Reporting year 2024

Childcare and early years survey of parents

This is the latest release

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Next update	July 2026
Release type	Official statistics
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This Official Statistics release provides the main findings of the

2024 wave in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents series.

The survey is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and managed by Ipsos. It aims to provide information to help monitor the progress of policies and public attitudes in childcare and early years education.

The 2024 survey reports the findings of interviews, conducted between April and December 2024, with a nationally representative sample of 5,777 parents with children aged 0 to 14 living in England. Interviews are primarily carried out face-to-face. More information on the background and methodology to the study can be found in the methodology.

Note - references to “Accompanying Tables” refer to those found under “Additional supporting files”.

Where differences are commented upon, e.g. as increases or decreases, or differences between sub-groups, these differences are statistically significant. Where differences are not statistically significant, they are described as being ‘in line with’ or ‘unchanged from’ previous figures.

Defining childcare

The study uses a very inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that the child was not with a resident parent, or a resident parent’s current (or ex-) husband, wife, or partner.

- Formal providers: include nursery schools, nursery classes, reception classes, special day schools, day nurseries, playgroups, childminders, nannies or au-pairs, baby-sitters, breakfast clubs or before school clubs, after-school clubs and holiday clubs.
- Informal providers: include grandparents, older brothers/sisters, other relatives, friends or neighbours.

Prior to the 2023 survey wave, ‘after school clubs and activities’ were grouped and regarded as ‘formal providers’ in the list of childcare providers that is shown to respondents during the survey interview and used for reporting purposes. For 2023 onwards, the reference to ‘activities’ was removed, so that only ‘after school clubs’ are considered formal providers of childcare.

Releases in this series

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Methodologies

[Childcare and early years survey of parents]

For the 2024 survey wave, ‘breakfast clubs’ was expanded to include ‘or before school clubs’. This change was made to ensure that clubs running before the school day started, which did not offer breakfast, were also accounted for. Further information about this change can be found in the methodology.

Headline facts and figures - 2024

Proportion of children aged 0 to 4 using formal childcare

64%

This is in line with 2023 (63%)

Proportion of children aged 2 using formal childcare

64%

This is a rise from 2023 (58%)

Satisfaction with funded hours for 2yos with govt support

96%

This is a rise from 2023 (89%)

▶ More details

New 2-year-old offer gives more flexibility in hours worked

59%

% families (0 to 4) report the quality of childcare is good

72%

This is in line with 2023 (71%)

% working mothers said reliable childcare helped them work

64%

This is in line with 66% in 2023.

▶ More detail

Use of childcare and early years provision

- There has been very little change in the overall use of childcare since 2023 and the trend that pre-school age children were more likely to receive any childcare than school-age children has continued in 2024.
- Among children in England aged 0 to 4 years, overall, in 2024, 74% had received some form of childcare, during the most recent term-time week, equating to 2.2 million children. This includes formal childcare such as nurseries and childminders or informal childcare such as grandparents, friends or relatives.
- Formal childcare was used by just under two thirds (64%) of children aged 0 to 4, in line with 63% in 2023. This equates to 1.9 million children.
- There was an increase in the receipt of formal childcare among children aged 2, with just under two thirds (64%) receiving formal childcare in 2024, compared to 58% in 2023.

Receipt of the entitlement to government funded childcare or early education

- Almost three in five (59%) parents who had used the new 2-year-old offer (of 15 hours for working parents) said that the offer has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work.
- Around nine in ten (91%) parents using the new 2 year old offer for working parents were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child.
- Furthermore, 96% of parents who had used the existing 2-year-old offer for those in receipt of some forms of government support were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child, a rise from 89% in 2023.
- Just under nine in ten (88%) parents who used the universal 15 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 were satisfied with the way they could use the hours (in line with 90% in 2023), and 92% of parents who used the 30 hours offer for working parents of children aged 3 to 4 were also satisfied (unchanged from 92% in 2023).

Perceptions of childcare and early years provision

- Parents' perceptions of local childcare and early years provision remain broadly consistent with 2023.
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, nearly three quarters (72%) of parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as very or fairly good, in line with 2023 (71%).
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, just over six in ten (62%) parents rated

the overall quality of local childcare provision as very or fairly good, in line with 2023 (60%).

Mothers, work and childcare

- As in 2023, mothers in families with younger children were more likely to say that having reliable childcare helped them to work.
- Just under two-thirds (64%) of mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only mentioned that having reliable childcare helped them to work, in line with 66% in 2023.

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2024 Childcare and early years survey of parents (xlsx, 691 Kb)

Additional tables

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1. Use of childcare and early years provision

Hide

This section discusses the use of childcare, both formal and informal childcare and holiday childcare among children. The section also explores reasons for using and for not using childcare, along with views on local childcare provision and how it could be improved.

Overall use of childcare

There has been very little change in the overall use of childcare since 2023 and the trend that pre-school age children were more likely to receive any childcare than school age children has continued in 2024.

- Among children in England aged 0 to 4 years, overall, in 2024, 74% had received some form of childcare, during the most recent term-time week, equating to 2.2 million children. This includes formal childcare such as nurseries and childminders or informal childcare such as grandparents, friends or relatives.
- Formal childcare was used by just under two thirds (64%) of children aged 0 to 4 years, equating to 1.9 million children, which is in line with 63% in 2023.

Among children, there were differences in the use of childcare by age of the children with younger children being more likely to receive childcare compared to their older counterparts (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Among children aged 0 to 4 years, around three quarters (74%) had received some form of childcare, in line with 2023 (72%).
- Children aged between 5 and 11 years old were more likely to receive any childcare this year compared to last.
- The greatest changes were observed among children aged between 5 and 7 years (73%, a rise from 66% in 2023) and children aged between 8 and 11 years (60%, a rise from 53% in 2023).
- For children aged between 5 to 7 years old, there has been an increase in both formal and informal childcare use since 2023, although there seems to be a greater increase in informal childcare use since 2023.
- Among children aged 12 to 14 years, around two in five (41%) had received some form of childcare, in line with 35% in 2023.

Long-terms trends in childcare usage

- Childcare usage patterns over time varied depending on the age group of the children receiving the care (Table 1.4).
- Among children aged between 0 and 4 years old, childcare use remained relatively stable between 2010-11 and 2024. Just under three quarters (73%) of children in this age group used some form of childcare in 2010-11, which is in line with 74% in 2024.
- Among children aged between 5 and 11 years old, childcare use within this age group experienced more fluctuation. From 2010-11 to 2017, there was an increase in childcare use, followed by a decline until 2021. By 2024, usage had increased again, returning to a level comparable to that of 2010-11. Specifically, 67% of children aged between 5 and 11 years old used childcare in 2010-11. This figure rose to 71% in 2017, then decreased to 57% in 2021, before increasing again to 64% in 2024.
- Among children aged between 12 and 14 years old, childcare usage increased between 2010-11 and 2014 but has generally decreased since 2021. In 2010-11, 50% of children aged between 12 and 14 years old used some form of childcare, rising to 54% in 2014. However, childcare use declined among this age group after 2021 to 35% in 2023 and 41% in 2024.

Chart Table

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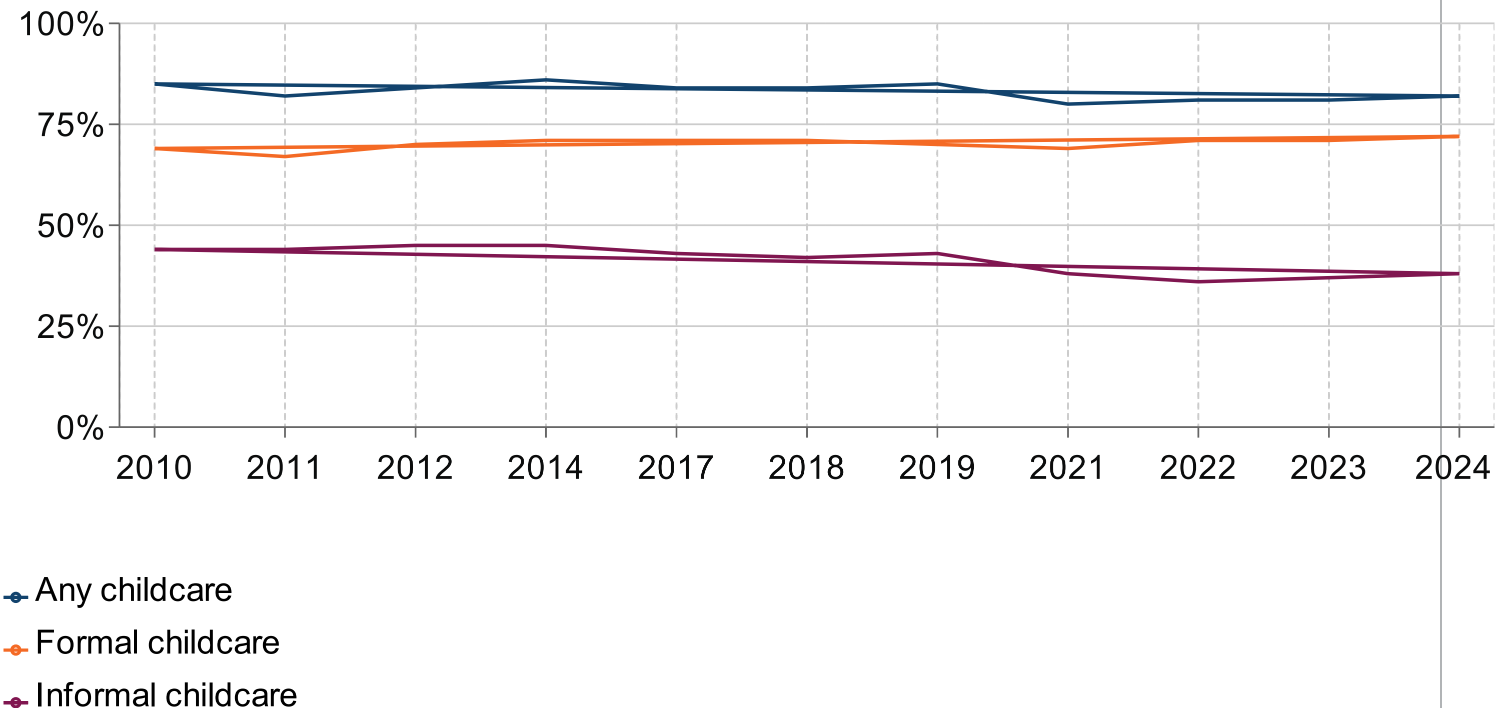
Figure 1.1: Percentage of families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term time week



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. Caution should be taken when comparing 2021 figures with other years due to the potential impact of COVID-19 disruptions on the 2021 data.

Show 2 more footnotes

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Chart Table

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Figure 1.2: Percentage of families with children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 14 years old using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term time week

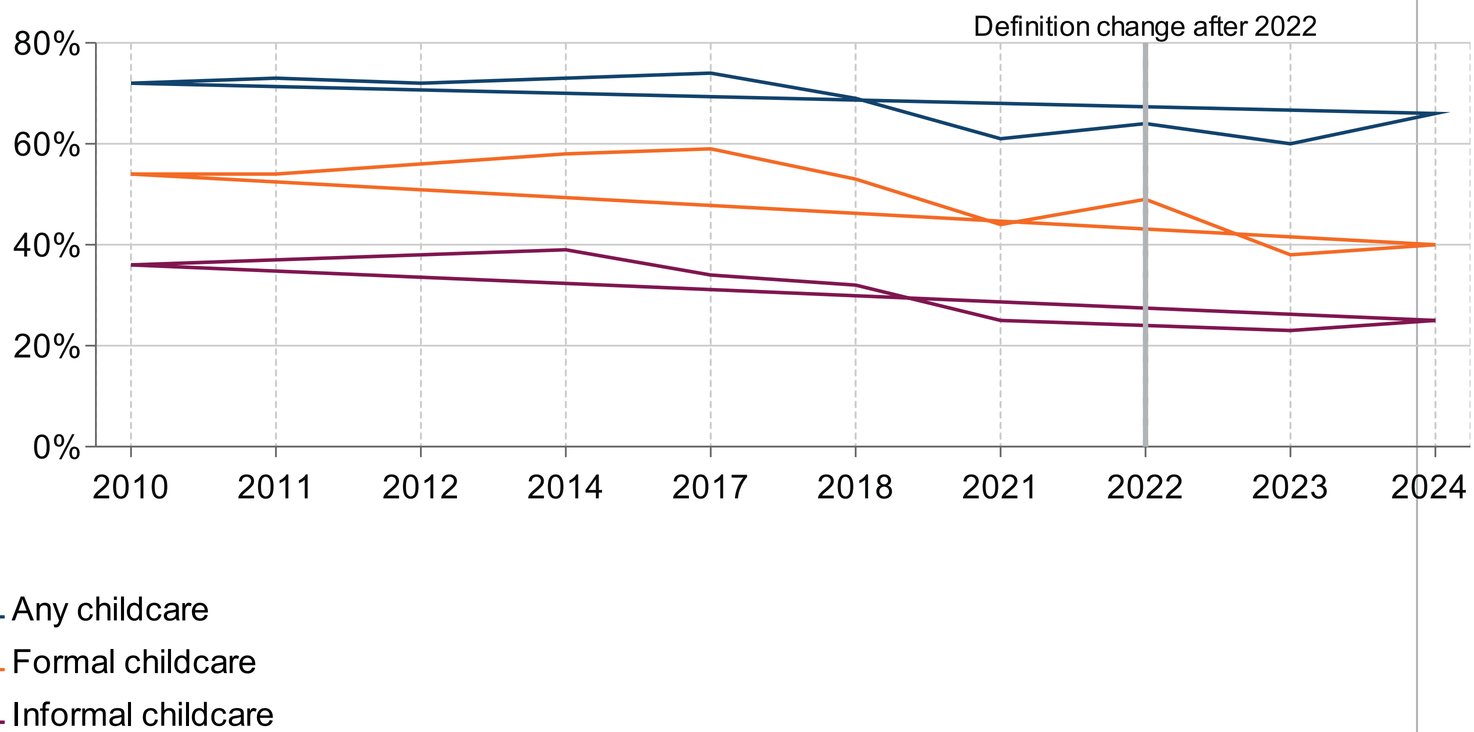

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Chart Table

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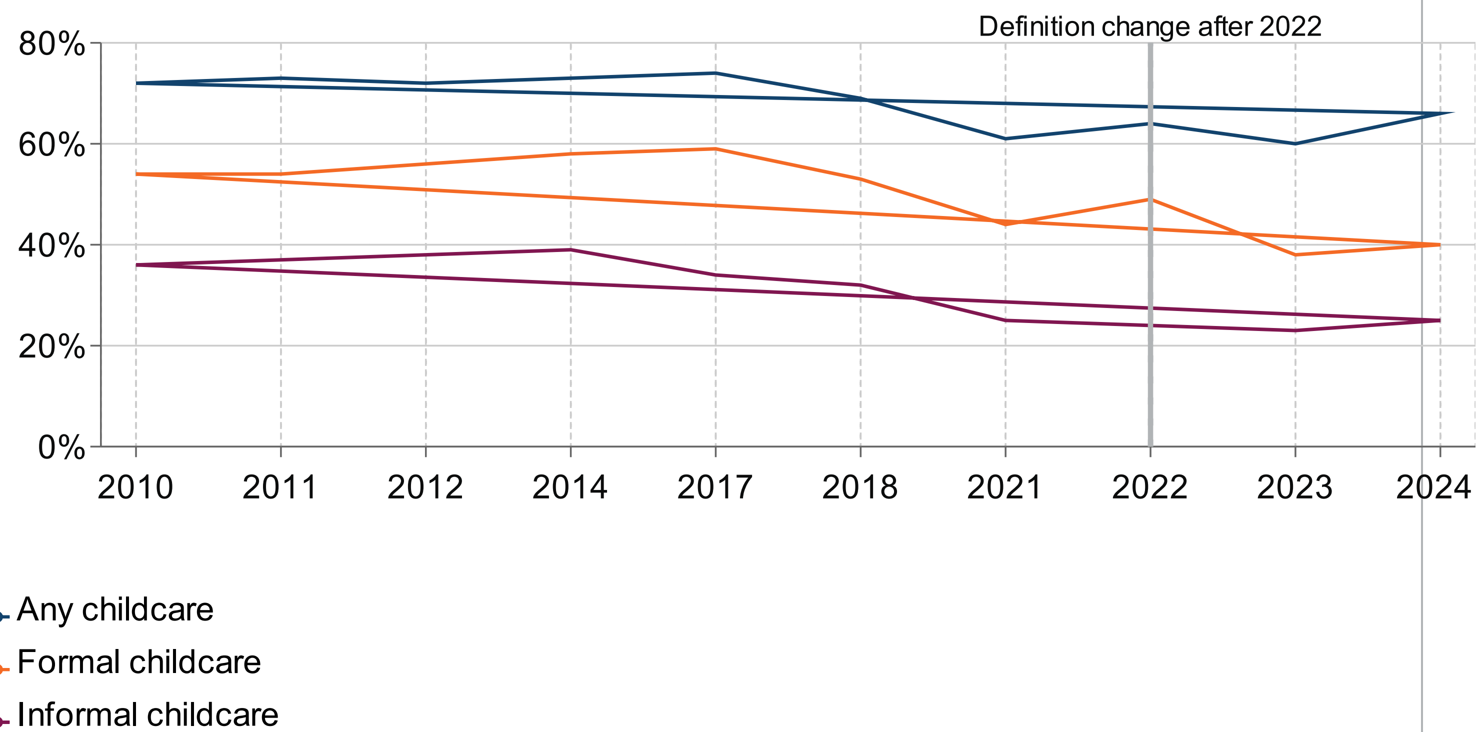
Figure 1.3: Percentage of families with just children aged 5 to 14 years old using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term week



