	38	43	43	45	45
Too much	1	1	2	1	1
Too little	38	35	37	38	38
Not sure or don't know	23	21	19	16	16

Parents using formal childcare were more likely to have an opinion about the amount of information on local childcare services available to them, as might be expected. Eleven per cent of parents using formal childcare were unsure about how much information is available, significantly lower than the 20 per cent of parents using an informal provider and the 27 per cent of parents who did not use any childcare in the reference week (see Table C6.4 in Appendix C). Formal childcare users were also more likely to report that they had the right amount of information available: for half of parents (50%), the level of information they received was about right, compared to 37 per cent of parents using an informal childcare provider and 35 per cent of parents not using any provider.

Those groups more likely to use formal childcare were also more likely to report they had the right level of information about childcare. For example, couple families were more likely than lone parents to have the information they needed (47% compared to 40%), as were those with higher incomes (50% of those earning over £45,000 or more compared to 39% earning less than £10,000) and parents who have pre-school children⁷⁴ (47% compared to 42% parents of school-age children only (see Table C6.4 in Appendix C). As one might expect, those already in touch with formal childcare providers would have access to information from these providers, and hence would be more likely to feel they had the right level of information.

The number of children in the family was also a relevant factor. Parents of two children were more likely to have enough information than parents of one child (49% compared to 42%). One might expect this to be the case as parents with more than one child will be more experienced parents, likely over time to have developed a greater knowledge of local childcare services.

We used multivariate logistic regression to look at what family characteristics were independently associated with whether or not families have the right level of childcare information. These were:

⁷⁴ Parents of pre-school children were significantly more likely to use formal childcare (60% did so compared to 46% of parents of school-age children).

- Age of children: families with both pre-school and school-age children were more likely than those with school-age children only to report they had the right level of information.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was of Indian background were more likely than those where the selected child was White British to feel they had the right level of information.
- Rurality: families in rural areas were more likely than those in urban areas to feel they had the right level of information.
- Use of childcare: families that used only informal, or no childcare, were less likely to report they had the right level of information compared with families who had used formal childcare.
- Family annual income: families with annual incomes under £20,000 were less likely than those with incomes of £45,000 or more to report they had the right level of information.

6.3 Perceptions of provision in the local area

Parents' knowledge of local childcare provision

Respondents were asked a series of questions about childcare and early years provision, including their perceptions of the availability of places, quality of childcare and the affordability of places in their local area. Between 20 and 30 per cent of respondents found these questions difficult to answer: 23 per cent of parents were unsure about the availability of childcare in their local area, 28 per cent were unsure about the quality and 29 per cent were unsure about affordability (see Table C6.5, Table C6.8, and Table C6.11 in Appendix C).

As with the views on the availability of information, the types of families 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. For instance, 21 per cent of dual-working couples were unsure about whether enough childcare places were available in their local area, though this was the case for 32 per cent of couples where neither parent is in work (see Table C6.6 in Appendix C).

As the proportion of respondents unsure of their answer was relatively high (at between 20 and 30 per cent), we used multivariate regression to establish whether certain groups of respondents were more likely to give a view than others. This showed that the use of childcare was most significantly associated with families being unable to form a view. As might be expected, those using only informal, or no childcare were less likely to be able to give a view than those using formal childcare. Other characteristics independently associated with being unable to form a view were:

- Age of children: families with both pre-school and school-age children and families with pre-school children only, were more likely to be able to form a view than families with school-age children only.
- Rurality: families in rural areas were more likely than those in urban areas to form a view.
- Ethnicity: in particular families where the selected child was classified Other White or Other Asian were less likely than families where the selected child was White British to form a view.

- Family annual income: those families unwilling or unable to state their annual income were less likely than families with incomes of £45,000 or more to form a view.
- Government Office Region: families in the East Midlands and South East were less likely to be able to form a view than those in the North East.

Perceptions of availability

Parents' perceptions of the availability of childcare in their local area were mixed. Overall, almost half of parents (44%) felt that the right number of childcare places were provided, whilst one-third (32%) stated there were not enough (see Figure 6.2).

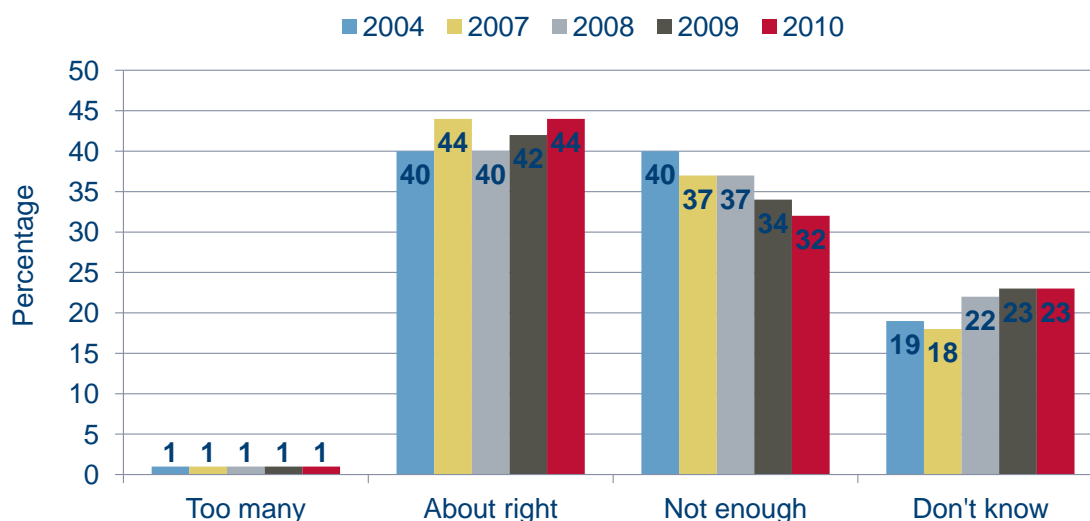
Since 2004, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents saying the number of childcare places is about right (44% compared to 40% in 2004), with a decline in the proportion of parents reporting there are not enough childcare places (32% compared with 40% in 2004). There has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents who were unsure (23% compared to 19% in 2004)⁷⁵. However, there has been no significant change in perceptions of availability between 2009 and 2010.

As with parents' views on the availability of information (section 6.2), those who use formal and informal childcare were more likely to be able to answer questions about the availability of childcare places in their local area and say that it was about right. Seventeen per cent of parents using a formal provider stated they did not know whether there were sufficient childcare places in their local area compared to 27 per cent of parents using informal providers and 37 per cent of parents using no childcare in the reference week (see Table C6.6 in Appendix C).

There was no significant variation in perceptions of childcare availability between families with one or more parents working atypical hours, other working families and other workless families.

⁷⁵ A slightly different type of significant testing has been used to compare the 2010 results with those from 2004. This is because the report authors did not have access to the 2004 dataset and hence were unable to calculate the standard errors of the 2004 estimates using complex samples formulae. We have therefore estimated the 2004 standard errors by assuming the same design effect for the relevant question in 2004 as was found in 2010 (as the survey design is largely unchanged from 2004). We believe this assumption is more robust than the alternative method of estimating the 2004 standard errors using standard formulae which do not take into account the complex sample design.

Figure 6.2 Perceptions of availability of local childcare places, 2004 - 2010



Base: All families (6,723)

Source: Table C6.5 in Appendix C

When excluding families unable to give a view, a multivariate regression (controlling for childcare used and other characteristics) showed that the selected child's SEN status was most significantly associated with families feeling there was the right amount of childcare available in the area. Those with children with SEN were less likely than other families to feel there was the right amount.

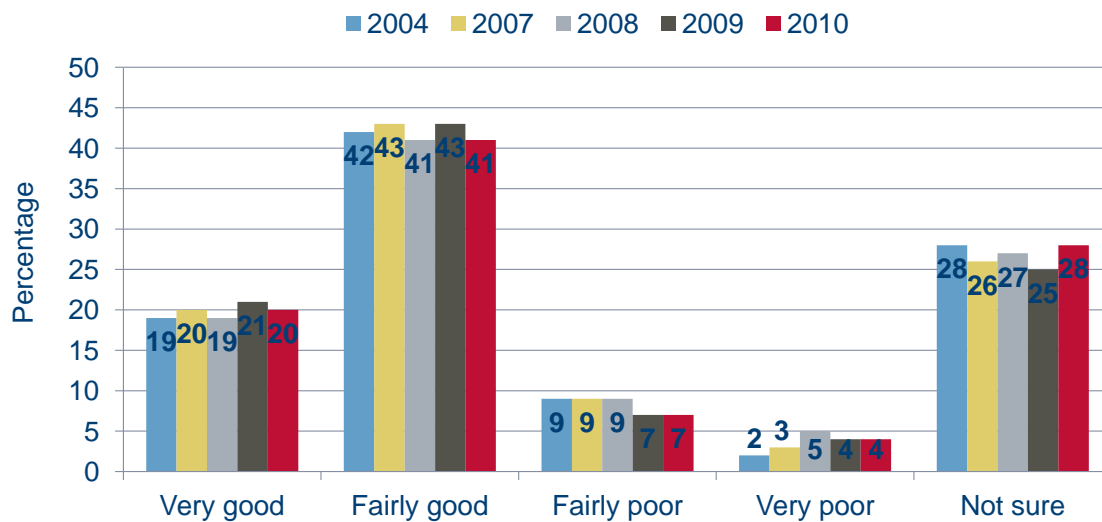
Other characteristics independently associated with feeling there was the right amount of childcare available were:

- Family annual income: those with annual incomes of £20,000 to £29,999 and those unable or unwilling to state their annual income were more likely than others to feel there was the right amount of childcare available.
- Use of childcare: families that did not use formal childcare were less likely to feel there was the right amount of childcare available.
- Family type and work status: working lone parents were less likely than working couples to feel there was the right amount of childcare available.

Perceptions of quality

There was no significant change in parents' perceptions of the quality of childcare in their area between 2004 and 2010. In 2010, 20 per cent of parents perceived that the quality of childcare was very good and a further 41 per cent of parents believed it was fairly good (Figure 6.3). The proportion saying they were unsure has significantly increased, from 25 per cent in 2009 to 28 per cent in 2010.

Figure 6.3 Perceptions of quality of local childcare places, 2004 - 2010



Base: All families (6,723)

Source: Table C6.8 in Appendix C

Looking at negative responses, there was a significant variation by whether a family contained a working parent (see Table C6.9 in Appendix C). While 11 per cent of families where a parent worked atypical hours and 10 per cent of families where a parent worked normal hours felt the childcare in their local area was very or fairly poor, this figure was 14 per cent among non-working families.

A multivariate regression, excluding families unable to give a view, once controlling for childcare used and other characteristics, showed that use of childcare and whether the selected child had a SEN were the variables most significantly associated with families' perception of quality of childcare. Those not using formal childcare and those with children with SEN were less likely than other families to feel there was good quality childcare.

Other characteristics independently associated with perceptions of quality of childcare were:

- Number of children: families with two children were more likely than those with more children to feel there was good quality childcare.
- Age of children: families with both pre-school and school-age children were more likely to think there was good quality childcare than families with school-age children only.
- Family type and work status: working lone parents were less likely than working couples to feel there was good quality childcare.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was classified as Other Mixed were less likely than families where the selected child was White British to think that there was good quality childcare.

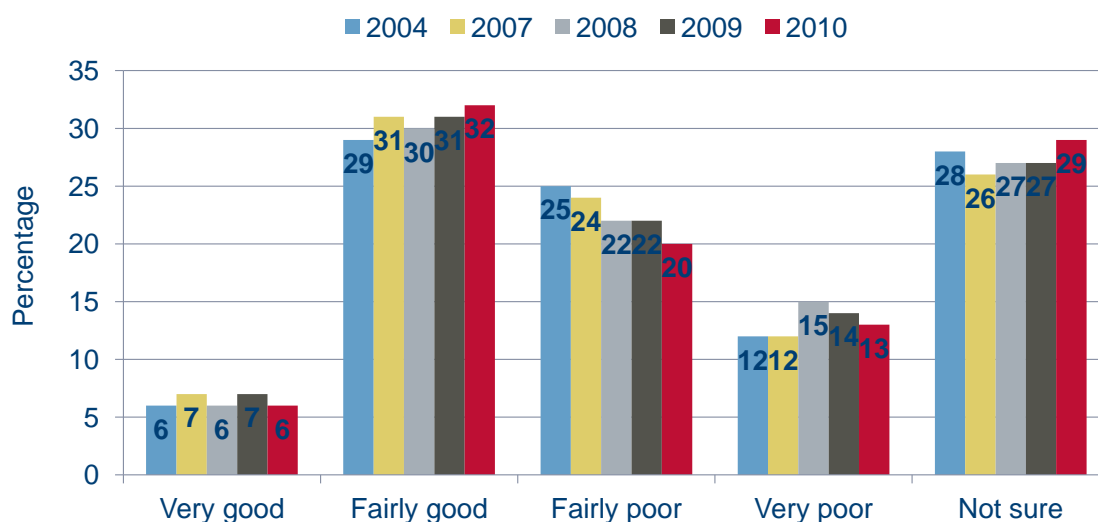
Perceptions of affordability

Parents' perceptions of affordability were the most evenly split of all three measures of local childcare (see Figure 6.4). The proportion assessing it as good (very or fairly good) was 38 per cent, similar to the proportion who rated it as poor (fairly and very poor) at 33 per cent. The proportion assessing it as good has significantly increased since 2004 (from 35% to 38%) with a significant decrease in those rating it as poor (from 37% to 33%).

Looking back over a shorter period, there were no significant changes in perceptions of affordability from 2009.

There was no significant variation between families with one or more parents working atypical hours, other working families and other workless families (see Table C6.12 in Appendix C).

Figure 6.4 Perceptions of affordability of local childcare places, 2004 - 2010



Base: All families (6,273)

Source: Table C6.11 in Appendix C

A multivariate regression, excluding families unable to give a view, once controlling for childcare used and other characteristics, showed that a number of variables were significantly associated with families' perceptions of affordability of childcare:

- Number of children: families with one or two children were more likely than those with more children to rate the affordability of childcare as good.
- Family type and work status: couples with one parent in work or where neither parents worked were more likely than working couples to rate the affordability of childcare as good.
- Use of childcare: families not using formal childcare were less likely to rate the affordability of childcare as good.

- SEN: families of children with SEN were less likely than other families to rate the affordability of childcare as good.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was classified Black Caribbean, and, in particular, White and Asian were less likely than other families to rate the affordability of childcare as good.
- Family annual income: those with incomes of £10,000 to £29,999 were less likely than other families to rate the affordability of childcare as good.

6.4 Demand for childcare outside of school hours

Extended services through schools were introduced in 2005 to increase childcare provision to meet the needs of families. Consequently, schools may offer learning opportunities or extra-curricular activities outside of school hours to children aged 5 to 14. These additional services can be in a wide variety of areas ranging from homework help, sports activities and art clubs and can take the form of breakfast or after-school clubs.

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

Respondents who had not used before- or after-school clubs though they were available were asked for the reasons why they did not use activities run by the school before the school day starts or after school (see Table 6.4). First we examine activities before-school, and then after-school activities.

Among those families with a school-age child who had not used a breakfast or after-school club in the reference week, 54 per cent said their child's school did offer before-school provision, and 71 per cent said the school offered after-school provision, whether before or after 6pm (table not shown).

The most common reasons provided by parents who were not using before-school clubs were related to the child or parents' choice (Table 6.4). Parents preferred to look after their child(ren) at home (31%), stated that their child(ren) did not want to go (25%) and also reported that they had no need to be away from their child(ren) (24%). Fewer families appeared to face constraints concerning the actual nature of the childcare itself (e.g. suitability for their child's age) at before-school clubs. Affordability was an issue for 11 per cent of parents, whilst eight per cent said the times were not suitable and four per cent felt the activities were not suitable for their child's age.

Where after-school clubs had not been taken up this was more likely to be due to choice, as with before-school clubs, though here it would seem that children had a greater input. Thirty-nine per cent of parents reported that their child did not want to go, whilst 20 per cent preferred to look after their children at home, 11 per cent had no need to be away from their children and four per cent attended activities elsewhere. Suitability, cost, timing, accessibility and transport constraints were each mentioned by less than ten per cent of parents.

Table 6.4 Parents' reasons for not using before/ after-school clubs⁷⁶

	Before-school	After-school
	%	%
<i>Base: Families with child(ren) aged 5 to 14 who did not use a before- or after-school club at school</i>	(980)	(1,213)
Child or parents' choice		
Child(ren) didn't want to go/ didn't like it	25	39
No need to be away from children	24	11
Prefer to look after children at home	31	20
Attended activities elsewhere	n/a	4
Constraints around nature of childcare		
Not suitable for child's age	4	8
Too expensive/ cannot afford	11	8
Difficult combining activities with work/ times not suitable	8	5
Full/ could not get a place	2	4
Transport difficulties	3	4
Other/ one-off	6	10

Respondents who said their school did not offer breakfast clubs were asked if their child's school provided access to any childcare or activities before school (whether run by the school itself or by other organisations, on or off site). Fifty-seven per cent said their school did not offer any before school activities, 24 per cent were not sure, and 14 per cent said there were some activities offered on the school site. Four per cent said they thought there were activities but they did not know where they were located, and one per cent said their school offered off-site activities before school (table not shown).

As regards after-school clubs, the picture was relatively similar. Forty-eight per cent of parents who said their school did not offer an after-school club said their school did not offer any after-school activities, 26 per cent were unsure, and 19 per cent said some activities were offered on the school site. Six per cent said they thought there were activities but could not say where they were, and one per cent said the school offered after-school activities off-site (table not shown).

6.5 Reasons for not using any childcare in the last year

Overall 22 per cent of parents reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education (table not shown). The majority of parents who had not used childcare suggested this was because they had a preference for parental childcare (75%) (see Table 6.5). A significant minority also reported that their children were old enough to look after themselves (15%), or that they were rarely away from their children (13%). Very small numbers had no need to use childcare (2%) or reported that they could fit work around their children (1%). This suggests that for most families, not using childcare in the last year was mainly down to choice rather than because of a particular constraint. However, one in ten parents (10%) stated that they had not used childcare in the last year because they had been unable to

⁷⁶ In 2009, this table only presented data about the attendance of before- and after-school clubs in the autumn school term. In the 2010 series, data for the whole school year are shown to display the overall picture.

afford it. Trust, quality, availability, lack of special care, transport problems and a previous bad experience were mentioned by less than three per cent of parents.

Table 6.5 Reasons for not using childcare in the last year

Reasons	%
<i>Base: Families who had not used any childcare in the last year</i>	<i>(601)</i>
Choices	
I would rather look after my child(ren) myself	75
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	15
I rarely need to be away from my children	13
No need to use childcare	2
My/ partners work hours or conditions fit around children	1
Constraints	
I cannot afford childcare	10
My children need special care	3
There are no childcare providers that I could trust	3
The quality of childcare is not good enough	3
I cannot find a childcare place as local providers are full	2
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1
I have had a bad experience of using childcare in the past	1

In order to ascertain the **extent** to which parents' decisions about childcare were the result of choices rather than constraints, parents who had not used childcare in the last year were asked whether any informal childcare providers would be available to them for both one-off and regular childcare. Twenty-seven per cent of parents (and three per cent of all parents) had no informal childcare providers available as a one-off (Table 6.6). There was no significant variation by region or by rurality. This suggests that overall, most parents who were not using a formal childcare provider could find alternative forms of childcare elsewhere.

The availability of informal childcare to be used on a **regular** basis was significantly lower. More than half of parents (53%) who had not used a formal childcare provider in the last year (and six per cent of all parents) reported that they lacked access to an informal provider which they were able to use regularly. Again there was no significant variation by region or by rurality.

Four out of the five providers of informal childcare listed were more likely to be used for one-off than regular childcare: grandparents (33%), another relative (25%), friends/neighbours (22%), and older siblings (19%). However, grandparents and other relatives were also the most commonly mentioned informal carers for regular childcare (22% and 12% respectively).

Table 6.6 Availability of informal childcare

Informal childcare available...	... as one-off	... for regular childcare
	%	%
<i>Base: Families who had not used any childcare in the last year</i>	(600)	(599)
Ex-partner	9	6
Grandparents	33	22
Older sibling	19	11
Another relative	25	12
Friend/neighbour	22	8
None	27	53

Respondents 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 (Table 6.7). For the majority of parents there were no relevant factors as 81 per cent reported that they did not need to use childcare. For the remainder of parents, the most popular factor was affordability (mentioned by 11% of those not using any childcare). Flexibility, availability in school holidays, greater information about childcare, higher quality childcare and convenience were mentioned by a very small proportion of parents not using childcare (4% or fewer for each).

Table 6.7 Changes that would facilitate formal childcare use

Change needed to start using formal childcare	%
<i>Base: Families who had not used any formal childcare in the last year</i>	(834)
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	4
More information about formal childcare available	4
Higher quality childcare	3
Childcare provider closer to where I work	1
Other	4
None (I don't need to use childcare)	81

6.6 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged nought to two years

Given the importance of nursery education for young children (see references in Smith et al 2010, page 101), this section focuses on parents where the selected child was aged nought to two had not used nursery education in the reference week.

Overall, 67 per cent of children aged nought to two had not received nursery education in the reference week (table not shown). Of those nought- to two-year-olds who had not received nursery education in the reference week, 61 per cent had not been in childcare at all, 29 per cent had received informal childcare only, seven per cent had received childcare from other formal providers only, and three per cent had received a combination of formal and informal childcare (table not shown).

The majority of families were not using a nursery provider due to personal choice rather than a particular constraint: 57 per cent reported that they felt their child was too young whilst 30 per cent stated it was due to personal preference. For 17 per cent of parents, the affordability of nursery education was an issue, and nine per cent had problems with availability (Table 6.8). There are no significant differences between the reasons provided by work status and family type.

Table 6.8 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged nought to two, by family type and work status

Reasons	Couple families			Lone parents		All
	Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families where selected child aged nought to two and not using nursery education</i>	(252)	(268)	(84)	(27)	(144)	(775)
Child too young	61	52	53	[63]	59	57
Personal preference	24	35	38	[25]	31	30
Cost problems	20	17	8	[4]	19	17
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	8	10	12	[17]	8	9
Other reason	2	1	1	[4]	1	1

Two out of the five reasons listed for not using nursery education for children aged nought to two differed significantly depending on the type of childcare used in the reference week (Table 6.9). Users of formal childcare (for example childminders⁷⁷) were more likely to suggest that they did not use nursery education in the reference week because their child was too young (69%) compared to those using informal or other childcare (59%) and parents who did not use any childcare (49%). However, parents who had not used any childcare were more likely than parents who used formal or informal/other childcare to report that they chose not to use nursery education because of personal preference (38% compared to 16% and 29% respectively).

Table 6.9 Reasons for not using nursery education for children aged nought to two, by childcare use

Reasons	Childcare used by selected child in reference week			
	Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No childcare used	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families where selected child aged nought to two and not using nursery education</i>	(80)	(461)	(234)	(775)
Child too young	69	59	49	57
Personal preference	16	29	38	30
Cost problems	9	19	16	17
Availability problems – providers full or on a waiting list	17	8	10	9
Other reason	0	1	3	1

⁷⁷ The provider types defined as formal providers are set out in section 1.4.

6.7 Parents of disabled children

The Childcare Act 2006 explicitly outlined the need for local authorities to secure providers to supply suitable childcare for children with disabilities and improving childcare for this group has been a key government priority. For example, ten pilot areas were identified to work with the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare (DCATCH) initiative⁷⁸, which aimed to pilot ways of improving the range and quality of childcare for families of disabled children, and improve families' involvement in shaping childcare services.

Respondents whose selected child had an illness or disability were asked a series of questions about their perceptions of the availability of suitable childcare for their child in their local area. In 2010, overall, six per cent of selected children had a longstanding health condition or disability, and four per cent had a health condition that affected their daily lives (2% to a great extent and a further 2% to a lesser extent) (table not shown).

The severity of a child's illness or disability significantly affected their likelihood of using childcare compared with other children. While 65 per cent of children with no disability used childcare, the corresponding figure among children with an illness or disability which disrupts daily living to a great extent was 57 per cent. However, those with an illness or disability, but one that did not disrupt daily living, or only to a small extent, were more likely than children without a disability to use childcare (70% and 78% respectively, compared with 65%) (see Table C2.2).

However, a significant proportion of parents reported that locally available childcare did not meet their needs. Less than half (40%) of parents believed there were childcare providers in their local area that could cater for their child's illness or disability (there was no significant change from the 2009 figure of 43%); 34 per cent of parents felt that providers were available at times to fit around their other daily commitments; and 29 per cent found it easy to find out about providers that could cater for their child's disability. However, over half (52%) found that it was easy to travel to their nearest suitable provider (Table 6.10).

It is unclear whether there was a problem with the availability of childcare or awareness of these places as considerable proportions of parents were unsure of their answer to questions about the availability of appropriate childcare. For each of these questions, around five per cent of parents responded with don't know, and at least one-quarter (25% to 36%) said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements. Furthermore, when asked about how easy it was to find out about appropriate childcare providers in the local area, 40 per cent reported that it was difficult (Table 6.10). This suggests that a high proportion of parents of disabled children lacked knowledge about childcare.

⁷⁸ Department for Education (2010) *Impact evaluation of the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare Pilot (DCATCH)* by Cheshire et al. Department for Education: London

Table 6.10 Views on available provision for children with an illness/ disability

		Childcare used by selected child in reference week			
		Formal provider	Informal (or other) provider only	No childcare used	All
Parents' views		%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life</i>		(141)	(64)	(68)	(273)
<i>There are childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability</i>	Agree strongly	19	3	4	11
	Agree	38	28	14	29
	Neither agree or disagree	20	30	29	25
	Disagree	9	16	19	14
	Strongly disagree	9	17	30	17
	Don't know	4	6	4	4
<i>Hours available at childcare providers that can cater for my child's illness or disability fit with my other daily commitments</i>	Agree strongly	9	4	0	5
	Agree	41	23	13	29
	Neither agree or disagree	32	32	45	36
	Disagree	8	11	12	10
	Strongly disagree	6	20	19	13
	Don't know	5	10	10	8
<i>How easy to travel to nearest childcare provider who can accommodate health condition or impairment</i>	Very easy	26	19	13	21
	Easy	40	29	16	31
	Neither easy nor difficult	22	26	37	27
	Difficult	5	7	7	6
	Very difficult	3	11	23	10
	Don't know	5	7	4	5
<i>It is easy to find out about childcare providers in my area that can cater for my child's illness/ disability</i>	Very easy	10	3	4	7
	Easy	28	24	11	22
	Neither easy nor difficult	22	26	36	27
	Difficult	21	24	20	21
	Very difficult	17	17	25	19
	Don't know	2	6	5	4

Finally, respondents who had a selected child with an illness or disability and used a formal provider in the reference week were also asked about their views of staff training at their childcare provider. One of the main aims of the DCATCH pilot has been to ensure that childcare providers are adequately trained. Over half of parents (58%) agreed that staff were trained to deal with the health condition (20% said agree strongly and 38% said agree, see Table 6.11).

Table 6.11 Parents' views on training for childcare for children with illness/ disability

Parents' views		%
<i>Base: Families where selected child's illness/ disability affected daily life and used formal childcare in reference week</i>		(73)
<i>Staff at childcare providers I use for my child with an illness/ disability are trained in how to deal with this condition</i>	Agree strongly	20
	Agree	38
	Neither agree nor disagree	17
	Disagree	12
	Strongly disagree	7
	Don't know	6

6.8 Perceptions of flexibility

Improving the flexibility of childcare arrangements is another important government priority, reflected in the extension of free early years entitlement for three- and four-year-olds. In July 2011 the Department for Education announced it would conduct a consultation on making some small but significant changes to the free entitlement to enable the free hours to be used slightly earlier (from 7am rather than 8am) or slightly later (to 7pm rather than 6pm), but with a maximum of ten free hours per day; and to enable providers to offer the full 15 hour entitlement over two days rather than a minimum of three⁷⁹.

Parents' perceptions of inflexibility may act as a barrier against them taking up formal childcare. For the first time in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series, respondents were asked about how flexible⁸⁰ they perceived childcare arrangements to be. Results in this section are analysed in terms of family annual income, rurality and region to demonstrate the variety of ways in which the experiences of parents differed.

A relatively large proportion of parents believed that their childcare arrangements were flexible. Just twenty-two per cent reported that they had problems finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs whilst 45 per cent disagreed (Table 6.12). Similarly, when asked specifically about how term-time childcare fitted around their working hours, the majority agreed (51%⁸¹) that they could find childcare that fitted with their or their partner's working hours whilst 13 per cent disagreed. Finding flexible childcare therefore did not seem to be an issue for most employed parents.

Additional analysis of the data shows that parents living in London were significantly more likely than parents in other regions to agree that they had problems finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs (7% said agree strongly and 20% said agree, table not shown) (see Table C6.15 in Appendix C). In addition, parents in high income families were significantly more likely to agree that they were able to fit childcare around their work. Fifty-eight⁸² per cent of parents in families with an annual income of £45,000 or more agreed compared to 43 per cent of families with an income less than £10,000 (see Table C6.16 in Appendix C). Parents living in London were significantly less likely to report being able to fit childcare around work (39% compared with 51%⁸³ of parents overall) (see Table C6.17 in Appendix C).

⁷⁹ Department for Education and Department of Health (2011) *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*. Department for Education: London.

⁸⁰ Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement 'I have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to fit my needs'.

⁸¹ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table 6.12 because of rounding.

⁸² The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C6.16 because of rounding.

⁸³ The total differs from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C6.17 because of rounding.

Table 6.12 The extent to which parents' perceive their childcare arrangements as flexible

Parents' views		%
<i>Base: All families</i>		(6,709)
<i>I have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to fit my needs</i>	Agree strongly	6
	Agree	16
	Neither agree nor disagree	16
	Disagree	33
	Strongly disagree	12
	Don't use/need to use formal childcare	18
<i>Base: All working families</i>		(5,367)
<i>I am able to find term time childcare that fits in with my/ my partner's working hours</i>	Agree strongly	14
	Agree	36
	Neither agree nor disagree	11
	Disagree	9
	Strongly disagree	3
	Don't use/need to use formal childcare	25

There was a significant variation in perceptions of whether or not childcare arrangements were flexible by whether a family contained a working parent (see Table C6.14 in Appendix C). Whereas 23 per cent of families where a parent worked atypical hours said they had problems finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs, the figure among families where the parent(s) worked normal hours was 19 per cent.

Among working families, there was no significant variation between families where one or more parents worked atypical hours, and other working families (see Table C6.16 in Appendix C).

A multivariate regression, excluding families unable to give a view, once controlling for childcare used and other characteristics, showed that variables most significantly associated with families' perceptions of flexibility were age of children and whether the selected child had a SEN. Families with pre-school children only and, particularly, those with both pre-school and school-age children, were more likely to say they had problems finding flexible childcare than those with school-age children only. Families with a child with SEN were also more likely than other families to say they had problems finding flexible childcare:

- Family type and work status: working lone parents were more likely than working couples to say they had problems finding flexible childcare. However, couples where only one parent worked were less likely to say they had problems than working couples.
- Ethnicity: families where the selected child was classified White and Asian, were more likely than other families to say they had a problem finding flexible childcare.
- Government Office Region: families living in London were more likely than those in the North East to say they had problems finding flexible childcare.
- Family annual income: those unwilling or unable to state their annual income were less likely than other families to say they had a problem finding flexible childcare.

Respondents were asked whether they would like childcare provision to be improved for a number of different times and holiday periods. The most frequently cited time where parents felt provision could be improved was the summer holidays (64%), followed by half-term holidays (33%), the Easter holidays (31%) and weekdays during term-time (31%) (Table 6.13).

There were significant differences by family annual income for five out of the seven times listed. Families with relatively low incomes (between £10,000 and £19,999) were the most likely to require improved childcare provision for summer holidays (70% compared to 61% of those with a household income of £45,000 or more) and weekends during term-time (21% compared to 13%).

In contrast, these high income families were more likely to require improved childcare outside of normal working hours than families with lower incomes (27% compared to 18% to 22%). Those with incomes of £45,000 or more or between £10,000 and £19,000 were the most likely to report that they would like childcare provision to be improved in the Easter holidays (33% for both groups). Perspectives on childcare in half-term holidays were more mixed with families with an annual income of £10,000 to £19,000 more likely to require improved childcare than those with an annual income of under £10,000 and those with an income of £30,000 to £49,999 (38% compared to 29% and 28% respectively).

There were significant differences by region for the Easter and half-term holidays. Those in the South East (36% for Easter and 37% for half-term) and the East Midlands (35% for Easter and 38% for half-term) were most likely to state that they would like childcare provision to be improved in at those times (see Table C6.18 in Appendix C).

There were significant differences by rurality for the Easter holidays and for weekdays during term-time. Those in rural areas were more likely to want improvements to childcare provision in the Easter holidays (35% compared to 29% in urban areas), and on weekdays during term-time (36% compared to 30%).

