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Department for Education

Reporting year 2025

Childcare and early years survey of parents

Nationally representative survey of parents of children aged 0-14 on their use, experiences and views on early education and childcare.

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Early Years Survey of Parents series.

Headline facts and figures

% of children aged 0 to 4 years using formal childcare

67%

This is a rise from 64% in 2024

% of children aged 1 using formal childcare

45%

This is a rise from 38% in 2024

Ave number of hours in formal childcare per week (aged 2)

21.8 hours

This is a rise from 18.0 hours a week in 2024

2YO working parent offer: More flexibility in hours worked

74%

This is a rise from 59% in 2024

Affordability of local childcare rated as good

48%

This is a rise from 43% in 2024

► More details



% mothers said reliable childcare helped them to work

66%

This is in line with 64% in 2024.

► More detail



Headline facts and figures

Use of childcare and early years provision

- Formal childcare was used by over two thirds (67%) of children aged 0 to 4 years, equating to 2 million children. This is a rise from 64% in 2024. The proportion of children aged 1 using formal childcare in 2025 was 45%, a rise from 38% in 2024. This is the highest proportion since 2010-11 (34%).
- Average number of hours spent in formal childcare: Children aged 0 to 4 years spent a median of 26.7 hours a week in formal childcare, a rise from 24.0 hours a week in 2024. The increase was driven by an increase in hours by 2 year olds, with a median of 21.8 hours a week in formal childcare, a rise from 18.0 hours a week in 2024.

Receipt of the entitlement to government funded childcare or early education

- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 1 years, 74% were aware of the offer for working parents with children aged 9 months up to 2, and among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years, 83% were aware of the 2 year old offer for working parents.
- Over two thirds (71%) of working parents said that the offer for working parents of children aged 9 months up to 2 has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work.
- Just under three quarters (74%) of parents who had used the 2-year-old offer for working parents said that the offer has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work, a rise from 59% in 2024.
- In the absence of the working parents offer for children aged from 9 months up to 2, 40% said that they would be working fewer hours.
- In the absence of the working parents offer for children aged 2, 35% said that they would be working fewer hours, a rise from 23% in 2024.

- Over four in five (84%) parents aware of funded hours offers knew that providers could charge for extra services, a rise from 80% in 2024. Over one in ten (12%) said they had stopped them from applying to a provider and 8% they had stopped them from applying for more free hours.
- One in five (20%) parents whose child(ren) received funded hours of childcare indicated that there were restrictions on when the funded hours could be used, compared to 80% who said that there were no such restrictions.

Paying for Childcare

- Among children aged 0-2, there was a fall in the median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers between 2024 (£108.00) and 2025 (£75.00). This coincides with the introduction of the new entitlements.
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, just under half (48%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good, a rise from 43% in 2024.
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, half (50%) of parents who paid for childcare said it was 'easy' or 'very easy' to meet their childcare costs, a rise from 41% in 2024. In contrast, around a quarter (24%) of families with children aged 0 to 4 years only who paid for childcare found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to meet their childcare costs, a fall from 31% in 2024.

Perceptions of childcare and early years provision

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, over two thirds (71%) of parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as very or fairly good, in line with 2024 (72%).
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years, half (50%) of parents rated the level of information available about childcare in their local area as 'about right' a rise from 46% in 2024.
- Around a third (33%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only thought there was 'too little' information, a fall from 39% in 2024.

Special educational needs and disability

- Around two in five (39%) parents with a child receiving support for a special educational, health or disability

need, and using a formal childcare provider, reported finding it difficult or very difficult to find a local provider that could cater for their child's needs. The decrease from 48% in 2024 is not statistically significant (due to a small sample). This comes after a rise from 29% in 2023.

- Just over two thirds (69%) of parents using a formal provider for their child(ren) with special educational or disability needs agreed or agreed strongly that the hours available at their childcare provider fitted in with their other daily commitments, a rise from 49% of parents in 2024.

Mothers, work and childcare

- Around two thirds (66%) of mothers in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only said that having reliable childcare helped them to work, in line with 64% in 2024.
- Just over one in six (18%) mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only reported that they were not working due to childcare issues, a fall from 2024 (25%).

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Introduction

Introduction

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 2025 survey reports the findings of interviews, conducted between April and December 2025, with a nationally representative sample of 4,953 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 Technical Report.