Footnotes

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Use of formal childcare among children

- There were differences in the receipt of formal childcare by the age of the children: as age increases there is a decrease in the amount of time spent in formal childcare, which is in line with 2023 (Accompanying Tables 1.8 and 1.10).
- Receipt of formal childcare was highest among younger children, being received by a majority (64%) of children aged 0 to 4 years, which is in line with 2023 (63%) and was lowest among older children aged 12 to 14 years (14%), also in line with 2023 (13%) (Accompanying Table 1.8).
- Just under three in five (58%) children aged 5 to 7 years used formal childcare (a rise from 52% in 2023) and around a third (35%) of children aged 8 to 11 years used formal childcare, in line with 32% in 2023.
- Children aged 0 to 4 years spent a median of 24.0 hours a week in formal childcare, in line with 22.5 hours a week in 2023.
- Children aged 5 to 7 years spent a median of 14.8 hours a week and children aged 8 to 11 spent a median of 3.0 hours a week in formal childcare.
- Older children aged 12 to 14 years spent a median of 2.0 hours a week in formal childcare, a fall from 2.5 hours in 2023.

Long-term trends in formal childcare use

- The longer-term trends in formal childcare use also varied by the age of the children receiving the formal childcare (Table 1.4). Among children aged between 0 and 4 years old there has been a gradual increase in formal childcare use since 2010-11. The proportion of children aged 0 to 4 years that received formal childcare in 2010-11 was 60%, which rose to 64% in 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, formal childcare use declined to 59%, but since then has risen again to 63% in 2023 and 64% in 2024.
- Among older children, different trends were observed. Among children aged 5 to 11 years, between 2010-11 and 2017 there was an increase in formal childcare use. In 2010-11, 52% of 5 to 11 year olds were in receipt of formal childcare, which rose to 57% in 2017. However, from 2021 formal childcare use declined among this age group to 44% and has remained stable since with 44% of children aged 5 to 11 years receiving formal childcare in 2024.
- Among children aged 12 to 14 years the trend in formal childcare use remained stable between 2010-11 to 2018 but then use among this age group declined. In 2010-11, 33% of children aged 12 to 14 years received formal childcare, but in 2021 this declined to 25% in 2021 and 14% in 2024.

The characteristics associated with the likelihood of children aged between 0 and 4 years receiving formal childcare

- The child’s age: Children aged 3 to 4 years were most likely to receive formal childcare (85% among children aged 3, in line with 2023 (83%), and 89% among children aged 4, in line with 2023 (91%) (Accompanying Table 1.8). Just under two thirds (64%) of children aged 2 years old received formal childcare, this is an increase from 58% in 2023.

- The deprivation level of the local area: 75% of children aged 0 to 4 years living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare compared to 56% in the most deprived areas (Accompanying Table 1.3).
- The family's (gross) annual income: 80% of children aged between 0 and 4 years in families with an annual gross income of £65,000 or more received formal childcare, compared to 49% of those in families with an annual gross income of under £20,000 (Accompanying Table 1.3).
- The family structure and work status: Children in dual-working couple families, and in working lone-parent families, were most likely to receive formal childcare (74% for children in dual-working couple families and 71% for children in working lone-parent families). Children in couple families with one parent in work, and in non-working lone-parent families, were least likely to receive formal childcare (43% for couple families with one parent in work and 52% for children in non-working lone-parent families) (Accompanying Table 1.3).

Use of informal childcare among children

Informal childcare use varied among the different ages of children. Children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 7 years were more likely to receive informal childcare than older children (aged 8 to 14 years) (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Over a quarter (28%) of 0 to 4 year olds received informal childcare (unchanged from 2023).
- Around a quarter (26%) of children aged 5 to 7 years received informal childcare (an increase from 21% in 2023).
- Just over a fifth (22%) of children aged 8 to 11 years and 13% of children aged 12 to 14 years received informal childcare (these results are in line with 2023, 23% and 13% respectively).

Children aged 0 to 4 years received more hours per week in informal childcare than older children (Accompanying Table 1.10). This overall finding is unchanged from 2023.

- Children aged 0 to 4 years spent a median of 10 hours a week in informal childcare, more than twice as long as children aged 5 to 7 years who spent a median of 4.3 hours a week in informal childcare and twice as long as children aged 8 to 11 years who spent a median of 5.0 hours a week in informal childcare.
- The number of hours spent in informal childcare by children aged 0 to 4 years was the same as in 2023 (10.0 hours).
- Older children aged 8 to 11 years and aged 12 to 14 years spent a median of 5.0 hours a week in informal childcare.

As in 2023, the most common provider of informal childcare was grandparents (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Just over a quarter (26%) of children aged 0 to 4 years received informal childcare from their grandparents, in line with 2023 (also 26%).
- The proportions of older children receiving informal care from grandparents decreased with the age of the children, with just over a fifth (22%) of children aged 5 to 7 years receiving this care,

compared to 15% for children aged 8 to 11 years and 9% for children aged 12 to 14 years.

Chart Table

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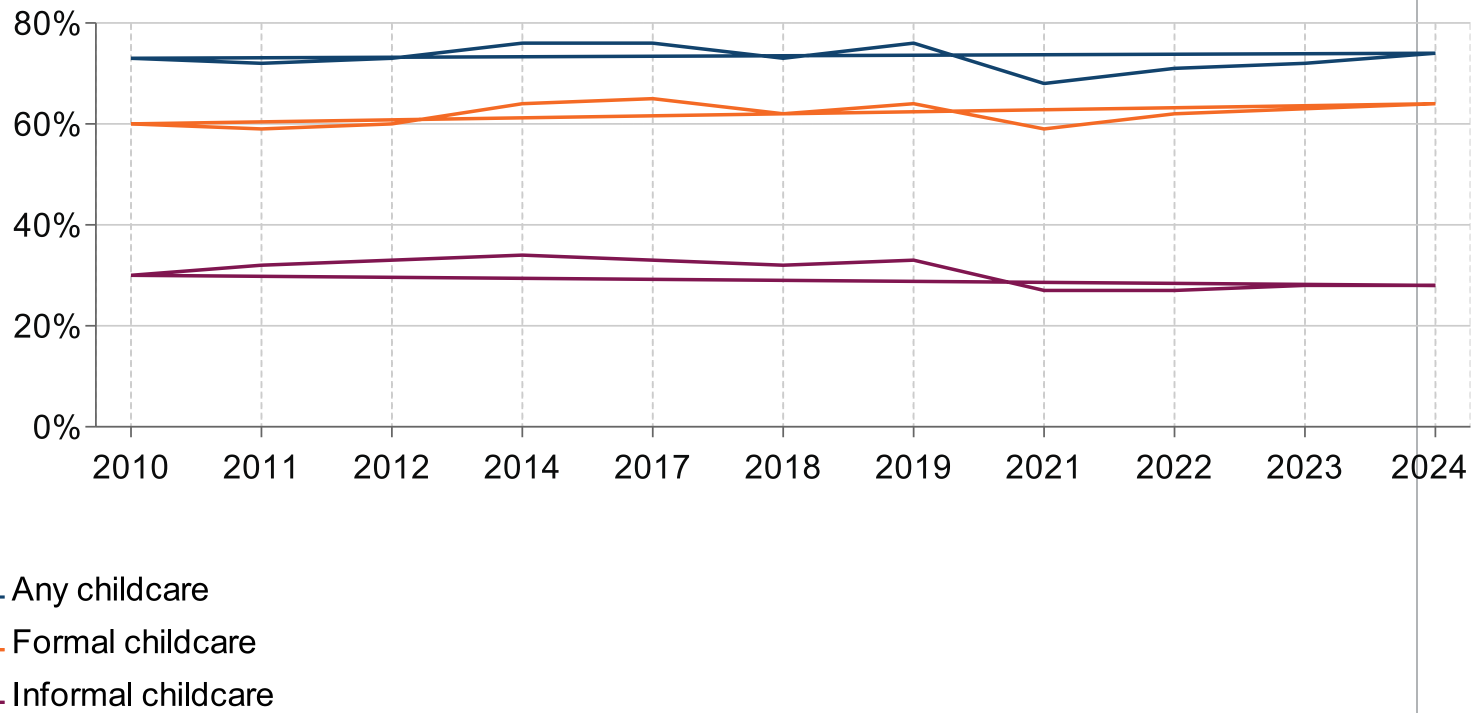
Figure 1.4: Percentage of children aged 0 to 4 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term time week



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2. Caution should be taken when comparing 2021 figures with other years due to the potential impact of COVID-19 disruptions on the 2021 data.

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Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Chart
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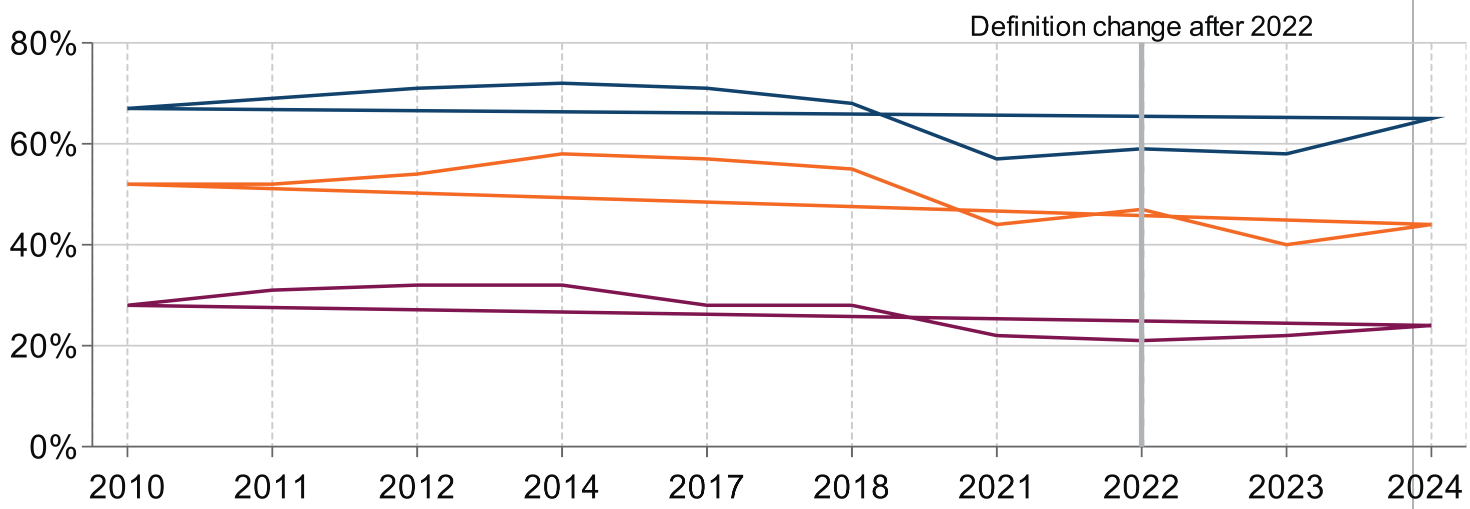
Figure 1.5: Percentage of children aged 5 to 11 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term week



- Any childcare
- Formal childcare
- Informal childcare

Footnotes

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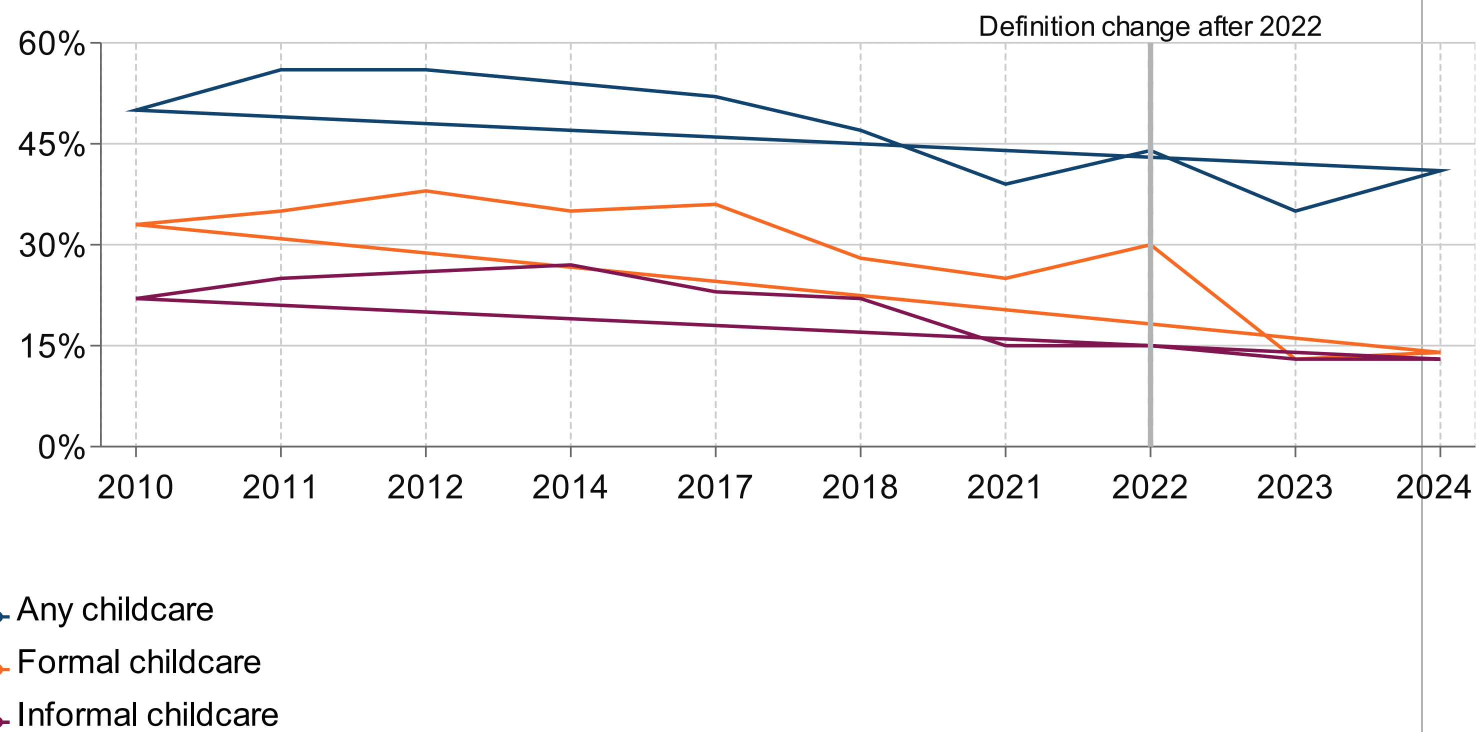
Figure 1.6: Percentage of children aged 12 to 14 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent term week



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Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Use of holiday childcare among school-age children

There were differences in the use of holiday childcare depending on the age of the child (Accompanying Table 7.4).