Table 6.13 Times where parents would like childcare provision improving in order to meet their needs

	Family annual income					All
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - £29,000	£30,000 - 44,999	£45,000 or more	
Time	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families saying that childcare provision could be improved</i>	(426)	(1,001)	(734)	(765)	(1,038)	(3,964)
Summer holidays	64	70	65	63	61	64
Easter holidays	26	33	32	26	33	31
Christmas holidays	25	30	28	24	30	28
Half-term holidays	29	38	35	28	31	33
Term-time - weekdays	30	31	34	29	32	31
Term-time - weekends	15	21	17	13	13	16
Outside of normal working hours, in other words 8am to 6pm	22	18	21	21	27	22

The most frequently reported changes to childcare provision that parents would like to see were more affordable childcare (32%), more childcare available during school holidays (18%) and more information about what is available (17%, see Table 6.14). In addition, longer opening hours, increased availability of childcare places, greater flexibility about when childcare is available and childcare more suited to their child's interests were changes raised by more than one in ten parents (13%, 12%, 12% and 11% respectively). However, a significant proportion of parents suggested that their current childcare provision met their needs as 40 per cent did not require any changes.

Parents' perspectives on changes to childcare that would make it better suited to their needs differed significantly for five of the reasons listed depending on their family annual income. Low income families were more likely to be concerned with the cost and accessibility of childcare, location and distance, whilst those with higher incomes tended to focus on the times that childcare was available, and flexibility. Affordability was an issue for many. Those with family annual incomes under £45,000 were more likely than those with incomes of £45,000 or more to report that they would like more affordable childcare (33% to 37% compared to 27%).

Four of the changes listed were significantly more likely to be raised by parents living in urban areas compared to those in rural areas. They suggested that the following would make childcare provision better suited to their needs: more affordable childcare (33% compared to 28%); higher quality childcare (9% compared to 5%); more convenient childcare (9% compared to 6%); and more information about what is available (17% compared to 14%). Linked to this, when the changes to childcare provision that parents would like to see were analysed in terms of region, parents in London or the South East were more likely to raise all eight of the changes listed (see Table C6.19 in Appendix C). Parents in London were the most likely to suggest that childcare would be better suited to their needs if there are more childcare places, higher quality childcare, more conveniently located childcare, more affordable childcare (joint with the South East), longer opening hours, and childcare closer to where they live. Parents in the South East most frequently raised the need for more childcare available during school holidays and more flexibility about when childcare was available.

Table 6.14 Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs

Change	Family annual income					Rurality		All
	Up to £9,999	£10,999 - £19,999	£20,000 - £29,999	£30,000 - £44,999	£45,000 or more	Rural	Urban	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(698)	(1,628)	(1,174)	(1,219)	(1,670)	(1,285)	(5,432)	(6,723)
More childcare places - general	16	14	12	11	12	11	13	12
Higher quality childcare	10	7	8	7	9	5	9	8
More convenient/accessible locations	11	10	7	8	6	6	9	8
More affordable childcare	37	33	36	35	27	28	33	32
More childcare available during term-time	7	6	7	6	7	5	7	7
More childcare available during school holidays	14	18	19	19	18	18	18	18
More information about what is available	20	18	18	15	16	14	17	17
More flexibility about when childcare is available	10	10	12	11	16	12	12	12
Longer opening hours	9	12	12	14	18	13	13	13
Making childcare available closer to where I live	12	10	7	8	6	7	9	8
Making childcare available closer to where I work	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	11	13	10	10	12	12	11	11
Other	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Nothing	39	41	40	40	39	44	39	40

The majority of parents were happy with their current childcare arrangements in terms of which formal childcare providers they wanted to use (59%, see Table 6.15). For the remaining parents, the most frequently cited providers they would like to use or use more of were after-school clubs and holiday clubs or schemes (19% and 15% respectively). A significant minority also reported that they would like to use breakfast clubs (7%), playgroups or pre-schools (5%) and baby-sitters (4%).

Types of formal childcare provision that parents would like to use or use more of differs significantly for six out of the 15 providers listed depending on the family annual income of the family. Families with an annual income of under £10,000 were the most likely to want to use playgroups or preschools (8%), day nurseries (5%) and childminders (5%) whilst relatively high proportions of those with an income of £10,000 to £19,000 wanted to use after-school clubs and holiday clubs (23% and 18% respectively). The families with the highest incomes (£45,000 or more) were more likely to wish to use a nanny or au pair whilst those with an income of £30,000 to £44,999 were the most likely to report that they were happy with their current arrangements (61%).

Formal childcare provision that parents wanted to use or use more of differed significantly for six types depending on rurality. In all of these cases, those in urban areas were more likely to report that they would like to use/use more of the following: nursery schools, nursery classes, reception class, day nurseries, playgroups or preschools, and holiday clubs or schemes. Consequently, parents in rural areas were significantly more likely to report that they were happy with their current arrangements (64% compared to 58%). The only significant variation by region was with desired use of nursery classes (see Table C6.21 in Appendix C). Parents in London and the North East were most likely to want to use nursery classes more (both 4%), with parents in the East of England least likely to wanting to use them more.

Table 6.15 Types of formal childcare provision that parents wanted to use/ use more of

	Family annual income					Rurality		
	Up to £9,999	£10,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - 29,999	£30,000 - £44,999	£45,000 or more	Rural	Urban	All
Formal childcare provider	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(698)	(1,628)	(1,174)	(1,219)	(1,670)	(1,285)	(5,432)	(6,723)
Nursery school	5	3	4	3	3	2	4	3
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	*	1	1	1	*	*	1	1
Day nursery	5	3	4	4	2	2	4	3
Playgroup or pre-school	8	6	5	5	4	3	6	5
Childminder	5	3	2	2	4	3	3	3
Nanny or au pair	1	*	*	1	2	1	1	1
Baby-sitter who come to home	3	3	3	3	5	3	4	4
Breakfast club	6	7	6	6	7	5	7	7
After-school club/activities	18	23	18	18	18	17	20	19
Holiday club/scheme	14	18	15	13	13	11	15	15
Other nursery education provider	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other childcare provider	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
None – happy with current arrangements	56	54	60	61	60	64	58	59

6.9 Summary

Seventy-one per cent of parents have used one or more sources of information about childcare in the last year (a significant increase from 63% in 2009). Over one-quarter (29%) accessed no information at all.

The most popular sources were those which parents were likely to encounter regularly such as friends or relatives (word of mouth) and school (39% and 33% respectively). A significant minority of parents used a variety of other information sources including Sure Start/Children's Centres (11%), local advertising (8%), local authorities (7%), local libraries (7%) and health visitors (6%). Family Information Services (FIS) were familiar to 32 per cent of parents, and 13 per cent had previously used them.

The utilisation of particular information sources was significantly influenced by the type of childcare provider parents used. Parents with a formal childcare provider were much more likely to have accessed information than those using no childcare (78% compared to 53%). Consequently, groups with lower rates of formal childcare usage were less likely to access information about childcare. Low income families were less likely than higher income families to get information from word of mouth and schools but were more likely to access information from Sure Start/Children's Centres and the Jobcentre Plus. Thirty-eight per cent of parents stated that they have too little information about childcare, though this was also affected by family characteristics. After controlling for childcare use and other factors, families less likely to say they had the right amount of information about childcare were those using informal childcare only or no childcare, those with an annual income of under £20,000, those with school-age children only, and those living in urban areas.

As might be expected, groups with lower formal childcare usage were also more likely to report that they were unsure about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare in the local area. Just under one-third of parents believed that there were not enough childcare places in their local area (32%) and a similar proportion believed that childcare affordability was fairly or very poor (33%). Parents were more positive about the quality of local childcare with just 11 per cent reporting it as very or fairly poor (61% perceived it to be good).

Since 2004, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents saying the number of childcare places is about right (44% compared to 40% in 2004), with a decline in the proportion of parents reporting there are not enough childcare places (32% compared with 40% in 2004). There has been a significant increase in the proportion of parents who were unsure (23% compared to 19% in 2004). The proportion of families assessing the affordability of childcare as good has significantly increased since 2004 (from 35% to 38%) with a significant decrease in those rating it as poor (from 37% to 33%). Ratings of the quality of childcare have not significantly changed since 2004.

There has been no significant change in opinion about the availability, quality and affordability of childcare since 2009. There was no significant variation in perceptions of availability or affordability between families with one or more parents working atypical hours, other working families and other workless families. Multivariate regressions showed that whether a selected child had SEN was most strongly associated with parents feeling that there was not the right amount of childcare available in their local area, or that it was not good quality.

We also explored why parents did not use particular types of childcare. The majority of parents of 5- to 14-year-olds who did not use a breakfast or after-school club in the reference week had this service available to them but chose not to use it. The most common reasons

provided for not using both before-school and after-school clubs were that parents preferred to look after their children at home (31%), their children did not wish to attend (25%), and because parents had no need to be away from their child (24%). Eleven per cent of parents suggested that they did not use before-school clubs specifically because it was too expensive. Therefore, for the majority of parents, not using such clubs seems to be due to choice rather than any particular constraint.

Just under one-quarter (22%) of parents of children aged 0 to 14 reported that they had not used any childcare or nursery education in the last year. For the majority of parents, the main reason for this was because they preferred to look after their children themselves (75%). Having children old enough to look after themselves and rarely being away from their children were also reasons suggested by a significant minority of parents (15% and 13% respectively). A further ten per cent stated that they had been unable to afford childcare in the last year. Again, this suggests not using childcare was predominantly down to choice rather than a particular constraint.

Looking at informal childcare, 73 per cent of parents were able to use it as a one-off, and 47 per cent on a regular basis, with grandparents and other relatives the providers of informal childcare most likely to be available for parents to turn to. This suggests that the majority of parents who did not normally use childcare could find alternative forms of childcare elsewhere, at least on an infrequent basis. When parents who had not used formal childcare in the last year were asked if any factors would encourage them to start using it, 11 per cent reported that affordability was a factor. However, for the majority there were no relevant factors with 81 per cent reporting that they did not need to use childcare.

More than half of parents with children aged under two had not used nursery education in the reference week (53%), and for the majority this was again down to personal choice. The most common reasons for not using nursery education were that parents felt their child was too young (57%) and because of personal preference (30%). The most frequently cited constraints preventing nursery education from being used were affordability (17%) and availability of places (9%).

Six per cent of parents had a child with a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability, and four per cent reported that their child's health condition affected the child's daily life. Whilst these children were as likely as other children to use childcare in the reference week, a significant proportion of parents felt that childcare in their local area did not meet their needs. Under half (40%) of parents believed there were local childcare providers that could cater for their child's illness or disability (no significant change from 2009), and 34 per cent felt that providers were available at times to fit around their other daily commitments. In addition, 40 per cent of parents reported that they found it difficult to find out about suitable childcare providers in their local area. However, 52 per cent found it easy to travel to the nearest childcare provider that could accommodate their child.

For the first time in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series, respondents were asked about their perspectives on the flexibility of childcare. Only a minority (22%) reported they had problems finding childcare that was flexible enough to fit their needs. A multivariate regression showed that families with pre-school children or both pre-school and school-age children, or families where the selected child had a SEN, were most strongly associated with problems finding flexible childcare.

A majority felt that they could fit childcare around their working hours (51%). Parents living in London were significantly less likely than parents from other regions to agree childcare was flexible enough to meet their needs.

The most commonly cited periods where parents feel childcare provision could be improved were the summer holidays (64%), half-term holidays (33%), Easter holidays and weekdays during term time (31%). Furthermore, family annual income, the region where parents reside, and rurality, had a significant influence on the times when parents required improved childcare.

Forty per cent of parents did not require any changes to their childcare provision to make it more suited to their needs. However, the most frequently cited changes were more affordable childcare (32%), childcare available during school holidays (18%) and more information about what childcare is available (17%). Parents in low income families (annual income under £10,000) were more likely to be concerned with the cost and accessibility of childcare than those in high income families (£45,000 or more) for whom the times that childcare was available and flexibility were more significant concerns. In addition, parents in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to mention several changes and parents from London and the South East were more likely than those from other regions to cite several ways in which childcare could be better suited to their needs.

The majority of parents were happy with their current childcare arrangements and did not wish to use, or increase their use of, a particular provider (59%), though after-school clubs and holiday clubs or schemes were the most frequently cited providers that parents would like to use more of (19% and 15% respectively). Again, parents' views were influenced by their household income and those in rural areas were significantly more likely to report that they were happy with their childcare arrangements than those in urban areas (64% compared to 58%).

7. Parents' views of their childcare and early years provision

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores parents' considerations when they selected formal childcare and early years providers, and the academic and social skills which were fostered by these providers. It also looks at what parents did to encourage learning at home, and for the first time in the survey series, examines parents' knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), a government framework for the learning and development of children from birth to five years old.

All analysis in this chapter draws on data for the selected child (a randomly selected child in each household) and is separated by the age of the child: pre-school, aged nought to four, and school-age, aged 5 to 14. This is because the two groups had different childcare and educational needs. Formal childcare providers (registered organisations or individuals, rather than relatives) are the focus of this chapter and sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.7 make reference to formal group providers. This type of childcare is defined as childcare provided to a large group of children rather than an individual child, for example through a nursery school or class or playgroup.

This chapter begins with the reasons why parents selected their main formal childcare provider⁸⁴, with reference to the age of the child and the family's work status (section 7.2). In section 7.3 the academic and social skills which parents believed their formal providers encouraged are discussed. How parents received feedback about their children from their provider, and whether this was affected by provider type and the age of the child, is discussed in section 7.4 whilst section 7.5 looks at the home learning environment. Section 7.6 is concerned with the Early Years Foundation Stage and how much information parents received from their childcare provider about it.

Key findings will be compared to previous years of the Childcare and Early Years Survey series to demonstrate changes over time.

7.2 Reasons for choosing formal providers

The reasons for selecting a particular childcare provider were numerous and reflect a combination of reputation, cost and convenience factors. This section identifies the most common reasons that parents of pre-school and school-age children gave for choosing their particular main formal provider and how these reasons varied depending on the age of the child⁸⁵. The results are also analysed at the provider type level and by work status.

⁸⁴ The formal provider was determined during the interview as the provider used for the greatest length of time by the selected child in the reference week. Parents were given an option to override this selection if they felt that another childcare provider was the main formal provider.

⁸⁵ Before 2009 analysis in Chapter 7 was focused on the main reason given for selecting a provider, but for the 2009 and 2010 surveys this has been broadened to all reasons reported by parents.

Pre-school children

Table 7.1 demonstrates that the factors which had the biggest influence on childcare provider selection were the reputation of the provider and finding a provider that was convenient (with 63% and 55% of parents respectively saying this). A further reason provided by half of parents was concern with the care given (52%). Just four per cent of parents stated they selected their formal childcare provider because there was no other option, the same as in 2009.

Parents' choice of provider significantly differed depending on the age of the child for six of the 11 reasons shown in Table 7.1. Parents of children aged nought to two were more likely than parents of three- and four-year-olds to cite concern with care given (61%), convenience (59%), trust (47%) and economic factors (22%). Parents of three- and four-year-olds were more likely than parents of children aged nought to two to give the reasons that their provider allowed their child to be educated (45%) and because an older sibling went there (26%).

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

Reasons	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(515)	(1,216)	(1,731)
Provider's reputation	64	63	63
Convenience	59	53	55
Concern with care given	61	47	52
Child could mix	53	48	49
Child could be educated	34	45	41
Trust	47	32	37
Older sibling went there	20	26	24
Economic factors	22	15	17
No other option	3	4	4
Child's choice	*	*	*
Other (e.g. family ties)	10	7	8

The range and variation of reasons for selecting a particular childcare provider is evident from Table 7.2. The reputation of the provider, a frequently cited reason for selecting the main formal provider in Table 7.1, was particularly important for parents whose main childcare providers were nursery schools, day nurseries and playgroups (69%, 68% and 68% respectively), and least important for parents using childminders (55%) and nursery classes (57%). The second most important reason, convenience, was particularly important for parents using day nurseries and childminders (67% and 62% respectively), and least important for those using reception classes (43%) or nursery schools (51%). Furthermore, playgroups were most likely to be chosen so the child could mix (67%, with reception classes least likely to be chosen for this reason (34%)) and because of economic factors (24%, with reception classes least likely to be chosen for this reason (7%)). It is possible that the reason reception classes were least likely to be chosen for economic reasons, convenience, and child mixing was related to the fact that reception classes are less likely to be providers of choice (compared with childminders, day nurseries, and playgroups).

As with the 2009 results, a large proportion of parents who used a childminder as their main formal provider chose to do so because of reasons relating to concern with the nature of care given (81%) and trust (68%). The parents who were most likely to feel that they had no other choice of childcare provider were those using reception classes (7%).

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

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(302)	(218)	(347)	(398)	(285)	(112)	(1,731)
Provider's reputation	69	57	60	68	68	55	63
Convenience	51	53	43	67	54	62	55
Concern with care given	50	41	31	67	50	81	52
Child could mix	52	42	34	57	67	46	49
Child could be educated	44	49	43	43	40	23	41
Trust	37	25	20	42	43	68	37
Older sibling went there	24	34	28	20	25	16	24
Economic factors	17	18	7	20	24	20	17
No other option	2	4	7	3	1	2	4
Child's choice	*	0	0	*	0	0	*
Other (e.g. family ties)	5	7	10	4	4	22	8

Table 7.3 shows the different reasons parents from different backgrounds gave for selecting their main formal provider. Six reasons out of 11 were significantly different by family type and work status. Both dual-working couples and working lone parents were more likely than their non-working counterparts to cite the provider's reputation as a reason (68% and 61% respectively), though couples were also more likely than lone parents to report this (65% compared to 58%). This pattern was also true for the following reasons: concern with care given, so the child could mix and trust. Working couples and lone parents were more likely to use providers for longer periods of time (see Chapter 2), and so it is perhaps unsurprising that they were more likely than others to focus on concern with care given, child mixing and trust when choosing a main formal provider.

Turning to convenience this reason was most likely to be given by working couples (62%) compared with lone parents, whether working or not (49%).

Economic reasons were more likely to be given by lone parents than couples (25% compared to 15%). Finally, attendance of an older sibling was significantly more likely to be given as a reason by couples than lone parents (25% compared to 20%).

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

Reasons	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(1,369)	(836)	(443)	(90)	(362)	(167)	(195)
Provider's reputation	65	68	60	52	58	61	54
Convenience	56	62	47	51	49	49	49
Concern with care given	53	63	38	33	46	54	40
Child could mix	51	53	49	49	42	44	41
Child could be educated	42	43	38	44	38	40	37
Trust	39	45	30	27	29	33	24
Economic factors	15	16	14	17	25	30	22
Older sibling went there	25	25	27	24	20	16	23
No other option	3	3	4	2	4	5	4
Child's choice	*	*	*	0	0	0	0
Other (e.g. family ties)	8	10	6	3	6	6	7

School-age children

This section looks at the reasons why parents of school-age children (here 5- to 14-year-olds) chose their main formal childcare provider⁸⁶. As in the last section, children of different ages, provider types and family types are separated in the analysis.

⁸⁶ Reception class has been omitted from the discussions though it was mentioned by some parents as a main formal childcare provider. This is because, as a compulsory form of childcare, it is unlike other providers that were actively chosen by parents.

Like parents of pre-school children, parents of school-age children also had a range of reasons for choosing different types of main formal provider. The most important considerations for parents of school-age children when making decisions about childcare were the provider's reputation and convenience (38% and 35% respectively, see Table 7.4). This reflects the most common reasons also provided by parents of pre-school children (Table 7.1).

Parents' choice of provider differed significantly for seven of the 11 reasons shown below by the age of the child, and this was likely to be associated with their child's needs. For example, convenience was a more common reason for parents of five- to seven-year-olds (44%) and eight- to eleven-year-olds (36%), than for parents of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds (22%). Concern with care given, trust, economic factors and prior attendance of an older sibling also followed this pattern (see Table 7.4).

Conversely, child's choice is the only reason that was more likely to be considered by parents of older children (8% of parents of five- to seven-year-olds compared with 20% of parents of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds). The provider's reputation, the most cited reason overall, was more likely to be a factor considered when choosing a childcare provider for parents of five- to seven-year-olds (42%) than parents of twelve- to fourteen-year-olds (36%) and of eight- to eleven-year-olds (35%).

Very few parents claimed that they had no other option when selecting a main formal childcare provider (4%) suggesting that there was a range of providers available in their local area. There has been no significant change in this respect from 2009 (5%).

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

Reasons	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)</i>	(521)	(749)	(366)	(1,636)
Provider's reputation	42	35	36	38
Convenience	44	36	22	35
Concern with care given	40	34	27	34
Child could mix	37	35	30	34
Trust	38	34	27	34
Child could be educated	19	18	16	18
Economic factors	22	16	11	17
Older sibling went there	21	11	8	14
Child's choice	8	15	20	14
No other option	4	4	3	4
Other (e.g. family ties)	12	12	16	13

Though parents presented a variety of reasons for selecting a particular formal childcare provider, some were more relevant to particular providers than others – nine reasons out of 11 differed significantly by provider type in Table 7.5. Breakfast clubs were more likely to be chosen by parents than after-school clubs and childminders because they were convenient (62%, compared to 32% for after-school clubs) whilst it was the social and educational aspects of after-school clubs that made them attractive compared with breakfast clubs and childminders (37% of parents reported that they enabled their child to mix and 19% stated that their child could be educated). These reasons were least likely to be given for childminders (21% of parents reported that they enabled their child to mix and 10% that they enabled their child to be educated).

As with parents of pre-school children (Table 7.2), childminders were more likely to be chosen by parents of school-age children because of concerns with the nature of care given and trust issues (70% and 63% respectively). In addition, parents whose main childcare provider was a childminder were also more likely to cite the provider's reputation (46%), economic factors (31%), attendance of an older sibling (23%) and other reasons such as 'family ties' (32%) than parents who had selected a breakfast or after school club as a main formal provider.

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

	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast club	After-school club	Childminder	All
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week (excluding reception class)</i>	(102)	(1,371)	(97)	(1,636)
Provider's reputation	36	37	46	38
Convenience	62	32	56	35
Concern with care given	43	30	70	34
Child could mix	25	37	21	34
Trust	34	31	63	34
Child could be educated	12	19	10	18
Economic factors	25	15	31	17
Older sibling went there	17	13	23	14
Child's choice	4	16	1	14
No other option	4	3	5	4
Other (e.g. family ties)	8	11	32	13

Table 7.6 demonstrates that the work status of parents significantly influenced seven out of the 11 reasons why they selected a main formal provider. Concern with the nature of care given, trust, convenience, having no other option and other reasons were all mentioned more frequently by dual-working couples and working lone parents than their non-working counterparts. Conversely, 44 per cent of non-working lone parents and 43 per cent of non-working couples selected a provider that would allow their child to mix with other children, compared to 23 per cent of working lone parents and 34 per cent of dual-working couples. It is possible that for working parents (whose children spend longer in childcare) convenience and trust were more important (because they were critical in enabling parents to use childcare and hence go out to work). Child mixing may have been seen more as ‘desirable’ than ‘essential’, but have been more of a priority for non-working parents because issues of convenience and trust were less pressing, as they did not work and also because their children spent fewer hours in childcare.

Economic factors were also more likely to be given as a reason for choosing a main formal provider by both non-working couples (20%) and working lone parents (28%) than dual-working couples and non-working lone parents.

With the exception of economic reasons, there were no significant differences between couples and lone parents in their reasons for choosing a main formal provider. Lone parents were more likely to cite economic factors as a reason for selecting their main childcare provider than couples (24% compared to 15%). This reflects the same pattern of results as parents of pre-school children in Table 7.3.

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

Reasons	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>	(1,260)	(883)	(326)	(51)	(376)	(219)	(157)
Provider's reputation	38	39	38	33	35	31	40
Concern with care given	33	37	26	23	37	43	30
Child could mix	35	34	37	43	32	23	44
Convenience	35	38	28	32	36	37	35
Child could be educated	18	17	20	18	17	14	20
Trust	33	35	27	25	37	39	35
Older sibling went there	14	15	11	11	13	10	18
Economic factors	15	14	17	20	24	28	19
No other option	3	3	3	0	5	5	4
Child's choice	15	15	15	11	12	14	10
Other (e.g. family ties)	13	14	11	11	12	17	6

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

The previous section has demonstrated that the educational element of childcare provision influenced some parents to choose a particular childcare provider (see Table 7.1). This section explores these ideas further by considering the academic skills (such as reading and recognising letters, numbers and shapes) and social skills (including interacting with other children and adults) that parents believed their main provider encouraged. During the survey,

respondents were presented with a list of skills and asked to identify if any were encouraged at their child's main formal provider. Childminders and formal group providers are the focus of this section.

Academic skills

The analysis of academic skills is drawn from the experience of parents of pre-school children. The same questions were not asked of respondents with school-age children because there was an expectation that at this age, children would develop most of their skills at school.

Table 7.7 shows the involvement of childcare providers in developing the academic skills of pre-school children. The majority of parents of pre-school children believed that their provider had encouraged a range of skills with their children. The most commonly mentioned skills were enjoying books (91%) and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (90%) (just two per cent of parents reported that their child had been encouraged to develop none of the skills listed). There has been a significant decrease in the proportion saying their main provider encourages their child to find out about animals and plants (83% compared with 88% in 2009) and people or places around the world (71% compared with 76%).

Parents' views on which of the academic skills listed below were encouraged at their main formal childcare provider differed significantly depending on which provider they used. Parents who used a childminder as their main formal provider were less likely to believe that they encouraged particular skills (especially in comparison to reception classes, which in the view of parents were most likely to encourage each specific skill). For instance 60 per cent of parents thought that childminders encouraged finding out about people or places around the world (compared to 82% for reception classes), finding out about animals or plants (76%, compared to 87%), finding out about health or hygiene (77%, compared to 92%), recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes (80%, compared to 96%), and enjoying books (81%, compared to 96%).

Table 7.7 Academic skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type⁸⁷

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(296)	(215)	(348)	(385)	(273)	(111)	(1,668)
Enjoying books	88	92	96	94	93	81	91
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	92	93	96	89	88	80	90
Finding out about health or hygiene	81	83	92	85	84	77	84
Finding out about animals or plants	83	82	87	86	84	76	83
Finding out about people or places around the world	67	71	82	72	69	60	71
Not sure	2	2	1	2	1	3	2
None of these	2	1	*	1	3	4	2

A high proportion of parents believed their childcare provider was encouraging their three- or four-year-old to read. Fifty-seven per cent of parents reported that their child brought home books to read at least once a week (see Table 7.8). For one-third of parents this happened more regularly, with 31 per cent of their children bringing books home most days, however a similar proportion (35%) also stated that this never happened.

Table 7.8 How often children brought home books from provider to look at/ read with their parent

How often	%
<i>Base: All children aged three to four, whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(1,193)
Every day/ most days	31
Once or twice a week	26
Once a fortnight	4
Once every month or 2 months	2
Once every 3 or 4 months	*
Once every 6 months	*
Once every year or less often	*
Varies too much to say	2
Never	35

⁸⁷ Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, breakfast club, or after-school club; however these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

Table 7.9 shows how often children brought home books to look at or read with their parents, by their main type of formal provider. There was a significant variation in the proportion of parents saying their child never brought books home by provider type. Parents whose main provider was a reception class were least likely to say this (8%). However, over half of parents whose main provider was a day nursery, childminder or playgroup said their child never brought books home to read (62%, 55% and 53% respectively). Just over one-third (36%) of parents using a nursery school as their main provider said their child never brought home books to read.

Table 7.9 How often children brought home books from provider to look at/ read with their parent, by provider type

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
How often	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children aged three to four, whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(207)	(199)	(348)	(180)	(177)	(43)	(1,189)
Every day/ most days	25	25	55	15	21	14	31
Once or twice a week	28	36	32	8	17	21	26
Once a fortnight	6	5	2	4	4	0	4
Once every month or 2 months	3	2	1	6	2	0	2
Once every 3 or 4 months	1	0	0	2	0	3	*
Once every 6 months	0	1	0	0	1	0	*
Once every year or less often	0	1	0	1	1	0	*
Varies too much to say	1	2	1	2	2	7	2
Never	36	28	8	62	53	55	34

Social skills

Parents of both pre-school and school-age children were asked about their childcare providers' involvement in the development of social skills. Almost all parents of pre-school children (over 99.5%) reported that their provider encouraged at least one of the skills listed in Table 7.10, as did 93 per cent of parents of school-age children. Playing with other children (84%), good behaviour (80%) and listening to others and adults (77%) were the most frequently cited social skills that parents believed were encouraged at their main formal provider.

Perceptions about the encouragement of all six skills listed differed significantly depending on the age of the child. Parents of pre-school children were consistently more likely to believe that their main provider encouraged social skills than those of school-age children. For instance 96 per cent of pre-school parents believed their child was encouraged to play with other children, compared with 75 per cent of parents of school-age children, and 93 per

cent believed their provider promoted good behaviour compared to 70 per cent of parents of school-age children.

Table 7.10 Social skills that parents believed were encouraged at their main formal provider, by age of child

Skills encouraged	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)</i>	(1,672)	(1,487)	(3,159)
Playing with other children	96	75	84
Good behaviour	93	70	80
Listening to others and adults	91	67	77
Being independent and making choices	83	61	70
Expressing thoughts and feelings	81	48	62
Tackling everyday tasks	85	40	59
Not sure	1	5	3
None of these	*	7	4

Table 7.11 shows that a high proportion of parents reported that their provider taught their children to play with other children, promoted good behaviour and encouraged listening skills (96%, 93% and 91% respectively). The proportion of parents who believed their provider encouraged the social skills listed differs significantly depending on their main formal provider type. As was the case with academic skills, reception classes were the provider type consistently perceived as encouraging all of the listed skills most, whilst generally parents believed childminders were the least likely to advance these skills. For instance, the responses of parents whose main formal provider was a reception class ranged from 91 per cent to 99 per cent for the six skills listed, compared to 71 per cent to 91 per cent of those using childminders.

Table 7.11 Social skills encouraged at main provider for pre-school children, by provider type⁸⁸

	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	All
Skills encouraged	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(296)	(215)	(348)	(385)	(273)	(111)	(1,668)
Playing with other children	95	96	99	98	97	91	96
Good behaviour	92	90	97	93	93	89	93
Listening to others and adults	88	90	96	92	93	81	91
Tackling everyday tasks	88	84	92	85	84	76	85
Being independent and making choices	82	79	92	83	83	71	83
Expressing thoughts and feelings	80	78	91	82	77	74	81
Not sure	2	1	*	*	1	3	1
None of these	*	1	0	0	1	3	1

⁸⁸ Due to low base sizes columns are not included in this table for special day school, breakfast club, or after-school club; however these providers have been included in the calculation of the 'All' column.

Table 7.12 shows that parents of school-age children thought that their main formal provider encouraged playing with other children more than other social skills (75%). The next most frequently mentioned perceived attributes were good behaviour (70%), listening to others and adults (67%) and being independent and making choices (60%). Fewer than half mentioned other types of social skills such as expressing thoughts and feelings and tackling everyday tasks.

There were some significant differences by provider type. Childminders were most likely to be perceived as encouraging good behaviour, expressing thoughts and feelings and tackling everyday tasks than breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

There was a significant increase in the proportion of parents saying their provider encouraged good behaviour (from 66% in 2009 to 70% in 2010). There was a significant decrease in the proportion saying their provider encouraged none of the social skills listed (13% to 7%). There were no other significant changes from 2009.

Table 7.12 Social skills encouraged at main provider for school-age children, by provider type

Skills encouraged	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast club	After-school club	Childminder	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children whose main provider was formal (excluding reception class)</i>	(97)	(1,273)	(94)	(1,487)
Playing with other children	83	74	79	75
Good behaviour	73	69	83	70
Listening to others and adults	65	67	76	67
Being independent and making choices	64	59	68	60
Expressing thoughts and feelings	51	46	69	48
Tackling everyday tasks	58	37	67	40
Not sure	5	4	7	5
None of these	3	7	5	7

7.4 Parents' views on the feedback their provider offers

This section looks at parents' views on the feedback that they receive about their child from their main formal provider. Feedback is defined broadly, and includes verbal feedback, written reports and examples of the child's work. Respondents whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder were asked about the types of feedback they received and how regularly they received it.

Table 7.13 presents the types of feedback that parents of pre-school and school-age children received from their formal group provider. All parents reported receiving some form of the feedback listed.

All methods of receiving feedback (excluding other) were received by over one-third of parents though the most common were talking with staff about how their child is getting on (85%) and through pictures, drawings and other things their child brought home (51%). The frequency with which parents received all methods of feedback significantly differed depending on the age of the child. Parents of pre-school children were more likely than parents of school-age children to talk with staff about how their child was getting on, receive pictures, drawings and other things their child brought home, see pictures, drawings and other things on display at their provider, attend parents' evenings and receive written reports.

Table 7.13 Method by which parents received feedback from their formal providers, by age of child

Method of feedback	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)</i>	(1,649)	(1,200)	(2,849)
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	92	79	85
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	78	28	51
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	61	17	37
Parents' evenings/ meeting	57	30	43
Written reports	57	25	40
Other	3	12	7
None of these	2	19	12

Table 7.14 specifically focuses on the experiences of parents of pre-school children. As demonstrated in Table 7.13, parents most commonly received feedback by talking with staff and this was the case across all provider types (87% or over).

The type of feedback received differed significantly between provider types for all five of the methods mentioned. Parents whose main formal provider was a day nursery or nursery school were the most likely to receive verbal feedback about their child (97% and 92% respectively), whilst this was less likely for parents using reception classes as their main provider (87%). However, reception classes were the most likely to provide feedback through parents' evenings or meetings (82%) compared to nursery classes, day nurseries and nursery schools (64%, 60% and 54% respectively). This is likely to be because reception classes are part of a wider school environment where parents' evenings are commonplace.