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

For ease of interpretation, data from the 2025 survey wave is compared with, in most instances, the most recently comparable survey wave, which varies depending on the specific data under analysis. In several instances longer-term trends have been described where data from 2025 is compared with earlier survey waves.

Where differences are commented upon, e.g. as increases (‘a rise’) or decreases (‘a fall’), or differences between sub-groups, these differences are statistically significant[1]. Where differences are not statistically significant, they are described as being ‘in line with’ or ‘unchanged from’ previous figures.

This report summarises key findings from the survey. More detailed findings can be found in the Accompanying Tables (referenced throughout).

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. For the 2024 survey wave onwards, ‘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.

Effect of final rollout of new entitlements

At the start of fieldwork, 2 year olds and children aged from 9 months up to 2 with working parents were eligible for 15 funded hours of childcare under the working parents offer. From September 2025, the number of hours available under the working parents offer for 2 year olds and for children aged from 9 months up to 2 increased from 15 to 30 hours.

Of the households that had a child aged between 9 months and 2 years on the date of interview, **41%** were interviewed between April and August (pre-roll out) and the remaining **59%** were interviewed between September and December (post-roll out).

The survey explores awareness, take up and use of the offer as well as the impact on the lives of working parents. Given that the 30 hours only became available in September 2025, the results will only partially capture the impact of the increase in hours available under the working parents offer.

[1] Statistical significance testing was undertaken using Stata version 17. A difference was found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above. This means that the chance that the difference is due to sampling error, rather than reflecting a real difference between the sub-groups or survey years, is 1 in 20 or less. More information on statistical testing can be found in the technical report.

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1. Use of childcare and early years provision

This section discusses the use of childcare, both formal and informal childcare and holiday childcare. 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 2024 and the trend that younger children were more likely to receive any childcare than older children has continued in 2025 (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Among children in England aged 0 to 4 years, overall, in 2025, three quarters (75%) had received some form of childcare, during the most recent term-time week, equating to 2.2 million children (Accompanying Table 1.2 for national estimates). This includes formal childcare such as nurseries and childminders or informal childcare such as grandparents, friends or relatives.
- Formal childcare was used by two thirds (67%) of children aged 0 to 4 years, equating to 2 million children (Accompanying Table 1.2 for national estimates).

Among children, there were differences in the use of childcare by age of the children with younger children (aged 0 to 4 years) being more likely to receive childcare compared to their older counterparts (aged 5 to 14 years) (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Among children aged 0 to 4 years, three quarters (75%) had received some form of childcare, in line with 2024 (74%).
- There were no differences in the use of any childcare among children aged 5 to 11 years between 2024 and 2025.
 - Among children aged between 5 and 7 years, 70% received any childcare in line with 73% in 2024, along with 58% of children aged between 8 and 11 years, in line with 60% in 2024.
- Among children aged 12 to 14 years, over two in five (43%) had received some form of childcare, in line with 41% in 2024.