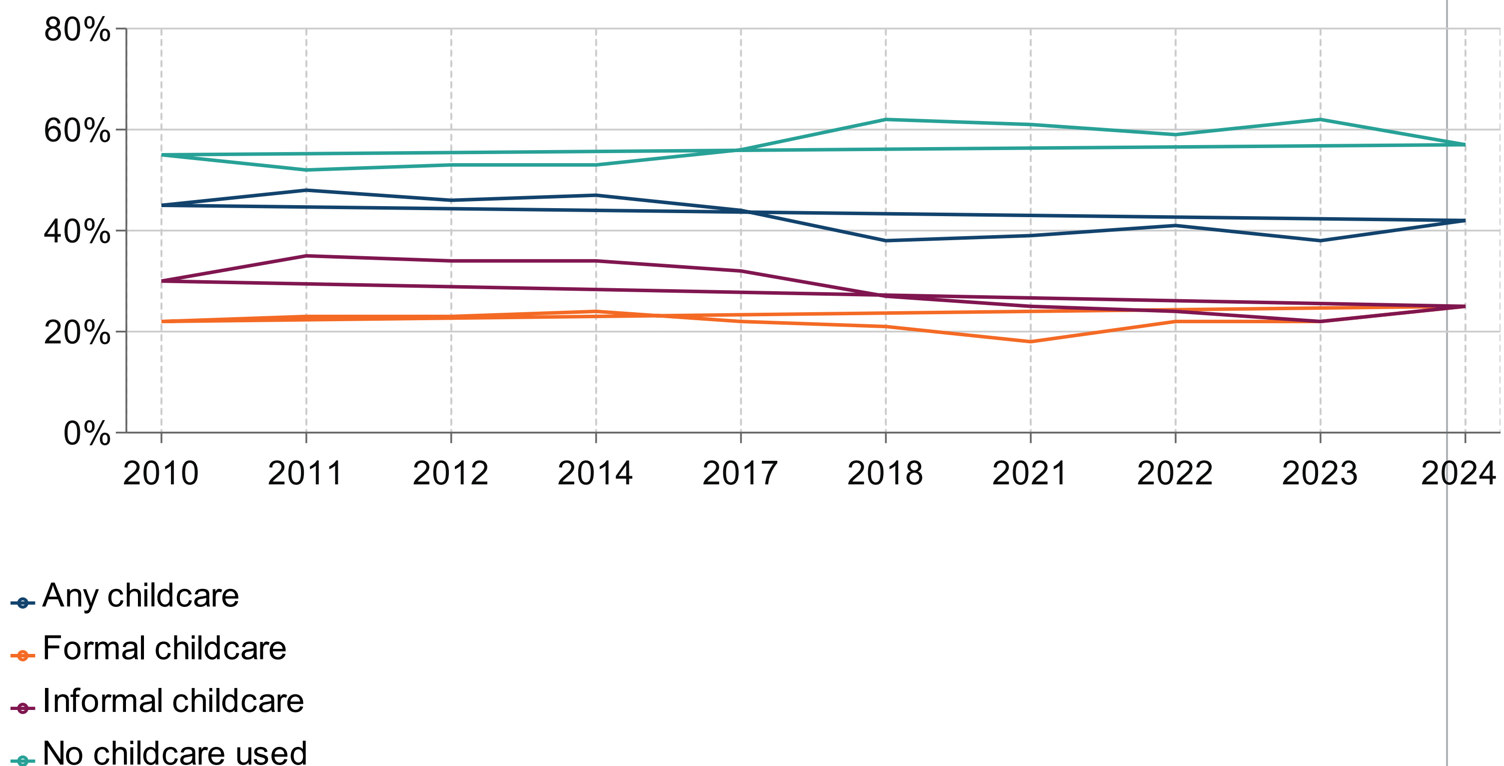
- Younger children (aged 4 to 11 years) were more likely to receive any childcare during school holidays than older children (aged 12 to 14 years) - 32% among children aged 4 years, 43% among children aged 5 to 7 years, and 40% among children aged 8 to 11 years compared to 24% among children aged 12 to 14 years.
- Younger children were also more likely to receive formal childcare during school holidays than older children - 19% among children aged 4 years, 28% among children aged 5 to 7 years, and 25% among children aged 8 to 11 years compared to 10% among children aged 12 to 14 years.

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 1.7: Percentage of families with school-age children using childcare during school holidays, 2010 to 2024

Childcare use in the most recent school holidays



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Reasons for using formal childcare

Children aged 0 to 4 years

- The most common factors cited by parents of children aged 0 to 4 years were convenience (e.g. ease of getting to the provider, flexibility or convenient hours and hours that fitted in with the parent(s) working hours) (64%, in line with 60% in 2023), the provider's reputation (57%, in line with 55% in 2023), and concerns relating to the kind of care given (56%, in line with 55% in 2023).

Children aged 5 to 14 years

- For children aged 5 to 7 years, the most common factor cited by parents was convenience (e.g. ease of getting to the provider, flexibility or convenient hours and hours that fitted in with the parent(s) working hours) (69%), followed by the providers reputation (48%).
- For children aged 8 to 11 years old, the most common factor was also convenience (58%) followed by concerns relating to the kind of care given (43%).
- For older children aged 12 to 14, the provider's reputation was the most common factor (37%) followed by convenience (33%).

Reasons for not using any childcare

- Parents who had not used any childcare in the past year (neither formal nor informal) tended not to do so out of choice, rather than due to constraints.
- Just under two thirds (64%) of parents who were not using childcare said this was because they would rather look after their child(ren) themselves (an increase from 55% in 2023).
- There were some differences based on the age of children in the family. Parents who had a child aged 0 to 4 years in the family (this included both families who only had children aged 0 to 4

years and families who had both 0 to 4 year olds and 5 to 14 year olds) were more likely to say they would rather look after their child(ren) themselves than parents of children aged 5 to 14 years only. The proportions were 74% for parents of children aged between 0 and 4 years only and 78% for parents of children aged both 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years, compared to 61% of parents with children aged between 5 and 14 years only (Accompanying Table 5.3).

- Families containing both children aged 0 to 4 and children aged 5 to 14, were more likely to say that they could not afford childcare (21%), compared to families containing children aged 5 to 14 years only (11%).

▶ Export options

Table 1.8: Reasons not using childcare in the last year, 2024

		2024		
		Pre-school only	School-age only	All
Choice	I rarely need to be away from my child(ren)	19%	17%	17%
	I would rather look after my child(ren) myself	74%	61%	64%
	My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	3%	23%	18%
	My child(ren) are too young	8%	0%	1%
	My child(ren) don`t want to go	0%	1%	1%
	My/ my partner’s work hours or conditions fit around child(ren)	1%	1%	1%
	No need to use childcare	5%	4%	4%
	Respondent and/or partner is working from home	0%	2%	1%
Constraint	I cannot afford childcare	14%	11%	12%
	I cannot find a childcare place as local providers are full	4%	1%	2%
	I have had a bad experience of using	0%	1%	1%

Data symbols

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Changes to local childcare provision

Parents were asked what changes to local childcare provision, if any, would be most helpful for making it better suited to their needs (Accompanying Table 5.18). The results were in line with those from 2023, except for the availability of more childcare in the school holidays, where the proportion of families with children aged 0 to 4 years old mentioning this was higher this year compared to last.

- Families containing children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to want to see changes to childcare provision than parents in families containing children aged 5 to 14 years only.
- Among families containing children aged 0 to 4 years only, the most frequently mentioned change parents wanted was more affordable childcare (43%) in line with 46% in 2023. This was also the most frequently cited change among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, although to a lesser extent (27%, in line with 29% in 2023).
- A higher percentage of families containing 0 to 4 year olds only, also mentioned:
  - More childcare places in general 23%, (in line with 22% in 2023), compared to 13% (in line with 2023, 12%) among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only.
  - More flexibility about when childcare is available 16% (unchanged from 2023), compared to families with 5 to 14 years olds only 11% (in line with 2023, 12%).
- The proportion of families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only mentioning the provision of more childcare during school holidays was 21%, an increase from 18% in 2023.

Types of formal providers parents wanted to use more of

Over half (56%) of parents in families with child(ren) aged between 0 and 14 years said they did not want to use another formal childcare provider as they were happy with their current arrangements, in line with 2023 (57%) (Accompanying Table 5.20).

Of those parents that did want to use another formal provider, one in five (20%) said that they wanted to use a holiday club or scheme, unchanged from 2023.

- Parents in families with the lowest annual income of £20,00 or under, were significantly less likely to say that they would like to use a holiday club/scheme than parents in families in with an annual income of £30,000 - £44,999.
- Parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 only were significantly less likely to want to use a holiday club/scheme than parents of children aged 5 to 14 only and parents of children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years.

▶ Export options

Table 1.9: Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents needs, 2024

	0 to 4	5 to 14	All
More affordable childcare	43%	27%	32%
More childcare available during school holidays	21%	23%	23%
More information about what is available	18%	17%	17%
More childcare places – general	23%	13%	16%
Longer opening hours	13%	15%	15%
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	8%	16%	14%
More flexibility about when childcare is available	16%	11%	12%
More convenient/accessible locations	9%	9%	10%
Making childcare available closer to where I live	11%	9%	10%
Higher quality childcare	14%	7%	9%
More childcare available during term time	9%	8%	8%
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational and disability needs	3%	8%	7%
Making childcare available closer to where I work	3%	3%	3%
Other	4%	5%	4%
Nothing	25%	37%	33%

Data symbols ?

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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2. Receipt of the entitlement to government funded childcare or early education

Hide

This section describes the awareness and receipt of government funded childcare and early education and is based only on parents of children aged 0 to 4 years old.

Policy background on childcare and early education in England

Entitlements before April 2024 entitlements

All 3 and 4 year olds in England are entitled to a defined number of hours of funded childcare or early education. Some 2 year olds are also eligible to access a defined number of hours of funded childcare or early education - for example if their parent or guardian receives certain benefits, or they have a statement of special educational needs. Find out more information on the eligibility criteria (opens in a new tab).

15 hours entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds, are entitled to 570 hours of funded early education or childcare per year. This is usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year (although it is also possible to take fewer hours over more weeks).

30 hours entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds with working parents are also eligible for a further 15 hours, to bring the total to 30 hours a week. Parents can usually get 30 hours of funded childcare if they (and their partner, if they have one) are in work (or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave), and are earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week. Parents can also receive 30 hours funded childcare if they are claiming Universal Credit, tax credits, childcare vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare.

Entitlements after April 2024

From April 2024, new childcare entitlements for children aged 9 months up to 3 years with eligible working parents started to be rolled out in stages, as follows:

i) From April 2024, working parents of children aged between 24 months and up to 36 months were able to get 15 hours funded childcare a week for 38 weeks of the year.

ii) From September 2024, this was extended to include working parents of younger children, so children aged between 9 months and up to 24 months were also eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare a week for 38 weeks of the year.

iii) By September 2025, all children of working parents aged between 9 months and up to 36 months will be eligible for an extra 15 hours of funded childcare per week, bringing the total number of funded hours of childcare to 30 hours per week. These funded hours will be available to lone working parents and in working families where each parent works and earns the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the National Minimum Wage. To be eligible, each parent must earn below £100,000 per year.

Awareness and use of 15 hours of childcare or early education

Previously, only some 2 year olds were entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare per week. However, in April 2024, this offer was extended to working parents of children aged between 24 months and up to 36 months.

At the start of fieldwork, three types of 15 hour offers were available:

- the existing offer for 2 year olds in receipt of some forms of government support
- the new offer for 2 year olds with working parents
- the existing offers for 3 and 4 year olds.

Offers for children aged 2 years old

- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years old, over four in five (85%) were aware of the new offer for working parents (Accompanying Table 2.4).
- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years old, three quarters (75%) were aware of the offer for families in receipt of some forms of government support (Accompanying Table 2.4).
- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years old, who were aware of either of the 2 year old offers, but had not used either of them, around two in five (41%) thought that they were **eligible** for the working families offer compared to three per cent who thought that they were eligible for the offer for families in receipt of some forms of government support (Accompanying Table 2.5).

Awareness of the existing offer for 2 year olds in receipt of some forms of government support

- Parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 per year were least likely to be awareof this offer (71%) compared to those in families with an annual income of £45,000 - £64,999 (78%) or £65,000 or more (82%) (Accompanying Table 2.4).

Awareness of the new offer for 2 year olds with working parents

- Parents in families containing children aged 0 to 4 years old only were more likely to be aware of this offer (87%), compared to those with children of this age group and children aged 5 to 14 years old (83%) (Accompanying Table 2.4).

- Parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 per year were least likely to be aware of this offer (69%), compared to those in families earning at least £20,000 annually. Furthermore, the proportions of those who were aware increases with the amount of annual family income - 77% for £20,000 - £29,999, 83% for £30,000 - £44,999, 90% for £45,000 - £64,999 and 96% for £65,000 or more (Accompanying Table 2.4).

Offers for children aged 3 and 4 years old

- Over nine in ten (94%) parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years were aware of the universal 15 hours offer available for 3 and 4 year olds (Accompanying Table 2.2), in line with 92% in 2023.
- Awareness levels varied by annual family income: the more parents earnt, the more likely they were to be aware of this offer. Parents in families with an income of £65,000 or more per year were most likely to be aware of the scheme (98%), while those with an annual income under £20,000 per year were least likely to be aware (86%) (Accompanying Table 2.2).
- Official statistics from the DfE's Early Years Census and Schools Census show that in January 2024, an estimated 95% of 3 to 4 year olds and 75% of eligible 2 year olds benefitted from funded childcare and early education, the highest figure since 2014.

  The Department for Education's Early Years Census and Schools Census are the official take up figures for funded childcare and early education.