Reception classes were also the provider type most likely to provide feedback to parents by encouraging children to take examples of their work home (83%), whilst day nurseries were most likely to put examples of children's work on display (69%). Written reports were most likely to be given to parents using day nurseries as their main formal provider (70%).

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

Method of feedback	Main formal provider						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	Childminder	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder</i>	(296)	(212)	(347)	(383)	(263)	(109)	(1,645)
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	92	90	87	97	91	89	92
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	76	74	83	80	80	63	77
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	62	56	62	69	61	37	61
Written reports	57	47	51	70	56	53	57
Parents' evenings/ meetings	54	64	82	60	41	10	57
Other	3	2	1	2	4	4	3
None of these	0	1	*	*	5	1	1

Table 7.15 presents the types of feedback that parents of school-age children by formal group provider. Almost one in five parents reported getting no feedback.

By far the most common method of feedback was talking with staff about how their child was getting on (79%). Around three in ten obtained feedback from parents' evenings and saw pictures and drawings that were brought home (30% and 28% respectively).

The type of provider had a significant effect on the type of feedback received for three of the types of feedback listed. Childminders were much more likely to give verbal feedback (91%) compared with other providers. Breakfast clubs were more likely than other providers to give feedback at parents' evenings, and result in the child bringing pictures and drawings home.

Table 7.15 Method by which parents received feedback from their formal providers for school-age children, by provider type

	Main formal provider			
	Breakfast club	After-school club	Childminder	All
Method of feedback	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children whose main provider in the reference week was formal (excluding reception class)</i>	(70)	(1,027)	(81)	(1,200)
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	82	78	91	79
Pictures, drawings and other things the child brings home	48	26	33	28
Written reports	26	25	13	25
Parents' evenings/ meetings	50	30	8	30
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed at provider	26	16	22	17
Other	9	12	8	12
None of these	27	20	14	19

Respondents that reported that they talked to their childcare provider about how their child was getting on (the most common form of feedback in Table 7.13) were also asked about how frequently this occurred (Table 7.16). Just over one-third of all parents received feedback each day or on most days (38%), though this varied significantly depending on the age of the child. Parents of pre-school children were more likely to talk to their provider each day/most days than school-age children (54% compared to 22%), whilst parents of school-age children were more likely to receive feedback once or twice a week (32% compared to 29%), once a fortnight or once every month or two months.

Table 7.16 How often parents spoke to provider staff about how their child was getting on, by age of child

	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
How often	%	%	%
<i>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)</i>	(1,508)	(953)	(2,461)
Every day/ most days	54	22	38
Once or twice a week	29	32	30
Once a fortnight	6	11	8
Once every month or 2 months	7	18	13
Once every 3 or 4 months	2	7	5
Once every 6 months	*	3	2
Once every year or less often	*	1	1
Varies too much to say	2	6	4

7.5 Home learning activities for children aged two to five

Whilst section 7.3 examined the role of providers in educational development, this section looks at how parents could do this at home. Questions focused on the types and frequency of home learning activities that parents engaged in with reference to reading, reciting nursery rhymes, painting, playing games and using computers. For the first time in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series, respondents were asked about their perspective on how much time they spent undertaking learning and play activities with their child, what factors, if any, would allow them to spend more time and where they got information about their child's learning and development from.

Table 7.17 shows the frequency with which parents engaged in home learning activities with their children. The activities performed most often (on most days or every day) were looking at books, reciting nursery rhymes and recognising letters, words, numbers and shapes (86%, 73% and 72% respectively). Sixty per cent of parents also played indoor or outdoor games on most days.

Other activities were undertaken less frequently, for example 42 per cent of parents of two-to five-year-olds painted or drew with their child most days, with the same proportion reporting that this happened once or twice a week. One-quarter (24%) used a computer with their child on most days, though a greater proportion of parents did so once or twice a week (32%). Finally, as might be expected, visiting the library happened less often with 40 per cent of parents stating they had never done this.

There has been a significant increase since 2009 in the proportion of parents who used a computer with their child (24% compared with 20% in 2009), painted or drew with their child (42% compared with 36%) and took their child to a library every day (3% compared with 1%).

Sixty eight per cent of parents of children aged three to four reported that they received information about the types of home learning activities they could do with their child from their main provider. This suggests childcare providers had an important role in facilitating home learning.

Table 7.17 Frequency with which parents engage in home learning activities with their children

	Frequency							Base: All children aged two to five
	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	
Home learning activities	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Look at books or read stories	86	12	1	*	*	*	1	(2,575)
Recite nursery rhymes or sing songs	73	19	2	1	*	1	4	(2,575)
Play at recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	72	22	2	1	*	1	3	(2,575)
Paint or draw together	42	42	6	3	1	1	5	(2,575)
Take child to the library	3	13	14	19	9	2	40	(2,575)
Play indoor or outdoor games	60	32	3	1	1	2	1	(2,575)
Use a computer	24	32	7	5	2	2	28	(2,575)

NB: Row percentages.

Time spent on learning and play activities

Table 7.18 demonstrates that perspectives on the amount of time spent on learning and play activities differed significantly according to the work status of parents, but not whether the parents were lone parents or in a couple. As might be expected, non-working couples and non-working lone parents were significantly more likely than dual-working couples and, particularly, working lone parents to believe that they spent the right amount of time on learning and play activities, reflecting the fact that they were more likely to have a greater amount of free time to spend with their child. Working lone parents were least likely to report that the amount of free time they spent with their child was about right.

Similarly, in keeping with this, working lone parents were most likely to express a desire to spend more time on home learning (46% compared to 30% of non-working lone parents), and a similar pattern can be seen for couple families.

Table 7.18 Parents’ perspectives on the amount of learning and play activities they do with their child, by family type and work status

	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Working	Not working
Amount of time	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two to five years old</i>	(1,973)	(1,051)	(745)	(177)	(602)	(228)	(374)
It’s about right	65	62	68	70	63	54	69
I’d like to do less	1	*	1	2	1	1	1
I’d like to do more	34	37	31	29	36	46	30

Respondents with two- to five-year-olds who suggested that they would like to spend more time on learning and play activities were also asked whether a range of factors would enable them to do so. Finding time for activities appeared to be the most significant barrier to home learning with just under half of all parents suggesting more free time would be a factor enabling them to do more (see Table 7.19).

There were significant differences by parental work status for responses to six out of the 11 factors listed. For instance, having more free time was more likely to be a factor for dual-working couples (48%) and working lone parents (49%), compared to non-working couples and lone parents (35% and 46% respectively). In addition, and as also might be expected, working fewer hours was also a factor which followed this pattern. Non-working lone parents and couples where one parent was not working were more likely to raise the need for someone to look after their other children as a factor (12% and 11% to 12% compared to 3% of dual-working couples and 4% of working lone parents). Finally, parents who were not working were more likely to report that they needed more information or ideas about what to do, more toys or materials, and more places to go or local activities than working parents.

Two of the 11 factors were significantly different for particular family types. Couples were more likely to report that working less hours would enable them to spend more time on learning and play activities than lone parents (34% compared to 23%) whilst access to more toys or materials was more likely to be reported by lone parents than couples (9% compared to 5%).

Table 7.19 Factors which would increase time spent on learning and play activities, by family type and work status

Factors	Couple families				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Work-ing	Not working
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was two to five years old</i>	(671)	(385)	(234)	(52)	(213)	(103)	(110)
More free time to spend with child	51	48	58	35	48	49	46
Working less hours	34	53	7	8	23	48	1
More information or ideas about what to do	11	5	18	19	12	8	16
More money to spend on activities	12	10	12	22	16	8	22
Someone to look after other children	7	3	12	11	8	4	12
More toys/materials	5	4	5	16	9	4	14
More support/help from partner	4	4	3	3	4	7	2
If I had more energy/was less tired	1	1	1	0	2	3	2
More places to go/local activities	2	2	2	3	2	0	3
If my health was better	1	1	1	8	1	0	1
Other	5	6	5	8	6	4	8
No answer	4	2	6	3	3	1	4

Further analysis of the data (see Table C7.2 in Appendix C) shows that spending time on learning and play activities differs according to the level of area deprivation. Seven of the reasons allowing parents to spend more time on learning and play activities were significantly different depending on area deprivation. Parents in the most deprived areas were significantly more likely to raise the following factors compared to those in other areas: more information or ideas about what to do, better health, more money to spend on activities, and more toys/materials. Conversely, having the time for home learning was a more significant issue for the parents living in the least deprived areas, possibly because they were more likely to be employed. Working less hours, and having someone to look after other children were the factors more likely to be cited by this group.

Information about learning and play activities

The sources of information parents used about learning and play activities differed significantly between different family types for seven out of the 13 reasons listed in Table 7.20. Couples were significantly more likely than lone parents to use friends or relatives, other parents, children's TV programmes, internet sites, schools, playgroups and childcare providers.

Six of the information sources were more likely to be used by working parents than non-working parents. For instance, friends or relatives, one of the most frequently cited sources, was used by 69 per cent of dual-working couples compared to 50 per cent of non-working couples, and 63 per cent of working lone parents compared to 46 per cent of non-working lone parents. Schools were equally likely to be used by working as non-working lone parents.

The pattern was different for Sure Start/Children's Centres and Children's/Family Information Services. Just over one in five families used Sure Start/Children's Centres as a source of information or ideas about learning and play activities, and around one in ten used Children's/Family Information Services. However, there were no significant differences by family type and work status.

Table 7.20 Sources of information/ideas used about learning and play activities, by family type and work status

Source	Couples				Lone parents		
	All %	Both working %	One working %	Neither working %	All %	Work- ing %	Not working %
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two to five years old</i>	(1,974)	(1,051)	(746)	(177)	(602)	(228)	(374)
Friends or relatives	64	69	60	50	53	63	46
Other parents	47	53	44	22	33	40	29
Children's TV programmes	40	42	38	35	31	35	28
Internet site	34	40	30	19	22	28	18
School	31	33	32	23	25	25	25
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	21	19	23	26	22	20	24
Playgroup	17	19	19	6	13	17	11
Childcare provider	16	21	11	4	10	17	5
Children's Information Services/ Family Information Services	12	13	11	8	10	10	11
Local Authority	8	8	8	9	8	8	9
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and website) ⁸⁹	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, Citizens' Advice Bureau)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Other	5	5	6	5	5	5	6
No answer	7	7	7	13	12	10	13

⁸⁹ The low proportion of parents using ChildcareLink may be explained by the closure of the website in October 2009 and the phoneline in March 2010, prior to the fieldwork period.

As with Table 7.19, several of the sources of information utilised by parents varied by area deprivation. Parents in the least deprived category were more likely to use other parents, Children's Information Services/Family Information Services, children's TV programmes, internet sites and playgroups for ideas about learning and play activities (see Table C7.3 in Appendix C). Friends or relatives and childcare providers were much more likely to be used by parents living in areas in the top three quintiles in terms of area deprivation relative to other areas. Sure Start/Children's Centres were most likely to be used in areas of average deprivation.

The people/organisations contacted by parents about their child's learning and development were significantly different depending on the work status of parents (Table 7.21). For seven of the nine individuals or organisations listed, dual-working or working lone parents were more likely than non-working parents to contact them. For instance, 87 per cent of dual-working couples would speak to their partner about their child's learning and development compared to 72 per cent of non-working couples, and 32 per cent of working lone parents compared to 19 per cent of non-working lone parents. This also applied to friends or relatives, other parents, childcare providers and, as might be expected, work colleagues. Almost half (46%) of dual-working couples contacted their childcare provider about the child's learning and development, as did 33 per cent of working lone parents. Fewer than one-quarter of other parents contacted their childcare provider about their child's learning and development.

Non-working parents were more likely to contact local authorities and other sources.

Couples were significantly more likely than lone parents to contact organisations about their child's learning and development (8% of lone parents had contacted no-one compared with 2% of couples). Couples were significantly more likely than lone parents to speak to their partner, friends/relatives, other parents, childcare providers, work colleagues, and other organisations.

Table 7.21 People/organisations contacted about child's learning and development

People/ organisations	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both working	One working	Neither working	All	Work-ing	Not working
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two to five years old</i>	(1,974)	(1,051)	(746)	(177)	(602)	(228)	(374)
My husband/ wife/ partner	85	87	84	72	24	32	19
Friends/ relatives	67	73	61	54	60	69	55
School/ teacher	50	49	52	49	50	56	47
Other parents	50	56	47	33	32	39	28
Childcare provider	35	46	25	14	22	33	16
Work colleagues	23	36	10	2	11	29	*
Healthcare professional	17	16	18	20	19	15	21
Local authority	2	1	2	3	3	2	4
Other	1	1	1	2	4	4	4
No answer	2	2	2	4	8	4	10

The proportion of organisations contacted by parents of children aged two to five about their child's learning and development varied significantly by area deprivation (see Table C7.4 in Appendix C). Parents in the least deprived areas were most likely to speak to their partners,

friends and relatives, other parents, childcare providers, and work colleagues. Those parents living in the top two quintiles (in other words least deprived) of areas by deprivation were most likely to speak to friend and relatives. Those living in the most deprived areas were most likely not to contact anyone.

7.6 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage was introduced in 2008 to ensure that childcare or education providers of children aged nought to five adhere to a standardised framework for early learning and development. It sets out mandatory learning and development requirements in six areas⁹⁰ and requires providers to complete an assessment of each child in their final year of the EYFS at age five. The Government has placed significant emphasis on the importance of early learning and the finding that the first five years of a child's life have the biggest impact on their life chances has been well publicised⁹¹. Subsequently, early education has formed a core part of the Coalition Government's *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*⁹², a vision for the early years. Analysis in this section refers to nursery classes, reception classes, day nurseries, playgroups, childminders, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs as the EYFS applies to these particular childcare providers.

Three-quarters (75%) of parents with children aged two to five have heard of the EYFS and over half of parents knew something about it (56%, though 37% of this group knew a little and 19% knew a lot). However, one-quarter of parents were not aware of it (see Table 7.22).

Table 7.22 Level of knowledge about the Early Years Foundation Stage

Awareness	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(2,576)
Know a lot	19
Know a little	37
Heard of, but know nothing about	19
Not heard of it	25

A significant proportion of parents had received information about EYFS from their formal childcare provider. Forty-four per cent of parents said that their main formal provider had spoken to them about the EYFS and 37 per cent had been provided with non-verbal information (Table 7.23). Over one-third believed they had not received any information about EYFS from their main provider.

Table 7.23 Whether formal childcare provider has spoken to parent or provided them with information about the Early Years Foundation Stage

Contact about the Early Years Foundation Stage	%
<i>Base: All families where respondent was aware of EYFS, where selected child was two- to five-years-old and where a formal provider was used in the reference week</i>	(1,484)
Yes, spoken to	44
Yes, provided information	37
No	37

⁹⁰ Reforms to the EYFS in September 2012 will streamline the number of learning areas from six to three, and reduce learning goals from 69 to 17, in order to make sure children are school ready.

⁹¹ HM Government (2010) *Preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances by Frank Field*. Cabinet Office: London.

⁹² Department for Education and Department of Health (2011) *Supporting Families in the Foundation Years*. Department for Education: London.

Parents were asked about the extent to which they believe their main formal provider was encouraging the development of the six EYFS areas of learning and development: personal, social, and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; problem solving, reasoning and numeracy; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy were the skills that the largest proportions of parents believed were encouraged a great deal at their main formal provider (57% and 54% respectively) (see Table 7.24).

Parents perceived that day nurseries were most likely to encourage four out of the six skills listed a great deal. These were: personal, social and emotional development (64%); communication, language and literacy (63%); creative development (61%); and being physically active and improving coordination skills (59%). In addition, reception class was the provider type which parents perceived to be the most likely to encourage problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills (46%), whilst they thought childminders were the most likely to help children understand why things happen and how things work (42%).

Table 7.24 To what extent attending a formal childcare provider helped the child with the following skills, by provider type

Skill		Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Play-group	Child-minder	Breakfast club	After-school club	All
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was aged two to five and attended a formal provider in the reference week</i>		(220)	(499)	(316)	(273)	(97)	(22)	(102)	(1,529)
<i>Personal, social and emotional development</i>	A great deal	53	58	64	59	62	[35]	39	57
	A fair amount	41	36	33	37	30	[45]	48	37
	Not very much	5	4	2	4	5	[15]	11	5
	Not at all	0	1	*	1	1	[5]	2	1
	Don't know	1	1	1	0	1	[0]	0	1
<i>Communication, language and literacy</i>	A great deal	54	61	63	47	52	[30]	27	54
	A fair amount	41	35	33	44	36	[45]	38	37
	Not very much	4	3	3	7	8	[20]	31	7
	Not at all	1	1	*	1	3	[5]	4	1
	Don't know	1	*	*	1	1	[0]	0	*
<i>Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy</i>	A great deal	35	46	42	31	39	[20]	17	38
	A fair amount	43	45	42	41	39	[40]	23	41
	Not very much	16	8	12	23	21	[25]	42	17
	Not at all	4	1	3	5	1	[15]	16	4
	Don't know	2	1	1	1	0	[0]	1	1
<i>Understanding why things happen and how things work</i>	A great deal	35	41	41	29	42	[19]	19	36
	A fair amount	47	49	45	47	37	[43]	41	46
	Not very much	15	7	11	18	15	[24]	26	13
	Not at all	2	2	1	5	4	[14]	13	4
	Don't know	2	2	1	1	1	[0]	1	1
<i>Being physically active and improving coordination skills</i>	A great deal	47	49	59	48	55	[40]	58	51
	A fair amount	45	42	36	43	34	[35]	28	40
	Not very much	5	8	4	7	10	[20]	10	7
	Not at all	2	1	0	1	1	[5]	4	1
	Don't know	1	1	1	1	0	[0]	0	1
<i>Creative development</i>	A great deal	47	54	61	52	56	[33]	34	51
	A fair amount	47	39	35	41	38	[43]	34	40
	Not very much	5	5	3	5	4	[24]	22	7
	Not at all	1	1	*	2	1	[0]	10	2
	Don't know	1	1	1	0	0	[0]	0	1

One aspect of the EYFS is to ensure that parents are updated with their child’s progress. Providers are required to assess each child against 69 learning goals and produce a written report by the time the child reaches five; though it is likely parents will receive feedback more regularly depending on the provider. Respondents were asked about the volume of information they received from their formal childcare provider, though because of the small number of parents with children aged five who were likely to have received EYFS feedback, the question was broadened to all respondents with two- to five-year-olds.

There was a significant difference in the volume of information received by parents depending on the provider (Table 7.25). Childminders were most likely to give a great deal of information (54%). Around one-third of day nurseries, reception classes and playgroups did so. After-school clubs provided the least information with around half (48%) providing not very much or no information at all about the child’s learning and development.

Table 7.25 Volume of information received from formal provider about child’s learning and development

Provider	A great deal %	A fair amount %	Not very much %	Not at all %	Don’t know %	
						<i>Base: All families where selected child was aged two to five and attended a formal childcare provider in the reference week</i>
Nursery class	29	47	21	2	1	(220)
Reception class	32	55	11	2	*	(499)
Day nursery	37	50	12	*	0	(316)
Playgroup	32	46	16	6	0	(273)
Childminder	54	31	13	3	0	(97)
Breakfast club	[20]	[30]	[25]	[25]	[0]	(22)
After-school club	16	36	30	18	0	(102)
Total	32	47	16	4	*	(1,529)

NB: Row percentages.

7.7 Other services available at childcare providers

It is becoming more common for childcare providers to offer additional services to parents and Children’s Centres are increasingly being used to consolidate a variety of support services in one place to make them easier to access. Such services can include parenting classes, advice and support or job or career advice. Respondents with pre-school children using a formal group provider were asked about the availability, take-up and demand for additional services as these providers were most likely to have the resources for services to be located on-site. This section presents these results.

Fifty-seven per cent of parents stated that no additional services were available at their main formal group provider (Table 7.26). Where additional services were available, the most common was advice or support (19%). The availability of courses and training, parent or childminder and toddler sessions and health services were also relatively high (13%, 13% and 12% respectively). Counselling (5%), career advice (5%) and fitness services⁹³ (under one half of one per cent) were the least common additional services supplied by parents' main formal provider.

There was a significant difference in the availability of the top five additional services across different provider types. Parents using reception classes were the most likely to be able to access four of the top five additional services available to them, which may be because a significant proportion of Children's Centres are based on school sites. These services were: advice or support for parents (28%), courses or training (20%), health services (19%) and parenting classes (16%).

Playgroups were the most likely to offer the third most commonly available service, parent or childminder and toddler sessions (19%). Around seven in ten parents whose main provider was a day nursery reported that no services were available to them (71%), the highest proportion across all providers.

Table 7.26 Additional services available to parents at their main formal provider, by provider type

	Main formal provider					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	All
Services available	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider</i>	(297)	(214)	(349)	(387)	(276)	(1,523)
Advice or support for parents	21	19	28	12	16	19
Courses or training	16	15	20	8	11	13
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	16	10	10	9	19	13
Health services for families	13	12	19	6	14	12
Parenting classes	13	11	16	7	9	11
Help in finding additional childcare	8	2	7	6	7	6
Counselling services	6	5	5	3	5	5
Job or career advice	6	4	4	4	5	5
Fitness services	0	0	*	0	0	*
Other services	*	1	0	0	0	0
No services available	57	54	40	71	58	57

⁹³ Fitness services were mentioned by parents for the first time in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series in 2010.

Where Table 7.26 demonstrates that additional services were not available to 57 per cent of parents, Table 7.27 also shows that the take-up of additional services was low. For instance, parent or childminder and toddler sessions and health services were the most commonly used services by parents, though only four per cent attended each of these services. In addition, just three per cent of parents had taken up advice or support for parents even though this was the most commonly available service.

Table 7.27 Additional services used by parents at their main formal provider, by provider type

	Main formal provider					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	All
Services used	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider</i>	(297)	(214)	(349)	(387)	(276)	(1,523)
Advice or support for parents	5	4	5	2	2	3
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	5	3	3	3	7	4
Courses or training	3	5	6	2	1	3
Health services for families	4	5	5	1	4	4
Parenting classes	2	1	4	1	1	2
Help in finding additional childcare	*	1	1	2	*	1
Counselling services	0	0	1	*	*	*
Job or career advice	1	1	*	*	*	1
Fitness classes	0	0	*	0	0	*
Other services	*	0	0	1	0	*
No services used	24	27	33	16	24	24
No services available	60	60	48	74	61	62

Table 7.28 indicates that half of parents had no need for services in addition to those that were already available to them. For those who would like more services to become available, the most commonly desired were courses or training (18%) and health services (17%). As the 2009 survey report highlighted (Smith et al 2010), parents may have overestimated how much they would use a service if it was available to them.

Three out of the ten services listed below were significantly more likely to be requested by parents with particular formal providers. Parents whose main formal provider was a nursery class were the most likely to state they that would like to access courses or training and job or career advice at their provider (32% and 17% respectively). In addition, parents with a day nursery or playgroup as their main formal provider were the most likely to express a need for health services.

Table 7.28 Additional services parents would like to use at their main formal provider (if not currently available), by provider type

Services used	Main formal provider					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children whose main provider was a formal group provider</i>	(286)	(197)	(318)	(372)	(269)	(1,442)
Courses or training	15	32	17	14	20	18
Health services for families	13	16	13	20	21	17
Advice or support for parents	11	13	10	17	15	13
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	14	13	10	13	11	12
Job or career advice	12	17	14	7	13	12
Help in finding additional childcare	10	11	10	10	10	10
Parenting classes	8	7	9	8	8	8
Counselling services	4	2	3	4	4	4
Had no need for services in addition to those already available	54	45	51	51	47	50
Other services	2	0	1	1	0	1

7.8 Summary

Parents using formal childcare were likely to choose a childcare provider because of the provider's reputation and convenience. This was the case for parents of both pre-school and school-age children. However, parents were also significantly more likely to select a particular provider depending on the age of their child. Parents of three- and four-year-olds were more likely to choose providers offering educational opportunities (48%), and whilst convenience was important for parents of five- to seven-year-olds (44%) it was less so for twelve- to fourteen-year-olds (22%). Twenty per cent of parents of 12- to 14-year-olds stated that they selected a provider in accordance with their child's preference, the highest proportion selecting this reason across all age groups.

Some reasons for choosing a provider were more relevant to particular types of childcare providers than others. Regardless of the age of the child, parents who used a childminder as their main formal provider were likely to say this was because of concerns with the nature of care given and trust. Parents using nurseries, day nurseries and playgroups primarily considered the reputation of the provider. Finally, breakfast clubs were chosen by parents of school-age children because they were convenient (62%), whilst it appeared to be the social aspect of after-school clubs that made them attractive (37%).

The vast majority of parents agreed that their provider helped their child to develop academic skills, for example enjoying books and recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes. Whilst all formal group providers ranked highly in this regard, as with the 2009 survey, parents felt that reception classes were the most likely to develop all of the skills listed, and childminders the least. More than half of parents of children aged three to four (57%) reported that their child brought home books to read at least once a week. There was significant variation by provider type, parents who chose reception classes as their main provider were least likely to say their child never brought books home. Over three-quarters of parents reported that their main formal provider encouraged playing with other children (84%), good behaviour (80%), and listening to others and adults (77%). Around sixty per cent of parents said their provider encouraged expressing thoughts and feelings (62%) and tackling everyday tasks (59%).

The most common method by which parents received feedback from their formal providers was talking to staff (85%) and seeing pictures, drawings and other things their child brought home (51%). Over half of parents of school-age children received verbal feedback (79%) but less than half received any other form of feedback. Parents of pre-school children were more likely to receive feedback in a variety of ways, with over half reporting that they received feedback in each of five different ways. Most parents received feedback about how their child was getting on at least weekly, with 38 per cent receiving feedback each day or most days.

Parents engaged in a number of home learning activities with their child. The most frequently undertaken were looking at books and reciting nursery rhymes, which 86 per cent and 73 per cent of parents did each day or most days. Painting and drawing and using a computer happened less often, as did visiting the library with 40 per cent of parents saying they had never done this. More than two-thirds of parents (65%) believed they spent the right amount of time on learning and play activities though one-third (35%) would also like to do more. The main sources of information about activities used by parents were friends and relatives (61%) and other parents (44%), though media sources also rated highly with 38 per cent of parents taking ideas from children's TV programmes and 32 per cent using the internet. Around one in five (21%) used Sure Start/Children's Centres, and one in eight (12%) used Children's/Family Information Services as sources of information.

Three-quarters of parents of two- to five-year-olds had heard of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), over half claimed to know something about it, but only one in five claimed to

know a lot. Most of those aware of EYFS had spoken to their provider about EYFS or received information about EYFS from their provider.

The majority of parents indicated that there was no availability of additional services at formal group pre-school providers (57%). In addition, take-up of services at providers where other services are available was low. When parents were asked about which additional services they would use if available, courses or training (18%), health services (17%) and advice or support (13%) were the most frequently requested. However, parents may have overestimated how much they would use a service if it was available to them.

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 needed to make alternative arrangements during school holidays. School-age children were defined as children aged four to five attending primary school full- or part-time and children aged 6 to 14.

Within the chapter we explore the types of holiday providers that families used over the last year, and how this compares to 2009 and to term-time use (section 8.2). We look at the difference in use of holiday childcare between children with different characteristics and families in different circumstances (section 8.3).

We then examine the reasons why families used particular types of provider (section 8.4), how much families paid (section 8.5), and the ease of finding and arranging holiday childcare (section 8.6).

Finally we look at what parents thought about the holiday childcare available to them (section 8.7), and why some families chose not to use it (section 8.8).

Detailed questions on childcare use during school holidays were first included in the 2008 survey. Any year on year comparisons reported on in this chapter are between 2009 and 2010.

Two new family characteristics are looked at in this chapter; disability and rurality of the area that the family lived in.

8.2 Families' use of childcare during school holidays

Table 8.1 shows that just under half (45%) of families with school-age children used childcare during holidays in 2010. This compared to just over three-quarters (77%) in term-time. Usage of holiday childcare has decreased since 2009 when 51 per cent of parents used it. Parents were more likely to use an informal provider (30%) than formal provider (22%). This was also the case in 2008 and 2009.

There was a significant decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare in 2010 compared with 2009, but no significant change in the use of formal holiday childcare. There were significant decreases in the use of two informal provider types during holidays in 2010, which explain the significant decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare overall. Twenty-two per cent of parents used grandparents to provide holiday childcare in 2010 compared with twenty-seven per cent in 2009. Four per cent of parents used older siblings in 2010 compared with six per cent in 2009.

Table 8.1 Use of childcare during school holidays, 2008-2010

	Survey year		
	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>	(5,798)	(5,797)	(5,639)
Use of childcare during school holidays			
Any childcare	50	51	45
Formal childcare	22	23	22
Informal childcare	35	37	30
No childcare used	50	49	55

Working respondents with school-age children were asked whether their job allowed them to work during term-time only (table not shown). Twenty-three per cent had a job that allowed them to work term-time only (table not shown). There was no significant change from the 2009 figure (24%).

We did not ask respondents with working partners whether their partner had a job allowing them to work during term-time only. Therefore it is not possible to estimate the proportion of families where one or more parents could work during term-time only.

Table 8.2 shows that where term-time only work was permitted, one-third of working parents (33%) used holiday childcare, with 21 per cent using formal childcare, and 16 per cent using informal childcare.

Working parents were significantly more likely than workless parents to use childcare, both formal and informal, during the holidays. Among working parents, those who had a job allowing them to work during term-time only were significantly less likely to use holiday childcare, both formal and informal, than working parents whose job required them to work during term-time and holidays. This suggests that the effect of employers who allow term-time only working is to reduce the demand for holiday childcare among affected employees from what it might otherwise be.

Table 8.2 Use of childcare during school holidays, by respondent work status

	Respondent work status		
	Working respondents allowed to work term-time only	All working respondents	All respondents
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>	(787)	(3,328)	(5,639)
Use of childcare during school holidays			
Any childcare	33	53	45
Formal childcare	21	27	22
Informal childcare	16	37	30
No childcare used	67	47	55

Table 8.3 shows the use of holiday childcare by type of childcare used during term-time. It demonstrates that just under half (49%) of families using childcare during term-time did not use any childcare during holidays. Just over half (51%) did with informal childcare being more prevalent than formal childcare (34%, compared to 26%). More families used informal than formal childcare during the school holidays, irrespective of the type of childcare they used in term-time.

There were other clear differences between the childcare families used in term-time and the holidays:

- Thirty per cent of families used formal childcare in the holidays as well as term-time (while 48% of families using formal childcare during term-time used no childcare at all in the holidays).
- Just under half of families (48%) who used informal childcare during term-time also used informal provision during the school holidays.
- Twenty-three per cent of families who used no childcare during term-time used some form of holiday childcare. This suggests that there was demand amongst a substantial proportion of families for childcare specific to the holiday periods.

Table 8.3 Use of childcare during school holidays compared with use of childcare during term-time

	Use of childcare during term-time			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	No childcare
	%	%		%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>	(4,620)	(4,020)	(2,016)	(1,039)
Use of childcare during school holidays				
Any childcare	51	52	57	23
Formal childcare	26	30	22	9
Informal childcare	34	34	48	16
No childcare used	49	48	43	76

Use of childcare in different holiday periods

When the respondents using holiday childcare were asked when they used it (table not shown), 90 per cent said they did so during the summer holidays, 58 per cent used it in the Easter holidays and 50 per cent during February half-term. A similar proportion used holiday childcare during the October and May half-term (53% and 52% respectively). The lowest usage was during the Christmas holidays when less than half (46%) used childcare. This relatively low level reflects the fact that many formal providers were closed during the Christmas period and many parents may have chosen to take time off work at this time (which working parents would be less able to do in the summer holidays).

8.3 Type 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 special educational needs or disability) used holiday childcare. In addition, this section looks at variation between families in different circumstances (e.g. family annual

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 childcare rather than the proportion of **families**.

Table 8.4 shows that 35 per cent of school-age children attended some type of childcare during the school holidays, compared to 64 per cent during term-time. The major difference between the term-time and holiday period is that children were much more likely to be cared for by formal providers during term-time (49%) than during the holidays (18%). This suggests that during the school holidays parents filled the gap in childcare provision when after-school/breakfast clubs were closed during the school holidays.

In particular, as might be expected, the proportion of children who attended after-school/breakfast clubs was noticeably lower during the holidays (36% and 4% respectively compared to 7% and 1%). It is likely that this reflects the fact that many after-school/breakfast clubs were sited on school premises and as such were likely to be closed during the holidays.

Table 8.4 Use of childcare in term-time and school holidays

	Term-time	Holiday
	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>	(4,695)	(2,096)
Use of childcare		
Any childcare	64	35
Formal provider	49	18
Breakfast club	4	1
After-school club	36	7
Holiday club	*	8
Childminder	3	2
Nanny or au pair	1	*
Informal provider	26	23
Ex-partner	4	3
Grandparent	15	16
Older sibling	3	2
Another relative	3	5
Friend or neighbour	4	4
Other		
Leisure/ sport activity	5	*
Other childcare provider	1	2
No childcare used	36	65

Table 8.4 also shows that holiday clubs were the most popular formal provider of holiday childcare, with eight per cent attending such clubs. When it comes to informal childcare there was a difference in the use of this type of provision during term-time (26%) compared to holidays (23%). This is in contrast to 2009 where there was no difference in the use of informal providers overall for holidays and term-time. Grandparents played an important childcare role and were cited by 15 per cent as providing childcare during term-time and 16 per cent during the school holidays. An ex-partner, friend or neighbour was used by four per cent of respondents during term-time and a similar proportion (3% and 4% respectively) during the holidays.