Long-term trends in childcare use

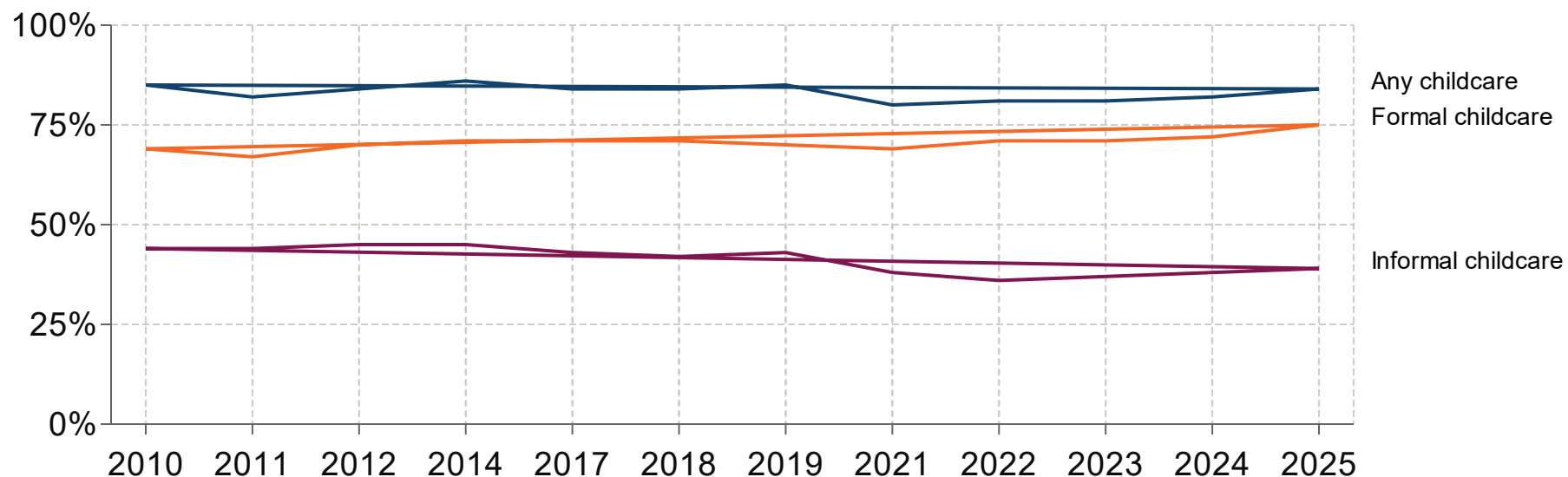
- Childcare usage patterns over time varied depending on the age group of the children receiving the care.
- Among children aged between 0 and 4 years, childcare use remained relatively stable between 2010-11 and 2025. Just under three quarters (73%) of children in this age group used some form of childcare in 2010-11, which is in line with 75% in 2025.
- Among children aged between 5 and 11 years, childcare use has experienced more fluctuation. From 2010-11 to 2017, there was a rise in childcare use, followed by a fall until 2023. By 2024, usage had risen, returning to a level comparable to that of 2010-11. However, in 2025, usage has fallen compared to 2010-11.
- Specifically, 67% of children aged between 5 and 11 years used childcare in 2010-11. This figure has fluctuated over the years - rising to 71% in 2017, falling to 57% in 2021, rising to 65% in 2024 before falling again to 62% in 2025.
- Among children aged between 12 and 14 years, 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 used some form of childcare, rising to 54% in 2014. However, after 2021, childcare use has fallen among this age group compared to 2010-11, to 35% in 2023, 41% in 2024 and 43% in 2025. Childcare use in 2025 was higher than in 2023 and in line with 2024 but remained lower than the level of childcare used in 2010-11.

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 2025



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.

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

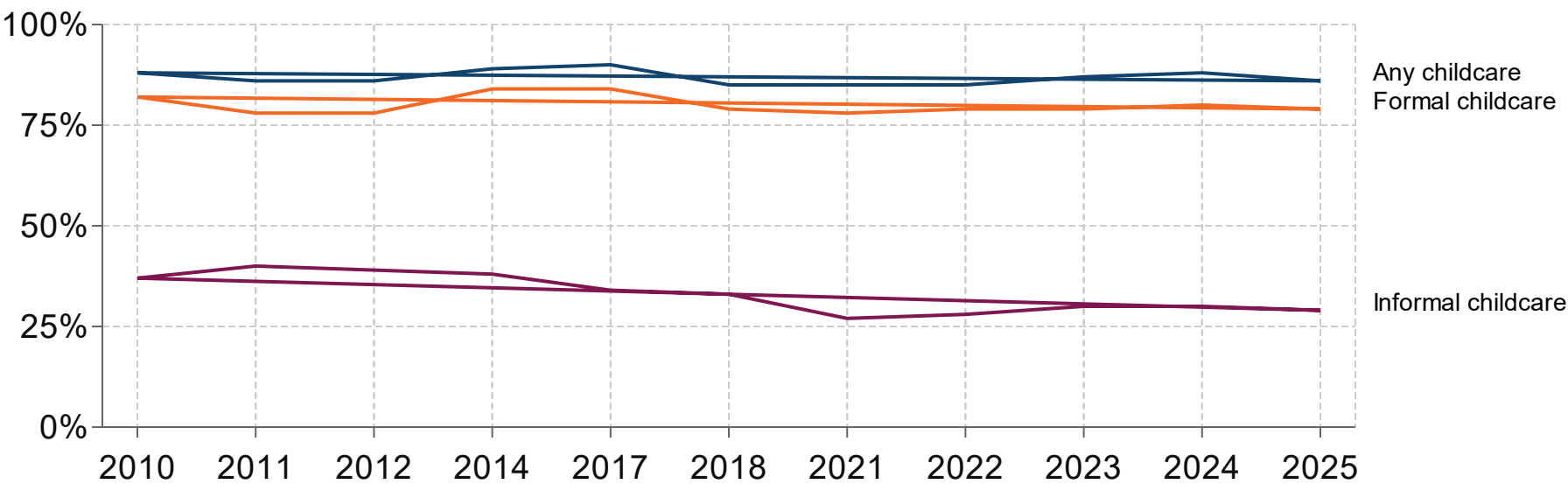
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Figure 1.2: Percentage of families with children aged both 0 to 4 and 5 to 14 years old using childcare providers, 2010 to 2025