Satisfaction with the offers

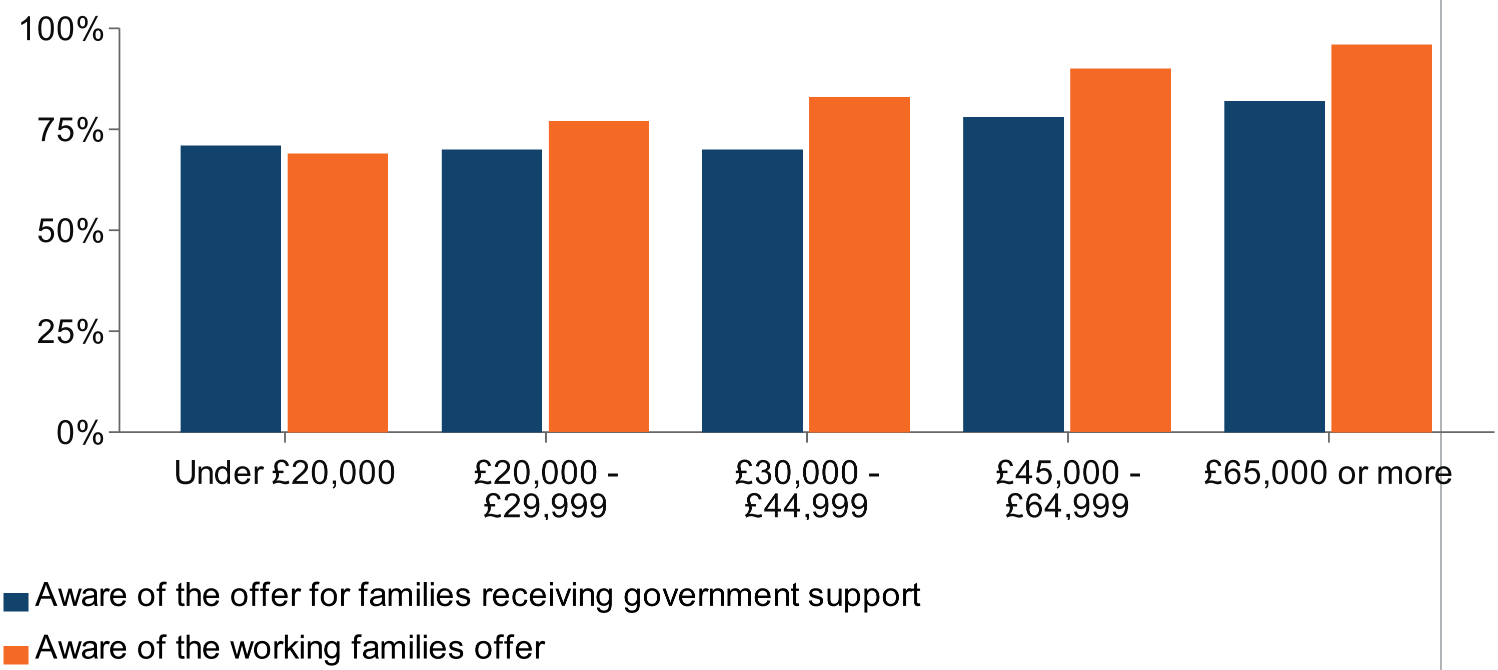
- In 2024, over nine in ten (96%) parents using the 2 year old offer for those in receipt of some forms of government support were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child, a rise from 89% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 2.8).
- Around nine in ten (91%) parents using the new 2 year old offer for working parents were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child (Accompanying Table 2.8).
- Just under nine in ten (88%) parents using the universal 15 hours offer available for 3 and 4 year olds were satisfied with the way they could use the hours for their child in line with 90% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 2.8).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.1: Awareness of the entitlement to government funded early education for 2 year olds by family annual income, 2024

All families with a 0 to 2 year old



Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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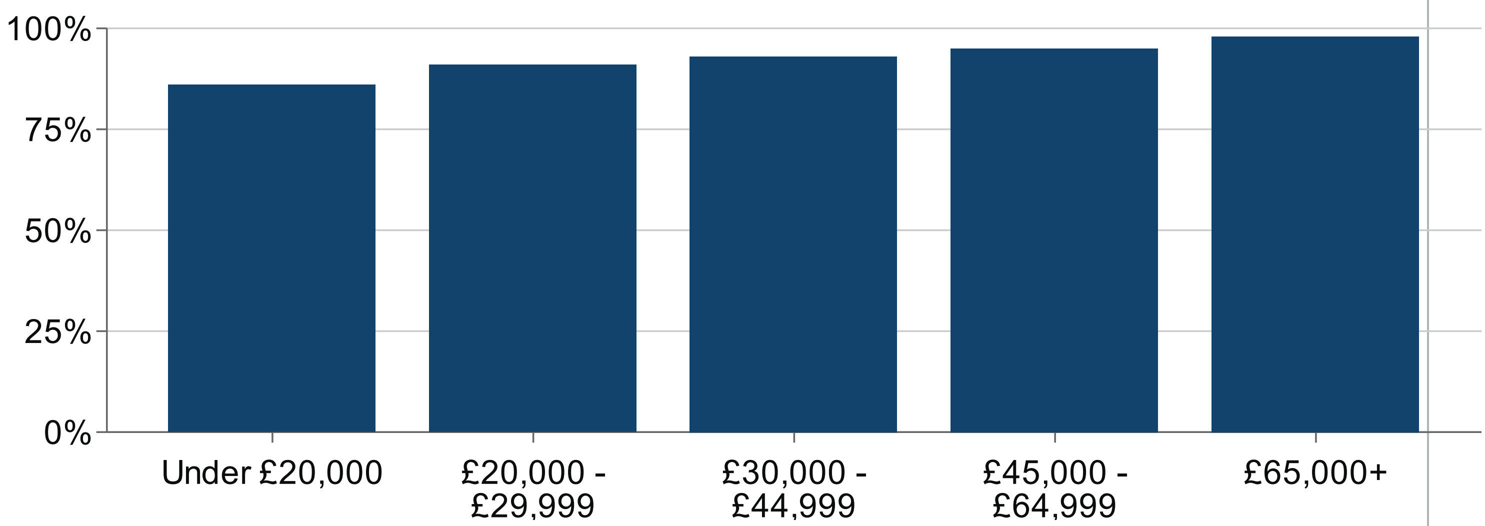
Explore data

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.2: Awareness of the 15 hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds by annual family income, 2024

All families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only



Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

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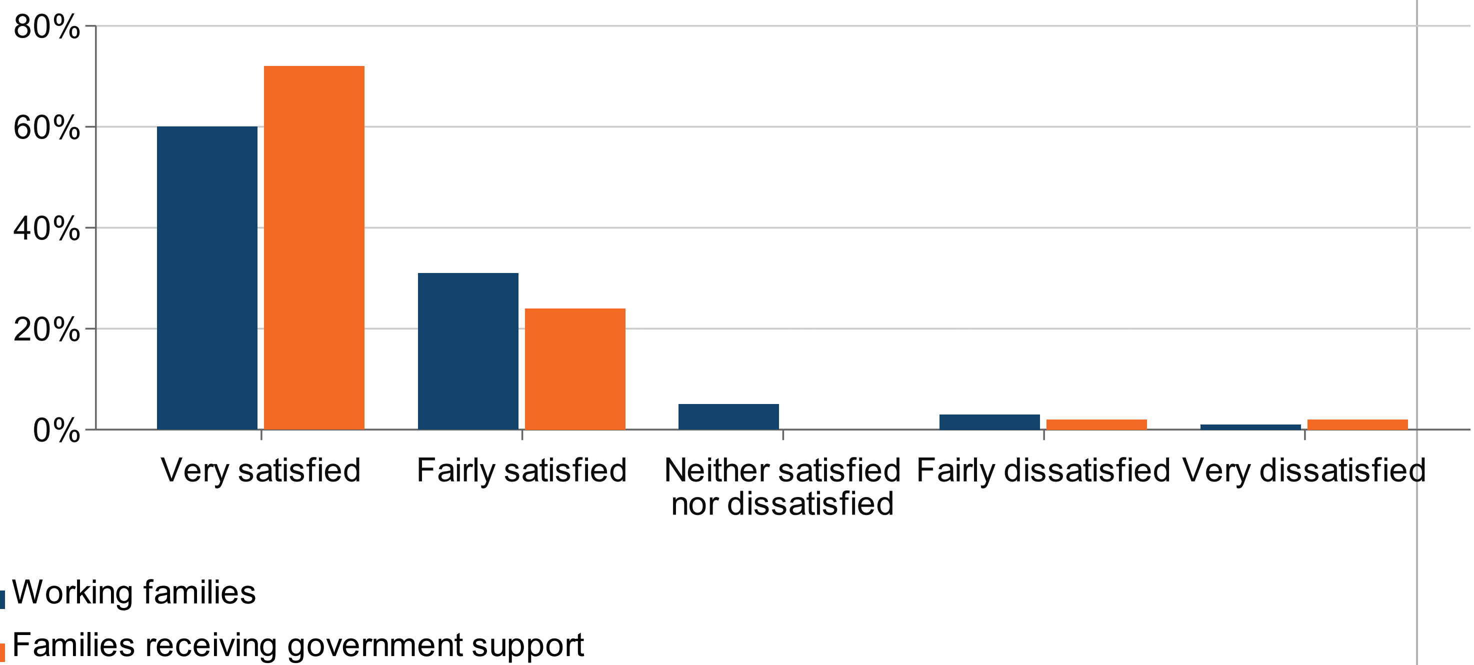
Take-up of the new 15 hours offer for working parents

Over four in five (85%) parents with a child aged 2 years old that were aware of the new 15 hours offer for working parents had applied for the scheme and a further 10% were intending to apply for it (Accompanying Table 2.7).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.3: Satisfaction with the way the government funded hours for 2 year olds could be used, 2024



Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

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Perceived impact of the new 15 hours offer for working parents

Parents receiving free hours under the new 15 hour offer for working parents were asked about the impact of the scheme on the amount and type of work they chose to do, their family finances and the quality of their family life.

- Just over three in five (62%) parents said that in the absence of the 15 hours offer they would be working the same number of hours whereas almost a quarter (23%) said that they would be working fewer hours (Accompanying Table 2.16).
- Almost three in five (59%) parents said that the 15 hours offer has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work and over two in five (43%) parents said that the offer has given

them more flexibility in which jobs they can do (Accompanying Table 2.19).

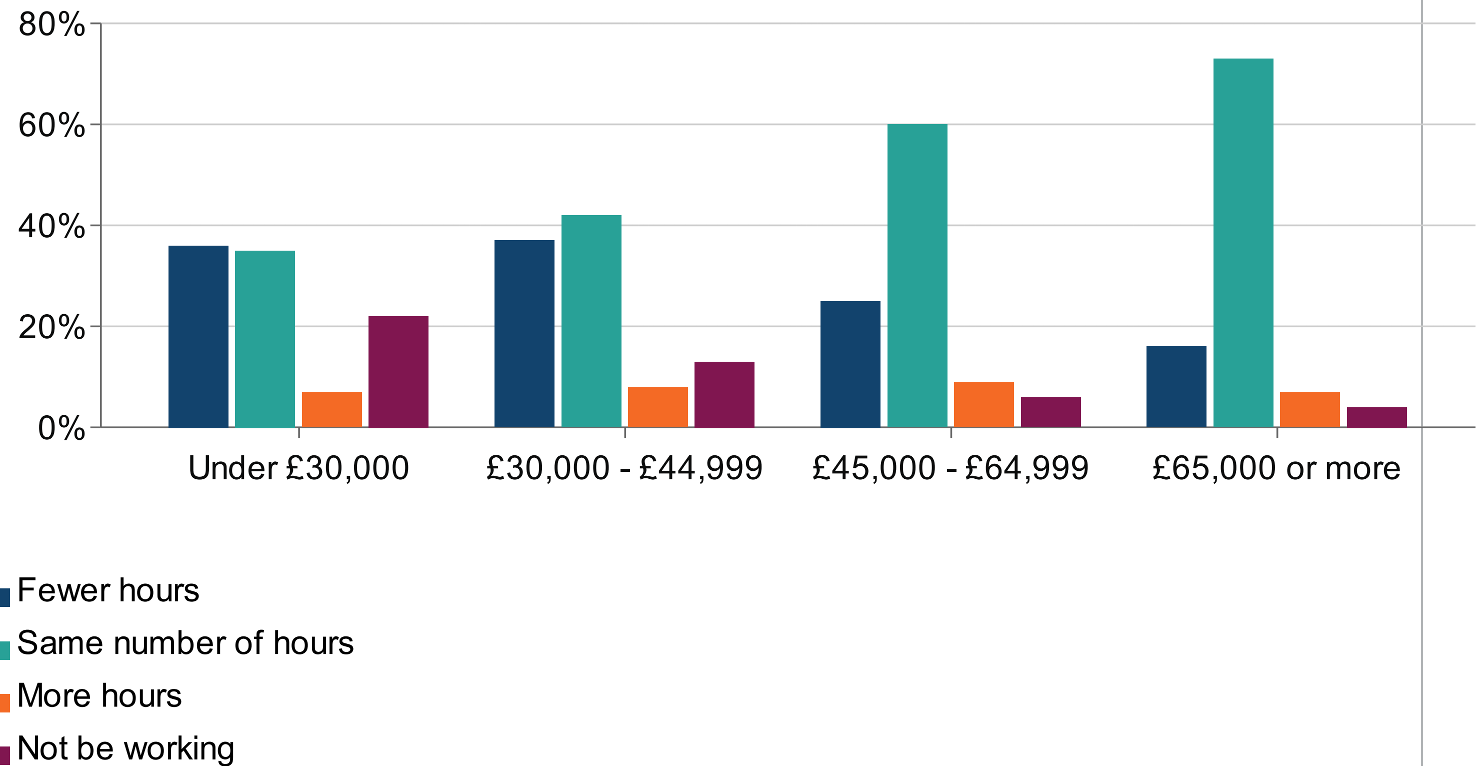
- Under three in five (57%) parents stated that the 15 hours offer has given them slightly more money to spend now than before (Accompanying Table 2.17). Parents in couple households are less likely to say the offer has resulted in the family seeing no real difference to the money they have to spend compared to respondents in lone-parent households (23% for couples compared to 44% of lone parents).
- For three quarters (75%) of families the 15 hours offer has made the overall quality of their family life better (Accompanying Table 2.18).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.4: Perceived impact of the 15 hours offer for working families of 2 year olds on work, 2024

Were the 15 hours offer not available, the parent would be working…



Footnotes

1. Answers from lone parents and those with an annual family income under £30,000 are both based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

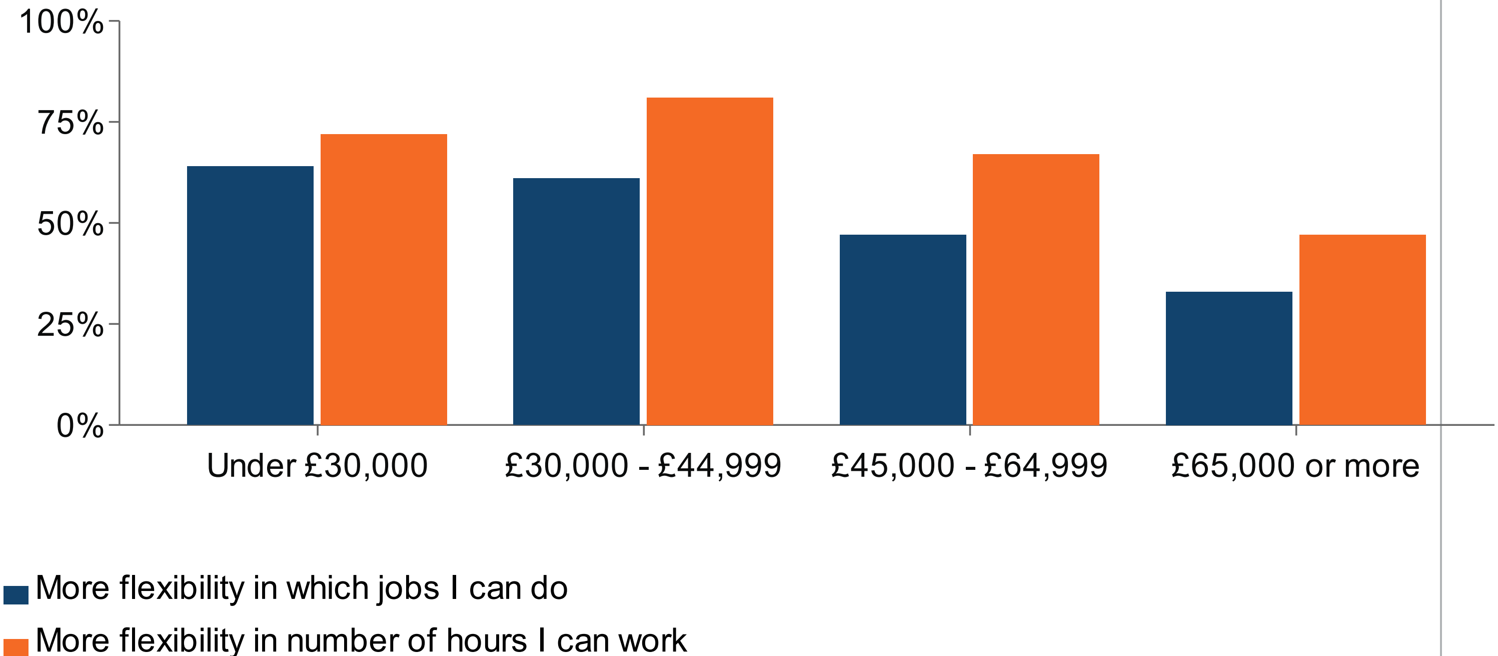
Explore data

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.5: Perceived impact of the 15 hours offer for working families on employment choices by family annual income, 2024

All working families with 2 year olds using the 15 hours offer



Footnotes

1. Answers from lone parents and those with an annual family income under £30,000 are both based on fewer than 50 respondents. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Awareness and understanding of the forthcoming 30 hours offer

Fieldwork for the 2024 survey took place between April and December 2024, prior to the full expansion of the 30 hours offer for younger children with working parents, which was rolled out in stages from April 2024. Parents were asked about their awareness of the forthcoming offer – due to be rolled out fully by September 2025 - during the 2024 survey with all results reported in Accompanying Table 2.6.