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

In Table 8.5 we can see that the heaviest use of childcare was amongst families with 8- to 11-year-olds. Forty per cent of children in this age group attended holiday childcare, compared to 33 per cent of 5- to 7-year-olds and 32 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds. Informal childcare was attended more by older children, with 27 per cent of 8- to 11-year-olds and 23 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds receiving informal childcare compared to 19 per cent of 5- to 7-year-olds. Where formal childcare was used it tended to be favoured for younger children with 20 per cent of 5- to 7-year-olds and 8- to 11-year-olds receiving some sort of formal holiday childcare compared to 11 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds. Holiday clubs and after-school clubs were the main provider of formal childcare and used by eight per cent and seven per cent of school-age children respectively.

Grandparents were the most important provider of informal childcare, irrespective of the child's age. Fourteen per cent of 5- to 7-year-olds, 18 per cent of 8- to 11-year-olds and 16 per cent of 12- to 14-year-olds were cared for by grandparents during the school holidays. Older children (aged 12 to 14) were more likely to be looked after by siblings than younger children (aged 5 to 7).

Table 8.5 Use of holiday childcare providers, by age of child

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>	<i>(1,277)</i>	<i>(1,577)</i>	<i>(1,183)</i>	<i>(4,695)</i>
Use of childcare				
Any childcare	33	40	32	35
Formal provider	20	20	11	18
Breakfast club	1	1	*	1
After-school club	7	8	7	7
Holiday club	9	11	5	8
Childminder	3	1	*	2
Nursery or au pair	1	1	0	*
Informal provider	19	27	23	23
Ex-partner	2	4	4	3
Grandparent	14	18	16	16
Older sibling	*	3	4	2
Another relative	3	6	5	5
Friend or neighbour	4	5	4	4
No childcare used	67	60	68	65

Table 8.6 shows the proportions of children from different ethnic backgrounds, with SEN or health problems or a disability who received different forms of holiday childcare. Children from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and other Asian backgrounds were amongst the least likely to receive childcare of any type (formal or informal) during the holidays (as discussed in Chapter 2 this might in part be related to the lower employment rates amongst Asian Pakistani and Asian Bangladeshi families). Whilst 35 per cent of all school-age children received some form of holiday childcare, the equivalent proportions for children from Asian backgrounds were between four per cent (Bangladeshi) and 24 per cent (Indian). Children from White and Asian backgrounds were most likely to receive holiday childcare (42%).

Table 8.6 Use of holiday childcare, by child characteristics

Child characteristics	Use of holiday childcare			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	35	18	23	<i>(4,695)</i>
Ethnicity of child, grouped				
White, British	39	20	26	<i>(3,650)</i>
Other White	21	12	11	<i>(161)</i>
White and Black	37	25	16	<i>(76)</i>
White and Asian	42	22	24	<i>(52)</i>
Other Mixed	[24]	[5]	[20]	<i>(46)</i>
Indian	24	11	16	<i>(102)</i>
Pakistani	14	7	7	<i>(197)</i>
Bangladeshi	4	2	3	<i>(89)</i>
Other Asian	11	5	6	<i>(63)</i>
Black Caribbean	34	17	17	<i>(53)</i>
Black African	20	12	8	<i>(156)</i>
Other	[15]	[13]	[2]	<i>(44)</i>
Whether child has SEN				
Yes	36	17	22	<i>(382)</i>
No	35	18	23	<i>(4,310)</i>
Whether child has a disability				
Yes	37	20	23	<i>(296)</i>
No	35	17	23	<i>(4,399)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

Children with SEN were no more or less likely than children without SEN to receive childcare (formal and informal) in the holidays. This pattern was repeated for children with and without a long standing illness or disability. Similar proportions were in receipt of childcare and there was no significant difference between the use of formal or informal childcare.

However, although children with SEN were no more or less likely than children without SEN to receive childcare (formal and informal) during term-time (see Table 2.5), significant proportions of parents of disabled children experienced difficulties in securing adequate provision (see Table 6.10).

Use of holiday childcare by families' circumstances

Tables 8.7 and 8.8 show how children's use of holiday childcare varied by their family circumstances such as annual income, family type, size and work status. Table 8.7 shows that roughly the same proportions of children in couple and lone parent families received some kind of holiday childcare (35% and 34% respectively). This was also true for informal childcare specifically. However, there was a difference in the use of formal providers, with 19 per cent of children of couples receiving childcare from formal providers compared to 15 per cent of children of lone parents.

The pattern of usage with regard to the families' work status reflects the findings from 2009. Children of couples where both parents worked and those of working lone parents 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 childcare). Children of couples where neither parent worked were least likely to use any holiday childcare.

Table 8.7 Use of childcare during school holidays by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Use of holiday childcare			Unweighted base
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	35	18	23	<i>(4,695)</i>
Family type				
Couple	35	19	22	<i>(3,450)</i>
Lone parent	34	15	23	<i>(1,245)</i>
Family work status				
Couple – both working	44	23	29	<i>(2,039)</i>
Couple – one working	24	13	14	<i>(1,140)</i>
Couple – neither working	15	7	8	<i>(271)</i>
Lone parent – working	47	21	33	<i>(603)</i>
Lone parent – not working	20	9	14	<i>(642)</i>
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	21	11	14	<i>(461)</i>
£10,000-£19,999	27	12	18	<i>(1,156)</i>
£20,000-£29,999	35	15	24	<i>(827)</i>
£30,000-£44,999	39	18	26	<i>(830)</i>
£45,000+	45	26	28	<i>(1,169)</i>
Number of children				
1	43	19	30	<i>(1,160)</i>
2	35	19	22	<i>(2,173)</i>
3+	27	15	16	<i>(1,362)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

Children from higher income families were more likely to receive both formal and informal holiday childcare (see Table 8.7). This may indicate that use of formal holiday childcare may be affected by affordability, although to some degree it will be associated with work status (in other words parents with higher incomes were more likely to be in work and hence, presumably, had less time to look after their children). Nevertheless, we should not assume that the differences in use of holiday childcare between families with different income levels were simply an association with work status. The regression model predicting formal

childcare use during term-time showed that both family annual income and work status were independently associated with formal childcare use (see Chapter 2).

In terms of family size, children in families with three or more children were less likely to receive holiday childcare overall and less likely to receive childcare from formal or informal providers. This may be associated with the higher likelihood of parents not working amongst those families.

Use of holiday childcare by region and area deprivation

Table 8.8 shows how children's receipt of holiday childcare varied by region, area deprivation and rurality. Just under half of school-age children living in the North East (49%) and South West (48%) received some sort of holiday childcare, compared to 21 per cent of school children in London. Informal childcare was particularly low in London with just 10 per cent using this type of provider compared to 17 to 35 per cent elsewhere. This finding is similar to that for term-time informal childcare use (see Chapter 2) and consistent with the 2009 findings. Children living in the North East and South West attended informal childcare most (35% and 34% respectively).

In addition, there were some clear regional differences in the use of formal holiday providers. School-age children living in the South East and South West were most likely to receive formal holiday childcare (26% and 23% respectively) and London the least likely at 13 per cent.

Table 8.8 Use of childcare during school holidays, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Use of holiday childcare			
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All school-age children</i>				
All	35	18	23	<i>(4,695)</i>
Government Office Region				
North East	49	18	35	<i>(246)</i>
North West	30	14	20	<i>(699)</i>
Yorkshire and the Humber	38	17	26	<i>(495)</i>
East Midlands	31	13	21	<i>(409)</i>
West Midlands	29	17	17	<i>(521)</i>
East of England	35	18	24	<i>(455)</i>
London	21	13	10	<i>(672)</i>
South East	45	26	29	<i>(740)</i>
South West	48	23	34	<i>(458)</i>
Area deprivation				
1 st quintile – most deprived	24	11	15	<i>(1,148)</i>
2 nd quintile	32	15	21	<i>(951)</i>
3 rd quintile	41	20	29	<i>(789)</i>
4th quintile	39	21	26	<i>(887)</i>
5 th quintile – least deprived	42	23	25	<i>(917)</i>
Rurality				
Rural	42	20	29	<i>(917)</i>
Urban	33	17	21	<i>(3,773)</i>

NB: Row percentages.

Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, Table 8.8 shows that the overall pattern of holiday childcare take-up (both formal and informal) was higher in less-deprived areas and lower in more deprived areas. This reflects the 2009 findings and as discussed in Chapter 2 it is likely that the lower take-up of holiday childcare in disadvantaged areas reflected lower employment rates in these areas.

We also looked at the rurality of the area the family lived in. Table 8.8 demonstrates that school-age children living in rural areas were more likely than their urban counterparts to be in receipt of any holiday childcare, particularly informal childcare.

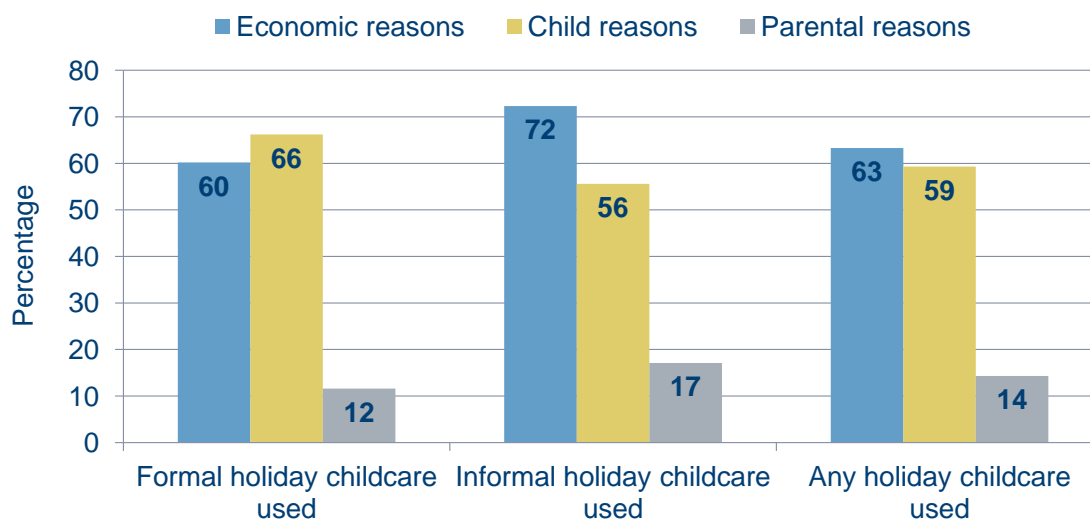
8.4 Reasons for using holiday childcare

In this section we return to looking at families' use of childcare, and in particular the reasons that they chose to use holiday childcare (respondents were able to name more than one reason)⁹⁴. Overall, 63 per cent of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons (e.g. so that they could go to work, work longer hours, or study/ train) and 59 per cent mentioned child development or enjoyment reasons. Far fewer parents (14%) said they used it for personal reasons (e.g. so that they could go shopping, attend appointments). There was a significant decrease in the proportion using holiday childcare for economic reasons in 2010 (63% compared with 68% in 2009) and also a significant decrease in the proportion using holiday childcare for personal reasons (14% compared with 18% in 2009).

Figure 8.1 shows how the reasons for using holiday childcare varied between parents using formal and informal childcare. Parents who used informal childcare were most likely to mention economic factors for choosing their childcare (72%) compared with child- or parent-related reasons (56% and 17% respectively). Parents using formal provision were less likely to mention economic factors than parents using informal childcare (60% compared to 72%) and instead child-related reasons appeared to be more important (66% compared with 56%). Also, where parents used formal providers they were less likely to say that they did so to enable them to do other things (e.g. shop or attend appointments) compared to parents who used informal providers (12% compared to 17%). This suggests that use of informal providers in the school holidays was associated with economic needs and parental needs, whereas benefits to the child appeared to play a more important role in the use of formal providers.

⁹⁴ Note that respondents 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 Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare, by type of holiday childcare use



Base: All families with school-age children using holiday childcare (2,164)

Source: Table C8.1 in Appendix C

Tables 8.9 and 8.10 show parents' reasons for using particular formal and informal childcare providers during school holidays. Looking first at formal providers (Table 8.9), holiday clubs or schemes were typically chosen for reasons relating to children's enjoyment or development (72%). For example, 58 per cent of parents used a holiday club because it provided an opportunity for the child to take part in a leisure activity, and 40 per cent used it because the child enjoyed spending time with the provider. Likewise, child development and enjoyment factors were key reasons for choosing after-school clubs with just over three-quarters (76%) citing this as a reason⁹⁵.

In contrast, most parents using childminders said that they were using them for economic reasons, such as being able to go to work, look for work, train or study (95%, see Table 8.9). This may be because childminders were more likely to be available all or most of the year round and during working hours.

⁹⁵ In 2009 breakfast clubs and after-school clubs were combined and looked at in terms of whether or not they were on the school premises. In 2010 breakfast clubs and after-school clubs were looked at separately although no distinction was made between the location of these clubs (in other words whether they were on or off the school site).

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

	Formal holiday provider			
	Holiday club or scheme	Breakfast club	After-school club	Child-minder
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of formal holiday childcare</i>	(582)	(16)	(241)	(130)
Economic reasons	50	[97]	37	95
So that I could work/ work longer hours	48	[92]	32	90
So that my partner could work/ work longer hours	18	[25]	10	23
So that I could look for work	1	[0]	2	1
So that my partner could look for work	0	[0]	0	2
So that I could train/ study	2	[7]	3	7
So that my partner could train/ study	*	[0]	1	1
Child developmental/ enjoyment	72	[43]	76	18
For the child's educational development	21	[12]	23	2
Child likes spending time with provider	40	[13]	46	15
Child could take part in leisure activity	58	[36]	61	5
Parental time	5	[0]	5	5
Parents could look after the home/ other children	4	[0]	3	1
Parent could go shopping/ attend appointments/ socialise	3	[0]	4	5
Other reason	4	[0]	3	4

Comparing the reasons for using formal and informal providers, child developmental reasons played more of a role in the choice of formal group provision, particularly holiday clubs and after-school clubs. The choice of informal childcare, including grandparents, was more likely to be driven by economic factors. These findings reflect the 2009 results but are not directly comparable because the question about breakfast and after-school clubs asked respondents whether the clubs were on or off the school site (see section 2.2 for more details).

Table 8.10 shows some notable variation in the reasons why different types of informal providers looked after children in the school holidays. As previously mentioned, most informal providers looked after children in the school holidays for economic reasons (62% to 74%). The only exception was ex-partners (who were likely to be children's non-resident parents) who were most likely to provide childcare for child-related reasons (60%), such as the child enjoying spending time with them. In addition though, around half of parents using grandparents or friends and neighbours during the school holidays (51% and 53% respectively) did so for the children's development and/ or enjoyment. Grandparents and older siblings were slightly more likely than other types of informal childcare to be used for parental reasons, to give parents time to shop, attend appointments or socialise.

Table 8.10 Parents' reasons for using informal providers of holiday childcare, by provider type

	Informal provider				
	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Another relative	Friend/ neighbour	Ex-partner
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of informal holiday childcare</i>	(981)	(109)	(283)	(261)	(168)
Economic reasons	73	74	69	62	45
So that I could work/ work longer hours	69	72	66	58	43
So that my partner could work/ work longer hours	26	17	24	20	5
So that I could look for work	1	*	1	2	0
So that my partner could look for work	*	1	0	1	1
So that I could train/ study	2	1	2	2	3
So that my partner could train/ study	*	0	1	1	0
Child developmental/ enjoyment	51	35	44	53	61
For the child's educational development	3	1	4	1	3
Child likes spending time with provider	49	33	42	52	60
Child could take part in leisure activity	8	7	9	14	6
Parental time	17	17	13	14	13
Parents could look after the home/ other children	3	2	3	3	4
Parent could go shopping/ attend appointments/ socialise	15	16	12	13	9
Other reason	5	6	5	4	22

8.5 Paying for holiday childcare

Parents who used childcare during school holidays were asked whether they were charged for the service. Table 8.11 shows that most parents were paying formal providers (between 57% and 86%), while few were paying for informal holiday childcare (between 4% and 8%). This is consistent with the findings on paying for childcare during term-time (Chapter 5).

Table 8.11 Whether payment made for holiday childcare, by provider type

Use of childcare	Paid for holiday childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of holiday childcare</i>		
Formal providers		
Breakfast club	[81]	(16)
After-school club	57	(365)
Holiday club/ scheme	86	(584)
Childminders	80	(160)
Informal providers		
Grandparent(s)	4	(1,219)
Older sibling	8	(127)
Another relative	6	(321)
Friend or neighbour	8	(299)

NB: Row percentages.

A new question was asked in 2010 to ascertain whether families paid more for childcare during holiday times compared to term-time and whether or not they had to pay for holiday childcare. As can be seen from Table 8.12 holiday clubs were the type of childcare most likely to be used exclusively in the school holidays. Sixty-three per cent of families used and paid for a holiday club during the school holidays, whilst a further 14 per cent used a holiday club but did not pay for it. After-school clubs were the most likely form of holiday childcare to be free. More than two-fifths (43%) of users did not need to pay for this service during the holidays. Sixty-one per cent of families using a childminder in the holidays reported that their provider did not charge more for their services in the school holidays. This compares favourably to after-school clubs where the figure falls to 36 per cent. One in ten had to pay more for their holiday after-school club than they did in term-time.

Table 8.12 Relative use and payment of holiday childcare, by provider type

	Breakfast club	After-school club	Holiday club	Child-minder
Use of holiday childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of holiday childcare</i>	(16)	(365)	(584)	(160)
Paid more for all carers of this provider type in holidays	[22]	10	9	15
Paid more for some carers of this provider type in holidays	[0]	*	*	0
Did not pay more for this provider type in holidays	[42]	36	13	61
Used and paid for holiday provider but did not use in term-time	[18]	10	63	4
Used a holiday provider but did not pay	[18]	43	14	20

Table 8.13 shows how much parents paid their providers per day of holiday childcare, by the type of provider they used (the amount paid per family could cover more than one child). In terms of the average amount families paid per day for holiday childcare, parents spent the most money on childminders (a median of £25 per day) and least on after-school clubs (a median of £10.47 per day). Holiday clubs cost on average £15.00 per day.

It is not possible to directly compare holiday childcare costs with those incurred during term-time. This is because the questions regarding term-time childcare costs related to the reference week, while the questions regarding holiday childcare costs asked respondents to give the total amount paid for the previous holiday period.

Table 8.13 Amount paid for holiday childcare per day, by provider type

	Amount paid per day			
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted Base
Use of holiday childcare	£	£		
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare</i>				
Formal providers				
Breakfast club	[13.11]	[14.18]	[3.09]	(10)
After-school club	10.47	16.05	1.33	(180)
Holiday club/ scheme	15.00	22.51	4.11	(484)
Childminder	25.00	32.00	2.47	(111)

To put these figures into context, Table 8.14 shows how many hours per day these providers were typically used. On the whole, the difference between the numbers of hours spent with different providers was quite small. This suggests that the differences in daily cost highlighted above genuinely reflected differences in the cost of these provider types, rather than in the time children spent there.

Table 8.14 Hours of holiday childcare used per day, by provider type

	Hours per day			
	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted Base
Use of childcare	Hrs	Hrs		
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who paid for type of holiday childcare</i>				
Formal providers				
Childminder	8.00	7.60	0.35	(116)
Holiday club	6.00	6.82	0.22	(479)
Breakfast club	[7.00]	[6.64]	[0.22]	(11)
After-school club	5.00	5.64	0.44	(185)

There was no significant difference in the mean hours families employed childminders for in the holidays between 2009 and 2010, and no difference in the mean hours families used holiday clubs for. Due to the changes in the questions about breakfast clubs and after-school clubs in the 2010 survey (see section 2.2), it is not possible to look at trends over time for these two provider types.

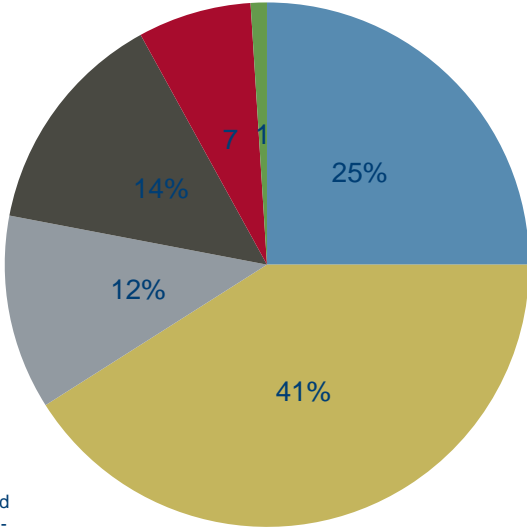
8.6 Availability of holiday childcare

Ease of finding holiday childcare for working parents

As reported in section 8.2, twenty-three per cent of working parents with school-age children reported that their job enabled them to work during school term-time only (table not shown). Working parents with school-age children who had to work during the school holidays were asked about how easy or difficult it was to arrange holiday childcare. Sixty-five per cent of parents reported that it was easy or very easy to arrange childcare during the school holidays, whilst 12 per cent stated that it was neither easy nor difficult. However, 21 per cent of parents said that they found arranging holiday childcare difficult or very difficult (see Figure 8.2).

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

■ Very easy ■ Easy ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Difficult ■ Very difficult ■ Varies



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 (1,115)

Source: Table C8.2 in Appendix C

When looking at family work status (see Table C8.3 in Appendix C) more working lone parents said it was difficult or very difficult to find holiday provision than couple parents where one parent was working (24% compared to 8%). This may reflect a lack of need for childcare amongst couples where one parent is not working. For couples where both partners were working, 21 per cent stated that it was difficult or very difficult to arrange holiday childcare.

Those respondents who said it was difficult or very difficult to arrange childcare during the holidays were asked about the reasons for these difficulties (Table 8.15). Friends or family not being available to help with childcare was one of the biggest difficulties reported by parents (50%). Other factors were affordability and a lack of holiday childcare places (32%). The results presented in Table 8.15 are not directly comparable to 2009 because the 2009 analysis looked only at the autumn term reference week⁹⁶.

Table 8.15 Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare

Reasons for difficulties	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/very difficult</i>	(326)
Friends/ Family not always available to help	50
Difficult to afford	32
Not many places/ providers in my area	32
Difficult to find out what childcare/ holiday clubs are available in my area	18
Quality of some childcare/ clubs in not good	8
My children need special care	3
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/ clubs	4
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/ clubs in the past	2
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I need	6
Other reason	0

Table 8.16 shows reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare by rurality (it was not possible to analyse by region because of the relatively low number of respondents answering this question). There was no significant difference by rurality for any of the reasons for difficulties in arranging holiday childcare given below.

Table 8.16 Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare, by rurality

Reasons for difficulties	Rurality	
	Rural	Urban
	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare is difficult/very difficult</i>	(79)	(246)
Friends/ Family not always available to help	47	50
Difficult to afford	39	31
Not many places/ providers in my area	30	32
Difficult to find out what childcare/ holiday clubs are available in my area	23	17
Quality of some childcare/ clubs in not good	9	7
My children need special care	7	2
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/ clubs	5	3
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/ clubs in the past	4	1
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I need	4	6
Other reason	0	0

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

⁹⁶ Analysis was run on autumn term data only and there were negligible differences between those results and the analysis presented in Table 8.15 of this report.

Sufficiency of the hours available at formal providers

Respondents who had used formal providers during the holidays were asked whether their providers were available for enough time⁹⁷ 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. Parents were generally happy with the availability of formal holiday providers (Table 8.17), with the proportion saying all providers were available for enough time ranging from 65 per cent for after-school clubs to 74 per cent for holiday clubs. However, a substantial minority of parents using these same providers reported that either some providers were not available for enough time (7% and 4% respectively) or, more commonly, that none were available for enough time (29% and 22% respectively).

Table 8.17 Formal provider available for enough time during school holiday, by provider type

	Holiday provider			
	Holiday club scheme	Breakfast club	After-school club	Child-minder
Whether available for enough time	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children using the types of formal holiday childcare</i>	(581)	(1)	(83)	(49)
All providers were available for enough time in holidays	74	[100]	65	[76]
Some providers were available for enough time in holidays	4	[0]	7	[0]
No providers were available for enough time in holidays	22	[0]	29	[24]

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

Respondents who had used any holiday provision were also asked how easy they thought it would be to find alternative providers if their current holiday providers were not available. Over half (55%) said it would be difficult to find alternatives for any of the providers that they used (table not shown). Thirty-six per cent said it would be easy or very easy to find alternatives for all holiday providers used and nine per cent thought that it would be easy or very easy to find alternatives for some holiday providers.

⁹⁷ The question did not specify further whether this was hours per day, or days per week, or some other amount of time.

8.7 Parents' views of childcare used during school holidays

Table 8.18 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 formal holiday childcare, informal holiday childcare and no childcare in the holidays.

Overall, more than half (56%) of parents strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available in their local area. Just over half (53%) of parents were happy with their ability to find flexible holiday childcare. Under half (45%) reported no difficulties with affordability.

However, on the other hand, 15 per cent of parents were not happy with the quality of childcare available in the holidays, 21 per cent of parents reported having problems finding holiday childcare that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 29 per cent reported difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays. This suggests that from parents' point of view, holiday childcare provision had some way to go with regards to quality, flexibility and affordability, and caused a substantial number of parents difficulties. However, there has been no significant change in the proportion of parents experiencing any of these difficulties since 2009.

It is not possible to compare parents' views on quality or affordability of holiday childcare with term-time childcare because of differences in the way the questions were asked⁹⁸. However, the proportion of parents saying they had problems finding holiday childcare that was flexible enough to meet their needs (21%) was almost the same as the proportion saying they had problems finding term-time childcare that was flexible enough (22%) (see Table 6.12).

Parents who had not used any holiday childcare were less likely to express an opinion about quality, flexibility and affordability, with 32 to 39 per cent saying they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements in Table 8.18. It is important to recognise that at least a proportion of those not using holiday childcare did so because they had no need for it. This would explain why parents who did not use holiday childcare were less likely to report difficulties with provision than parents who did use holiday childcare. For example, whilst 16 per cent of parents who had not used childcare reported difficulties finding flexible childcare this was also the case for 24 to 27 per cent of those who had used holiday childcare. Similarly, 26 per cent of parents who had not used any childcare in the holidays agreed that they had difficulties affording holiday childcare, compared to 36 per cent 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 were unimportant, as there was clearly unmet demand within this group.

⁹⁸ The question asking about the quality of childcare in term-time asked respondents 'and thinking about the overall quality of childcare provided in your local area, how good would you say this is?'. The respondents were asked to rate it very good, good, poor or very poor. The question about the quality of childcare during holidays asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I am happy with the quality of the childcare available to me during the school holidays'. The respondents were asked to say whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed. The same pattern of questioning was used for the questions about affordability in term-time and holidays.

Table 8.18 Views of parents about childcare during school holidays, by use of holiday childcare

Parents' views	Holiday childcare used				
		Formal provider	Informal provider (or other) only	No child-care used	All
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>		(1,305)	(1,144)	(3,183)	(5,632)
<i>I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	24	29	16	21
	Agree	46	34	31	35
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	18	39	29
	Disagree	10	14	9	11
	Disagree strongly	4	5	4	4
<i>I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs</i>	Strongly agree	10	9	4	7
	Agree	17	15	12	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	18	33	26
	Disagree	41	40	33	36
	Disagree strongly	14	19	18	17
<i>I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	16	14	11	13
	Agree	20	15	15	16
	Neither agree nor disagree	19	19	32	26
	Disagree	35	33	27	30
	Disagree strongly	11	19	16	15

Sixty-two per cent of couples where both parents worked were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available (Table C8.5 in Appendix C). This fell for couples where only one parent worked (53%) and was lowest for workless families (44%). This again may reflect a lack of demand in workless families, and indeed the proportions not expressing an opinion were higher amongst these groups (33% to 40%) than families with both parents in work (23% to 25%).

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 or neither parent worked (16%). Similarly, working lone parents were more likely to say that flexibility was a problem compared with lone parents who were not working (24% compared with 20%). Affordability impacted most heavily on lone parents, with 35 per cent of working lone parents and 39 per cent of non-working lone parents citing affordability as a problem. Amongst dual-working couples, the figure was 27 per cent, and in the case of couples with one partner working, only 24 per cent were concerned about affordability. These figures indicate that affordability posed a particular problem for lone parents and may have acted as a 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, 57 per cent of families said that they could find holiday childcare that fitted their working hours (Table 8.19). This compares to 51 per cent of families that said they could find term-time childcare that fitted their working hours (see Table 6.12).

Parents who used formal childcare were the most likely group to report problems with finding holiday childcare that fitted their working hours (20%). Amongst parents who did not use any childcare in the holidays only 15 per cent reported such problems.

Table 8.19 Views of working parents on holiday childcare hours, by use of holiday childcare

Working parents' views	Whether used holiday childcare				
		Formal provider	Informal provider (or other) only	No holiday provider used	All
<i>Base: All families with school-age children where respondent worked</i>		(942)	(816)	(1,542)	(3,300)
<i>I am able to find holiday care that fits in with my/ (mine and my partner's working hours)</i>	Strongly agree	17	26	16	19
	Agree	45	43	31	38
	Neither agree nor disagree	18	13	38	26
	Disagree	16	12	11	13
	Disagree strongly	4	5	4	4

We asked working respondents whether they would increase their working hours if holiday childcare were (a) cheaper or (b) if it were available for more hours per day.

The majority of parents (58%) said they would keep their working hours the same if holiday childcare was cheaper. Twenty one per cent said that they would increase their working hours (table not shown) and the same proportion were unable to express a view either way.

Most working parents (63%) thought they would keep their working hours the same, if holiday childcare were available for more hours per day. Seventeen per cent said they would increase their working hours, and 20 per cent could not give a view either way (table not shown). These figures indicate that the availability and cost of holiday childcare affected 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, over half of families (55%) did not use any holiday childcare. When respondents not using holiday childcare were asked about the likelihood of their using holiday childcare if suitable childcare could be found, 43 per cent said that this would make them likely or very likely to use holiday childcare (table not shown).

Table 8.3 demonstrated that only 30 per cent of families who used formal childcare during term-time also used formal childcare in the holidays. Thirty-two per cent of families who used formal provision during term-time only said their providers remained open during the school holidays, seven per cent said that this was sometimes the case but 53 per cent said that

none of their formal term-time providers were open during the holidays (table not shown)⁹⁹. Amongst those families whose formal term-time providers were not open in the holidays, 43 per cent said that they would be likely or very likely to use holiday childcare if suitable childcare could be found (37% of all families who did not use holiday childcare said they would use it if suitable childcare could be found). These figures suggest that there was 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 8.20 shows that these parents were most likely to say that they wanted to look after their children themselves (58%). Parents also mentioned that they or their partner were at home during school holidays (23%), and that they rarely needed to be away from their children (15%). As such, where families' formal term-time provider was available but not used during the holidays, this was mainly because they had no need to use holiday childcare. However, 11 per cent of those parents also said that they did not use their formal term-time providers during the holidays because it was too expensive. This suggests that affordability was a barrier for a substantial minority of parents whose formal term-time provision was available during the holidays.

Table 8.20 Reasons for not using holiday childcare

Reasons	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children who used formal childcare in term-time but not in school holidays, and whose term-time provider was open during school holidays</i>	(561)
Preferred to look after children myself	58
Respondent/ partner is at home during school holidays	23
Rarely needed to be away from children	15
Too expensive/ cost	11
Children old enough to look after themselves	7
Did not fit my/ partner's working hours	0
Children need special care	1
Had a bad childcare experience in past	*
Would have had transport difficulties	*
No providers available I could trust	1
Couldn't find a place/ local providers full	*
Quality not good enough	*
Other	1

8.9 Summary

Less than half of families with school-age children used childcare in the school holidays (45%, compared to 77% in term-time) and they were more likely to use informal providers than formal providers (30% and 22% respectively). This pattern is consistent with the findings from 2008 and 2009, although usage of holiday childcare has decreased since 2009 when 51 per cent of parents used it.

There was a significant decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare in 2010 compared with 2009, but no significant change in the use of formal holiday childcare. Significant

⁹⁹ In addition, nine per cent of families were not sure whether their providers remained open during the holidays.

decreases in the use of grandparents and older siblings explain the overall decrease in the use of informal holiday childcare.

There were some notable differences between families' use of childcare in term-time and the school holidays. Just under half (49%) of families using childcare during term-time used no childcare during the school holidays; and where families used no childcare during term-time 23 per cent used some holiday childcare. Holiday clubs and schemes were the most common form of formal childcare in the holidays (8%). In terms of informal carers, grandparents played an equally important role in providing childcare during school holidays (16% of children received childcare from grandparents in the holidays) as they did during term-time (15%). This pattern is consistent with the 2009 results.

Use of formal childcare during school holidays varied by children's characteristics and their families' circumstances. Those less likely to receive formal holiday childcare included: older school-age children (in other words those aged 12 to 14), children from Asian and Black African backgrounds, children from non-working families, children in lower income families and children living in deprived areas. These differences are consistent with those reported in the 2009.