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.

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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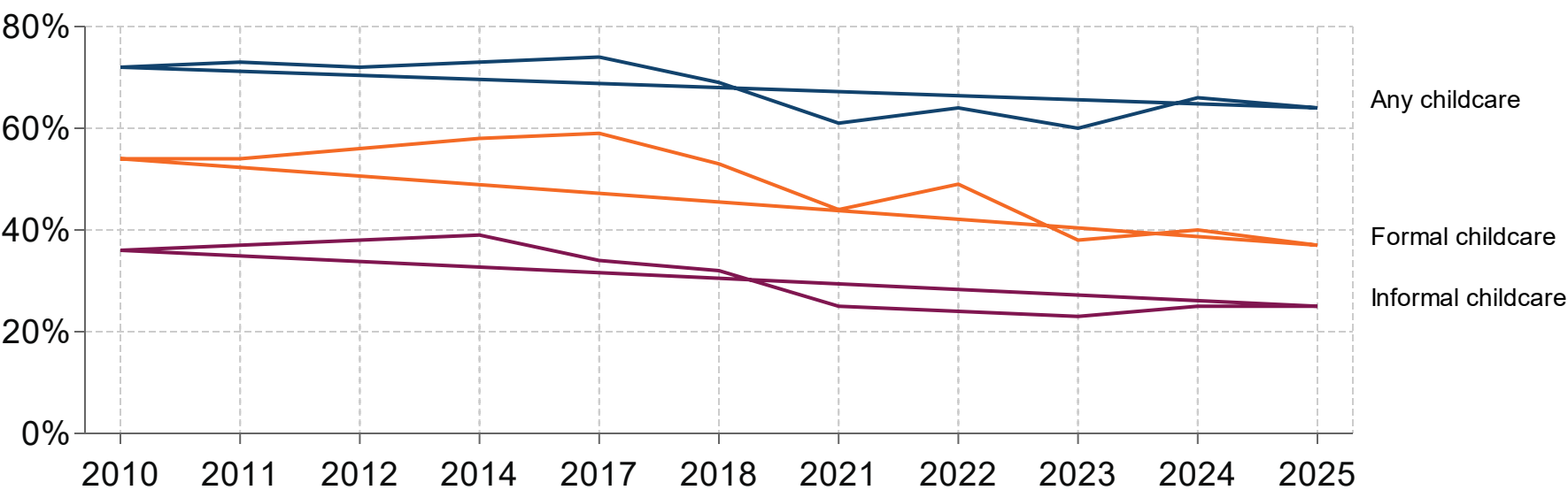
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Table 1.3: Percentage of families with just children aged 5 to 14 years old using childcare providers, 2010 to 2025



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.

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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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: with younger children being more likely to be in receipt of formal childcare than older children (Accompanying Table 1.8).
- Receipt of formal childcare was highest among younger children, being received by two thirds (67%) of children aged 0 to 4 years, which is a rise from 64% in 2024, and was lowest among older children aged 12 to 14 years (13%), in line with 2024 (14%) (Accompanying Table 1.8).
 - Among children aged 0 to 4 years, receipt of formal childcare was highest among children aged 3 to 4. These children were more likely to use a formal childcare provider than children aged 0 to 2.
 - There were also differences based on the individual ages of the children. Both children aged 3 and children aged 4 were more likely to use a formal childcare provider than children aged 0, 1 or 2. 90% of children aged 4 and 86% of children aged 3 used a formal childcare provider, compared to 68% of children aged 2, 45% of children aged 1 and six per cent of children below the age of 1 (Accompanying Table 1.8).
- There was a difference in use of formal childcare among children aged 1 between 2024 and 2025, with over

two in five (45%) children in receipt of this type of childcare in 2025, a rise from 38% in 2024. There were no differences in receipt of formal childcare between 2024 and 2025 among children aged 0, 2, 3 or 4 years of age (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Over half (53%) of children aged 5 to 7 years used formal childcare (in line with 58% in 2024) and just under a third (31%) of children aged 8 to 11 years used formal childcare, in line with 35% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 1.8).