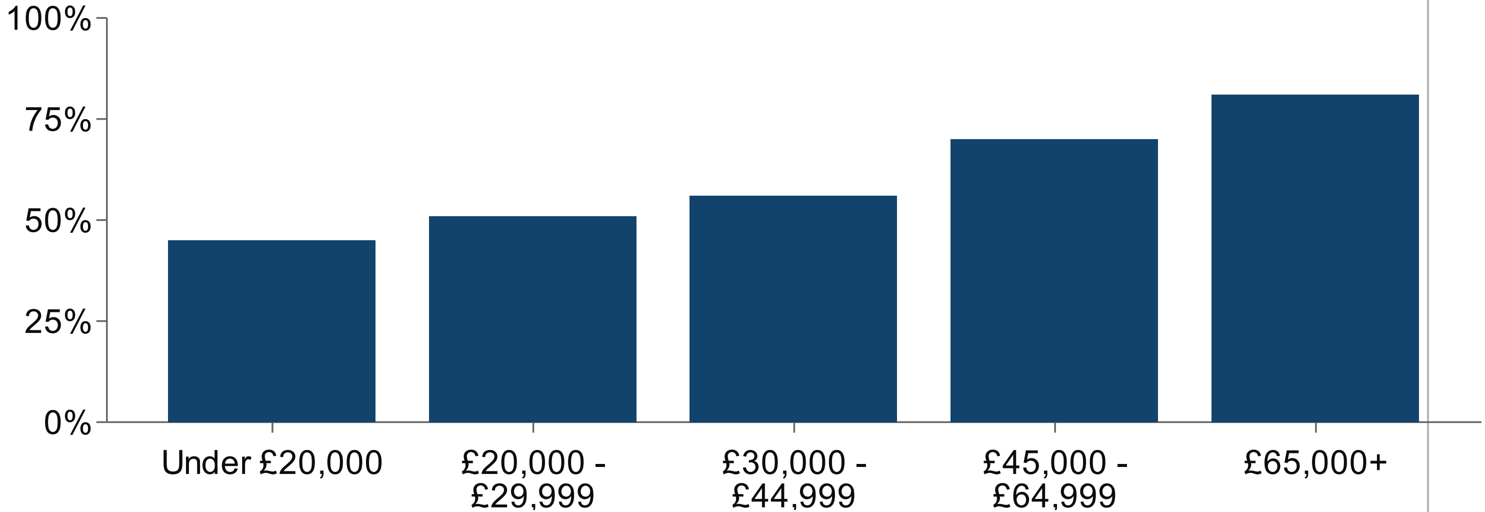
- Among parents with a child aged 0 to 2 years around five in eight (63%) were aware of the forthcoming offer of up to 30 hours of free childcare a week for children from nine months old with working parents. This is in line with 61% in 2023.
- Awareness varied by family working status, with dual-working couple households more likely to be aware of the offer than any other family working status. Three quarters (75%) of dual-working couple households were aware of the forthcoming offer, compared to 43% among couple households with neither parent in work.
- Awareness also varied by annual family income - those earning under £20,000 had lower levels of awareness of the forthcoming offer than those families with an annual income higher than £30,000 (45% among those earning under £20,000, rising to 56% for £30,000 - £44,999, 70% for £45,000 - £64,999 and 81% for those earning £65,000 or more per year).
- There was also a difference in awareness of the forthcoming 30 hours offer for younger children with working parents by the age of the children in the family. Parents with children aged between 0 and 4 years only were more likely to be aware of the offer compared to parents with children aged 0 to 4 and children aged 5 to 14 (66% compared to 60%).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.6: Awareness of the 30 hours offer for 9 month to 2 year olds, 2024

All families with a 0 to 2 year old



Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Explore data

Awareness and understanding of the existing 30 hours offer

- Among parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years, over four in five (86%) were aware of the current 30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 years with working parents, unchanged from 2023 (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- Awareness varied by family working status, with dual-working couple households more likely to be aware of the offer than any other family working status (Accompanying Table 3.1). Around two thirds (66%) of couple households with neither parent in work were aware, rising to 92% among dual-working couple households) (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- Awareness levels also varied by annual family income. Around three quarters (76%) of those earning under £20,000 were aware, rising to 93% of those earning £65,000 or more per year) (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- Awareness varied by the age of the children in the household: among families with a child aged 0

to 2 years (but no child aged 3 to 4 years) 84% were aware, while among families with a child aged 3 to 4 years (but no child aged 0 to 2 years) 89% were aware (Accompanying Table 3.9).

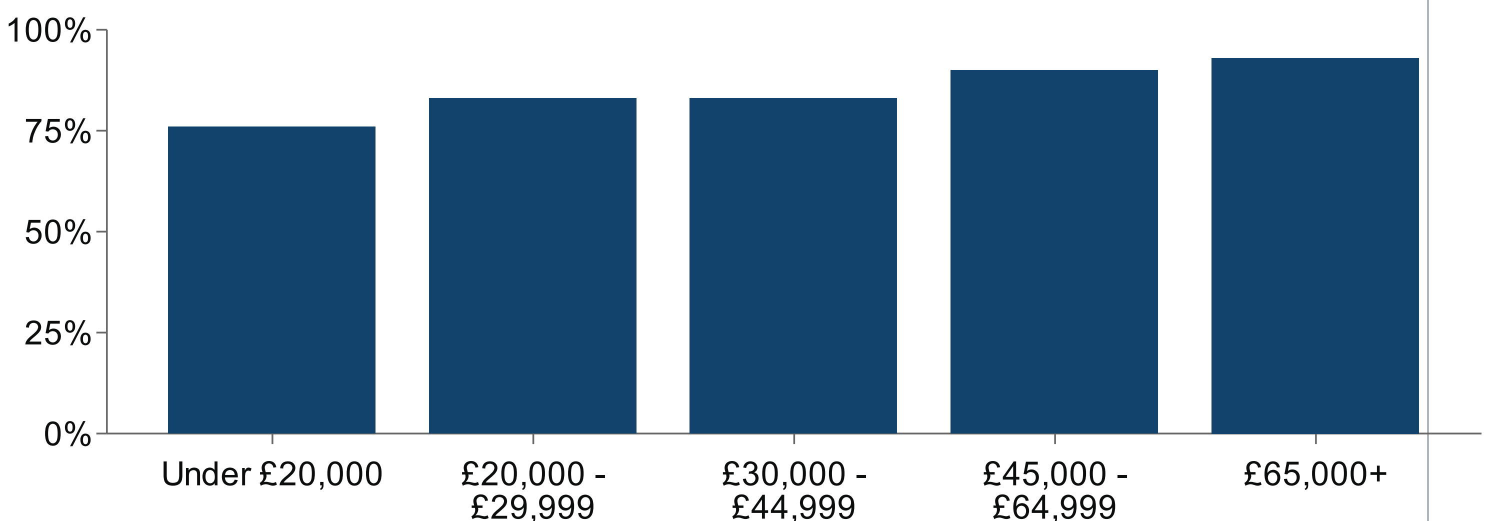
Chart

Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.7: Percentage of families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4 years only aware of the 30 hours offer

All families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only



Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Explore data

Take-up of the existing 30 hours offer

- Official statistics from the DfE's Early Years Census and Schools Census show that in January 2024, 361,800 children aged 3 to 4 benefitted from the 30-hour entitlement, or over four in every five eligible children.
- Nine in ten (92%) parents using the 30 hours offer were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child (Accompanying Table 2.8), unchanged from 2023 (92%).
- Around three in five (58%) non-working parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years, who were not

receiving or registered for the 30 hours, felt it was likely they would try to find paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours (Accompanying Table 3.2), in line with 2023 (61%).

- Among parents whose partner was not in work, and who were not already receiving or registered for the 30 hours, under half (47%) thought it likely that their partner would try and find paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours, in line with 2023 (52%).

Perceived impacts of the existing 30 hours offer

Parents using the 30 hours were asked to gauge the perceived impact of the hours on their work (Accompanying Table 3.3). These results were all in line with 2023.

- Over a third (37%) of parents, said that in the absence of the 30 hours they would be working fewer hours, in line with 41% in 2023.
- Around half (49%) of parents said that if the 30 hours were not available to them, they would still work the same number of hours, in line with 46% in 2023.
- Nine per cent of parents thought they would be working more hours were the 30 hours not available to them, a rise from 5% in 2023, and 6% thought they would not be working were the 30 hours not available to them, in line with 2023 (8%).
- There were no differences by family type in the proportion of parents who said they would work fewer hours.

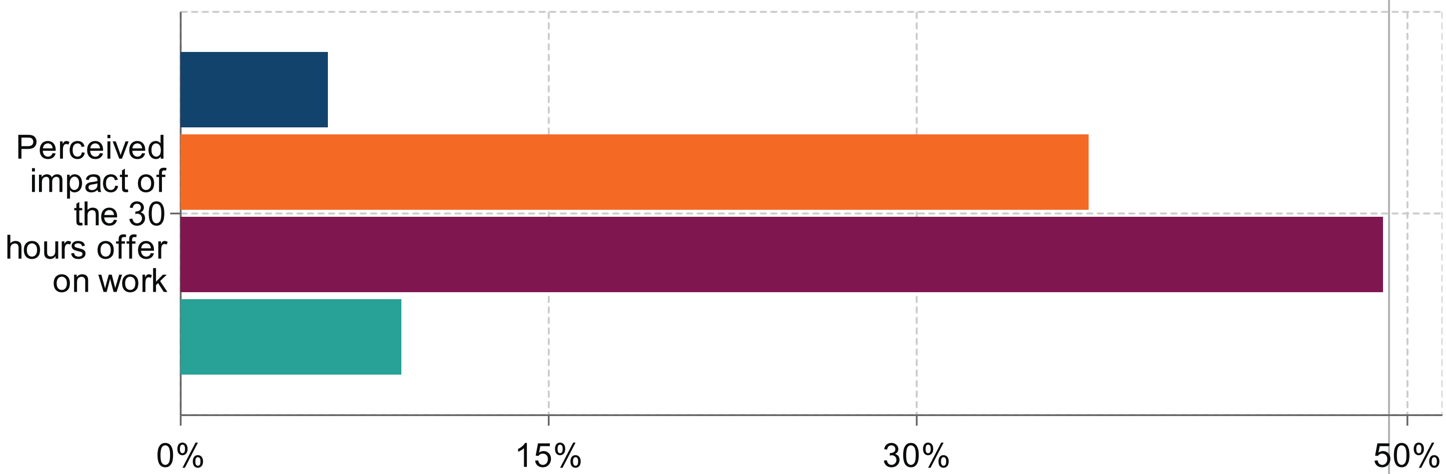
Parents using the 30 hours were also asked some questions to gauge the perceived impact of the hours on their family finances and the overall quality of their family life (Accompanying Tables 3.5 and 3.7).

- Most parents felt the 30 hours had improved both their family finances and the overall quality of their family life. Around three quarters (74%) of parents reported that the 30 hours had improved their family finances (in line with 70% in 2023), with 47% saying they had 'slightly more money' to spend than before, and 27% saying they had 'much more money' to spend than before.
- Over four in five (83%) parents reported that the overall quality of their family life was better, compared with before they took up the 30 hours (Accompanying Table 3.7), in line with 2023 (86%).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 2.8: Families using the 30 hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds and their perceptions of the impact of the offer on work



Were the 30 hours offer not available, the parent would not be working, England, 2024

Were the 30 hours offer not available, the parent would be working fewer hours, England, 2024

Were the 30 hours offer not available, the parent would be working the same number of hours, England, 2024

Were the 30 hours offer not available, the parent would be working more hours, England, 2024

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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▶ Export options

Table 2.9: Receipt of government funded childcare, or early education, by age of child

	Percentage of children using childcare providers in the most recent term time week			
	2024			
	2	3	4	All
2 year-old offer for families receiving government support	12%	0%	0%	3%
2 year-old offer for working families	59%	0%	0%	16%
15 free hours offer for 3 to 4 year-olds	0%	40%	20%	21%
30 free hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds	0%	40%	23%	22%
early years provision but no government funded hours	9%	4%	1%	4%
Attended school	0%	0%	53%	21%
no early years provision	19%	16%	3%	12%

Data symbols ?

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Use of childcare providers among those receiving funded hours

- Almost all children receiving government funded hours (whether under either of the 2 year old offers, the 15 hours offer, or the 30 hours offer for 3 to 4 year olds) received their hours from a single childcare provider (96%), with the remainder receiving their hours from two or more providers (Accompanying Table 3.10). These proportions are unchanged from 2023 (also 96%).
- Among children receiving government funded hours from their main formal provider, over four in five (86%) were attending their parents' first choice of provider, in line with 2023 (89%) (Accompanying Table 2.12).
- For most (83%) children receiving government funded hours from their main formal provider, their parents had found it easy or very easy to get a place at the provider, a fall from 87% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 2.14).

Additional charges

- Parents who were aware of the 15 and 30 hours offers were asked if they knew that providers could charge for extra services, such as meals, consumables, and special lessons or activities. Over four in five (84%) parents knew this to be the case, in line with 2023 (85%).
- Among parents who were aware of the 15 and 30 hours offers and were aware that providers can charge for certain extra services, most (69%) were aware that parents can choose not to receive, or pay, for these services. This is a fall from 2023 (75%) illustrating that parents in 2024 were less likely to be aware of this than those responding in 2023.
- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 4 years old, who were aware that providers can charge for certain extra services and who were using free hours, just over one in eight (14%) said that it had stopped them from applying to a provider and around one in ten (9%) said that it had stopped them from applying for more free hours (Accompanying Table 3.13).

There were some differences amongst parents who were aware of the 15 hours offer or the 30 hours offer in awareness of the extra charges by annual income and family type (Table 3.11).

- Parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 were less likely to be aware of these charges than those with an annual income of between £45,000 and £64,999 (71%, compared to 84%) or with an annual income of £65,000 or more (71%, compared to 89%).
- However, there were no significant differences in awareness of these charges between parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 compared to parents in families with an annual income of between £20,000 and £29,999 (71%, compared to 75%) or £30,000 and £44,999 (71%, compared to 77%).

There were also some differences amongst parents who were aware of the 15 hours offer or the 30 hours offer in terms of whether the additional charges had stopped them from applying for more hours at an existing provider by annual income and family type but not by age of child (Table 3.13).