Sixty-three per cent of parents used holiday childcare for economic reasons (such as working longer hours), 59 per cent of parents for reasons relating to child development or enjoyment, and 14 per cent of parents for reasons relating to how the holiday provision gave them time to do other things (e.g. shop, attend appointments). Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare varied depending on the types of providers used. For example, child development and enjoyment tended to be more important when using holiday schemes and after-school clubs, while economic reasons played a more important role where parents used childminders. All types of informal provider (except ex-partner) were primarily used for economic reasons. In families where ex-partners provided childcare this was mainly for children's enjoyment and/or development.

Most parents were paying formal providers for holiday childcare (between 57% and 86% when looking at different provider types), while few were paying for informal holiday childcare (between 4% and 8%). This is consistent with the findings on paying for childcare during term-time. During holidays parents spent the most money on childminders (a median of £25 per day) and least for after-school clubs (a median of £10.47 per day). Holiday clubs cost on average £15.00 per day.

Just under two-thirds of parents of school-age children who worked in school holidays thought that childcare was easy or very easy to arrange. However 21 per cent 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. Over half (55%) thought it would not be easy to find alternative providers if their normal providers were not available.

Parents views on the quality, flexibility and affordability of holiday childcare were mixed – over half (56%) of parents said that they were happy with the quality of holiday childcare available. However, 29 per cent reported difficulties finding childcare that they could afford during the school holidays, 21 per cent reported having problems finding holiday childcare that was flexible enough to meet their needs, and 15 per cent were unhappy with the quality of childcare available. Lack of flexibility and the affordability of available holiday provision caused more difficulties for lone parents than couple parents. A substantial minority of parents also indicated that the availability and affordability of holiday childcare impacted on their capacity to work more hours.

Lastly, focusing on families who did not use holiday childcare, 43 per cent said they would be 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 (53%) said that their providers were not available during the holidays. These figures suggest that there was a considerable level of unmet demand for holiday provision amongst those families who used formal childcare during term-time but not in the holidays. This might be met though term-time formal providers remaining open for business during the holiday periods.

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 work at the time of the survey. The chapter starts with an overview of mothers' working 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 movements from part-time to full-time work (section 9.4). Next we examine the inter-play of factors that shaped mothers' decisions to go out to work - including financial influences, work orientation, availability of family-friendly work 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 the reasons they stayed at home and did not enter work at that time (section 9.9).

Much of the analysis in this report compares the experiences of partnered mothers with lone mothers. This is because whether mothers have a partner or not is likely to affect the choices available to them and hence their employment experiences. For this reason, 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 also discussed briefly in the chapter, with further analysis provided in Appendix C.

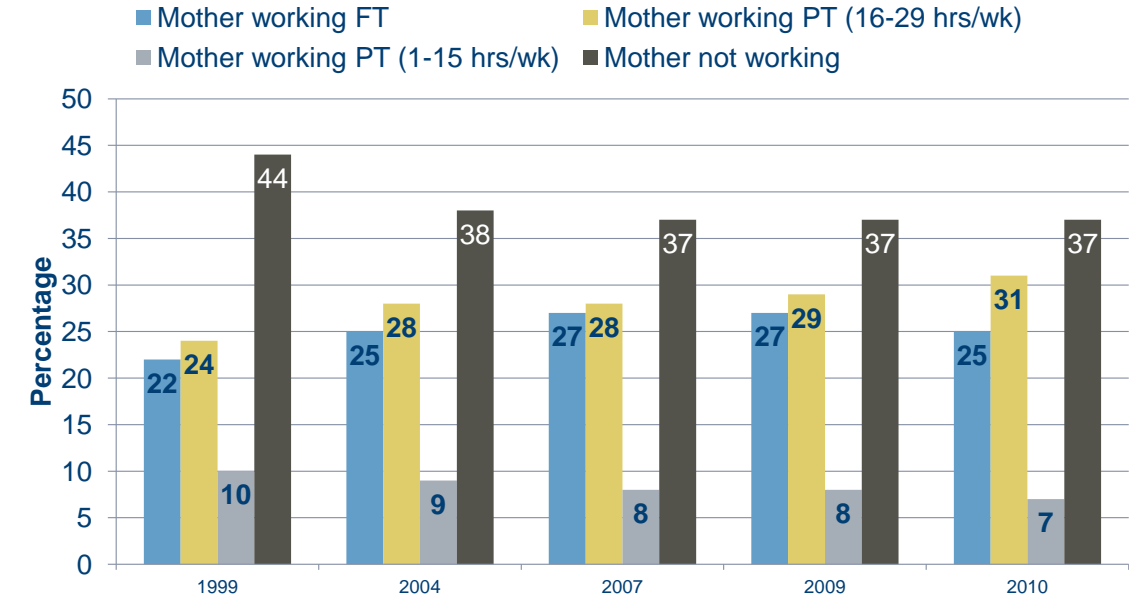
The focus of this chapter is mothers and therefore lone fathers (1% of the sample, 85 unweighted cases) have been excluded from the analysis, as have two-parent families where the father was the respondent (these comprise a further 10% of the sample, 681 unweighted cases).

9.2 Overview of work patterns

Maternal work patterns

Figure 9.1 shows the trend in mothers' employment since 1999 when the survey series began. The employment rate of mothers in 2010 was 63 per cent, the same rate since 2007¹⁰⁰.

Figure 9.1 Changes in maternal employment 1999-2010



Base: All mothers
Source: Table C9.1 in Appendix C

¹⁰⁰ Labour Force Survey figures show a small increase in UK unemployment among women aged 16 to 64 between the final quarter of 2009 (6.6%), when fieldwork for the 2009 survey ended, and the final quarter of 2010 (7.1%), when fieldwork for the 2010 survey began (Labour Market Statistics, February 2012).

There was a statistically significant difference in the patterns of work status by family type (Table 9.1). Partnered mothers were more likely than lone mothers to be in work (67% compared to 51%). There has been no significant change in the proportion of mothers in couples and lone mothers working full-time since the 2009 survey. However, there has been a shift in the experience of lone mothers since 2009, with more working part-time hours. As was the case in 2009, few lone mothers worked part-time hours of below 16 hours a week, most likely due to the 16 hours per week eligibility for tax credits.

Table 9.1 Maternal employment, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All mothers
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(5,046)	(1,584)	(6,630)
Mother working FT	27	19	25
Mother working PT (16-29 hrs/ wk)	32	28	31
Mother working PT (1-15 hrs/ wk)	8	3	7
Mother not working	33	49	37

An important aspect of the interaction between motherhood and work is the occurrence of atypical working hours. Atypical working hours may have allowed mothers to fit work around childcare, for example working when their partners can look after their child(ren), but, alternatively mothers may have been forced to work atypical hours as it is the only time they did not have responsibility for their child(ren).

In 2009 atypical hours were defined as usually or sometimes working early morning and/or evening during the week, and/or usually or sometimes working any time during the weekend. However, in our view this definition was too broad, capturing as it did parents who occasionally did some overtime (and for whom remote working may make it not particularly problematic), as well as those whose job usually requires working outside normal working hours. Under this broad definition in 2009, the majority (63%) of working mothers worked 'atypical' hours (table not shown). The equivalent 2010 figure was significantly lower than 2009 (59%). The following analyses focus solely on mothers who said they *usually* work outside normal working hours rather than *sometimes or usually*.

Table 9.2 shows that the most common atypical working pattern was working after 6pm, with 16 per cent of working mothers reporting that they usually worked evenings, followed by usually working on Saturdays (13%). There were no significant differences in the pattern of atypical working between partnered mothers and lone mothers.

Table 9.2 Atypical working hours, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(2,969)	(682)	(3,651)
Any atypical hours usually	30	31	30
Before 8am (weekdays or weekends) usually	12	11	12
After 6pm (weekdays or weekends) usually	16	17	16
Saturdays usually	12	14	13
Sundays usually	8	10	9

There were significant differences in atypical working by the number of hours worked (Table 9.3). Full-time mothers were more likely than those working part-time to work each type of atypical working pattern except Sundays, which suggests that mothers working part-time tended to work during school or office hours rather than fitting work in outside of those times. Mothers working a long part-time week of 16 hours or more were more likely to work mornings usually than those working a short part-time week, and were also more likely to work on Saturdays usually.

Table 9.3 Atypical working hours, by mothers' work status

	Mothers' work status			
	Working full-time	Working part-time 16-29 hrs/wk	Working part-time 1-15 hrs/wk	All mothers
	%	%	%	
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(1,366)	(1,855)	(430)	(3,651)
Any atypical hours usually	35	28	24	30
Before 8am usually	17	9	5	12
After 6pm usually	19	14	15	16
Saturdays usually	15	12	8	13
Sundays usually	10	8	6	9

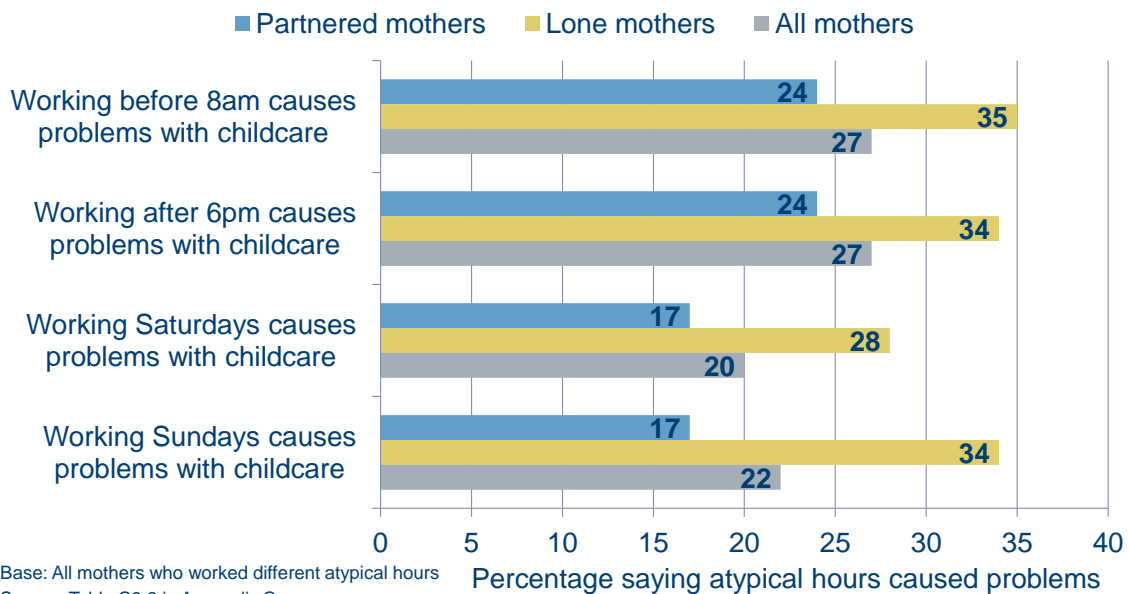
Mothers who usually worked atypical hours were asked whether this had caused problems with their childcare arrangements (Figure 9.2).

Working before 8am or after 6pm was more likely to cause difficulties with childcare than working at the weekend. Twenty-seven per cent of mothers who usually worked before 8am, and twenty-seven per cent of mothers who usually worked after 6pm, reported having difficulties with their childcare arrangements. Around one in five mothers who usually worked on a Saturday or a Sunday had difficulties with their childcare arrangements (20% and 22% respectively).

Lone parents were significantly more likely to report problems with childcare caused by Sunday working.

There was no significant difference in the proportion of mothers reporting that their usual atypical working hours caused problems with childcare compared with (the recalculated figures using the 2010 definition) 2009. There were also no significant differences since 2009 in the proportion of lone mothers and partnered mothers reporting problems for any of the arrangements.

Figure 9.2 Whether atypical working hours caused problems with childcare, by family type



Family work patterns

Table 9.4 shows family employment by family type. Among couples, the most common situation was one partner in full-time employment, with the other in part-time employment (16 to 29 hours per week) (31%). In around one-quarter of couple families both parents were in full-time employment (24%), or one was in full-time employment with the other not working (25%). Only a small proportion of couple families had no one in employment (7%).

Around half of lone parents (49%) were not in employment. Twenty-two per cent were in full-time employment and 26 per cent in part-time employment (16 to 29 hours per week). Only a few (3%) worked 1 to 15 hours per week.

Couple families were much less likely to be workless (7%) than lone parents (49%).

Table 9.4 Family employment, by family type

	Family type		
	Couple families	Lone parents	All mothers
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	<i>(5,054)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Couples			
Both in full-time employment	24	n/a	17
One in full-time, one in part-time (16 to 29 hours) employment	31	n/a	23
One in full-time, one in part-time (1 to 15 hours) employment	7	n/a	5
One in full-time employment, one not in employment	25	n/a	18
Both in part-time employment	2	n/a	1
One in part-time employment, one not in employment	5	n/a	3
Neither in employment	7	n/a	5
Lone parents			
In full-time employment	n/a	22	6
In part-time (16 to 29 hours) employment	n/a	26	7
In part-time (1 to 15 hours) employment	n/a	3	1
Not in employment	n/a	49	13

Turning to atypical hours, 51 per cent of all families had a parent who usually worked atypical hours. Just over half of couples (55%) had one or both parents who usually worked atypical hours, while 31 per cent of all lone parents did so (Table 9.5). Among all families, between 26 and 31 per cent had at least one parent who usually worked one of the atypical working arrangements.

The most common atypical working arrangement in couple families was usually working in the evenings after 6pm (31%), followed by usually working weekends and usually working in the mornings (both 26%). Usually working at the weekend was the most common arrangement among lone parents as well as usually working after 6pm (both 17%).

Table 9.5 Atypical working hours, by family type

	Family type		
	Couple families	Lone parents	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All working families</i>	<i>(4,416)</i>	<i>(723)</i>	<i>(5,146)</i>
Any atypical hours usually	55	31	51
Before 8am (weekdays or weekends) usually	29	11	26
After 6pm (weekdays or weekends) usually	34	17	31
Weekends usually	27	17	26

9.3 Transition into work

Table 9.6 shows the reasons given by mothers for entering paid work, for those mothers who had entered work within the last two years. The most common reason given was that they found a job that enabled them to combine work with looking after their children¹⁰¹, mentioned by 37 per cent of mothers who had entered work, followed by the mother's financial situation (e.g. their partner had lost their job), mentioned by 15 per cent, and that the mother wanted to get out of the house, cited by 14 per cent of mothers who had entered work. These were also the three most common reasons given in the 2009 survey. However, the proportion of mothers mentioning that they had found a job that enabled them to combine work with looking after their children was higher in the 2010 survey than in 2009 (37% compared to 29%).

Finding a job that enabled respondents to combine work with looking after their children was mentioned more by lone mothers (42%) than partnered mothers (35%). Nearly one-quarter of lone mothers (22%) stated that a reason for entering work was a desire to get out of the house, compared to one in ten partnered mothers.

Table 9.6 Reasons for entering paid work, by family type

Reasons	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers who entered work in past two years</i>	<i>(304)</i>	<i>(116)</i>	<i>(420)</i>
Found job that enabled me to combine work and children	35	42	37
Financial situation	17	12	15
Wanted to get out of the house	10	22	14
Wanted financial independence	10	12	11
Children started school	10	13	11
End of maternity leave	5	0	3
Finished studying/training/education	6	3	5
Job opportunity arose	7	5	6
Children old enough to use childcare	12	12	12
Children old enough to look after themselves	3	8	5
Appropriate childcare became available	3	2	3
Became eligible for tax credits	*	1	*
My health improved	2	2	2
Became eligible for other financial help with childcare cost	1	1	1
Family became available/willing to help with childcare	6	6	6
Other	5	6	5

¹⁰¹ This was the wording of the survey question. It is presumed that this was understood as gaining a job that fitted with the respondent's existing childcare arrangements, or a job around which new childcare arrangements could be made.

9.4 Transition from part-time to full-time work

The two per cent of mothers in the survey who had moved from part-time hours to full-time hours in the past two years were asked why they had increased their hours (Table 9.7). The most commonly reported reasons for doing so was because of a job opportunity or promotion, mentioned by around one-third of mothers, followed by their financial situation (23%). These were also the most commonly reported reasons in the 2009 survey, with similar proportions mentioning each reason (there was no significant change from 2009 to 2010).

Children starting school was mentioned as the reason by 17 per cent of mothers, while 14 per cent reported that their employer demanded or enforced full-time hours. These proportions were significantly higher than the corresponding figures in the 2009 survey of eight per cent and four per cent respectively. There were no other significant changes between 2009 and 2010.

Table 9.7 Reasons for moving from part-time to full-time work, by family type

Reasons	%
<i>Base: Mothers who moved from part-time to full-time work in the past two years</i>	<i>(130)</i>
Job opportunity/promotion	34
Financial situation (e.g. partner lost job)	23
Found job that enabled combine work and children	11
Children started school	17
Children old enough to look after themselves	3
Children old enough to use childcare	6
Family became available/willing to help with childcare	1
Wanted financial independence	4
Employer enforced/demanded full-time hours	14
Self-employed and business required FT hours	7
Wanted to get out of the house	1
Appropriate childcare became available	2
Finished studying/training/education	*
Became eligible for financial help with childcare cost	0
Other	7

9.5 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work

Table 9.8 shows how different types of childcare arrangements helped working mothers to go out to work.

Forty-seven per cent of mothers reported that having reliable childcare influenced their decision to go out to work, the same proportion as in 2009. The proportion who reported that their children being in full-time education influenced their decision to go to work fell from 44 per cent in 2009 to 34 per cent in 2010.

The proportion of mothers reporting having reliable childcare varied significantly by their educational status, as it did in 2009, from 51 per cent of mothers with A levels and above, to 44 per cent of mothers with O levels/GCSEs, and 38 per cent of mothers with lower level or no qualifications.

Forty-two per cent of mothers reported that relatives helping with childcare helped them to go out to work. Other key influences were access to childcare that fitted with working hours, access to good quality childcare, and access to free/cheap childcare (Table 9.8).

While responses were broadly consistent between partnered mothers and lone mothers, there were a few significant differences: lone parents were significantly more likely to mention help with childcare costs through tax credits (17% compared with 5% of partnered mothers) as being helpful, and they were more likely to say that their children were old enough to look after themselves (12% compared with 9% of partnered mothers). By contrast, partnered mothers were significantly more likely than lone mothers to mention that childcare fitted with their working hours (36% compared with 32%), and also that their employer paid for or provided childcare although the proportions citing this arrangement were low at two per cent of partnered mothers and less than one per cent of lone mothers.

Looking solely at partnered mothers, 20 per cent reported that childcare fitting with partner's working hours had helped them to go out to work. Other factors enabling mothers to work that were mentioned included their partner helping with childcare (15%), and being able to work when their partner did not (12%). Turning to lone mothers, 13% said that their ex-partner helping with childcare contributed to them being able to go out to work. These responses were broadly similar to those found in the 2009 survey.

Table 9.8 Childcare arrangements that helped mother to go out to work, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,621)	(682)	(3,303)
All mothers			
Have reliable childcare	47	48	47
Children at school	33	36	34
Relatives help with childcare	43	39	42
Childcare fits with working hours	36	32	35
Have good quality childcare	33	29	32
Have free/cheap childcare	24	25	24
Friends help with childcare	11	13	11
Children old enough to look after themselves	9	12	10
Help with childcare costs through tax credits	5	17	8
Employer provides/pays for childcare	2	*	2
Other	1	1	1
None of these	0	0	0
Partnered mothers			
Childcare fits partner's working hours	20	n/a	n/a
Partner helps with childcare	15	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	13	n/a

Table 9.9 presents the other influences on mothers' decisions to go to work, grouped by financial reasons, work orientation reasons, and flexible working reasons.

Financial reasons were important to most mothers, with two-thirds reporting that they needed the money, and just under half (45%) reporting that they liked to have their own money. A need to continue contributing to a pension was an influence on a just under one-quarter of mothers (22%). There were significant differences in the responses by family type – lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to report financial necessity, while partnered mothers were more likely to report a desire to have their own money, or pension-related reasons.

Turning to work orientation reasons, an enjoyment of work was an influence on around two-thirds of working mothers, while just over one-quarter (28%) were working because they wanted to get out of the house, and a similar proportion (26%) reported that they would feel useless without a job. One in six mothers were working because they felt that their career would suffer if they were to take a break. Again there were some significant differences, with lone mothers being much more likely than partnered mothers to report that they would feel useless without a job, and partnered mothers being more likely to report that their career would suffer if they took a break.

Influences around flexible and family-friendly working arrangements were less commonly reported than those concerning financial influences or attitudes to working, although one in six mothers reported that access to flexi-time was an influence, and a slightly smaller proportion reported not having to work school holidays was an influence (14%). Partnered mothers were more likely than lone mothers to report flexible working arrangements as an

influence, and the differences were significant for not working during school holidays (14% compared with 11% respectively) and for working from home most or all of the time (7% compared with 3% respectively).

These responses are broadly in line with those from the 2009 survey. The majority of mothers said that they enjoyed working (65%). However, in 2009 the proportion was higher (68%), in particular for lone parents (70% saying they enjoyed working, compared to 62% in 2010).

Lower proportions of working mothers mentioned access to flexible or family-friendly working in 2010 (17% and 14% respectively) compared with 2009 (22% and 19% respectively), although for mothers who had entered work in the last two years the proportion saying they had found a job that enabled them to combine work with looking after their children had significantly increased since 2009. A significantly lower proportion of partnered mothers mentioned these flexible working arrangements (17%) compared with 2009 (23%), and not having to work in the school holidays (14% in 2010 compared with 21% in 2009).

Table 9.9 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,586)	(672)	(3,258)
All mothers			
I need the money	64	75	66
I like to have my own money	47	40	45
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	23	18	22
I enjoy working	65	62	65
I want to get out of the house	28	29	28
I would feel useless without a job	23	37	26
My career would suffer if I took a break	17	11	16
I can work flexi-time	17	16	17
I don't have to work during school holidays	14	11	14
I can work from home some of the time	11	8	10
I can work from home most/all of the time	7	3	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	1	n/a	n/a
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	1	n/a	n/a
Other	2	2	2
None of these	0	0	0

There were significant differences in the influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work by educational attainment, as there were in 2009 (Table 9.10):

- Twenty-nine per cent of mothers with A levels and above reported working because they needed to contribute to their pension, compared with 16 per cent of those with O levels/GCSEs, and nine per cent of those with lower or no academic qualifications.

- Sixty-nine per cent of mothers with A levels and above said they enjoyed working, compared to 62 per cent of those with O levels/GCSEs, and 54 per cent of those with lower or no qualifications.
- Twenty-four per cent of mothers with A levels and above said their career would suffer if they took a break, compared to seven per cent of those with O levels/GCSEs, and three per cent of those with lower or no qualifications.
- Mothers with A levels and above were more likely to report that each of the family-friendly arrangements influenced their decision to go out to work. The difference was greatest for being able to work from home some or all of the time, mentioned by 15 per cent of mothers with A levels and above compared with five per cent of those with O levels/GCSEs and three per cent of those with lower or no qualifications.
- Highly educated partnered mothers were more likely to work from home some of the time or work flexi-time than those with GCSEs/O levels or lower/no qualifications.

Table 9.10 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O level/GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(1,815)	(838)	(528)	(3,258)
All mothers				
I need the money	66	69	64	66
I like to have my own money	47	47	40	45
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	29	16	9	22
I enjoy working	69	62	54	65
I want to get out of the house	28	30	27	28
I would feel useless without a job	26	26	28	26
My career would suffer if I took a break	24	7	3	16
I can work flexi-time	20	15	12	17
I don't have to work during school holidays	16	12	9	14
I can work from home some of the time	15	5	3	10
I can work from home most/all of the time	8	6	4	6
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	(1,548)	(628)	(346)	(2,586)
Partnered mothers				
Partner can work from home some of the time	6	3	1	4
Partner can work flexi-time (couple only)	5	3	2	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	2	1	1	1
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	2	*	1	1
Other	2	2	3	2
None of these	0	0	0	0

Note: total figures includes mothers who did not give a response to question on highest qualification, or who said they had 'other' qualifications.

Note: significance testing excludes those who said they had 'other' qualifications, and includes those saying they had A levels, GCSE and lower/no qualifications.

There were also significant differences between mothers in different socio-economic groups in terms of the important influences on their decision to go out to work (Table 9.11):

- Mothers in senior managerial or professional occupations were most likely to mention the need to keep contributing to their pension, while mothers in semi-routine and routine jobs were least likely to report this influence.
- Mothers in professional and technical/craft occupations were most likely to report that they enjoyed working, while mothers in semi-routine and routine jobs were least likely to mention this influence.
- Very few mothers in clerical, semi-routine or routine occupations reported that their career would suffer if they took a break, compared with around 29 per cent of modern professionals and senior managers and 40 per cent of mothers in traditional professions.
- Flexi-time was most likely to be mentioned as an influence by mothers in senior or middle management roles or those in traditional professions. However, these mothers were least likely to report that not having to work during school holidays was an influence, while one in four modern professional mothers reported not having to work school holidays as an influence on their decision to go out to work.
- Mothers in semi-routine or routine occupations were least likely to mention that being able to work from home some or all of the time was an influence on them working, while senior and middle managers, and traditional professionals were most likely to mention this as an influence. Senior managers, technical and craft workers and traditional professionals were most likely to cite being able to work from home most or all of the time as an influence.
- Senior managerial and professional mothers in a couple were most likely to report that their partner being able to work from home some of the time was a key influence on their decision to go out to work, and partnered senior managers were also most likely to report that their partner being able to work flexi-time was an influence.

Table 9.11 Influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
	%	%	%						
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(940)	(945)	(265)	(117)	(383)	(277)	(172)	(154)	(3,258)
All mothers									
I need the money	69	66	70	62	62	65	73	58	66
I like to have my own money	47	43	50	51	41	46	43	47	45
I need to keep on contributing to my pension	35	18	29	12	9	7	22	29	22
I enjoy working	71	60	69	75	58	50	65	83	65
I want to get out of the house	25	28	25	29	33	35	28	29	28
I would feel useless without a job	24	24	26	34	32	30	26	25	26
My career would suffer if I took a break	29	5	30	15	3	1	15	40	16
I can work flexi-time	14	17	33	18	10	13	26	20	17
I don't have to work during school holidays	24	13	6	8	9	8	4	6	14
I can work from home some of the time	11	7	29	10	3	2	16	15	10
I can work from home most/all of the time	6	5	16	14	3	2	6	11	6
Other	2	2	0	0	3	2	2	1	2
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	(794)	(741)	(224)	(94)	(272)	(178)	(142)	(140)	(2,586)

Table 9.11 continued ...

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
	%	%	%						
Partnered mothers									
Partner can work from home some of the time	6	2	9	3	4	2	4	7	4
Partner can work flexi-time	4	2	9	4	3	2	4	4	4
Partner doesn't have to work during school holidays	3	*	*	4	*	*	*	0	1
Partner can work from home most/all of the time	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	1

9.6 Ideal working arrangements

Respondents in work were asked a number of questions about their ideal working arrangements, and the responses are presented in Table 9.12.

- Fifty-five per cent said they would like to work fewer hours so they could spend more time looking after their children (there was no significant difference from the 2009 figure (57%)).
- Thirty-eight per cent said they would prefer to give up work and stay at home to look after children (the same proportion as 2009). However, a higher proportion (48%) said they would prefer to work even if they could afford not to (there was no significant difference from the 2009 figure of 47%).
- Twenty-three per cent said they would like to increase their working hours, if good quality, reliable, convenient and affordable childcare were available (this was a significant increase from the 2009 figure (18%)).

The rise in the proportion who would like to increase their working hours may be partly due to the economic circumstances, with more mothers feeling pressured to increase paid hours to bring in more money.

Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to report that they would increase their hours if they good afford good quality, convenient and reliable childcare (30% compared with 20% of partnered mothers). They were also more likely than partnered mothers to say they would prefer to work even if they could afford not to (53% compared to 46%).

Table 9.12 Views on ideal working arrangements, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,615)	(682)	(3,297)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home and look after the children</i>			
Agree strongly	21	17	20
Agree	19	18	18
Neither agree nor disagree	15	12	14
Disagree	37	40	38
Disagree strongly	9	13	10
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,619)	(682)	(3,301)
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>			
Agree strongly	25	20	23
Agree	32	34	32
Neither agree nor disagree	13	11	13
Disagree	25	30	27
Disagree strongly	5	5	5
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(2,617)	(682)	(3,299)
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>			
Agree strongly	4	7	5
Agree	16	23	18
Neither agree nor disagree	13	14	13
Disagree	45	40	44
Disagree strongly	22	17	21

More educated mothers, those with A levels and above, were more likely to say that they would decrease their hours if they could afford to (58%, compared with 49% of mothers with lower or no qualifications). They were also less likely than less educated mothers to say they would increase their hours if they could afford good quality childcare (20%, compared with 28%) (see Table C9.5 in Appendix C).

There were significant variations in the responses by the socio-economic group of mothers, with those in higher socio-economic groups¹⁰² less likely to give up work or work more hours, but more likely to work fewer hours if they would afford it (see Table C9.6 in Appendix C):

- Forty-five¹⁰³ per cent of mothers in routine manual and service occupations would stay at home if they could afford it, as would 41 per cent of mothers in semi-routine manual and service occupations, and 40 per cent in clerical and intermediate occupations. At the other end of the scale just under one-quarter (24%) of those in traditional professional occupations agreed they would stay at home and look after the children if they could afford to give up work.

¹⁰² Broadly speaking those in traditional and modern professions, and senior managers and administrators.

¹⁰³ The percentage totals in this paragraph differ slightly from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C9.6 in Appendix C because of rounding.

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of mothers in senior managerial occupations would work fewer hours if they could afford it, compared with around half of mothers in routine manual and service occupations.
- One-third of mothers working in routine and semi-routine manual and service occupations agreed that they would work more hours if good quality, convenient and affordable childcare was available, compared with 15 per cent of mothers working as senior managers, 14 per cent of those in technical and craft occupations, and 10¹⁰⁴ per cent of those in traditional professional occupations.

9.7 Mothers and self-employment

Research has shown that self-employment can allow mothers the flexibility to combine working with looking after children (Smith et al 2010). Earlier surveys in the series investigated the links between self-employment and increased work flexibility, however, these questions were not asked in the 2010 survey to accommodate new questions.

The 2010 survey found that 11 per cent of mothers were self-employed, similar to the proportion in 2009 of 10 per cent (table not shown). Self-employed mothers were not significantly more likely than employee mothers to have used childcare in the reference week (table not shown). The proportions of self-employed and employee mothers using formal childcare were the same (68%), and there was no significant difference in the use of informal childcare by employment (table not shown). This is a similar pattern to that from the 2009 survey.

¹⁰⁴ The percentage totals in this paragraph differ slightly from the sum of the individual numbers in Table C9.6 in Appendix C because of rounding.

9.8 Mothers who study

Twelve per cent of mothers were studying or engaged in training at the time of the survey. This is slightly lower than the proportion in the 2009 survey of 14 per cent. The proportion of students was significantly higher among lone mothers (16%) than among partnered mothers (11%) (table not shown).

Table 9.13 shows the childcare arrangements that helped mothers to study. Having reliable childcare (26%), and having relatives who help with childcare, were the most commonly cited influence on a mother's decision to study (25%), followed by having children at school (23%).

Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to report that the childcare arrangements helping them to study were having children at school, having childcare which fitted around the hours of study, having friends who could help with childcare and the college providing or paying for some or all of the childcare.

Table 9.13 Childcare arrangements that help mothers to study, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
	%	%	%
<i>Base: Respondent mothers who were studying</i>	(369)	(264)	(633)
All mothers			
Children are at school	19	27	23
Have reliable childcare	22	30	26
Relatives help with childcare	22	30	25
Have good quality childcare	14	20	17
Childcare which fits with hours of study	14	24	18
Have free/cheap childcare	10	17	13
Children are old enough to look after themselves	6	7	7
Friends help with childcare	4	13	8
College provides/pays for some/all of my children	1	6	3
Partnered mothers			
Partner helps with childcare	14	n/a	n/a
Studies when partner is not working	14	n/a	n/a
Childcare fits with partner's working hours	9	n/a	n/a
Other	2	2	2
None of these	31	24	28

9.9 Mothers who were not in paid employment

The final section of this chapter looks at mothers who were not in paid employment, their reasons for staying at home, and their attitudes towards working. Overall, 37 per cent of mothers were not working, the same proportion as in 2009.

Responding 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-two per cent of non-working mothers agreed with the statement, while 33 per cent disagreed, and 15 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed. These were very similar responses to those from the 2009 survey (table not shown).

Respondents were also asked for their childcare-related reasons for not working. Unfortunately, due to a routing error in the questionnaire script¹⁰⁵, the results are not reliable and hence are not reported this year (the results were reported as Table 9.10 in Smith et al 2010).

Table 9.14 presents the factors apart from childcare that influenced mothers' decisions to stay at home and not go out to work. It is clear that a wide range of factors influenced the decision to stay at home, including those related to family finances, combining work and childcare, and mothers' work orientation. The most commonly reported factor was a lack of jobs with suitable hours, mentioned by 20 per cent of mothers, followed by mothers not earning enough to make working worthwhile (17 per cent), a lack of job opportunities (12 per cent), mothers' perceived lack of qualifications (11 per cent), and jobs being too demanding to combine with bringing up children (11 per cent).