Formal childcare use among children aged between 0 and 4 years varied by a range of family and child characteristics, such as:

- The child's age: As mentioned earlier, children aged 3 to 4 years were most likely to receive formal childcare compared to children aged 0, 1 or 2. Just under seven in eight (86%) children aged 3 received formal childcare, in line with 2024 (85%). This proportion was 90% among children aged 4, in line with 2024 (89%) (Accompanying Table 1.8). Around two thirds (68%) of children aged 2 years also received formal childcare, in line with 2024 (64%).
- The deprivation level of the local area[1]: 77% of children aged 0 to 4 years living in the least deprived areas received formal childcare compared to 59% in the most deprived areas (Accompanying Table 1.3).
- The family's annual income: 84% of children aged between 0 and 4 years in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more received formal childcare, compared to 47% of those in families with an annual 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 (79% for children in dual-working couple families and 79% for children in working lone-parent families).
 - Children in non-working lone-parent families were least likely to receive formal childcare (40% for children in non-working lone-parent families) (Accompanying Table 1.3).

Time spent in formal childcare

- There were differences in the length of time spent in formal childcare by age of children: as age increases, the amount of time spent in formal childcare generally decreases (Accompanying Table 1.10).

- Children aged 0 to 4 years spent more time in formal childcare than children in older age groups. Children aged 5 to 7 years spent more time in formal childcare than children aged 8 to 11 years and aged 12 to 14 years. However, there was no difference between children aged 8 to 11 years and children aged 12 to 14 years in the amount of time spent in formal childcare (Accompanying Table 1.10).
- Among children receiving formal childcare, younger children (aged between 0 and 4 years) spent more time in childcare than their older counterparts (aged between 5 and 14 years).
 - Children aged 0 to 4 years spent a median of 26.7 hours a week in formal childcare, a rise from 24.0 hours a week in 2024.
 - Children aged 2 spent a median of 21.8 hours a week in formal childcare, a rise from 18.0 hours a week in 2024. The median number of hours a week in formal childcare for children aged 1, 3 or 4 this year was in line with 2024.
- The number of hours a week spent in formal childcare by older children in 2025 was in line with the amount of time spent in 2024:
 - Children aged 5 to 7 years spent a median of 9.0 hours a week in formal childcare, in line with 14.8 hours a week in 2024.
 - Children aged 8 to 11 years spent a median of 3.3 hours a week in formal childcare, in line with 3.0 hours a week in 2024.
 - Older children aged 12 to 14 years spent a median of 2.0 hours a week in formal childcare, unchanged from 2.0 hours in 2024.

Types of formal childcare providers

There were also differences in the types of formal childcare providers that delivered care for children of different ages (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Children aged 0 to 4 years received formal childcare from a range of providers, principally day nurseries (28%, a rise from 23% in 2024), reception classes (12%, in line with 2024 (10%)), nursery schools (10%, a fall from 15% in 2024) and nursery classes attached to a primary or infants' school (10%, in line with nine per cent in

2024).

- Children aged 5 to 14 years most often received formal childcare from after school clubs (27% of those aged between 5 and 7 years, 22% of those aged between 8 and 11 years and 10% of those aged between 12 and 14 years).