- Specifically, parents in families with children aged between 0 and 4 years with an annual income under £20,000 were more likely to report that additional charges had stopped them from applying for more free hours at an existing provider (13%) compared to parents in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more (6%).

Go to top

3. Paying for childcare

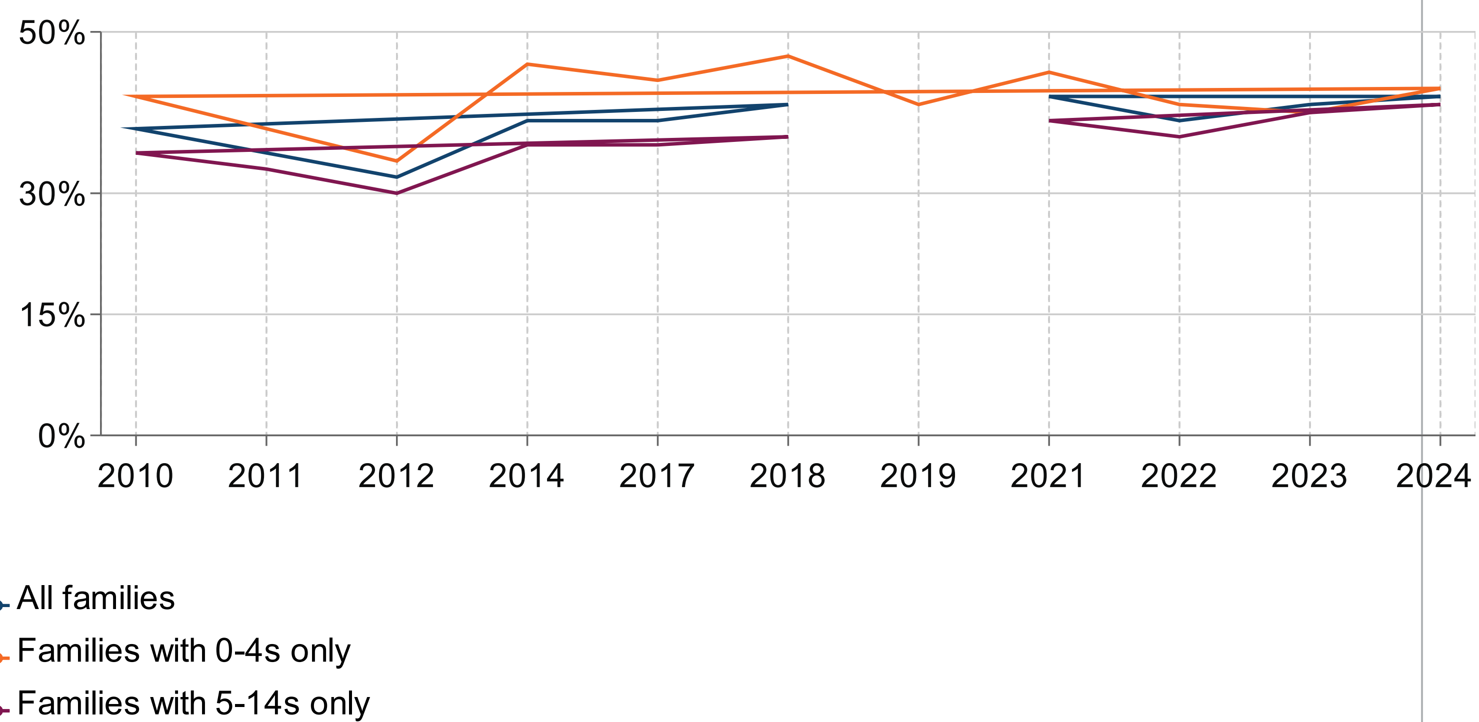
Hide

This section firstly describes the weekly cost of childcare for families and per child, and perceptions around the cost of childcare in terms of affordability and the ease of paying for childcare.

Chart Table

▶ Export options

Figure 3.1: Percentage of parents rating the affordability of local childcare as very or fairly good, 2010 to 2024



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. 2010 data corresponds to 2010-11, 2011 data corresponds to 2011-12, 2012 data corresponds to 2012-13, 2014 data corresponds to 2014-15. There was no survey in 2013,

2015 and 2016. 2019 survey was with families with children aged 0-4 and so the data are not directly comparable. 2020 data is presented separately in the supporting files due to a limited sample caused by COVID-19 disruption, limiting comparisons.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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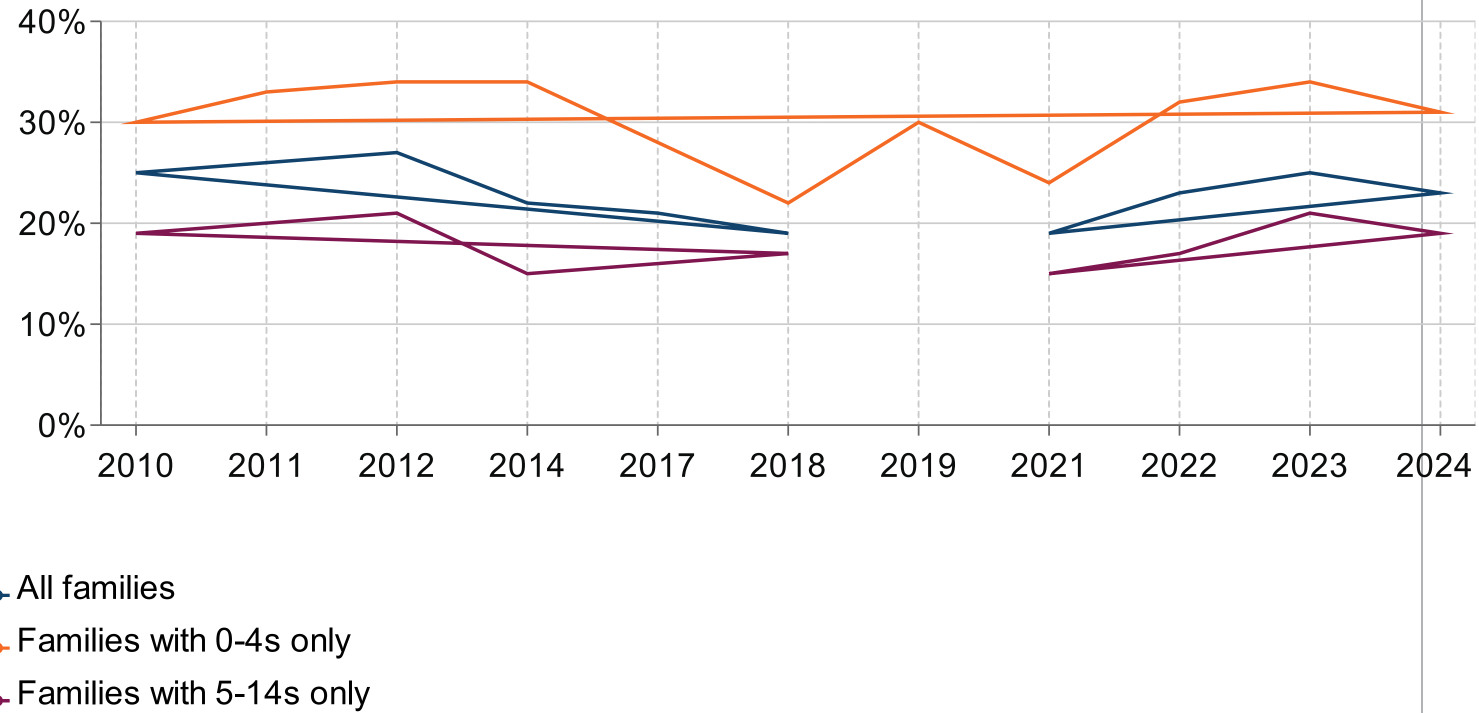
Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Chart Table

▶ Export options

Figure 3.2: Percentage of parents finding it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs, 2008 to 2024



Footnotes

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Show 1 more footnote

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Perceptions around the cost of childcare

Perceptions of affordability

Perceptions of affordability were explored by different family types - those with children aged 0 to 4 years only, aged 5 to 14 years only and families with children aged both 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years.

Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only:

- Over two in five (43%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good (Accompanying Table 5.2), in line with 2023 (40%).
- Around two in five (39%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, in line with 2023 (42%) (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- There is a significant difference in parents rating the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, with parents in families containing children aged between 0 and 4 years only more likely to say this compared to parents in families containing children aged between 5 and 14 years only (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years:

- Over two in five (45%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good (Accompanying Table 5.2), in line with 2023 (46%).
- Under two in five (37%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, unchanged from 2023 (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only:

- Around two in five (41%) parents rated the affordability of local childcare as very or fairly good, in line with 2023 (40%).
- Around a third (32%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as very or fairly poor, in line with 29% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Perceptions around the ease of paying for childcare

Perceptions of affordability were similar across families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, 5 to 14 years only and children in both age groups. Each of these results are in line with those from 2023.

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, around two in five (41%) parents who paid for childcare said it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to meet their childcare costs, in line with 37% in 2023. Around a third (31%) found it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to meet their childcare costs, in line with 2023 (34%) (Accompanying Table 4.3).
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, around three in five (59%) who paid for childcare said it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to meet their childcare costs, which was in line with 2023 (56%).

- A lower percentage of families with children aged 5 to 14 years only found it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs, 18%, in line with 20% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 4.3).

Go to top

4. Perceptions of childcare and early years provision

Hide

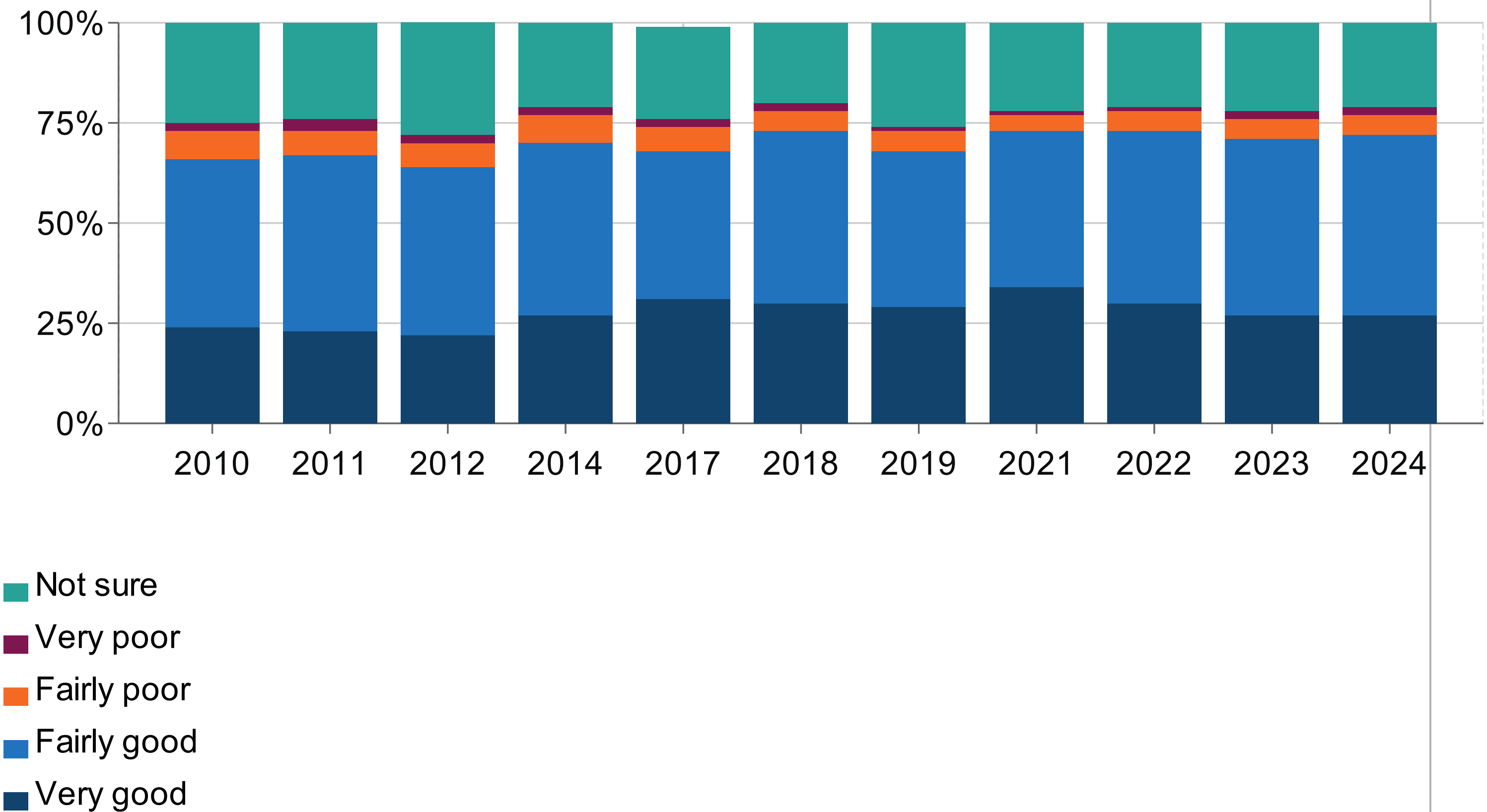
This section explores perceptions of the quality, availability and flexibility of local childcare provision as well as provision specifically for special educational needs and disabilities. It also touches on the availability of information about local childcare.

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Chart 4.1: Perceptions of the quality of local childcare provision, 2004 to 2024

All families with children aged 0 years to 4 years only



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. 2010 data corresponds to 2010-11, 2011 data corresponds to 2011-12, 2012 data corresponds to 2012-13, 2014 data corresponds to 2014-15. There was no survey in 2013, 2015 and 2016. 2019 survey was with families with children aged 0-4 and so the data are not directly comparable. 2020 data is presented separately in the supporting files due to a limited sample caused by COVID-19 disruption, limiting comparisons.