There were some significant differences in responses between partnered mothers and lone mothers. Partnered mothers were more likely to mention that they have enough money that they do not need to work (13%, compared to 2% of lone mothers) while lone mothers were more likely to report that they could not afford to work because they would lose benefits (11%, compared to 4% of partnered mothers). Lone mothers were also significantly more likely than partnered mothers to mention that they felt not very well qualified, that there were a lack of suitable job opportunities, and that they had been out of work for too long, whereas partnered mothers were more likely than lone mothers to mention that having a job was not very important to them.

There were also differences between partnered and lone mothers in the circumstances that prevented them from working, with a higher proportion of partnered mothers on maternity leave, and higher proportions of lone mothers reporting they were studying or training, or had an illness or disability.

¹⁰⁵ The base for this question should have been mothers not in paid work excluding those on maternity leave and long-term sick. The error resulted in only those mothers not in paid work **and** on maternity leave being asked about childcare-related reasons for not working.

Table 9.14 Reasons for not working, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Reasons for not working	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers not in paid work</i>	<i>(1,780)</i>	<i>(894)</i>	<i>(2,674)</i>
All mothers			
Would not earn enough	17	18	17
Enough money	13	2	9
Would lose benefits	4	11	7
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	19	22	20
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up children	11	10	11
Cannot work unsocial hours/at weekends	4	5	4
Not very well-qualified	8	17	11
Lack of job opportunities	11	14	12
Having a job is not very important to me	5	2	3
Been out of work for too long	5	8	6
On maternity leave	7	2	5
Caring for disabled person	8	6	7
Studying/training	5	10	7
Illness or disability	8	13	10
Partnered mothers			
My partner's job is too demanding	5	n/a	n/a
Other	2	5	3
None of these	15	10	13

9.10 Summary

The level of maternal employment has been broadly stable over the last few years, following increases around the turn of the century with the expansion of free childcare and introduction of tax credits. This is despite a small increase in unemployment among women aged 16-64 recorded by the Labour Force Survey between the 2009 and 2010 surveys.

Atypical working (defined as usually working before 8am, after 6pm or at the weekends) was not particularly common, with 16 per cent usually working outside usual office hours, most commonly in the evenings or on Saturdays. For a substantial minority of these mothers (20% to 27%), working atypical patterns caused difficulties with their childcare arrangements.

Among families as a whole, the most common pattern for couples was to have one partner in full-time employment, with the other in part-time employment (31%). Almost half of lone parents (49%) were workless, compared with seven per cent of couples. Around half of working families had a parent usually working atypical hours (51%). Just under one-third (31%) of lone parents usually worked atypical hours at least sometimes.

Finding a job that enabled mothers to combine work with childcare remained the most common reason for entering work among those mothers who had entered employment in the past two years. The proportion giving this reason had also increased significantly from 29 per cent in 2009 to 37 per cent in 2010. A job opportunity or promotion was the next factor most likely to have prompted a move from part-time to full-time work. For those who had moved from part-time to full-time employment in the past two years, the proportion saying children starting school or the employer demanding or enforcing full-time hours had significantly increased since 2009.

A range of factors enabled mothers to be in work, with having reliable childcare and the availability of informal childcare the most commonly reported factors among couples and lone parent families alike. Assistance with childcare costs through tax credits was important for a significant minority of lone mothers (17%).

Financial necessity, and an enjoyment of work, were the most commonly reported influences on mothers' decisions to go out to work, and financial necessity was a more important influence for lone mothers than for those in a couple. The availability of family-friendly work appeared to be less of an influence. Lone mothers were also more likely than partnered mothers to report that they would feel useless without a job.

Current views on ideal working arrangements were broadly similar to those from 2009, with a substantial minority of working mothers reporting they would like to give up work to become full-time carers if they could afford it (38%), a slim majority reporting they would like to reduce their working hours to spend more time with their children if they could afford it (55%), and a substantial minority reporting that they would like to increase their working hours if they could secure reliable, affordable, good quality childcare (23%). Lone mothers, and those in routine and semi-routine occupations, were most likely to report that they would like to increase their hours.

Availability of reliable childcare, childcare provision from relatives, and children being at school were all important factors that allowed mothers to study.

Just over half of non-working mothers reported that they would prefer to go out to work if they could arrange reliable, convenient, affordable, good quality childcare.

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Appendix A Socio-demographic profile

Respondent characteristics

Gender

Almost all parents who responded to the survey were female (88%).

Age

The mean age of respondents was 38, and of their partners, 40. Table A.1 shows the age band of respondents by family type. It shows that respondents in couple families tended to be older than lone parent respondents.

Table A.1 Age of respondent, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of respondent	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,054)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
20 and under	*	2	1
21 to 30	15	27	18
31 to 40	44	38	43
41 to 50	35	29	33
51+	5	4	5
Mean	39	36	38

Marital status

A large proportion of respondents were married and living with their partner (68%) (Table A.2). Eighteen per cent of respondents were single. This category includes persons who were cohabiting.

The proportion saying they were married and living with their partner was much higher in 2010 than in 2009 (59%) and there was a drop in the proportion saying they were single (from 25% to 18%). Overall the proportion saying they were either married or single was similar (86%) to 2009 (84%). One explanation for this finding could be the change in question wording in 2010 when the wording “civil partner(ship)” was added to the answer categories. So for instance whereas in 2009 one answer category was “married and living with your husband/wife” in 2010 this was amended to “married/ in civil partnership and living with your husband/wife/ civil partner”.

Table A.2 Marital status

	All
Marital status	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Married and living with husband/wife	68
Single (never married)	18
Divorced	8
Married and separated from husband/wife	5
Widowed	1

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. More lone parents than respondents in couple families had no academic qualifications.

Table A.3 Qualifications, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Qualifications	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(4,967)</i>	<i>(1,652)</i>	<i>(6,619)</i>
GCSE grade D-G/CSE grade 2-5/SCE O Grades (D-E)/SCE	8	14	9
GCSE grade A-C/GCE O-level passes/CSE grade 1/SCE O	24	26	24
GCE A-level/SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	13	11	13
Certificate of Higher Education	8	6	7
Foundation degree	3	2	3
Honours degree (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd)	19	7	16
Masters degree (e.g. MA, PGDip)	9	3	8
Doctorates (e.g. PhD)	1	*	1
Other academic qualifications	1	1	1
None	15	28	18

Family characteristics

Size of the family

The mean family size was four people, the smallest was two people, and the largest had 13 people.

Number of children aged 0-14 in the family

Just over half (52%) of families had one child aged 0 to 14 (Table A.4). Thirty-six per cent had two children, and 13 per cent had three or more children. Lone parents tended to have fewer children than couple families.

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

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Number of children	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,054)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
1	49	59	52
2	38	29	36
3+	13	12	13

Over half the families in the survey (57%) had school-age children only (Table A.5). One-fifth had both pre-school and school-age children (19%) and one-quarter had pre-school children only (25%).

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

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of children in family	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,054)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Only pre-school children (0 to 4 years)	26	21	25
Both pre-school and school-age children	20	16	19
Only school-age children	54	63	57

Family annual income

Table A.6 shows family annual income¹⁰⁶, and demonstrates that lone parents in this survey tended to come from poorer families compared with couple families.

Table A.6 Family annual income, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Family annual income	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(4,779)	(1,610)	(6,389)
Up to £9,999	5	31	12
£10,000 - £19,999	16	47	25
£20,000 - £29,999	19	14	17
£30,000 - £44,999	24	5	19
£45,000 or more	36	4	27

Family type and work status

Table A.7 shows family type and work status. A large proportion of respondents were from couple families where both parents worked (46%) or where one parent was working (22%). However, in 18 per cent of families no-one was working (13% were non-working lone-parent families and 5% were couple families where neither parent was in work).

Table A.7 Family work status

	All
Family work status	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,723)
Couple – both working	46
Couple – one working	22
Couple – neither working	5
Lone parent working	14
Lone parent not working	13

¹⁰⁶ There are 334 families which we do not have income data for; these families have been excluded from this table.

Tenure

The tenure of the respondents' families is shown in Table A.8. Overall the two most common tenures were buying the property with a mortgage or loan (55%) and renting the property (35%). The majority of couple families were in the process of buying their home with the help of a mortgage or loan (67%), while the majority of lone parents were renting (70%).

Table A.8 Tenure status, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Tenure status	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(5,040)	(1,665)	(6,705)
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	67	22	55
Rent it	23	70	35
Own it outright	10	6	9
Live rent-free (in relative's/friend's property)	*	2	1
Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)	*	1	1

Access to a car

The majority of respondents had access to a car (79%). This was much higher among couple families where 89 per cent had a car available, than among lone parent families where 53 per cent had a car available.

Selected child characteristics

Gender

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

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(5,054)	(1,669)	(6,723)
0 to 2	18	13	17
3 to 4	15	14	15
5 to 7	21	20	21
8 to 11	26	29	27
12 to 14	20	24	21

Ethnic group

The majority of selected children in the survey were White British (76%) (Table A.10). Children from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to come from lone parent families.

Table A.10 Ethnicity of selected child, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Ethnicity of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,047)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,716)</i>
White British	77	73	76
White Irish	*	1	*
Other White	4	4	4
White and Caribbean	1	3	1
White and Black African	*	1	1
White and Asian	1	1	1
Other mixed	1	1	1
Indian	3	1	2
Pakistani	5	3	4
Bangladeshi	2	1	2
Other Asian	2	1	2
Caribbean	1	3	1
African	2	6	3
Other Black	*	1	*
Chinese	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Special educational needs and disabilities

Seven per cent of selected children had a SEN, and six per cent 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 (7%), or a SEN (9%) compared with children in couple families (5% and 6% respectively, see Table A.11).

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

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(5,054)</i>	<i>(1,669)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Child has SEN	6	9	7
Child has long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability	5	7	6

Region, area deprivation and rurality

Table A.12 shows the geographical spread of the surveyed families according to Government Office Region.

Table A.12 Government Office Region

	All
Government Office Region	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,723)
North East	5
North West	14
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
East Midlands	8
West Midlands	11
East of England	11
London	16
South East	16
South West	9

Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation we can see that areas the sample came from varied in affluence.

Table A.13 Area deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

	All
Area deprivation	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,719)
1 st quintile – least deprived	19
2 nd quintile	19
3 rd quintile	18
4 th quintile	21
5 th quintile – most deprived	23

Table A.14 shows the rurality of the sample. Overall 81 per cent of the families responding to the survey lived in urban areas, with the other 19 per cent living in rural areas.

Table A.14 Rurality

Rurality	All
	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(6,717)
Rural	19
Urban	81
Urban >10k – sparse	*
Town and fringe – sparse	1
Village – sparse	*
Hamlet and isolated dwelling – sparse	*
Urban >10k – less sparse	81
Town and fringe – less sparse	10
Village – less sparse	5
Hamlet and isolated dwelling – less sparse	2

Appendix B Technical Appendix

B.1 Background and history

This appendix describes the methodology of the 2010 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents. The study was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Education. This report marks the fifth time the Survey has been run.

B.2 Questionnaire development

The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents was first conducted in 2004 by the National Centre for Social Research. It was conducted subsequently in 2007, 2008 and 2009. This series of surveys is a combination of two previous survey series – the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services series (1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004) and the Parents' Demand for Childcare studies (baseline in 1999, repeated in 2001) (hereafter referred to as the Early Years series and the Childcare series respectively). The Early Years series focused on children aged two to five, while the Childcare series focused on children aged 0-14. The Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents has undergone a number of amendments between 2004 and 2010, particularly in terms of content, in order to reflect the changing policy landscape and developments in the objectives of the survey.

The interviews in the 2010 survey lasted an average of 46 minutes and consisted of questions on the family's use of childcare and early years provision in the reference term-time week (which was the most recent term-time week) and during school holidays. The interviews also included questions about the details of the payments for this childcare, and generated a complete attendance diary for one 'selected' child in the family. The selected child was chosen at random at the sampling stage (except in cases where a child had been born in the household since the sample was drawn – see section B.4 for more detail on child selection). Parents were asked to provide detailed information about the main childcare provider used for the selected child. Parents were also asked about their general views on childcare and reasons for using particular providers. The questionnaire gathered information about the respondent's economic activity, as well as their partner's if applicable. Questions regarding the partner's economic activity were addressed to the partner wherever possible. If the partner was not available at the time of the interview, or was unwilling to participate in the interview, the respondent could answer as their proxy. Demographic information was also collected.

While the 2009 and 2010 questionnaires covered similar issues, there were some changes and additions made in 2010 to reflect key policy areas. For example, the 2010 questionnaire expanded the section on learning and play activities that parents do with their children and introduced more questions on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Other changes in 2010 included reducing the number of questions about tax credits and after-school activities, and using a shortened version of the questions used to create the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). This was done to help reduce the interview length so additional questions could be accommodated.

Moreover, changes were made to the section of the questionnaire that asks parents about their use of childcare in the reference term time week. An additional check question was added to ensure that the results capture all parents who did use both formal and informal childcare, and improve the reliability of the estimates of the use of different types of providers.

This additional question checked the answers of those saying they had not used childcare in the reference week by later asking whether they had used any of the provider types from a comprehensive list during the reference week. In 2009 this check question was more limited, just asking about whether the children attended activities before/after school. One would expect this more comprehensive additional check question to affect the estimates. Table B.1 shows the estimates for each individual provider type (excluding breakfast and after-school clubs) once the effect of the additional check question has been excluded. The first column shows the change in the estimate for the use of each provider type between 2009 and 2010 in the underlying data (in other words before the different additional checks made in 2009 and 2010), and the second column shows the change in the estimates after the different additional checks made in 2009 and 2010. The third column shows what amount of the difference appears to be accounted for by the additional checks.

The table suggests a pattern that one might expect – that the additional checks are slightly more likely to impact on estimates of informal as opposed to formal childcare. One might expect this as formal arrangements are more likely to be ‘top of mind’ for respondents (and hence less likely to be picked up by additional checks) rather than informal arrangements such as childcare by grandparents and older siblings (childcare not being the only reason children spend time with grandparents and older siblings).

Table B.1 Impact of additional checks on changes in estimates of use of childcare providers

	Change 2009-2010 without additional checks	Change 2009-2010 with additional checks	Change 2009-2010 accounted for by additional checks
	Percentage points	Percentage points	Percentage points
<i>Base: All families</i>			
Formal providers			
Nursery school	1.25	1.58	0.33
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	-1.02	-0.67	0.35
Reception class	0.73	1.70	0.96
Special day school/ nursery/ unit for children with SEN	-0.42	-0.44	-0.03
Day nursery	-0.38	-0.14	0.23
Playgroup or pre-school	-0.09	0.15	0.24
Other nursery education provider	0.07	0.06	-0.01
Childminder	-0.19	-0.19	0.00
Nanny or au pair	-0.18	-0.13	0.05
Babysitter who came to home	-0.83	-0.75	0.08
Informal providers			
Ex-partner	-2.11	-1.42	0.69
Grandparent	-2.79	-1.47	1.32
Older sibling	-1.98	-1.01	0.97
Another relative	-1.14	-0.82	0.32
Friend or neighbour	-0.32	-0.05	0.27
Other			
Leisure/sport	-4.10	-4.70	-0.60
Other childcare provider	-2.20	-2.65	-0.45

A further change was made to the method used to establish the usage of breakfast and after-school clubs. In 2010 the showcard used at the relevant question separated out breakfast and after-school clubs, so the data were collected in separate categories. In 2009 the showcard combined breakfast/after-school clubs so the data were collected in one category. In both 2009 and 2010 if respondents did not mention breakfast or after-school clubs, they were asked a follow-up question about whether their children attended activities before or after school. In 2010 the questionnaire instructed interviewers to 'probe' at this point, which it did not in 2009. We believe that this change accounts for the difference observed between 2009 and 2010 in the proportion of parents using formal providers, as once breakfast and after-school clubs are excluded from the calculations, the proportion of families using formal childcare was unchanged between 2009 and 2010 (at 32%).

The interview covered the following topic areas:

For all families:

- use of childcare in the reference term-time week and the past year;
- types of providers used for all children, and costs;
- use of and availability of breakfast and after-school clubs (for families with school-age children);
- use of and satisfaction with provision of childcare during school holidays in the past year (for families with school-age children);
- awareness and take-up of entitlement to free early years provision for three- and four-year olds;
- awareness and receipt of tax credits and subsidies;
- sources of information about local childcare;
- views on affordability, availability, flexibility and quality of childcare in the local area; and
- childcare and working arrangements.

For one randomly selected child:

- detailed record of childcare attendance in the reference week;
- details of main provider for selected child;
- reasons for choosing the main provider;
- additional services offered at the main provider;
- impact of provider on child development and well-being and influence on home learning environment;
- parental involvement with the selected child (if selected child aged two to five); and
- details of parental awareness of EYFS (if selected child aged two to five).

Classification details for all families:

- household composition;
- demographic characteristics (for example ethnicity, qualifications, income);
- parents' work history over the last two years (including any atypical working hours and whether this caused childcare problems);
- classification of children according to SEN and disability or long-standing illness;
- housing tenure; and
- contact details for childcare providers and admin questions.

B.3 Cognitive testing and piloting

In developing and refining the questionnaire, cognitive testing and a pilot were carried out.

Cognitive testing was conducted to ensure that questions were understood as intended by focusing on respondents' cognitive process in interpreting and responding to the questions. The testing concentrated particularly on more complex questions and those that were new in the 2010 survey. Feedback from the testing was used to revise the wording of some questions. Sixteen cognitive interviews were conducted on 26 May, 28 May and 4 June 2010 in Banbury, Bromley, Hackney and Kensington. Interviews lasted on average between 45 minutes and one hour, and each respondent received £25 in high street vouchers on completing the interview.

A field pilot was conducted two months prior to the start of the main survey fieldwork. The pilot was a full and comprehensive 'dress rehearsal' test of all procedures and materials. The main aims of the pilot were to test:

- the contact process and contact sheet;
- the advance letters and survey leaflet;
- the procedure for selecting the person responsible for making decisions about childcare;
- the questionnaire for comprehension, content and length;
- the accuracy and operation of the Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) script;
- respondents' understanding of questions; and
- the procedures and question wording for securing partner interviews or partner interviews by proxy.

B.4 Sampling

The target population for the survey was parents of children under the age of 15 at the start of fieldwork. The sample was selected from the Child Benefit records by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Child Benefit is a universal benefit with a high rate of take up (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 nought to fourteen years and included a boost sample of parents of two- to four-year-olds.

A small number of Child Benefit recipients were excluded from the sampling frame before selection took place. The exclusions were made according to HMRC procedures and reasons include: death of a child, cases where the child has been taken into care or put up for adoption, cases where the child does not live at the same address as the claimant and cases where there has been any correspondence by the recipient with the Child Benefit Centre (because the reason for correspondence cannot be ascertained and may be sensitive). These exclusions amount to 0.47 per cent of the sampling frame and were compensated for by weighting the data prior to analysis.

In 2010, the sampling approach was slightly different to that employed in previous years. For the 2010 survey, the sample that was selected from the Child Benefit records was a *sample of children* rather than recipients. The children were the 'units' of the sample and an appropriate adult was identified as a respondent to answer questions about the selected child. In previous years, the sample design was more complicated with children being selected from Child Benefit Records, their parent/guardian (the benefit recipient) identified as the sampling unit, and then children being re-selected for the focus of the interview at the

fieldwork stage. Both approaches achieve a sample of interviews that is primarily representative of the population of children aged 0-14 years (and can be made representative of their parents by weighting) but the more direct design used for the 2010 survey means that less weighting is required to achieve this (indeed the 'sampling efficiency' for the child-level data has improved from 88% in 2009 to 94% in 2010). This reduction in the degree of corrective weighting reduces loss of precision, resulting in more reliable survey estimates.

As the children were the units of the sample in 2010, the interviews were only conducted in households where the specific sampled child lived. In previous years, where the sample units were Child Benefit recipients, when interviewers visited an address they were trying to interview a specific recipient. They would have checked whether any children aged 0-14 lived in the household but would have not checked whether the specific child identified at the sampling stage lived in the household. An interview could have been conducted at an address where the selected child no longer lived. For the child-specific questions, the CAPI programme would have randomly selected a child to be the focus of these questions, regardless of the specific child identified at the sampling stage. With the approach used in 2010, the selected child was followed through from sample to interview and therefore the CAPI programme did not usually need to re-select for the child-specific questions.

The exception to this was where a child had been born between the date that the sample was drawn and the date of the interview. As there was approximately a four month gap between the sample being drawn and the start of fieldwork, children that were born during this time, that is all children around four months old or younger, were not represented in the sample of children drawn from Child Benefit records. To account for this, in households where a child had been born since the sample was drawn, the CAPI programme re-selected the child that was to be the focus of the child-specific questions from all children (including the newborn child) in the household. As at the sampling stage, children aged two to four were given a higher probability of selection. For the child specific questions where no other children had been born since the sample was drawn, the child that was selected during sampling remained the focus of the questions.

The sample of children was selected in two stages: selection of Primary Sample Units (PSUs) and selection of individual children within each PSU. Ipsos MORI randomly selected 454 PSUs plus an additional 150 PSUs that could be used as a reserve sample if needed. The PSUs were based on postcode sectors. HMRC provided a full list of postcode sectors in England with counts for each of the number of children on Child Benefit records aged nought to fourteen and number of children aged two to four rounded to the nearest five. In order to reduce clustering, postcode sectors containing fewer than 250 children were grouped with neighbouring postcode sectors. The list of grouped postcode sectors was stratified by GOR, population density, proportion of households in managerial professional and intermediate occupations, and, proportion of the population that were unemployed. A size measure was calculated for each PSU based on the population of children in each size group. Sample points were selected with probability proportionate to size (random start and fixed interval using cumulative total of the size measure).

At the second stage, prior to the start of fieldwork 26 children per PSU were selected by HMRC from the selected PSUs (both the 454 main PSUs and 150 reserve PSUs). A list of all eligible children aged 0-14 in the PSU was created and was sorted by postcode and child benefit number to help to avoid children from the same household being selected. A weighted design was used to increase the number of children aged two to four in the sample. Each child aged two to four on the Child Benefit records on the first day of fieldwork was given a weighted chance value of 1.728 and all other children had a value of 1.

During fieldwork it became clear that additional sample was required. However, not all 150 reserve sampling points were required. Therefore, an additional 15 PSUs were selected at random from the 150 reserve PSUs, using the same selection procedure used for the original 150 reserve sampling points.

The mainstage sample was drawn from the February 2010 extract of Child Benefit data. However, as the reserve sample was drawn later than the mainstage sample, to ensure that the sample was as up-to-date as possible it was drawn from the August 2010 extract of data which was the latest available at the time.

B.5 Contacting respondents

Given that the sample was drawn from Child Benefit records, interviewers had the contact details for named individuals. The named individual from the sample was the person listed as the recipient of Child Benefit in that household. While the interviewers were asked to trace the named individual, this person was not necessarily the person who needed to be interviewed. Respondents eligible to be interviewed were those who had 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare'. Although in the majority of cases this definition included the benefit recipient, in some cases another member of the family needed to be interviewed. All interviews were conducted by Ipsos MORI interviewers.

Each sampled individual received an opt-out letter introducing the survey in August. This meant they had at least two weeks to respond to refuse to take part before they received further contact regarding the survey. Only cases where the respondent did not opt-out at this stage were issued for interview. Interviewers sent advance letters to sampled individuals in their area, and visited their addresses a few days later.

Interviewers were given instructions on the procedures for tracing people who had moved house since the Child Benefit records were last updated (February 2010 for mainstage sample and August 2010 for reserve sample). 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.6 Briefings

Prior to the start of fieldwork, all interviewers attended a full day briefing led by the Ipsos MORI research team. The briefings covered an introduction to the study and its aims, an explanation of the sample and procedures for contacting respondents, full definitions of the formal and informal childcare, and a dummy interviewer exercise which was designed to familiarise interviewers with the questions and flow of the questionnaire. All briefing sessions covered discussion on conducting research with parents, issues of sensitivities and practical information, and gave interviewers opportunity to ask any questions.

B.7 The interview

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with laptop computers, using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI was programmed using Quancept for Windows software. A set of showcards were provided as an aid to interviewing. Fieldwork took place between 27 September 2010 and 10 April 2011.

In situations where respondents could not speak English well enough to complete the interview, interviewers were able to use another household member to assist as an interpreter or another interviewer in the area who was able to speak their language was asked to conduct the interview. If this was not possible, the interview was not carried out.

B.8 Fieldwork response rates

Fieldwork ran from the end of September 2011 to April 2011, with a break from mid-December to January to take account of the Christmas holiday period. Therefore, fieldwork covered two school terms; the autumn term and the spring term.

At the start 11,804 addresses were included in the main sample and went through to the opt-out stage during which 363 respondents opted out of the survey. In addition to these, 156 opt-out letters were 'returned to sender' where the respondent had either gone away or was unknown at the address. These respondents were also removed from the sample. The total number of respondents removed from the sample at this stage was lower than had been assumed when the sample was drawn. Therefore, to ensure that the correct amount of sample was issued, 454 additional addresses, 1 per Primary Sampling Unit (PSU), were removed from the sample. These addresses were randomly selected and removed from the sample before it was issued to interviewers.

Once the 363 opt-outs, 156 'return to senders' and the additional 454 addresses were removed from the sample, a total of 10,831 addresses were issued to interviewers and advance letters were sent. Towards the end of fieldwork it became clear that the survey would achieve a lower than assumed response rate, and hence fewer interviews than targeted. Therefore it was decided that reserve addresses would be issued (however, the 454 addresses previously removed were not issued. This was because issuing a single reserve address in each sampling point would have been much more costly than sampling new points and addresses within those new points). These addresses were drawn using the same random probability method as the main sample. In February 2011, an additional 368 addresses were sent opt-out letters. Following the opt-out period 354 addresses were issued to interviewers and advance letters sent. Overall, including the main sample used at the start of fieldwork and the reserve sample, 11,185 addresses were issued to interviewers.

In order to ensure that final response rates are calculated using consistent definitions, Ipsos MORI has used the Standard Outcome Codes (SOC) used by NatCen in 2009 (Table B.2). The overall response rate for the 2010 survey in the field using SOCs was 57 per cent, an increase from 52 per cent in 2009. 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 fieldwork was 62 per cent. The different rates of response to the survey in the field are also summarised in Table B.3.

Table B.2 Survey response figures

		Population in scope of study	Population in scope of fieldwork
	N	%	%
Full sample pre opt-out (FS)	12,172		
Ineligible (I)	344		
No children of relevant age	106		
Other ineligible	239		
Eligible sample (ES)	11,828	100	
Opt-outs before fieldwork started (OO)	533	5	
Sample removed before fieldwork started (OU)	454	4	
Eligible sample – issued to interviewers (EI)	10,841	92	100
Non-contact (N)	2,511	21	23
Respondent moved	1,432		
Other non-contact	1,079		
Refusals (R)	1,419	12	13
Office refusal	121		
Refusal to interviewer	1,270		
Information about eligibility refused	28		
Other unproductive (OU)	186	2	2
Ill at home during survey period	58		
Language difficulties	54		
Other unproductive	74		
Productive interviews (P)	6,725	57	62
Full interview – lone parent	1,670		
Full interview – partner interview in person	1,125		
Full interview – partner interview by proxy	3,324		
Full interview – unproductive partner	606		

Table B.3 Fieldwork response figures

	2009	2010
	%	%
Overall response rate (P/ES)	52	57
Co-operation rate (P/(P+OU+R+OO))	67	76
Contact rate ((R+OU+P)/EI)	77	77
Refusal rate ((R+OO)/(EI+OU))	24	17
Eligibility rate (ES/FS)	98	97

Ipsos MORI's standard quality control procedures were used for this survey.

B.9 Coding and editing of data

The CAPI script ensured that the correct routing is followed throughout the questionnaire and applies range checks, which prevented invalid values from being entered in the programme. It also allowed consistency checks, which prompted interviewers to check answers that were inconsistent with information provided earlier in the interview. These checks allowed interviewers to clarify and query any data discrepancies directly with the respondent and were used extensively in the questionnaire.

The data collected during interviews was coded and edited. The main task was the back-coding of 'other' answers. This was carried out when over 10 per cent of respondents at a particular question provide an alternative answer to those that are pre-coded; this answer was recorded verbatim during the interview and was coded during the coding stage using the original list of pre-coded responses and sometimes additional codes available to coders only.

Coding was completed by a team of Ipsos MORI coders who were briefed on the survey. If the coder could not resolve a query, this was referred to the research team.

After the dataset was cleaned, the analysis file of question-based and derived variables was set up in SPSS and all questions and answer codes labelled.

B.10 Analysis and significance testing

Tables used in analysis were generated in SPSS and significance testing was undertaken using SPSS 17.0 and 19.0. Where the questionnaire was the same as the 2009 survey, we validated our syntax against 2009 data to ensure that any differences observed were 'real' and not due to different specifications or working practices. We were able to 'validate' almost all tables used in the 2009 report in this way.

We replicated the method of significance testing carried out in 2009, which used the complex samples module in SPSS to take into account the impact of stratification, clustering and non-response on the survey estimates. The complex samples module allows us to take into account sample stratification, clustering, and weighting to correct for non-response bias when conducting significance testing. This means that we are much less likely to obtain 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpret a difference as real when it is not) than if we used the standard formulae.

B.11 Provider checks

In all five surveys in the series (2004, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010), checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the childcare providers they used in order to improve the accuracy of the classifications. During the main survey, parents were asked to classify the childcare providers they used for their children into types (for example nursery school, playgroup 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. In the 2010 survey these checks were restricted to pre-school providers used in the reference term-time week (rather than the whole year) as previous year's results had shown that parents were more likely to incorrectly classify these types of providers. The providers that were contacted were as follows:

- nursery school
- nursery class
- reception class
- special day school or nursery unit

- day nursery
- playgroup or pre-school

The process of checking providers started with extracting data from the CAPI interview regarding the providers used and the parents' classification of them. This was only done in cases where parents agreed to Ipsos MORI contacting their providers. Each provider remained linked to the parent interview so that they could be compared and later merged to the parent interview data.

We received information on 2,207 settings from the interview data. Because different parents may have used the same provider, the contact information for that provider was potentially repeated. As such, we completed an initial process of de-duplicating the list of providers, which was done both manually and automatically. 285 providers were duplicates and were therefore removed from the checks. In addition, 216 providers were removed from the provider checks because of incomplete or invalid phone numbers.

A full list of 1,706 providers with valid phone numbers was generated, and telephone interviewers were briefed. Interviews with providers were approximately five minutes long, and covered the services provided and the age range of the children who attended each service. We achieved productive interviews with 1,462 providers, which constitutes a response rate of 86 per cent.

The data from the telephone checks and the parents' interviews were then compared. While a substantial proportion of these checks were completed automatically, some cases were looked into manually. A new variable was then created showing the final provider classification. To ensure consistency, the guidance from previous years as how to decide on the final provider classification using the parent's answer and the providers answer was used. Table B.4 shows the parents classification of providers compared with the final classification of providers after all checks.

Table B.4 Classification of providers before and after provider checks

	Parents' classification	Final classification after all checks
	%	%
<i>Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents</i>	<i>(3,297)</i>	<i>(3,297)</i>
Nursery school	24	16
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	15	14
Reception class	32	33
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with SEN	1	1
Day nursery	12	18
Playgroup or pre-school	17	18

B.12 Weighting

Reasons for weighting

There were three stages to the weighting procedure; the first was to remove biases resulting from the sample design, and the second and third were to remove biases caused by differential non-response and non-coverage.

The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children of parents receiving Child Benefit, rather than the population of adults receiving Child Benefit. This

design feature means the sample is biased towards larger families; hence the data needed to be weighted before any analyses can be carried out on family-level data. In addition, the design included a boost sample of children aged two to four. These children needed to be down-weighted so they could be included in the core data analysis. The selection weights also corrected the selection probabilities for cases where the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the family at interview.

A second stage of weighting was used to correct for recipient non-response and a final stage of weighting (called calibration weighting) was used to correct for differences due to exclusions from the sample frame, and random chance in the selection process.

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

Selection weights

Household selection weight

The sample design means families that contain either a large number of eligible children, or children aged two to four, were more likely to be included in the sample. The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children of adults receiving Child Benefit and is not representative of Child Benefit recipients or all families. To make the sample representative of all families a weight needs to be applied, which should be used for all family-level analyses.

The family selection weight is the inverse of the family's selection probability, so larger households and those containing children aged two to four are weighted down:

$$W1 = 1/PR(F)$$

Pre-calibration family weight

A logistic regression model was used to model non-response. The probability that a recipient responded to the survey was found to depend on:

- Government Office Region;
- number of children aged 0-14 in the family;
- proportion of private renters in the Primary Sampling Unit (PSU); and
- proportion of households in the PSU in NS-SEC categories higher and intermediate occupations.

Area deprivation was also included in the model, but for consistency with the 2009 survey rather than because it was statistically significant.

A non-response weight (WNR) was calculated as the reciprocal of the modelled response probability. The family weight (WH) was then simply the product of the non-response weight (WNR) and the family selection weight (W1):

$$WH = WNR * W1$$

Child selection weight

At each sampled address a single child was selected at random at the sampling stage. Where children had been born to the responding parent after the sampling stage, a single child was randomly selected during the interview process. This selected child was the focus of the detailed childcare section of the questionnaire. Each child aged two to four on the Child Benefit records was given a weighted chance of selection of 1.728 compared to a selection weight of 1.0 for all children aged 0 to 1 and 5 to 14.