Use of a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school

- As mentioned, 10% of children aged 0 to 4 years received formal childcare from a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school (Accompanying Table 1.8).
- Among children aged 2 to 4 years who had received childcare from a formal provider other than a reception class or a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school in the reference week, two in five (40%) parents stated that they had previously looked into using a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school for their child (Accompanying Table 5.8). Among children aged two, just over three in eight (38%) parents had considered doing so, compared to a slightly higher proportion among children aged three (43% of parents) (Accompanying Table 5.8).
- Among children aged 2 to 4 years whose parents had looked into using a nursery class attached to primary or infants' school, but who were not currently using one, just over three in five (62%) parents said that they would prefer to use this type of childcare provider (Accompanying Table 5.9).
- Among children aged 2 to 4 years who were not being looked after by a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school, parents were asked the reasons for this. Almost one in six (16%) parents said this was because they preferred to use a different type of provider, 14% stated that there was not one in their local area and 13% said it was because it was not open on the days or hours that they needed (Accompanying Table 5.10).
- Among children aged 2, the most common reason given by parents was that they preferred to use a different type of provider (19%). Among children aged 3 or 4 years, the most common reason given was that there was not a nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school in their local area - 15% among 3 year olds and 21% among 4 year olds (Accompanying Table 5.10).

Long-term trends in formal childcare use

- The long-term trends in formal childcare use have been relatively stable but there has been a rise in overall

use of formal childcare by children aged 0 to 4 years since 2010-11, particularly between 2023 and 2025.

- The long-term trends in formal childcare use vary by the age of the children receiving formal childcare (Table E1.2).
- Among children aged between 0 and 4 years there has been a gradual rise 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 was 59%, but since then has risen to 63% in 2023, 64% in 2024 and 67% in 2025.
 - The proportion of children aged 1 that received formal childcare in 2010-11 was 34%, which has risen to 45% in 2025. The proportion among children aged 1 in 2025 is the highest since 2010-11 - the next highest proportion for children aged 1 was in 2022 (40%).
- Among children aged 5 to 11 years, between 2010-11 and 2017 there was a rise in formal childcare use, with 52% in receipt of formal childcare in 2010-11, rising to 57% in 2017. However, formal childcare use among this age group has fallen since 2017 to 40% in 2025.
- Among children aged 12 to 14 years the trend in formal childcare use remained stable between 2010-11 to 2018 but since then use among this age group has fallen. In 2010-11, 33% of children aged 12 to 14 years received formal childcare, but by 2025 this has fallen to 13%.

[1] The deprivation levels are defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England and are divided into five quintiles ranging from the most deprived (1st quintile) to the least deprived (5th quintile).

Use of informal childcare among children

Informal childcare use varied by the different ages of the children. Children aged 0 to 4 years were more likely to receive informal childcare than older children (aged 8 to 14 years) (Accompanying Table 1.8). However, there was no difference in the likelihood of using an informal provider between children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 7 years.

The proportions of children of different ages who received informal childcare in 2025 were all in line with 2024.

- Over a quarter (29%) of children aged 0 to 4 years received informal childcare, in line with 2024 (28%).
- A quarter (25%) of children aged 5 to 7 years received informal childcare, in line with 2024 (26%).
- Just over one in five (22%) of children aged 8 to 11 years and 16% of children aged 12 to 14 years received informal childcare; these results are also in line with 2024 (22% for children aged 8 to 11 years and 13% for children aged 12 to 14 years).

Time spent in informal childcare

Children aged 0 to 4 years spent more hours per week in informal childcare than older children (Accompanying Table 1.10).

- Children aged 0 to 4 years spent a median of 9.0 hours a week in informal childcare, more than three hours longer than children aged 5 to 7 years who spent a median of 5.3 hours a week in informal childcare, and four hours longer than children aged 8 to 11 years who spent a median of 5.0 hours a week in informal childcare.
- Older children aged 12 to 14 years 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 (9.0 hours) was in line with 2024 (10.0 hours).