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

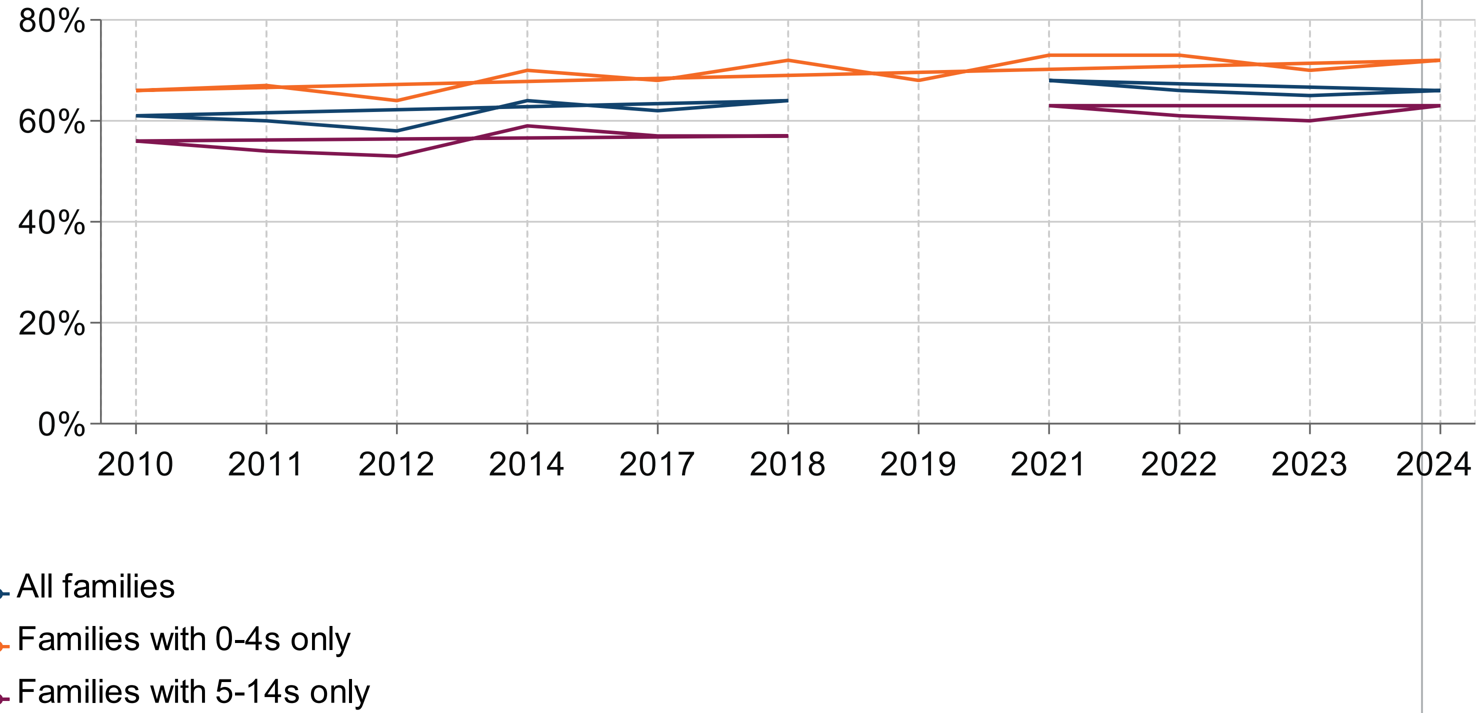
Explore data

Chart

Table

▶ Export options

Figure 4.2: Percentage of parents rating the quality of local childcare as very or fairly good, 2010 to 2024



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
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Show 1 more footnote

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

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Perceptions of quality

Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only (Accompanying Table 5.2):

- Under three quarters (72%) of parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good, in line with 2023 (71%).
- Seven per cent rated it as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, unchanged from 2023 (also 7%)

Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only (Accompanying Table 5.2):

- Just over three in five (62%) parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good, in line with 2023 (60%).
- Just under one in ten (8%) rated it as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, unchanged from 2023 (also 8%).

A lower percentage of families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, than parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only, rated the quality of local childcare provision as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good. This could in part be attributed to the higher percentage of families with children aged 5 to 14 years saying they were ‘not sure’ about the quality of childcare (29%), compared to 21% among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only. Parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 only are more likely to say ‘not sure’ than those with children aged 0 to 4 years only (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Factors important for high quality childcare

Parents were asked what three factors they considered most important in high quality childcare and early years education for their child aged 0 to 4 years (Accompanying Table 5.11). The most important factor reported was activities that encourage the child to socialise with other children (56%), in line with 2023 (57%), followed by each staff member only having a small number of children to look after (49%) in line with 2023 (47%) and receiving regular feedback on their child’s progress (34%) in line with 2023, 35%.

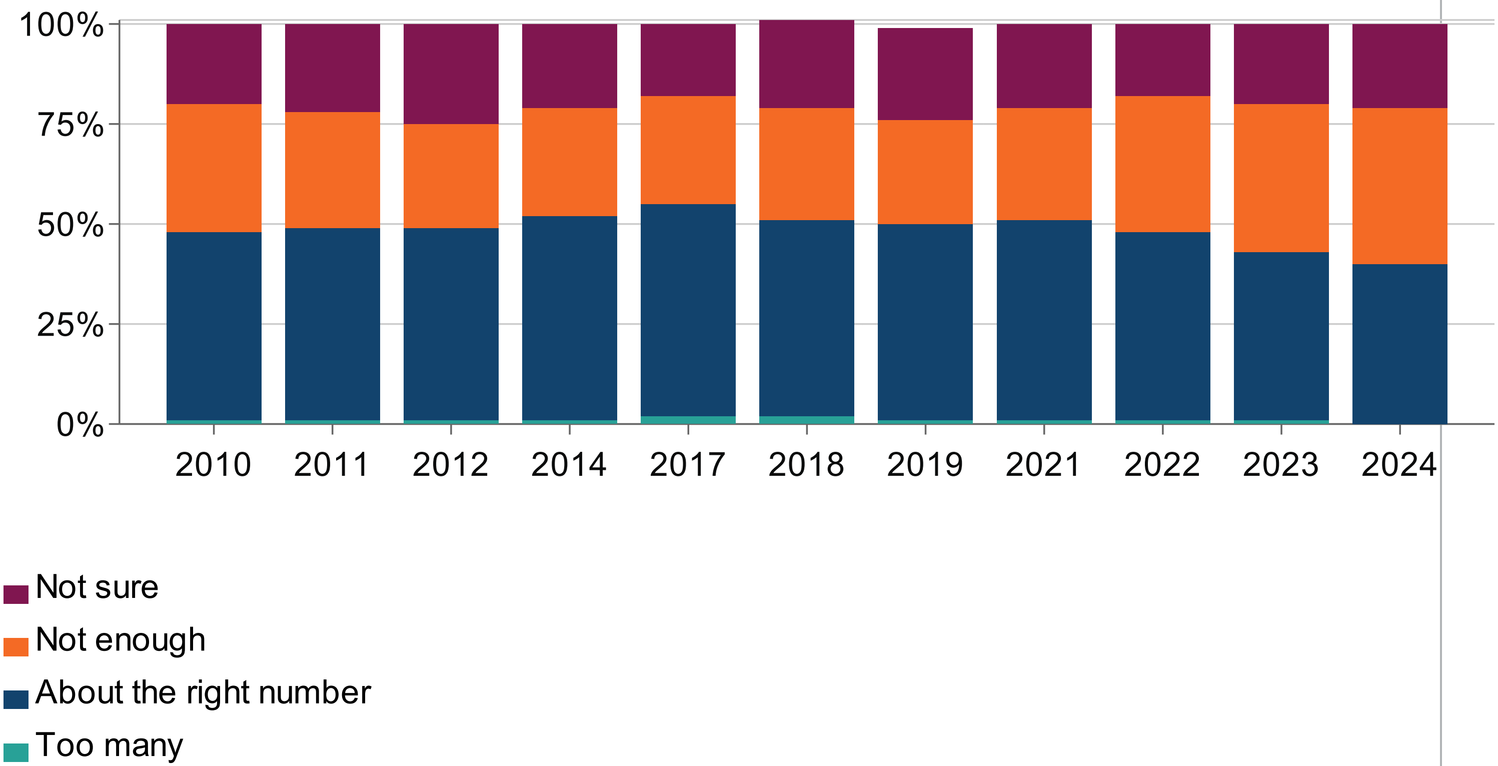
Parents were also asked what they considered important in high quality childcare and out of school activities for their child aged 5 to 14 years. Again, these results are in line with those from 2023. The most important factor was activities that encourage the child to socialise with other children (55%, in line with 53% in 2023), having staff that are qualified for their role (32%, in line with 31% in 2023) and the childcare or activity being affordable (31%, in line with 32% in 2023) (Accompanying Table 5.25).

Chart | Table

▶ Export options

Figure 4.3: Parents' perceptions of the availability of local childcare provision, 2004 to 2024

All families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. 2010 data corresponds to 2010-11, 2011 data corresponds to 2011-12, 2012 data corresponds to 2012-13, 2014 data corresponds to 2014-15. There was no survey in 2013, 2015 and 2016. 2019 survey was with families with children aged 0-4 and so the data are not directly comparable. 2020 data is presented separately in the supporting files due to a limited sample caused by COVID-19 disruption, limiting comparisons.

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

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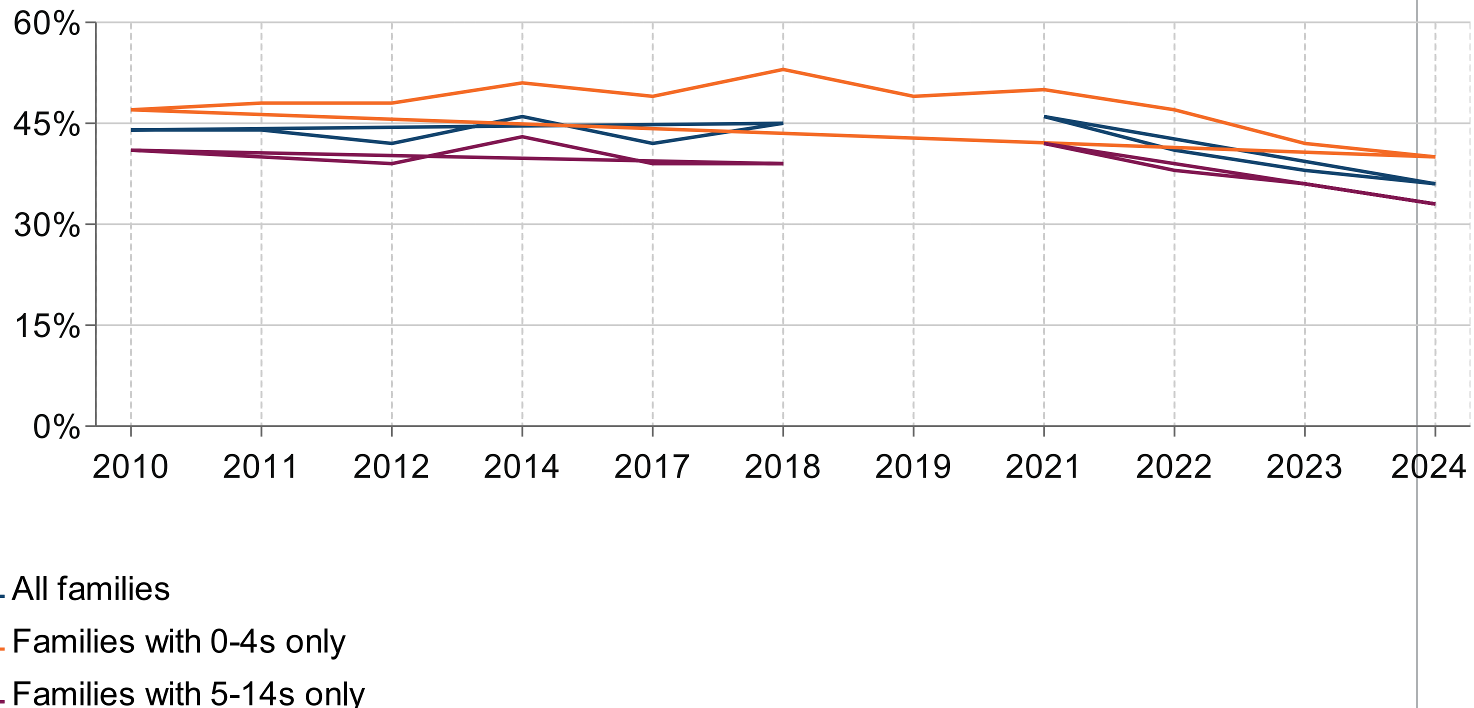
Chart

Table

▶ Export options

Figure 4.4: Percentage of parents saying the availability of local childcare places is ‘about right’, 2010 to 2024



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. 2010 data corresponds to 2010-11, 2011 data corresponds to 2011-12, 2012 data corresponds to 2012-13, 2014 data corresponds to 2014-15. There was no survey in 2013, 2015 and 2016. 2019 survey was with families with children aged 0-4 and so the data are not directly comparable. 2020 data is presented separately in the supporting files due to a limited sample caused by COVID-19 disruption, limiting comparisons.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

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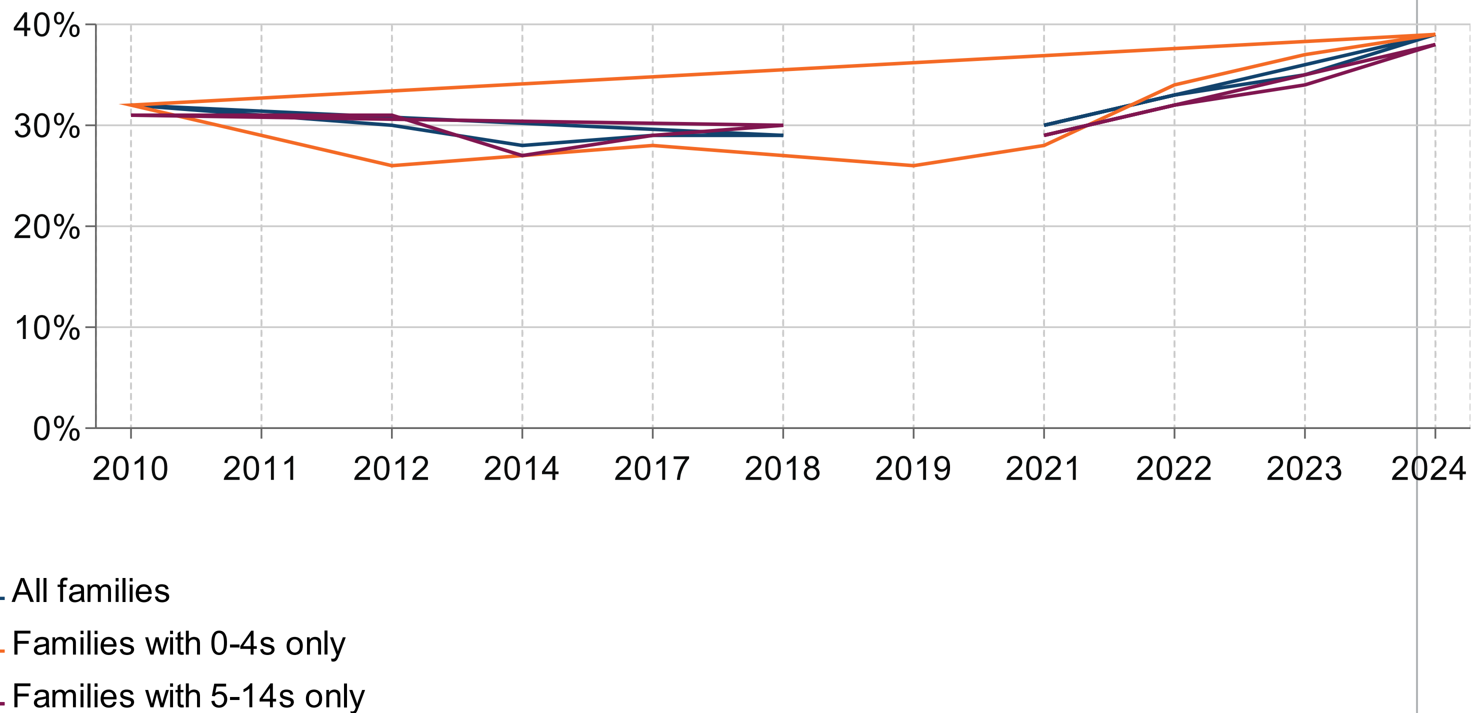
Chart Table

▶ Export options

Figure 4.5: Percentage of parents saying the availability of local childcare places is 'not enough', 2010 to 2024



Footnotes

1. x is used when the data is unavailable. This is used when the data was not collected in that year.
2. 2010 data corresponds to 2010-11, 2011 data corresponds to 2011-12, 2012 data corresponds to 2012-13, 2014 data corresponds to 2014-15. There was no survey in 2013, 2015 and 2016. 2019 survey was with families with children aged 0-4 and so the data are not directly comparable. 2020 data is presented separately in the supporting files due to a limited sample caused by COVID-19 disruption, limiting comparisons.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: 2024 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents

Explore and edit this data online

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Perceptions of availability and flexibility

General perceptions

Parents' general perceptions about the availability and flexibility of childcare provision this year are all in line with 2023.

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, two in five (40%) of parents felt the number of local childcare places was 'about right' (in line with 42% in 2023), whilst almost the same proportion (39%) said there were not enough places (in line with 37% in 2023) (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- Just under a quarter (23%) families with children aged 0 to 4 only, reported problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs, in line with 21% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 5.16).
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 only, with a parent in work (couple families with one or both parents in work, and working lone-parent families), just under two thirds (64%) felt that they were able to find term-time childcare that fitted in with their (and/or their partner's) working hours, in line with 61% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 5.16).