The child selection weight (W2) is the inverse of the child selection probabilities:

$$W2 = 1/PR(C)$$

Pre-calibration child weight

A child weight (WC) was then calculated as the product of the household weight (WH) and the child selection weight (W2):

$$WC = WH * W2$$

Calibration

The final stage of the weighting procedure was to adjust the weights using calibration weighting. The aim of calibration weighting was to correct for differences between the (weighted) achieved sample and the population profile caused by excluding cases from the sample frame before sampling and random chance in the selection process.

Calibration weighting requires a set of population estimates to which the sample can be weighted, known as control totals. HMRC provided Ipsos MORI with a breakdown of the sampling frame (before exclusions) for different variables at recipient- and child-level. The sample (weighted by the selection weights) and population distributions for these variables are shown in Tables B.5 and B.6.

Table B.5 Comparison of recipient-level population figures to weighted sample

Distribution of recipients	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only
	%	%
<i>Base: All recipients of Child Benefit</i>		(6,723)
Government Office Region		
North East	258,378	5.3
North West	719,754	14.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	531,198	11.1
East Midlands	448,521	8.9
West Midlands	571,415	10.7
South West	492,398	9.9
East of England	582,305	10.1
London	859,859	14.0
South East	849,108	15.7
Number of children in household		
1	2,746,708	45.6
2	1,889,400	39.6
3	518,401	11.3
4+	158,427	3.4

Table B.6 Comparison of child-level population figures to weighted sample

	Population	Sample weighted by selection weight only
	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible children</i>		(6,723)
Government Office Region		
North East	410,535	5.1
North West	1,174,832	14.6
Yorkshire and the Humber	876,182	10.8
East Midlands	735,398	8.7
West Midlands	957,616	10.9
South West	811,372	9.8
East of England	963,332	10.3
London	1,433,471	14.2
South East	1,403,195	15.6
Selected child's age		
0 to 1	836,139	9.5
2 to 4	1,921,180	21.9
5 to 7	1,808,596	21.1
8 to 11	2,334,237	27.2
12 to 14	1,865,780	20.4
Selected child's gender		
Male	4,486,536	51.4
Female	4,279,396	48.6

Calibration weighting adjusts the original sampling design weights to make the weighted survey estimates of the control totals exactly match those of the population. The adjustments are made under the restriction that the initial selection weights must be altered by as small amount as possible, so their original properties are retained.

This means the final calibrated weights are as close as possible to the selection weights whilst giving survey estimates for the control totals that match the population distribution exactly.

The calibration was run twice; once to calibrate the family weight and once to calibrate the child weight. Analysis of data weighted by the family weight will match the population of Child Benefit recipients in terms of the variables used as control totals. Similarly, analysis of data weighted by the child weight will match the population of children on the Child Benefit records in terms of the variables used in weighting.

The control totals for the family weight (WH) were:

- Government Office Region; and
- number of children in family.

The control totals for the child weight were:

- Government Office Region;
- age of child; and
- gender of child.

The distribution of the sample weighted by the calibration weights is shown in Tables B.7 and B.8. The distribution matches that of the population (see Tables B.5 and B.6).

Table B.7 Weighted distribution of variables used in household-level calibration

	All
	%
<i>Base: All recipients of Child Benefit</i>	(6,723)
Government Office Region	
North East	4.86
North West	13.55
Yorkshire and the Humber	10.00
East Midlands	8.44
West Midlands	10.76
South West	9.27
East of England	10.96
London	16.18
South East	15.98
Number of children in family	
1	51.70
2	35.56
3	9.76
4+	2.98

Table B.8 Weighted distribution of variables used in child-level calibration

	All
	%
<i>Base: All recipients of Child Benefit</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Government Office Region	
North East	4.68
North West	13.40
Yorkshire and the Humber	10.00
East Midlands	8.39
West Midlands	10.92
South West	9.26
East of England	10.99
London	16.35
South East	16.01
Selected child's age	
0-1	9.54
2-4	21.92
5-7	20.63
8-11	26.63
12-14	21.28
Selected child's gender	
Male	51.18
Female	48.82

Effective sample size

Disproportionate sampling and sample clustering often result in estimates with a larger variance. More variance means standard errors are larger and confidence intervals wider than they would be with a simple random sample, so there is less certainty over how close our estimates are to the true population value.

The effect of the sample design on the precision of survey estimates is indicated by the effective sample size (neff). The effective sample size measures the size of an (unweighted) simple random sample that would have provided the same precision (standard error) as the design being implemented. If the effective sample size is close to the actual sample size then we have an efficient design with a good level of precision. The lower the effective sample size, the lower the level of precision. The efficiency of a sample is given by the ratio of the effective sample size to the actual sample size. The sample was designed to be representative of the population of children; hence the child weight is more efficient than the household weight. The effective sample size and sample efficiency was calculated for both weights and are given in Table B.9.

Table B.9 Effective sample size and weighting efficiency

	All
<i>Base: All cases</i>	(6,723)
Child weight	
Effective sample size	6,328
Sample efficiency	94.1%
Family weight	
Effective sample size	4,695
Sample efficiency	69.8%

Confidence intervals

We have calculated confidence intervals (95% level) for key estimates in the survey in Table B.10. We have used standard errors calculated using complex samples formulae to generate the confidence intervals.

Table B.10 Confidence intervals for key estimates

	Estimate	Base size	Standard error	Lower	Upper
Use of any childcare	78%	6,723	0.7492	76.7%	79.7%
Use of formal childcare	63%	6,723	0.8581	61.3%	64.7%
Use of informal childcare	38%	6,723	0.8866	36.3%	39.8%
Hours of childcare used (all)	14.1	4,391	0.2370	13.6	14.5
Hours of childcare used (pre-school children)	22.7	1,950	0.3561	22.0	23.4
Hours of childcare used (school-age children)	9.5	2,441	0.2638	9.0	10.0
Take-up of free entitlement	85%	1,316	1.0769	83.1%	87.3%
Median weekly amount paid for childcare	£48	3,124	1.6600	£44.7	£51.3
Use of any holiday childcare	45%	5,639	1.0290	42.6%	46.7%

Appendix C Additional tables

Table C2.1 Use of childcare, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	(6,723)
Family type				
Couple	66	52	25	(5,054)
Lone parent	64	45	34	(1,669)
Family work status				
Couple – both working	76	60	33	(2,879)
Couple – one working	54	44	15	(1,750)
Couple – neither working	39	31	9	(425)
Lone parent – working	75	53	44	(741)
Lone parent – not working	55	38	25	(928)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	54	38	26	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	54	40	23	(1,628)
£20,000 - £29,999	65	49	28	(1,174)
£30,000 - £44,999	70	53	32	(1,219)
£45,000+	79	65	29	(1,670)
Number of children				
1	70	50	35	(1,783)
2	69	54	28	(3,078)
3+	55	45	18	(1,862)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.2 Use of childcare, by disability of selected child

	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	(6,723)
No disability	65	50	27	(6,350)
Disability – does not disrupt daily living	78	63	31	(100)
Disability – disrupts daily living to a small extent	70	51	37	(131)
Disability – disrupts daily living to a great extent	57	46	18	(142)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.3 Use of childcare, by family socio-economic classification and detailed family work status

Family characteristics	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	(6,723)
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	74	52	42	(289)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	77	56	44	(401)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	74	38	55	(51)
Lone parent not in paid employment	55	38	25	(928)
Couple - both in full-time employment	77	61	34	(999)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	75	59	33	(1,424)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	78	61	31	(382)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	55	45	15	(1,498)
Couple - both in part-time employment	70	62	35	(74)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	52	39	17	(252)
Couple - neither in paid employment	39	31	9	(425)
Family socio-economic classification				
Modern professional	74	61	30	(733)
Clerical and intermediate	69	52	31	(816)
Senior manager or administrator	76	64	26	(645)
Technical and craft	70	52	33	(684)
Semi-routine, manual and service	59	42	27	(892)
Routine manual and service	56	39	25	(1,195)
Middle or junior manager	72	56	34	(599)
Traditional professional	78	68	27	(497)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.4 Use of childcare providers, by family type and work status

	Family type and work status						
	Couples				Lone parents		
	All	Both work- ing	One work- ing	Neither work- ing	All	Work- ing	Not work- ing
Use of childcare	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children</i>	(5,054)	(2,879)	(1,750)	(425)	(1,669)	(741)	(928)
Formal providers							
Nursery school	4	4	3	4	3	3	3
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	2	2	3	3	2	2	3
Reception class	5	5	6	6	5	5	6
Day nursery	6	8	2	1	3	5	2
Playgroup or pre-school	4	4	5	3	2	2	3
Breakfast club	3	4	1	1	3	6	2
After-school club	29	35	22	13	24	30	18
Childminder	3	5	1	1	4	8	1
Nanny or au pair	1	2	*	0	*	*	0
Informal providers							
Ex-partner	1	1	1	1	13	16	9
Grandparent	18	24	10	5	17	24	12
Older sibling	2	3	1	1	3	4	2
Another relative	3	4	3	1	3	4	3
Friend or neighbour	4	5	2	1	4	6	3

Table C2.5 Use of childcare, by area deprivation

Area deprivation	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
All	65	50	27	(6,723)
1 st quintile – most deprived	54	39	23	(1,660)
2 nd quintile	61	45	26	(1,397)
3 rd quintile	71	55	31	(1,173)
4 th quintile	69	54	30	(1,217)
5 th quintile – least deprived	76	61	29	(1,272)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.6 Logistic regression models for use of formal childcare

	Use of formal childcare	
	Pre-school	School-age
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children</i>	(2,675)	(4,032)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	***10.98	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	0.85
12 to 14	n/a	***0.37
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.41	***0.74
Couple – neither working	***0.37	***0.53
Lone parent – working	*1.75	1.14
Lone parent – not working	***0.28	*0.77
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	*0.58	***0.39
£10,000-£19,999	***0.51	***0.45
£20,000-£20,999	***0.47	***0.61
£30,000-£44,999	**0.64	***0.62
Income unknown	**0.50	*0.70
Number of children (3+)		
1	*1.39	1.10
2	1.09	1.09
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	*0.59	0.73
Black Caribbean	1.06	*2.14
Black African	0.80	0.70
Asian Indian	**0.42	**0.42
Asian Pakistani	*0.61	**0.56
Asian Bangladeshi	*0.46	***0.35
Other Asian	*0.45	0.59
White and Black	0.77	1.17
White and Asian	0.91	1.14
Other mixed	0.78	1.31
Other	0.98	0.82
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	1.42	1.02
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	1.00	0.83
3 rd quintile	1.07	0.95
2 nd quintile	0.84	0.77
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.80	*0.69
Rurality (urban)		
Rural	1.10	0.99

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.7 Logistic regression models for use of informal childcare

	Use of informal childcare	
	Pre-school	School-age
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children</i>	(2,675)	(4,032)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	**0.75	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	0.96
12 to 14	n/a	***0.60
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.36	***0.51
Couple – neither working	***0.26	***0.27
Lone parent – working	1.42	***2.24
Lone parent – not working	**0.54	1.12
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	1.03	1.05
£10,000-£19,999	0.85	0.88
£20,000-£29,999	1.18	1.04
£30,000-£44,999	1.26	1.22
Income unknown	1.17	0.94
Number of children (3+)		
1	***2.70	***1.47
2	***1.56	*1.27
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	**0.43	***0.29
Black Caribbean	*0.34	*0.41
Black African	**0.29	***0.28
Asian Indian	0.54	0.84
Asian Pakistani	*0.43	*0.54
Asian Bangladeshi	0.65	**0.21
Other Asian	0.33	0.49
White and Black	0.90	***0.31
White and Asian	*0.38	0.55
Other mixed	0.72	1.07
Other	0.37	*0.07
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	0.99	1.05
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	0.92	1.13
3 rd quintile	0.93	1.25
2 nd quintile	1.06	1.05
1 st quintile – most deprived	1.07	1.13
Rurality (urban)		
Rural	1.16	0.96

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.8 Hours of childcare used per week, by provider type and age

Use of childcare	Pre-school children			School-age children		
	Median	Mean	Un-weighted base	Median	Mean	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving care from provider types</i>						
Any provider	20.5	22.7	(1,950)	5.0	9.5	(2,441)
Formal providers						
Childminder	17.0	18.9	(149)	6.8	10.1	(100)
Nanny or au pair	[17.3]	[21.3]	(26)	[7.6]	[12.3]	(23)
Informal providers						
Ex-partner	13.6	16.1	(71)	15.8	20.9	(154)
Grandparent	9.0	13.4	(618)	4.1	7.8	(593)
Older sibling	[2.9]	[4.3]	(13)	3.0	5.4	(126)
Another relative	5.6	10.4	(104)	4.0	8.2	(108)
Friend or neighbour	3.0	5.7	(58)	3.0	6.4	(181)

Table C2.9 Hours of any childcare used per week, by detailed family work status

Any childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	13.1	17.5	1.1	(187)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	13.8	18.2	1.1	(256)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[12.0]	[15.8]	[2.5]	(29)
Lone parent not in paid employment	8.4	13.5	0.6	(455)
Couple - both in full-time employment	10.2	17.3	0.6	(792)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	8.0	13.5	0.4	(1,113)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	6.0	10.0	0.6	(304)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	6.0	11.5	0.4	(876)
Couple - both in part-time employment	9.0	15.3	1.9	(55)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	5.3	12.3	1.4	(139)
Couple - neither in paid employment	7.8	14.2	1.2	(185)

Table C2.10 Hours of formal childcare used per week, by detailed family working status

Formal childcare	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving formal childcare</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	6.8	12.2	1.0	(136)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	6.0	11.3	0.8	(191)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[11.2]	[13.9]	[2.8]	(15)
Lone parent not in paid employment	5.0	10.4	0.6	(326)
Couple - both in full-time employment	7.5	14.0	0.6	(644)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	5.8	11.8	0.4	(885)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	4.3	8.5	0.6	(244)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	5.0	10.4	0.4	(735)
Couple - both in part-time employment	[9.0]	[13.9]	[1.8]	(49)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	6.0	11.2	1.1	(110)
Couple - neither in paid employment	6.6	11.8	0.9	(153)

Table C2.11 Hours of informal childcare used per week, by detailed family working status

Informal childcare	Age of selected child			
	Median	Mean	Standard error	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All children receiving informal childcare</i>				
Detailed family work status				
Lone parent in full-time employment	11.2	15.4	1.3	(102)
Lone parent in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	12.0	16.8	1.4	(151)
Lone parent in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	[4.9]	[12.5]	[3.1]	(21)
Lone parent not in paid employment	6.9	13.1	0.9	(207)
Couple - both in full-time employment	8.0	13.0	0.8	(354)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (16 to 29 hours per week) employment	6.0	9.1	0.4	(488)
Couple - one in full-time and one in part-time (1 to 15 hours per week) employment	5.0	7.6	0.8	(122)
Couple - one in full-time employment and one not working	4.2	10.0	0.8	(233)
Couple - both in part-time employment	[4.0]	[6.6]	[1.4]	(25)
Couple - one in part-time employment and one not working	[3.0]	[11.1]	[3.1]	(44)
Couple - neither in paid employment	[7.0]	[18.1]	[3.6]	(42)

Table C2.12 Receipt of the entitlement to early years provision, by family annual income, ethnicity of child (grouped), Government Office Region and rurality

	Received free hours (or attended school)	Received early years provision but not free hours	Received early years provision but not sure about free hours	Did not receive any early years provision	Un-weighted base
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds</i>					
All	85	4	1	10	(1,316)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	80	6	3	12	(153)
£10,000 - £19,999	85	5	1	9	(308)
£20,000 - £29,999	85	3	1	11	(236)
£30,000 - £44,999	86	3	0	11	(217)
£45,000+	87	5	*	8	(346)
Ethnicity of child, grouped					
White British	88	3	1	9	(989)
Other White	73	6	2	18	(68)
Black Caribbean	[80]	[7]	[0]	[13]	(21)
Black African	[87]	[3]	[3]	[7]	(43)
Asian Indian	[74]	[11]	[0]	[16]	(28)
Asian Pakistani	92	3	0	5	(55)
Asian Bangladeshi	[67]	[13]	[0]	[20]	(20)
Other Asian	[57]	[14]	[7]	[21]	(18)
White and Black	[75]	[15]	[5]	[5]	(28)
White and Asian	[88]	[0]	[0]	[13]	(11)
Other mixed	[92]	[8]	[0]	[0]	(18)
Other	[70]	[20]	[0]	[10]	(14)
Government Office Region					
North East	88	2	0	9	(69)
North West	89	5	1	5	(178)
Yorkshire and the Humber	88	3	0	9	(146)
East Midlands	87	3	0	10	(108)
West Midlands	82	1	1	17	(161)
East of England	82	5	2	11	(121)
London	73	10	1	15	(198)
South East	93	2	1	5	(214)
South West	92	1	1	5	(121)
Rurality					
Rural	92	1	1	6	(243)
Urban	84	5	1	11	(1,071)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C2.13 Number of free hours per week, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	All
Number of hours	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school</i>	(369)	(164)	(533)
Less than 12.5 hours	25	22	24
12.5 to 14.9 hours	9	6	8
15 hours or more	66	72	68
Median	15.0	15.0	15.0
Mean	14.3	15.4	14.7
Standard Error	0.4	0.5	0.3

Table C2.14 Logistic regression models for hours of formal childcare used

	Hours of formal childcare used	
	Pre-school (17.901+ hours)	School-age (3.01+ hours)
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children who used formal childcare</i>	(1,668)	(1,812)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	**1.49	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	***0.64
12 to 14	n/a	***0.54
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.36	*0.71
Couple – neither working	**0.48	1.22
Lone parent – working	1.21	*1.52
Lone parent – not working	*0.55	0.94
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	***0.34	0.69
£10,000-£19,999	***0.42	*0.70
£20,000-£20,999	***0.51	0.81
£30,000-£44,999	***0.47	**0.62
Income unknown	0.55	1.01
Number of children (3+)		
1	1.27	1.25
2	1.26	1.16
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	*1.82	1.02
Black Caribbean	*3.30	1.02
Black African	1.45	1.55
Asian Indian	1.59	0.81
Asian Pakistani	*1.95	1.24
Asian Bangladeshi	0.47	0.85
Other Asian	0.92	0.94
White and Black	1.88	0.82
White and Asian	1.23	1.21
Other mixed	0.98	2.01
Other	1.26	0.59
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	0.86	0.97
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	0.80	1.01
3 rd quintile	1.00	0.88
2 nd quintile	1.30	1.05
1 st quintile – most deprived	0.86	0.87

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data).

Table C2.15 Logistic regression models for hours of informal childcare used

	Hours of informal childcare used	
	Pre-school (9.501+ hours)	School-age (5.01+ hours)
	Odds ratio	Odds ratio
<i>Base: All pre-school and school-age children who used informal childcare</i>	(772)	(1,016)
Child's age (0 to 2/5 to 7)		
3 to 4	**0.63	n/a
8 to 11	n/a	0.77
12 to 14	n/a	1.05
Family type and work status (Couple-both working)		
Couple – one working	***0.25	1.13
Couple – neither working	0.51	1.66
Lone parent – working	**2.42	***2.67
Lone parent – not working	0.91	**2.09
Family annual income (£45,000+)		
Under £10,000	0.71	0.75
£10,000-£19,999	1.10	0.85
£20,000-£29,999	1.09	1.38
£30,000-£44,999	0.97	1.12
Income unknown	1.75	1.02
Number of children (3+)		
1	1.48	**1.75
2	1.09	**1.54
Ethnicity (White British)		
Other White	0.97	Not included
Black Caribbean	0.91	Not included
Black African	0.81	Not included
Asian Indian	1.70	Not included
Asian Pakistani	1.36	Not included
Asian Bangladeshi	2.09	Not included
Other Asian	1.84	Not included
White and Black	0.78	Not included
White and Asian	2.23	Not included
Other mixed	0.46	Not included
Other	0.36	Not included
Special educational needs (No)		
Yes	1.14	0.75
Area deprivation (least deprived)		
4 th quintile	1.02	1.02
3 rd quintile	0.83	1.20
2 nd quintile	0.88	*1.55
1 st quintile – most deprived	1.16	1.47

Note: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001. Odds ratio>1 indicates higher odds of using formal childcare, and odds ratio<1 indicates lower odds, compared to the reference category in bold and brackets. Children with missing values for any of the variables in the analysis were excluded from the models, with the exception of those with missing family annual income, who were included as a separate category (because of the relatively large number of parents who did not provide income data). Ethnicity was excluded from the school-age children model, due to small base sizes for individual categories.

Table C2.16 Whether parents satisfied with the number of free hours, by age of child

	Age of child		
	3 years	4 years	Total
Satisfaction	%	%	%
<i>Base: All eligible three- and four-year-olds who were reported as receiving the entitlement to free early years provision, except those who received free hours through attending school</i>	(413)	(199)	(612)
Very satisfied	67	68	67
Fairly satisfied	27	24	26
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	5	4
Fairly dissatisfied	3	2	3
Very dissatisfied	*	0	*

Table C3.1 Number of providers, by specific centre-based provider types

	Centre-based providers				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received centre-based childcare</i>	(550)	(451)	(729)	(646)	(621)
1	53	50	47	49	40
2	34	30	33	39	36
3+	13	21	20	12	24

Table C3.2 Number of providers, by informal provider types

	Informal providers			
	Non-resident parent	Grandparent	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Number of providers	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(149)	(1,220)	(218)	(116)
1	18	29	22	23
2	39	48	44	36
3+	43	22	34	41

Table C3.3 Patterns of childcare use, by age of child and package of childcare

	Age of child and package of childcare					
	0-2			3-4		
	Formal: Centre-based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-based and informal	Formal: Centre-based only	Informal only	Formal: Centre-based and informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received childcare</i>	(229)	(211)	(175)	(609)	(44)	(305)
Days per week						
1	17	33	2	3	[20]	2
2	27	24	19	7	[20]	4
3	24	21	30	17	[10]	13
4	9	8	22	14	[10]	18
5	22	13	22	58	[30]	46
6	1	*	4	*	[7]	10
7	0	*	1	0	[3]	6
Median hours per day	6.5	6.0	7.7	5.0	5.5	6.0
Median hours per week	18.0	15.0	26.0	17.0	17.5	26.1

Table C3.4 Hours of centre-based childcare received, by specific centre-based provider types

Hours of centre-based care received	Centre-based providers				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received centre-based childcare</i>	(307)	(224)	(331)	(401)	(340)
Median hours per day	4.7	3.0	6.3	7.7	3.0
Median hours per week	15.0	15.0	31.3	19.5	11.9

Table C3.5 Hours of informal childcare received, by informal provider types

Hours of informal care received	Informal providers			
	Non-resident parent	Grandparent	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received informal childcare</i>	(71)	(624)	(109)	(60)
Median hours per day	6.2	5.8	4.5	3.0
Median hours per week	17.8	10.5	11.4	4.5

Table C3.6 Whether pre-school child attended more than one provider on the same day, by age of child

	Age of child	
	0-2	3-4
Whether attended more than one provider on same day	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children who received a package of centre-based and informal childcare</i>	(181)	(325)
Never	72	48
Sometimes	23	45
Always	4	7

Table C3.7 Childcare packages for families with pre-school children only, by number of children

	Number of children			
	1	2	3+	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with pre-school children only</i>	(741)	(629)	(75)	(1,445)
All children used				
Informal only	18	5	0	15
Formal: Centre-Based only	28	16	13	25
All children used either				
Formal: Centre-Based OR Informal	23	8	3	19
No childcare OR Formal: Centre-Based only	n/a	24	43	7
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal OR Informal only	n/a	9	10	2
Some other arrangement	14	27	17	17
No childcare used	17	11	13	15

Table C3.8 Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Reasons/combinations	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,372)	(2,252)	(3,624)
Economic only	41	18	29
Child-related only	12	33	23
Parental time only	10	3	6
Economic and child-related	18	26	22
Economic and parental time	4	2	3
Child-related and parental time	6	11	9
Economic, child-related and parental time	5	6	6
Other	3	1	2

Table C3.9 Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Age of child		
	0-2	3-4	Total
Reasons	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received childcare</i>	(1,372)	(2,252)	(3,624)
Economic	68	52	59
Child-related	42	75	60
Parental time	26	21	23

Table C3.10 Reasons for using centre-based providers, by specific centre-based provider types

	Centre-based providers				
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All pre-school children in the family who received centre-based childcare</i>	(477)	(376)	(526)	(591)	(529)
Economic	53	29	19	83	35
Child-related	59	81	88	47	78
Parental time	13	18	10	12	17

Table C4.1 Number of providers, by specific informal provider types

	Informal providers				
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Number of providers	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(411)	(1,492)	(266)	(298)	(415)
1	33	29	44	32	20
2	36	40	28	34	32
3	21	17	14	21	24
4+	10	14	14	14	24

Table C4.2 Use of childcare providers, by age of child and package of childcare

	Age of child and package of childcare								
	5-7			8-11			12-14		
	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	Formal: Out-of-School only	Informal only	Formal: Out-of-School and Informal
Days and hours of childcare received	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children who received childcare</i>	(246)	(124)	(162)	(411)	(197)	(234)	(237)	(162)	(96)
Days per week									
1	34	30	8	38	40	7	39	33	9
2	26	30	22	25	23	23	29	27	20
3	15	16	30	19	15	25	16	11	22
4	8	10	20	6	6	17	6	9	20
5	14	10	15	10	9	21	8	14	16
6	2	1	5	2	4	3	2	4	9
7	*	1	0	1	2	3	0	3	4
Median hours per day	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.3	2.8	2.3	1.5	3.0	2.2
Median hours per week	2.3	6.0	6.4	2.8	5.0	7.1	3.0	7.0	8.0

Table C4.3 Hours of informal childcare received, by specific informal provider types

Hours of informal childcare received	Informal providers				
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
<i>Base: All school-age children who received informal childcare</i>	(157)	(608)	(135)	(121)	(192)
Median hours per day	7.3	2.6	2.0	3.0	2.8
Median hours per week	18.0	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.0

Table C4.4 Reason combinations given for using childcare providers, by age of child

Reasons/combinations	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,067)	(2,298)	(1,103)	(5,468)
Economic only	25	24	16	22
Child-related only	31	32	44	35
Parental time only	5	5	5	5
Economic and child-related	20	15	13	16
Economic and parental time	2	2	1	2
Child-related and parental time	6	6	3	5
Economic, child-related and parental time	3	3	2	3
Other	8	13	15	12

Table C4.5 Childcare packages for families with school-age children only, by number of children

Package of childcare	Number of children			
	1	2	3+	All
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children only</i>	(1,037)	(1,406)	(539)	(2,982)
All children used				
Informal only	18	9	3	14
Formal: Out-of-School only	25	15	11	21
All children used either				
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	14	9	4	11
No childcare or Formal: Out-of-School only	n/a	10	16	5
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal or Informal only	n/a	6	5	2
Some other arrangement	12	28	32	19
No childcare used	31	22	28	28

Table C4.6 Childcare packages for families with pre-school and school-age children, by number of children

	Number of children		
	2	3+	All
Package of childcare	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with pre-school and school-age children</i>	(1,043)	(1,248)	(2,291)
All children used			
Informal only	4	2	3
Formal: Centre-Based only	4	2	3
All children used either			
No childcare or Informal only	2	2	2
No childcare or Formal: Centre-Based only	15	22	18
No childcare or Formal: Out-of-School only	4	5	5
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal or Informal only	7	4	5
Formal: Out-of-School and Informal or Informal only	2	2	2
Formal: Out-of-School only or Formal: Centre-Based only	10	5	8
Formal: Centre-Based and Informal or Formal: Out-of-School and Informal	5	2	4
Some other arrangement	35	41	38
No childcare used	11	14	12

Table C4.7 Reasons for using childcare providers, by age of child

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	Total
Reasons	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received childcare</i>	(2,067)	(2,298)	(1,103)	(5,468)
Economic	50	44	32	43
Child-related	60	56	62	59
Parental time	16	15	12	15

Table C4.8 Reasons for using informal providers, by specific informal provider type

	Informal providers				
	Non-resident parent	Grand-parent	Older sibling	Other relative	Friend/ neighbour
Reasons	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All school-age children in the family who received informal childcare</i>	(359)	(1,271)	(239)	(250)	(343)
Economic	34	68	66	59	58
Child-related	71	39	25	37	40
Parental time	18	19	36	22	24

Table C5.1 Weekly payment for childcare, by service paid for

Provider type	Family paid provider for Education/ Childcare		Family paid provider for other services only	
	Median	Unweighted base	Median	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families who paid provider type</i>				
Formal providers				
Nursery school	60	(222)	3	(52)
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	23	(73)	1	(83)
Day nursery	85	(446)	[10]	(16)
Playgroup or pre-school	15	(285)	3	(50)
Breakfast club	10	(167)	6	(62)
After-school club	11	(1,234)	5	(371)
Informal providers				
Grandparent	[30]	(34)	[20]	(37)

Table C5.2 Weekly payment for childcare, by family characteristics

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>				
All	20	48	1.66	(3,124)
Family type				
Couple	21	51	1.98	(2,486)
Lone parent	15	41	2.70	(638)
Family work status				
Couple – both working	25	57	2.42	(1,704)
Couple – one working	13	34	2.83	(680)
Couple – neither working	5	21	4.96	(102)
Lone parent – working	25	51	3.55	(388)
Lone parent – not working	6	20	3.01	(250)
Family annual income				
Under £10,000	10	26	3.40	(185)
£10,000 - £19,999	10	31	2.45	(536)
£20,000 - £29,999	15	40	2.87	(540)
£30,000 - £44,999	20	42	2.79	(631)
£45,000+	33	69	3.45	(1,090)
Number of children				
1	20	47	2.48	(717)
2	20	51	2.17	(1,595)
3+	19	47	3.08	(812)
Age of children				
Pre-school child(ren) only	58	84	3.97	(726)
Pre-school and school-age children	25	54	2.58	(1,138)
School-age child(ren) only	12	27	1.53	(1,260)

Table C5.3 Weekly payment for childcare, by area characteristics

	Median	Mean	Standard Error	Unweighted base
Area characteristics	£	£		
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>				
Government Office Region				
North East	15	38	6.97	(173)
North West	22	46	5.15	(434)
Yorkshire and the Humber	20	40	3.72	(311)
East Midlands	25	57	8.02	(244)
West Midlands	16	43	3.55	(329)
East of England	18	39	3.54	(347)
London	31	77	6.46	(346)
South East	19	50	3.76	(594)
South West	15	36	2.86	(346)
Area deprivation				
1 st quintile – most deprived	11	35	2.71	(497)
2 nd quintile	20	51	4.01	(580)
3 rd quintile	20	49	3.63	(614)
4 th quintile	21	50	3.23	(672)
5 th quintile – least deprived	25	53	3.06	(760)
2 nd – 5 th quintiles – least deprived	21	51	1.82	(2,626)
Rurality				
Rural	19	44	3.31	(711)
Urban	20	50	1.89	(2,411)

Table C5.4 Difficulty paying for childcare, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Difficulty paying for childcare					
	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	Unweighted base
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>						
All	19	32	24	19	6	(2,360)
Family type						
Couple	20	34	24	16	5	(1,861)
Lone parent	14	24	24	27	10	(499)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	20	34	25	16	4	(1,280)
Couple – one working	21	36	22	15	6	(508)
Couple – neither working	14	33	21	17	14	(73)
Lone parent – working	12	23	25	29	10	(305)
Lone parent – not working	17	25	23	24	11	(194)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	18	24	20	24	15	(145)
£10,000 - £19,999	17	28	20	24	10	(407)
£20,000 - £29,999	16	25	28	23	8	(403)
£30,000 - £44,999	17	30	28	18	7	(473)
£45,000+	22	38	24	13	3	(837)
Number of children						
1	19	31	26	18	6	(579)
2	20	33	23	18	6	(1,186)
3+	14	31	25	22	8	(595)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	14	27	29	23	8	(610)
Pre-school and school-age children	15	31	24	23	7	(828)
School-age child(ren) only	24	35	22	14	5	(922)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C5.5 Difficulty paying for childcare, by weekly family payment (quintiles)

Weekly payment	Difficulty paying for childcare					Unweighted base
	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	
<i>Base: Families who paid for childcare in last week</i>						
Less than £5	49	34	9	8	1	(386)
£5 to £14.99	24	40	20	12	4	(487)
£15 to £29.99	14	38	26	17	6	(389)
£30 to £79.99	10	27	33	23	7	(547)
£80 or more	5	25	29	29	12	(550)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.1 Main information sources, by family characteristics

	Main sources of information									Unweighted base
	Word of mouth	School	Sure Start/ Children's Centre	Local Authority	Local Adverts	Jobcentre Plus	Health Visitors	All other sources	None	
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
<i>Base: All families</i>										
All	39	33	11	7	8	2	6	27	29	(6,714)
Childcare used										
Formal provider	46	36	12	9	9	2	7	32	22	(4,740)
Informal provider/ other only	35	31	10	5	6	2	6	22	33	(759)
No childcare	23	26	8	4	5	2	5	16	47	(1,215)
Family type										
Couple	42	35	11	8	9	1	6	29	28	(5,046)
Lone parent	32	30	10	5	5	7	5	22	33	(1,668)
Family work status										
Couple – both working	45	37	10	9	10	*	5	31	26	(2,877)
Couple – one working	40	33	12	6	7	1	9	26	30	(1,746)
Couple – neither working	24	25	17	6	5	3	13	20	36	(423)
Lone parent – working	34	32	7	6	5	2	3	23	34	(740)
Lone parent – not working	30	27	13	4	4	11	8	22	33	(928)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.2 Main information sources, by family characteristics