Types of informal childcare providers

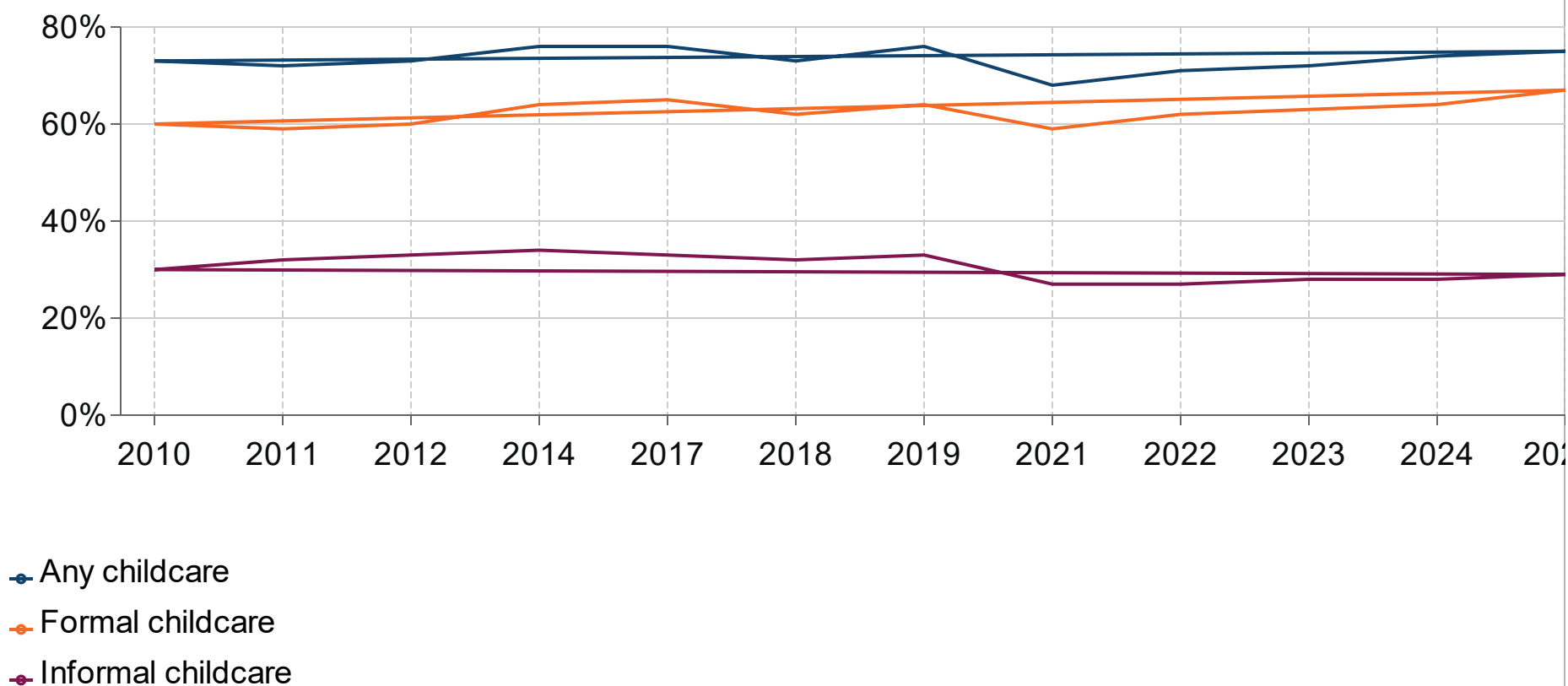
As in 2024, the most common provider of informal childcare was grandparents (Accompanying Table 1.8).

- Around a quarter (26%) of children aged 0 to 4 years received informal childcare from their grandparents, unchanged from 2024 (26%).
- Children aged 0 to 4 years were more likely to receive informal childcare from their grandparents than children aged 5 to 7 years, children aged 8 to 11 years, and children aged 12 to 14 years.
- As the age of children increased, the proportion of children receiving informal childcare from their grandparents decreased. Around a fifth (21%) of children aged 5 to 7 years received this type of informal childcare, compared to 16% of children aged 8 to 11 years and nine per cent of children aged 12 to 14 years.

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Figure 1.4: Percentage of children aged 0-4 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2025

Childcare use in the most recent term 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.