Waiting lists

- Among families with a child aged 0 to 4 years, parents were asked if their child was on a waiting list for another childcare provider.
    - Just under a sixth (14%) of parents whose children are currently using formal childcare are also on a waiting list for another childcare provider (Accompanying Table 5.26).
    - Just over a quarter (26%) of parents whose children are not currently using formal childcare are currently on a waiting list for a childcare provider.

- Of those children aged 0 to 4 years who are currently using formal childcare and were on a waiting list for a childcare provider, 69 were on a waiting list for a Nursery class. Of these children, 70% had been on the waiting list for one month or more and 30% had been waiting for a place for less than a month (Accompanying Table 5.27).
- Of those children aged 0 to 4 years who are currently using formal childcare and were on a waiting list for another formal provider, 72% had been waiting for one month or more for a place to become available at a different formal provider (Accompanying Table 5.27).

- Two thirds (66%) of those not currently using formal childcare who were on a waiting list for a formal childcare provider had been waiting for one month or more for a place to become available (Accompanying Table 5.27).

Changes to term time childcare provision

Parents who were working part-time, were unemployed or were looking after the home and family were asked what changes to term time childcare provision were needed to make it better suited to their work needs (Accompanying Table 1.16).

- Among families with child(ren) aged 5 to 14 years, just under two in five (38%) parents felt that changes to term time provision after school rather than before school or in the evenings and/or at the weekend would suit their needs relating to work the best.
- Around one in five (19%) felt that more affordable childcare after school at their child(ren)'s school would suit their work needs best followed by 14% who felt that more childcare places e.g. at after school clubs at their child(ren)'s school would help.
- Just over two fifths (42%) of parents said that none of the changes to term time childcare provision would make it better suited to their work needs, specifically because they did not want to work more or look for more work.

Wraparound care

All families with children aged 4 to 14 who used afterschool clubs, breakfast clubs or before school clubs were asked whether the current opening hours of these clubs enabled them to work the hours that best suited their needs (Accompanying Table 6.21).

- Over four in five (84%) parents using breakfast clubs or before school clubs and four in five (80%) parents using after school clubs reported that they were able to work the hours that suited their needs.

Families with children aged 4 to 14 who used afterschool clubs, breakfast clubs or before school clubs but for whom the current opening hours did not enable them to work the hours that best suited their needs were asked whether extended opening times (from 8am for breakfast clubs or until 6pm for after school clubs) would suit their needs better (Accompanying Table 6.21).

- Around one in eight (13%) of those using after school clubs thought that extended opening hours would enable them to work the hours that best suited their needs compared to 6% of those using breakfast clubs or before school clubs.
- Around one in 10 (11%) of those using breakfast or before school clubs and seven per cent of those using after school clubs did not think that the club’s current opening hours or extended hours would enable them to work the hours that suited their needs.

Families with children aged 4 to 14 who did not use afterschool clubs, breakfast clubs or before school clubs were asked the reasons for this (Accompanying Table 6.22). The most common reason was convenience – either to give children breakfast at home (43%) or bring children straight home after school (23%). The second most common reason was affordability – 17% of parents indicated that they did not use afterschool clubs because they couldn't afford them or that they were too expensive compared to 13% indicating the same about breakfast clubs or before school clubs.

Perceptions of special educational needs and disabilities provision

Just under one in six (14%) children aged between 0 and 14 years old had a special educational need, and just under one in ten (8%) had a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability (Table B.11, Methodology).

Parents whose children were receiving support for a special educational need or with a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness, or disability which affects them to at least a small extent were asked about childcare provision for their child(ren).

- Over two in five (43%) parents disagreed or disagreed strongly that it was easy to find out information about childcare providers in the local area that met their child's needs (Accompanying Table 5.15).
- Over half (54%) of parents using informal or other types of childcare providers reported finding it difficult or very difficult to find a local provider that could cater for their child's special educational, health or disability needs (Accompanying Table 5.15). This is in line with from 2023, where 44% of parents using informal or other childcare providers reported this.
- Just under half (48%) of parents using a formal childcare provider reported finding it difficult or very difficult to find a local provider that could cater for their child's special educational, health or disability needs (Accompanying Table 5.15). This is a rise from 29% in 2023.
- 94% of parents whose children were receiving support for a special educational need or had a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness, or disability did not pay any money to their formal provider to support their child's needs whereas 6% did (Accompanying Table 5.15).

Availability of information about local childcare provision

Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only

- Under half (46%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only said the information available to them about childcare in their local area was 'about right' (in line with 44% in 2023) (Accompanying Table 5.1).
- Around two in five parents (39%) thought there was 'too little' information (also in line with 36% in 2023).
- A further 13% of parents were unsure (a fall from 18% in 2023) (Accompanying Table 5.1).

Parents of children aged 5 to 14 years only compared to those with children aged 0 to 4 years only

- A lower percentage of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only (compared to those with children aged 0 to 4 years only) said that the information available to them about childcare in their local area was ‘about right’ (37%) (in line with 40% in 2023) (Accompanying Table 5.2).

- The proportion of parents saying the amount of information available was ‘too little’ did not vary by the ages of children in the household.
- Around two in five (41%) of families with children aged 5 to 14 years only thought there was ‘too little’ information, (a rise from 33% in 2023). This is comparable to 39% of families with children aged 0 to 4 years only who thought this (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- Parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only were more likely to say they were unsure about the amount of information available (20% compared to 13% among parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only), which may account for a lower percentage of parents with children in this age group saying that the amount of information was ‘about right’ (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Identifying and accessing formal providers

- Among parents whose child(ren) received childcare from a formal provider, just over three quarters (77%) said it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to identify a provider that met their child(ren)’s needs (Accompanying Table 2.14). Around one in six (15%) reported that they found it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’.
- Parents were asked about the information available to them about the care their provider gave to their child(ren). Over nine in ten (93%) said this was ‘fairly good’ or ‘very’ good (Accompanying Table 2.14). The remaining eight per cent said that it was ‘fairly poor’ or ‘very poor’.

Source of information about local childcare provision

- Parents were most likely to receive information about childcare via word of mouth, for example from friends or relatives (44% having done so in the last year), followed by from school (36%), and from social media (24%) (Accompanying Table 5.4).
- Around one in five (19%) parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only who used a formal provider in the reference week and 17% of those who had used an informal provider in the reference week had used the GOV.UK website to find out about childcare (Accompanying Table 5.4).

Go to top

5. The home learning environment, Family Hubs and Children's centres

Hide

This section discusses the frequency of learning within the home environment among children aged 0 to 5 years as well as sources of information for and ideas about learning and play activities. Awareness of, access to and services used at Family Hubs and Children’s centres has also been reported on.

Frequency of home learning and play activities

- The home learning activity most frequently carried out with children aged 0 to 5 years was looking at books or reading, with two thirds (66%) of parents reporting that someone at home does this activity at least once a day with their child (Accompanying Table 6.6 and Accompanying Table 6.7), a rise from 62% in 2023.
- The next most frequently conducted home learning activities were learning songs, poems or nursery rhymes (56% of parents reported that someone at home does this at least once a day with their child, a rise from 52% in 2023), and learning numbers or to count (55% of parents reported that someone at home does this at least once a day with their child, a rise from 51% in 2023).

Information about home learning and play activities

Parents were asked where they get information and ideas about learning and play activities that they can do with their child aged 0 to 5 years. Parents were most likely to get information from friends or relatives (61%), social media (52%), other parents (38%), internet sites (36%) and school (30%) (Accompanying Table 6.20).

Awareness of, access to and services used at Family Hubs and Children's Centres

Parents were asked if they were aware of a family hub, children's centre, a children and family centre or a family centre, in their local area. For succinctness, we refer to these sites as 'family hubs or children's centres' in the text that follows.

- Just under half (49%) of all parents with a child aged 0 to 14 years were aware of a family hub or children's centre in their local area. Awareness varied by the age of the children in the household. Among families with children aged 5 to 14 only, 44% were aware, compared to 61% among families with children aged 0 to 4 only (Accompanying Table 6.13).
- Amongst families who were aware of a family hub or children's centre in their local area, a fifth (20%) had accessed one or more services from any of these sites in the last year (Accompanying Table 6.13).
- A higher proportion of families with children aged 0 to 4 years only (40%) reported accessing a service compared to families with children aged 5 to 14 years only (9%) (Accompanying Table 6.13).

Those that had accessed any services through a family hub or children's centre in their local area were asked which services or sources of help or support they had accessed in the last year.

- Support with early years education was accessed the most (58%) followed by midwifery, maternity or child health services (31%) (Accompanying Table 6.14).
- 92% of those that had received any help or support from a family hub or children's centre in their

local area received this during an in person visit (Accompanying Table 6.16).
- Half (50%) of those that received any help or support from a family hub or children's centre in their local area had done so once every year or less often (Accompanying Table 6.16).

Go to top

6. Mothers, work and childcare

Hide

The following section focusses primarily on mother's work patterns and which factors influenced them to go out to work.

Levels of work among parents

Mothers in work

- Three-quarters (75%) of mothers overall, that is of mothers of children aged between 0 and 14 years, reported that they were in work (Accompanying Table 8.5), an increase from 72% in 2023. This is compared to 93% of fathers.
- Of these mothers, over two in five (44%) reported that they were working full-time, an increase from 39% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 8.5).
- Of these mothers, the proportion who reported that they were working part-time was 31%, in line with 2023 (33%) (Accompanying Table 8.5).
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, just under three quarters (73%) of mothers reported that they were in work, a rise from 69% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 8.5).
- The proportions of mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only working full-time or part-time in 2024 were in line with 2023 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Non-working mothers

- Around a quarter (26%) of all mothers were not working, a fall from 28% in 2023.
- Just over a third (35%) of mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years were more likely to be non-working than mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only (27%) (Accompanying Table 8.5).
- Lone mothers were more likely to report that they were not working compared to partnered mothers. Around a third (34%) of lone mothers reported this compared to just under a quarter (23%) of partnered mothers (Accompanying Table 8.6).
- A quarter (25%) of mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 only reported that they were not working due to childcare issues (Accompanying Table 8.12).
- Having to look after a child or children who needs special care was cited as a reason for not

working by 16% of all mothers (Accompanying Table 8.12).

- Over half (54%) of non-working mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only said that if they could arrange good quality childcare that was convenient, reliable and affordable, they would prefer to go out to work, in line with 2023 (54%) (Accompanying Table 8.13).

Trends in working patterns

- In terms of longer-term trends in mother's work patterns, there has been an increase in the percentage of mothers working full-time since 2010-2011 across all families (Accompanying Table 8.5).
  - In 2010-2011, 25% of all mothers were working full-time and by 2022 this had increased to 41%.
  - In 2024, the proportion increased with 44% of all mothers working full-time, compared to 39% in 2023.
  - In 2010-2011, 21% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years were working full-time, but by 2024 this had increased 18 percentage points to 39% whereas among mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only, 31% worked full-time in 2010-2011 and by 2024 this had increased 17 percentage points to 48%.
  - In 2010-2011, 16% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years, were working full-time, but by 2024, this had increased 15 percentage points to 31%.
- The increase in full-time working was accompanied by a decrease in the proportions working part-time or not working at all (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Factors influencing going out to work

- All working mothers with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 were asked what influenced their decision to go out to work. The two most common influences chosen were "needing the money" (69%) and "enjoying working" (66%) (Accompanying Table 8.11). These results are in line with 2023, with 65% reported for each reason respectively.
- Lone mothers were more likely to cite "needing the money" as a factor influencing their decision to go out to work than partnered mothers, with just over three quarters (77%) of lone mothers choosing this reason compared to two thirds (66%) of partnered mothers.

Reasons for returning to work in the past two years

- Among mothers who had entered the workforce in the past two years, the most common reasons for starting work were wanting financial independence (18%) and finding a job that enabled them to combine work with their child(ren) (also 18%) as well as wanting to get out of the hours (16%) and their child(ren) starting school (13%)(Accompanying Table 8.9).
- Three per cent of all mothers who had entered the workforce in the past two years reported that they did so to become eligible for the 30 hours offer of free childcare for children aged 3 to 4 years with working parents.

- Mothers who had transitioned from part-time to full-time work in the previous two years most commonly did so because a job opportunity or promotion arose (31%), because their children started school (21%), because of their financial situation (14%) or because they found a job that enabled them to combine work and childcare (10%) (Accompanying Table 8.10).
- Four per cent of mothers said they made this change to become eligible for the 30 hours offer of free childcare for children aged 3 to 4 years with working parents.

Childcare arrangements that help mothers to work

Working mothers were asked what childcare arrangements, if any, helped them to work (Accompanying Table 8.3).

- Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to mention having reliable childcare compared to parents of older children aged 5-14 years only. Just under two thirds (64%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only mentioned this, in line with 66% in 2023. The proportion was 32% among those in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, in line with 2023 (30%).
- Parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only were also the most likely to mention having relatives who could help with childcare (45% in line with 48% in 2023), compared to 37% among those in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, (in line with 32% in 2023).

Among working mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 only:

- The proportion that mentioned that the free hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds (under the **30** free hours scheme) helped them to work was 24% in line with 23% in 2023).
- The proportion that mentioned that the free hours of childcare for 3 and 4 year olds (under the **15** free hours scheme) helped them to work was 11% a rise from 8% in 2023 (Accompanying Table 8.3).

Changes to working hours

- All mothers working part-time who reported that they would like to increase their hours or work full-time were asked what factors would help them change their working hours (Accompanying Table 8.2). Over two in five (43%) mothers reported that being able to afford suitable childcare would help them, unchanged from 2023. Just under a quarter (23%) reported that if relatives or friends were able to help with childcare or if there was good quality local childcare available either of these would help them change their working hours. These results are in line with 2023, with 24% of mothers reporting support from relatives or friends and 23% reporting good quality local childcare.
- Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to cite “affording suitable childcare” as a factor that would help increase working hours than mothers with children aged between 5 and 14 years only. Over half (53%) of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only gave this reason compared to under two fifths (37%) of mothers with children aged between 5 and 14 years only (Accompanying Table 8.2).

- Mothers with children aged between 5 and 14 years only were more likely to cite “employer gave me the option of working more hours / working full time” as a factor that would help increase their working hours compared to mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only. Around a fifth (21%) of mothers with children aged 5 and 14 years only gave this reason, compared to 13% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only (Accompanying Table 8.2).

Interest in increasing working hours or working fulltime if there were no barriers

- Among mothers working part-time, around half (51%) said that even if there were no barriers to doing so, they would not increase their working hours or work full-time (Accompanying Table 8.1), in line with 48% in 2023.
- Over a third (35%) of mothers working part-time said that, in the absence of any barriers, they would continue to work part-time but would increase their working hours, in line with 2023 (37%).
- Under one in six (14%) of mothers working part-time said that, in the absence of any barriers, they would move into full-time work.
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only this proportion was 13%.
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only this proportion was 14%
- These results are all in line with 2023.
- Mothers in lone parent households were more likely than those in couple households to express a desire to move from part-time to full-time work (19% compared to 12% respectively) and to increase the number of hours worked (46% compared to 31% respectively).
- By annual family income, those at the lower end of the income distribution were most likely to express a desire to move from part-time to full-time work. Around a quarter (24%) of those earning under £20,000 said this, compared to seven per cent among those earning £65,000 or more).
- In terms of the desire to increase the number of working hours while continuing to work part-time, there was some variation by income levels. Those in the highest income band (earning £65,000 or more) were least likely to express a desire to do this (23%) compared to those in the lowest income band (earning up to £19,999) (48%) (Accompanying Table 8.1).

Go to top

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Childcare and early years survey of parents

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- meet identified user needs
- produced according to sound methods
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