	Main sources of information									
	Word of mouth	School	Sure Start/ Children's Centre	Local Authority	Local Adverts	Jobcentre Plus	Health Visitors	All other sources	None	Unweighted base
Family characteristics	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>										
Family annual income										
Under £10,000	31	24	13	4	6	7	8	22	35	(697)
£10,000-£19,999	32	32	12	5	5	4	7	22	32	(1,626)
£20,000-£29,999	37	35	13	7	6	1	7	25	29	(1,172)
£30,000-£44,999	42	35	11	9	10	1	5	30	28	(1,218)
£45,000+	49	37	8	8	10	1	5	34	25	(1,669)
Number of children										
1	37	28	11	7	7	2	6	26	33	(1,781)
2	43	40	10	7	8	2	6	29	25	(3,075)
3+	40	40	14	7	7	4	8	27	25	(1,858)
Age of children										
Pre-school only	52	9	20	8	6	3	16	37	22	(1,443)
Pre- and school-age	45	38	17	7	7	3	9	31	22	(2,294)
School-age only	32	43	5	6	9	2	1	21	35	(2,977)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.3 Awareness and use of Family Information Services, 2004-2010

	Survey year			
	2004	2008	2009	2010
Awareness and use of FIS	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,802)	(7,059)	(6,694)	(6,723)
Not aware	78	68	69	68
Aware but not used	12	17	18	20
Used FIS	10	15	13	13

Table C6.4 Level of information about childcare, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Level of information about childcare				
	About right	Too much	Too little	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	45	1	38	16	(6,723)
Childcare used					
Formal provider	50	1	37	11	(4,745)
Informal provider/ other only	37	2	41	20	(759)
No childcare	35	1	37	27	(1,219)
Family type					
Couple	47	1	37	15	(5,054)
Lone parent	40	2	40	18	(1,669)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	48	1	37	14	(2,879)
Couple – one working	45	1	36	18	(1,750)
Couple – neither working	39	2	42	17	(425)
Lone parent – working	39	2	42	17	(741)
Lone parent – not working	41	2	38	19	(928)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	39	2	38	21	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	40	1	42	17	(1,628)
£20,000 - £29,999	45	1	38	15	(1,174)
£30,000 - £44,999	48	2	37	13	(1,219)
£45,000+	50	2	35	14	(1,670)
Number of children					
1	42	1	39	18	(1,783)
2	49	2	36	13	(3,078)
3+	47	2	38	14	(1,862)
Age of children					
Pre-school child(ren) only	47	2	38	14	(1,445)
Pre-school and school-age children	51	2	37	10	(2,296)
School-age child(ren) only	42	1	38	18	(2,982)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.5 Perceptions of availability of local childcare places, 2004-2010

	Survey year				
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(7,797)</i>	<i>(7,135)</i>	<i>(7,074)</i>	<i>(6,707)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Too many	1	1	1	1	1
About the right number	40	44	40	42	44
Not enough	40	37	37	34	32
Not sure	19	18	22	23	23

Table C6.6 Perceptions of local childcare availability, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare availability				Unweighted base N
	Too many %	About right %	Not enough %	Not sure %	
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	1	44	32	23	(6,723)
Childcare used					
Formal provider	1	48	34	17	(4,745)
Informal provider/ other only	*	43	29	27	(759)
No childcare	1	33	30	37	(1,219)
Family type					
Couple	1	45	32	23	(5,054)
Lone parent	1	41	34	24	(1,669)
Family work status					
Couple – both working	1	46	32	21	(2,879)
Couple – one working	1	45	30	24	(1,750)
Couple – neither working	*	37	31	32	(425)
Lone parent – working	*	40	36	23	(741)
Lone parent – not working	2	42	31	26	(928)
Family annual income					
Under £10,000	2	40	30	27	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	1	42	33	24	(1,628)
£20,000 - £29,999	1	46	30	24	(1,174)
£30,000 - £44,999	1	46	32	21	(1,219)
£45,000+	1	45	35	19	(1,670)
Number of children					
1	1	43	31	25	(1,783)
2	1	45	33	21	(3,078)
3+	1	45	33	21	(1,862)
Age of children					
Pre-school child(ren) only	1	47	32	20	(1,445)
Pre-school and school-age children	1	47	36	16	(2,296)
School-age child(ren) only	1	41	31	27	(2,982)
Family working arrangements					
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	1	44	34	21	(4,075)
Working family – no one works atypical hours	1	47	29	23	(743)
Non-working family	1	41	31	28	(1,353)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.7 Perceptions of local childcare availability, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare availability				
	Too many	About right	Not enough	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>					
All	1	44	32	23	(6,723)
Government Office Region					
North East	1	43	38	19	(346)
North West	1	49	28	22	(974)
Yorkshire and the Humber	1	45	33	21	(730)
East Midlands	1	44	27	29	(581)
West Midlands	1	47	29	23	(741)
East of England	1	43	34	23	(678)
London	1	37	36	26	(967)
South East	1	48	32	18	(1,054)
South West	*	39	35	26	(652)
Area deprivation					
1 st quintile – most deprived	1	39	34	25	(1,660)
2 nd quintile	1	44	31	25	(1,397)
3 rd quintile	1	48	30	22	(1,173)
4 th quintile	1	45	32	23	(1,217)
5 th quintile – least deprived	1	45	34	21	(1,272)
Rurality					
Rural	1	47	34	19	(1,285)
Urban	1	43	32	24	(5,432)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.8 Perceptions of local childcare quality, 2004-2010

Perceptions of quality	Survey year				
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,796)	(7,134)	(7,074)	(6,707)	(6,723)
Very good	19	20	19	21	20
Fairly good	42	43	41	43	41
Fairly poor	9	9	9	7	7
Very poor	2	3	5	4	4
Not sure	28	26	27	25	28

Table C6.9 Perceptions of local childcare quality, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare quality					
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	20	41	7	4	28	(6,723)
Childcare used						
Formal provider	25	46	7	2	20	(4,745)
Informal provider/ other only	16	34	9	4	37	(759)
No childcare	9	31	8	7	45	(1,219)
Family type						
Couple	21	42	7	3	27	(5,054)
Lone parent	18	38	9	5	30	(1,669)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	23	43	7	3	25	(2,879)
Couple – one working	20	40	7	2	30	(1,750)
Couple – neither working	11	36	8	7	37	(425)
Lone parent – working	21	39	10	5	25	(741)
Lone parent – not working	15	36	8	5	36	(928)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	15	35	10	4	36	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	17	40	8	5	31	(1,628)
£20,000 - £29,999	20	43	7	4	27	(1,174)
£30,000 - £44,999	22	42	8	2	26	(1,219)
£45,000+	24	45	6	2	23	(1,670)
Number of children						
1	18	39	8	4	31	(1,783)
2	23	43	7	3	25	(3,078)
3+	20	43	7	5	25	(1,862)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	24	42	7	2	25	(1,445)
Pre-school and school-age children	25	45	7	3	20	(2,296)
School-age child(ren) only	17	39	8	4	32	(2,982)
Family working arrangements						
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	22	42	8	3	26	(4,075)
Working family – no one works atypical hours	21	44	7	3	25	(743)
Non-working family	14	36	8	6	36	(1,353)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.10 Perceptions of local childcare quality, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	20	41	7	4	28	(6,723)
Government Office Region						
North East	21	41	11	4	24	(346)
North West	24	40	7	3	26	(974)
Yorkshire and the Humber	18	41	7	4	29	(730)
East Midlands	18	37	8	4	32	(581)
West Midlands	20	40	7	6	27	(741)
East of England	20	40	9	4	27	(678)
London	14	42	8	3	32	(967)
South East	24	43	6	3	25	(1,054)
South West	23	39	6	3	29	(652)
Area deprivation						
1 st quintile – most deprived	14	39	9	5	32	(1,660)
2 nd quintile	17	43	8	3	29	(1,397)
3 rd quintile	23	39	6	3	29	(1,173)
4 th quintile	22	43	6	3	26	(1,217)
5 th quintile – least deprived	26	40	7	2	24	(1,272)
Rurality						
Rural	25	43	7	3	23	(1,285)
Urban	19	40	8	4	29	(5,432)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.11 Perceptions of local childcare affordability, 2004-2010

Perceptions of quality	Survey year				
	2004	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>Base: All families</i>	(7,796)	(7,136)	(7,074)	(6,707)	(6,723)
Very good	6	7	6	7	6
Fairly good	29	31	30	31	32
Fairly poor	25	24	22	22	20
Very poor	12	12	15	14	13
Not sure	28	26	27	27	29

Table C6.12 Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by family characteristics

Family characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare affordability					
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	6	32	20	13	29	(6,723)
Childcare used						
Formal provider	8	38	22	11	21	(4,745)
Informal provider/ other only	5	22	22	16	35	(759)
No childcare	3	21	14	16	46	(1,219)
Family type						
Couple	6	34	20	12	28	(5,054)
Lone parent	6	28	20	16	31	(1,669)
Family work status						
Couple – both working	7	35	22	12	24	(2,879)
Couple – one working	7	31	19	12	32	(1,750)
Couple – neither working	4	26	11	13	46	(425)
Lone parent – working	6	32	21	16	25	(741)
Lone parent – not working	5	23	19	17	36	(928)
Family annual income						
Under £10,000	5	25	15	17	38	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	6	27	19	15	33	(1,628)
£20,000 - £29,999	5	28	26	14	27	(1,174)
£30,000 - £44,999	5	36	21	12	25	(1,219)
£45,000+	9	40	21	9	22	(1,670)
Number of children						
1	6	31	20	12	32	(1,783)
2	7	34	20	13	25	(3,078)
3+	6	30	21	16	27	(1,862)
Age of children						
Pre-school child(ren) only	8	35	24	12	21	(1,445)
Pre-school and school-age children	9	35	20	15	21	(2,296)
School-age child(ren) only	5	30	19	13	34	(2,982)
Family working arrangements						
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	7	33	22	13	26	(4,075)
Working family – no one works atypical hours	7	35	21	13	25	(743)
Non-working family	4	24	17	16	39	(1,353)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.13 Perceptions of local childcare affordability, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Perceptions of local childcare affordability					
	Very good	Fairly good	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>						
All	6	32	20	13	29	(6,723)
Government Office Region						
North East	7	30	21	13	29	(346)
North West	9	32	21	11	27	(974)
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	29	19	13	32	(730)
East Midlands	6	26	23	13	33	(581)
West Midlands	7	33	16	14	29	(741)
East of England	5	34	20	13	28	(678)
London	5	31	18	13	33	(967)
South East	6	35	23	14	22	(1,054)
South West	6	33	22	11	28	(652)
Area deprivation						
1 st quintile – most deprived	5	27	18	15	35	(1,660)
2 nd quintile	5	30	22	12	31	(1,397)
3 rd quintile	6	34	20	14	26	(1,173)
4 th quintile	7	34	22	12	25	(1,217)
5 th quintile – least deprived	8	37	20	11	23	(1,272)
Rurality						
Rural	8	36	20	11	25	(1,285)
Urban	6	31	20	13	29	(5,432)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.14 Extent to which parents have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to meet their needs, by family annual income and working arrangements

Family annual income	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>							
All	6	16	16	33	12	18	(6,377)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	7	14	18	29	9	23	(698)
£10,000 - £19,999	5	16	18	29	11	21	(1,624)
£20,000 - £29,999	7	15	16	35	11	16	(1,170)
£30,000 - £44,999	5	16	15	35	12	17	(1,216)
£45,000+	7	17	13	36	14	14	(1,669)
Family working arrangements							
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	7	16	14	35	12	16	(4,067)
Working family – no one works atypical hours	6	13	16	38	13	14	(741)
Non-working family	6	14	21	26	9	24	(1,351)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.15 Extent to which parents have problems finding childcare that is flexible enough to meet their needs, by Government Office Region and rurality

Government Office Region and rurality	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All families</i>							
All	6	16	16	33	12	18	(6,709)
Government Office Region							
North East	5	13	13	35	13	22	(342)
North West	6	16	15	29	15	20	(974)
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	16	14	33	15	16	(730)
East Midlands	4	11	14	37	18	16	(581)
West Midlands	8	17	12	37	16	12	(740)
East of England	7	13	20	33	10	16	(677)
London	7	20	19	26	6	21	(967)
South East	6	15	15	37	10	16	(1,051)
South West	4	15	13	35	11	22	(647)
Rurality							
Rural	6	13	14	37	13	16	(1,282)
Urban	6	16	16	32	12	18	(5,421)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.16 Extent to which parents are able to find term time childcare that fits in with their or their partner's working hours, by family annual income

Family annual income	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All working families</i>							
All	14	37	11	9	3	25	(5,089)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	8	35	8	13	6	29	(216)
£10,000 - £19,999	11	32	13	11	4	30	(972)
£20,000 - £29,999	14	37	13	8	4	24	(1,071)
£30,000 - £44,999	14	36	11	9	3	28	(1,181)
£45,000+	18	41	11	9	3	19	(1,649)
Family working arrangements							
Working family - one or more works atypical hours	14	37	11	10	4	25	(4,072)
Working family – no one works atypical hours	14	36	14	7	3	26	(743)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.17 Extent to which parents are able to find term time childcare that fits in with their or their partner's working hours, by Government Office Region and rurality

Area characteristics	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't use/ need to use formal childcare	Unweighted base
<i>Base: All working families</i>							
All	14	36	11	9	3	25	(5,367)
Government Office Region							
North East	12	39	6	10	3	30	(259)
North West	15	32	12	10	4	26	(791)
Yorkshire and the Humber	16	40	7	8	4	24	(552)
East Midlands	19	37	10	6	5	24	(474)
West Midlands	15	41	11	9	3	20	(588)
East of England	13	36	15	8	3	25	(564)
London	7	32	16	10	3	31	(692)
South East	16	37	11	11	3	22	(882)
South West	14	38	10	8	1	28	(565)
Rurality							
Rural	16	38	11	8	4	24	(1,136)
Urban	14	36	12	9	3	26	(4,225)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C6.18 Times where parents would like childcare provision improving in order to meet their needs, by area characteristics

Area characteristics	Time							Unweighted base
	Summer holidays	Easter holidays	Christmas holidays	Half-term holidays	Term-time weekdays	Term-time weekends	Outside of normal working hours i.e. 8am to 6pm	
<i>Base: All families</i>								
All	64	30	28	32	31	16	22	(4,133)
Government Office Region								
North East	65	27	26	30	29	15	23	(228)
North West	63	22	24	26	27	14	20	(556)
Yorkshire and the Humber	67	34	32	32	29	20	25	(425)
East Midlands	72	35	29	38	33	22	23	(329)
West Midlands	65	32	27	36	29	14	23	(477)
East of England	61	31	29	32	37	20	20	(405)
London	63	26	22	28	27	14	22	(625)
South East	62	36	31	37	34	12	18	(683)
South West	62	32	30	35	35	15	25	(405)
Rurality								
Rural	66	35	31	36	36	18	24	(745)
Urban	64	29	27	32	30	15	21	(3,385)

Table C6.19 Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs, by Government Office Region

	Government Office Region									
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	All
Changes to childcare provision	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	(346)	(974)	(730)	(581)	(741)	(678)	(967)	(1,054)	(652)	(6,723)
More childcare places - general	11	11	11	11	11	13	20	10	11	12
Higher quality childcare	6	5	6	6	10	9	16	7	5	8
More convenient/accessible locations	4	6	8	5	10	7	12	8	8	8
More affordable childcare	31	29	25	31	33	32	36	36	35	32
More childcare available during term-time	6	4	7	5	8	7	8	7	6	7
More childcare available during school holidays	19	15	18	17	19	14	16	22	20	18
More information about what is available	17	14	18	13	19	17	19	17	16	17
More flexibility about when childcare is available	15	9	11	9	13	13	11	15	11	12
Longer opening hours	12	13	15	9	14	10	17	14	12	13
Making childcare available closer to where I live	4	6	10	6	11	9	11	8	6	8
Making childcare available closer to where I work	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	2	2	4	2	3	4	2	4	3	3
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	12	10	11	8	13	13	10	10	13	11
Other	5	1	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	3
Nothing	36	45	42	46	38	42	37	37	40	40

Table C6.20 Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents' needs, by rurality

	Rurality		
	Rural	Urban	All
Changes to childcare provision	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(1,285)</i>	<i>(5,432)</i>	<i>(6,717)</i>
More childcare places - general	11	13	12
Higher quality childcare	5	9	8
More convenient/accessible locations	6	9	8
More affordable childcare	28	33	32
More childcare available during term-time	5	7	7
More childcare available during school holidays	18	18	18
More information about what is available	14	17	17
More flexibility about when childcare is available	12	12	12
Longer opening hours	13	13	13
Making childcare available closer to where I live	8	9	8
Making childcare available closer to where I work	1	2	2
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational needs	3	3	3
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	12	11	11
Other	3	3	3
Nothing	44	39	40

Table C6.21 Types of formal childcare provision that parents would like to use/ use more of, by Government Office Region

	Government Office Region									All
	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England	London	South East	South West	
Types of formal childcare provision	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(346)</i>	<i>(974)</i>	<i>(730)</i>	<i>(581)</i>	<i>(741)</i>	<i>(678)</i>	<i>(967)</i>	<i>(1,054)</i>	<i>(652)</i>	<i>(6,723)</i>
Nursery school	5	4	2	4	2	4	4	2	4	3
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	4	3	2	2	2	1	4	2	2	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	*	*	*	*	1	1	1	1	*	1
Day nursery	2	3	4	3	3	4	5	3	3	3
Playgroup or pre-school	9	4	6	5	5	6	5	4	5	5
Childminder	4	3	3	1	3	3	4	4	2	3
Nanny or au pair	1	1	*	*	1	1	2	1	*	1
Baby-sitter who come to home	2	4	3	1	3	5	4	4	4	4
Breakfast club	9	8	6	6	6	9	7	5	5	7
After-school club/activities	20	17	22	18	17	22	21	19	17	19
Holiday club/scheme	14	16	16	15	16	14	15	14	10	15
Other nursery education provider	*	*	*	1	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other childcare provider	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
None – happy with current arrangements	56	59	56	64	57	56	57	60	63	59

Table C6.22 Types of formal childcare provision that parents would like to use/ use more of, by rurality

	Rurality		
	Rural	Urban	All
Types of formal childcare provision	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families</i>	<i>(1,285)</i>	<i>(5,432)</i>	<i>(6,717)</i>
Nursery school	2	4	3
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	1	3	3
Reception class at a primary or infants' school	*	1	1
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs	*	1	1
Day nursery	2	4	3
Playgroup or pre-school	3	6	5
Childminder	3	3	3
Nanny or au pair	1	1	1
Baby-sitter who come to home	3	4	4
Breakfast club	5	7	7
After-school club/activities	17	20	19
Holiday club/scheme	11	15	15
Other nursery education provider	*	*	*
Other childcare provider	1	1	1
None – happy with current arrangements	64	58	59

Table C7.1 How often providers give parents information about the activities their children have taken part in, by age of child

	Age of child		
	Pre-school	School-age	All
How often	%	%	%
<i>Base: All children whose main provider was a formal group provider or childminder (excluding reception class for school-age children)</i>	(1,669)	(1,481)	(3,150)
Every day/most days	33	7	18
Once or twice a week	32	15	22
Once a fortnight	7	5	6
Once every month or 2 months	9	8	8
Once every 3 or 4 months	4	5	4
Once every 6 months	1	2	2
Once every year or less often	1	2	1
Varies too much to say	3	4	4
Never	10	53	35

Table C7.2 Factors which parents believe would increase time spent on learning and play activities, by area deprivation

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	All
Factors	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(215)	(198)	(160)	(152)	(158)	(883)
More free time to spend with child	47	54	52	53	45	50
Working less hours	21	27	38	39	36	31
More information or ideas about what to do	19	13	8	7	5	11
More money to spend on activities	17	18	11	8	6	13
Someone to look after other children	8	8	2	5	11	7
More toys/materials	13	7	4	3	3	6
More support/help from partner	5	2	3	6	3	4
If I had more energy/was less tired	2	1	1	0	3	1
More places to go/local activities	3	3	2	1	1	2
If my health was better	1	1	2	1	0	1
Other	6	4	5	5	9	6
No answer	5	2	4	5	3	4

Table C7.3 Sources of information/ideas used about learning and play activities, by area deprivation

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	All
People/organisations	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(636)	(563)	(469)	(435)	(470)	(2,573)
Friends or relatives	51	59	66	70	65	61
Other parents	30	40	47	51	56	44
Children's TV programmes	31	36	40	41	43	38
Internet site	21	31	33	35	41	32
School	27	28	30	34	33	30
Sure Start/ Children's Centre	24	25	20	14	23	21
Playgroup	11	14	19	20	20	16
Childcare provider	7	14	19	18	17	15
Children's Information Services/ Family Information Services	8	10	13	14	16	12
Local Authority	7	6	10	10	10	8
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and website)	3	1	1	2	1	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, Citizens' Advice Bureau)	1	1	3	2	1	1
Other	4	5	4	5	7	5
No answer	11	10	6	8	7	9

Table C7.4 People/organisations contacted about child's learning and development, by area deprivation

	Area deprivation					
	1 st quintile – most deprived	2 nd quintile	3 rd quintile	4 th quintile	5 th quintile – least deprived	Total
People/organisations	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families who stated they would like to do more learning and play activities and where selected child was two- to five-years-old</i>	(636)	(563)	(469)	(435)	(470)	(2,573)
My husband/ wife/ partner	54	66	74	80	84	70
Friends/ relatives	52	64	68	73	73	65
School/ teacher	48	47	49	54	54	50
Other parents	30	45	50	52	61	46
Childcare provider	18	28	40	37	42	32
Work colleagues	11	19	24	25	27	20
Healthcare professional	15	21	19	16	16	17
Local authority	2	1	2	1	3	2
Other	3	1	1	2	2	2
No answer	6	4	3	2	1	3

Table C8.1 Parents' reasons for using holiday childcare, by type of holiday childcare used

	Use of holiday childcare		
	Any childcare	Formal childcare	Informal childcare
Reasons	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>	(2,164)	(1,189)	(1,440)
Economic	63	60	72
Parental time	14	12	17
Child-related	59	66	56

Table C8.2 Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare, by age of child

	Age of child			
	5-7	8-11	12-14	All
Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who had used holiday childcare and where the parent(s) did not report being able to work in term-time only</i>	(353)	(456)	(306)	(1,115)
Very easy	24	24	27	25
Easy	43	41	39	41
Neither easy nor difficult	10	13	12	12
Difficult	12	16	12	14
Very difficult	9	5	8	7
Varies depending on holiday	1	1	3	1

Table C8.3 Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare, by family work status and annual income

Family work status and annual income	Ease/difficulty of arranging holiday childcare						
	Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	Difficult	Very difficult	Varies	Un-weighted base
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who had used holiday childcare and where the parent(s) did not report being able to work in term-time only</i>							
Family work status							
Couple – both working	24	41	11	15	7	2	(1,099)
Couple – one working	37	31	23	4	5	0	(76)
Lone parent – working	23	41	12	15	9	1	(325)
Family annual income							
Under £10,000	[29]	[24]	[10]	[24]	[12]	[2]	(48)
£10,000 - £19,999	24	44	10	14	7	1	(220)
£20,000 - £29,999	22	43	15	11	8	1	(258)
£30,000 - £44,999	24	45	12	13	6	1	(344)
£45,000+	25	37	12	16	7	3	(557)

NB: Row percentages.

Table C8.4 Reasons for difficulties with arranging holiday childcare, by family type

	Family type	
	Couples	Lone parents
Reasons for difficulties	%	%
<i>Base: All families of school-age children who used holiday childcare and said arranging holiday childcare was difficult/very difficult</i>	(251)	(82)
Difficult to find childcare/holiday clubs in my area	18	18
Not many places/providers in my area	31	31
Friends/Family not always available to help	50	44
Difficult to afford	29	37
Quality of some childcare/clubs is not good	8	8
My children need special care	3	2
Have had bad experience of holiday childcare/clubs in the past	2	1
Transport difficulties getting to some childcare/clubs	3	6
Other reasons	0	0
Difficult to find childcare available for the hours I work/ need	6	3

Table C8.5 Views of parents about childcare during school holiday, by family work status

		Family work status					
		Couples			Lone parents		
		Both working	One working	Neither working	Working	Not working	All
Parents' views		%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with school-age children</i>		(2,395)	(1,473)	(352)	(661)	(778)	(5,659)
<i>I am happy with the quality of childcare available to me during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	23	21	17	23	13	21
	Agree	38	32	27	35	32	35
	Neither agree nor disagree	25	33	37	23	40	29
	Disagree	10	10	11	12	11	11
	Strongly disagree	3	4	8	7	5	4
<i>I have problems finding holiday care that is flexible enough to fit my needs</i>	Strongly agree	7	5	4	11	6	7
	Agree	15	12	13	14	14	14
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	32	37	19	31	26
	Disagree	38	31	28	43	35	36
	Strongly disagree	18	20	19	14	14	17
<i>I have difficulty finding childcare that I can afford during the school holidays</i>	Strongly agree	11	11	14	16	19	13
	Agree	16	13	13	19	20	16
	Neither agree nor disagree	23	31	35	23	29	26
	Disagree	34	28	20	30	22	30
	Strongly disagree	17	17	19	12	10	15

Table C9.1 Changes in maternal employment, 1999-2010

	Survey year				
	1999	2004	2007	2009	2010
Maternal employment	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: All mothers</i>	(4,779)	(7,696)	(7,044)	(6,640)	(6,630)
Mother working FT	22	25	27	27	25
Mother working PT (1 to 15 hrs/wk)	10	9	8	8	7
Mother working PT (16 to 29 hrs/wk)	24	28	28	29	31
Mother not working	44	38	37	37	37

Table C9.2 Whether usually working atypical hours caused problems with childcare, by family type

	Family type		
	Partnered mothers	Lone mothers	All
Whether usually working atypical hours caused problems with childcare	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers who usually worked before 8am</i>	(265)	(65)	(330)
Working before 8am caused problems with childcare	24	35	27
<i>Base: Mothers who usually worked after 6pm</i>	(377)	(99)	(476)
Working after 6pm caused problems with childcare	24	34	27
<i>Base: Mothers who usually worked Saturdays</i>	(285)	(83)	(368)
Working Saturdays caused problems with childcare	17	28	20
<i>Base: Mothers who usually worked Sundays</i>	(189)	(62)	(251)
Working Sundays caused problems with childcare	17	34	22

Table C9.3 Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by mothers' highest qualification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All
Childcare arrangements that enabled mothers to go out to work	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(1,834)</i>	<i>(851)</i>	<i>(538)</i>	<i>(3,303)</i>
All mothers				
I have reliable childcare	52	44	38	47
Children are at school	37	34	25	34
Relatives help with childcare	43	46	33	42
Have childcare which fits with my working hours	40	34	24	35
Have good quality childcare	37	28	22	32
Have free/cheap childcare	22	28	23	24
Friends help with the childcare	13	11	7	11
My child(ren) is/are old enough to look after themselves	10	10	9	10
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	8	7	7	8
My employer provides/pays for some/all of my childcare	2	*	1	2
Other	1	2	1	1
None of these	0	0	0	0
<i>Base: Partnered mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(1,564)</i>	<i>(639)</i>	<i>(351)</i>	<i>(2,621)</i>
Partnered mothers				
Childcare fits partner's working hours	21	19	13	20
Partner helps with childcare	17	11	14	15
Mother works when partner does not work	10	11	12	11
Partner's employer provides/pays for childcare	2	*	*	1
<i>Base: Lone mothers in paid work</i>	<i>(270)</i>	<i>(212)</i>	<i>(187)</i>	<i>(682)</i>
Lone mothers				
Children's father is able to help with childcare	15	14	11	13

Table C9.4 Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Childcare arrangements that helped mothers to go out to work	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(946)	(967)	(267)	(118)	(388)	(282)	(173)	(156)	(3,303)
All mothers									
Have reliable childcare	51	45	54	44	38	34	51	65	47
Child(ren) are at school	37	36	36	32	30	23	35	33	34
Relatives help with childcare	43	43	47	41	41	33	44	39	42
Have childcare which fits my working hours	38	36	41	30	27	21	42	45	35
Have good quality childcare	37	28	44	28	22	24	38	45	32
Have free/cheap childcare	23	26	22	22	27	25	27	17	24
Friends help with the childcare	15	10	11	16	9	6	10	10	11
Child(ren) old enough to look after himself/herself/themselves	12	7	8	12	11	6	15	10	10
We get help with the costs of childcare through tax credits	8	9	9	9	6	6	7	6	8
My employer provides/pays for some/all of my childcare	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	2
Other	1	1	*	2	2	1	*	3	1
None of these	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Base: Partnered in paid work</i>	(800)	(757)	(226)	(95)	(275)	(182)	(143)	(141)	(2,621)
Partnered mothers									
Childcare fits partner's working hours	20	16	26	17	19	14	26	31	20
Partner helps with childcare	17	11	17	10	17	10	16	21	15
Mother works when partner does not work	10	9	9	14	13	19	10	11	11
Partner's employer provides/pays for childcare	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	1	1
<i>Base: Lone mothers</i>	(146)	(210)	(41)	(23)	(113)	(100)	(30)	(15)	(682)
Lone mothers									
Child(ren)'s father is able to help with childcare	18	13	15	13	11	8	14	15	13

Table C9.5 Views on ideal working arrangements, by mothers' highest qualification

Views on ideal working arrangements	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All ¹⁰⁷
	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(1,834)	(851)	(538)	(3,301)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home</i>				
Agree strongly	19	21	19	20
Agree	17	19	22	18
Neither agree nor disagree	14	15	12	14
Disagree	39	35	38	38
Disagree strongly	11	9	9	10
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>				
Agree strongly	26	21	19	23
Agree	32	35	30	32
Neither agree nor disagree	12	13	15	13
Disagree	26	26	30	27
Disagree strongly	5	5	6	5
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>				
Agree strongly	4	4	7	5
Agree	16	19	21	18
Neither agree nor disagree	12	15	13	13
Disagree	46	40	43	44
Disagree strongly	21	22	16	21

¹⁰⁷ Total includes mothers who reported 'other' academic qualifications.

Table C9.6 Views on ideal working arrangements, by mothers' socio-economic classification

	Mothers' socio-economic classification								
	Modern professional	Clerical and intermediate	Senior manager or administrator	Technical and craft	Semi-routine manual and service	Routine manual and service	Middle or junior manager	Traditional professional	All
Views on ideal working arrangements	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers in paid work</i>	(946)	(966)	(267)	(118)	(388)	(282)	(172)	(156)	(3,301)
<i>If I could afford to give up work, I would prefer to stay at home</i>									
Agree strongly	20	22	11	18	21	22	23	15	20
Agree	19	18	21	12	19	24	16	10	18
Neither agree nor disagree	15	15	17	17	12	10	10	18	14
Disagree	37	36	38	40	38	38	40	41	38
Disagree strongly	10	9	13	13	9	7	10	17	10
<i>If I could afford it, I would work fewer hours so I could spend more time looking after my children</i>									
Agree strongly	27	21	25	24	18	22	27	22	23
Agree	32	33	40	33	33	27	33	31	32
Neither agree nor disagree	13	13	12	10	14	14	11	12	13
Disagree	24	29	19	26	28	30	27	29	27
Disagree strongly	4	4	4	7	7	7	3	6	5
<i>If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would work more hours</i>									
Agree strongly	3	5	3	4	7	8	6	3	5
Agree	16	18	12	10	28	25	14	8	18
Neither agree nor disagree	12	15	14	17	16	12	7	8	13
Disagree	48	43	42	52	34	41	47	45	44
Disagree strongly	21	19	29	16	16	15	26	37	21

Table C9.7 Reasons for not working, by mothers' highest qualification

	Mothers' highest qualification			
	A level and above	O level/ GCSE	Lower/no academic qualifications	All
Reasons for not working	%	%	%	%
<i>Base: Mothers not in paid work</i>	<i>(795)</i>	<i>(616)</i>	<i>(1,128)</i>	<i>(2,606)</i>
All mothers				
Would not earn enough to make working worthwhile	17	22	16	18
Lack of jobs with suitable hours	20	26	19	21
Not very well-qualified	4	9	17	11
Job too demanding to combine with bringing up child(ren)	15	10	8	11
On maternity leave	3	7	6	5
Enough money	15	7	5	9
Lack of job opportunities	7	13	14	12
Caring for disabled person	6	7	7	7
Studying/training	11	6	5	7
Would lose benefits	3	6	10	7
Been out of work for too long	4	5	8	6
Having a job is not very important to me	2	3	5	4
Cannot work unsocial hours/at weekends	7	5	2	4
Illness or disability	7	9	11	9
Other reasons	2	2	4	3
None of these	15	13	12	13
<i>Base: Partnered mothers not in paid work</i>	<i>(553)</i>	<i>(355)</i>	<i>(404)</i>	<i>(1,355)</i>
Partnered mothers				
Spouse/partner's job too demanding	2	6	9	5

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