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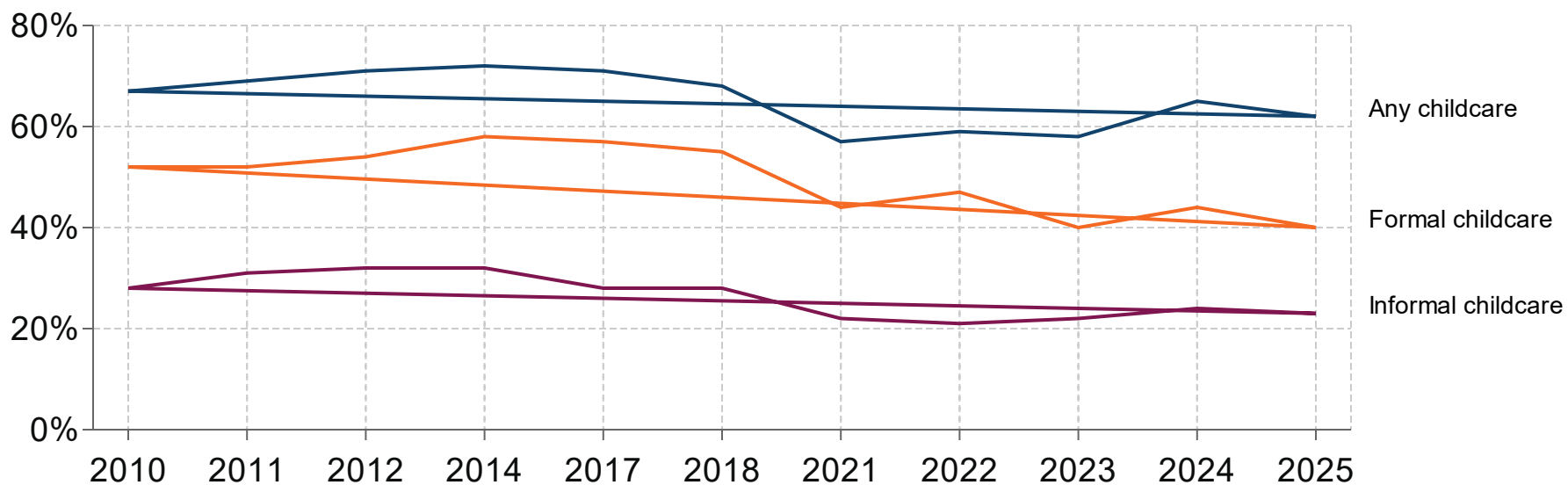
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Figure 1.5: Percentage of children aged 5 to 11 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2025



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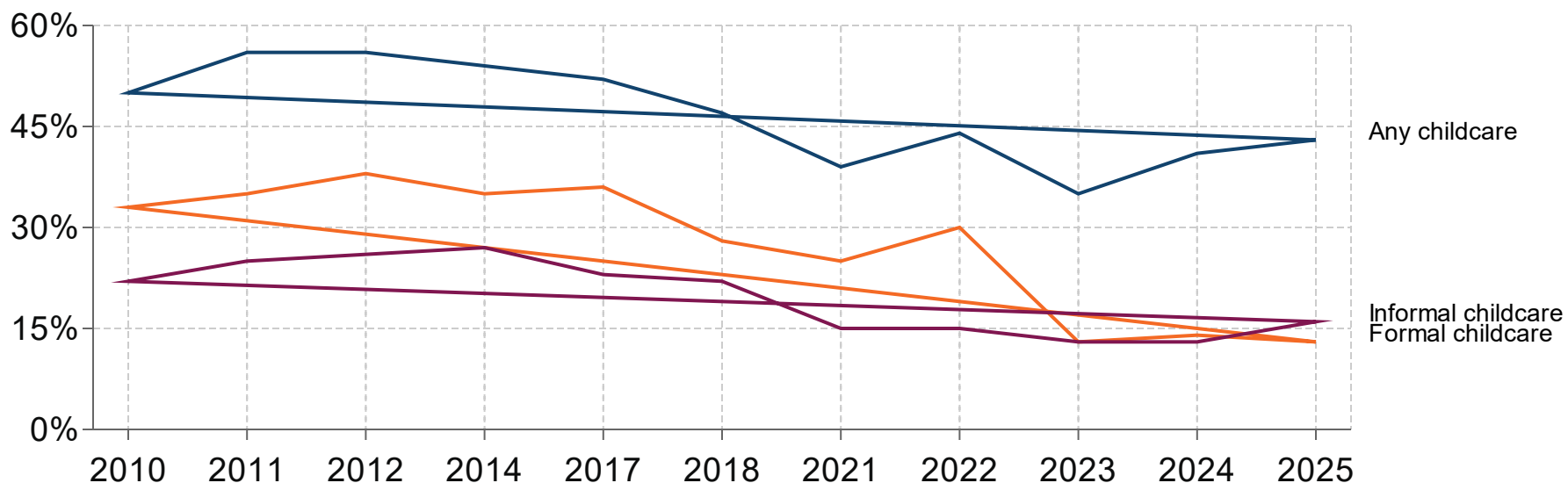
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Figure 1.6: Percentage of children aged 12 to 14 using childcare providers, 2010 to 2024



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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.

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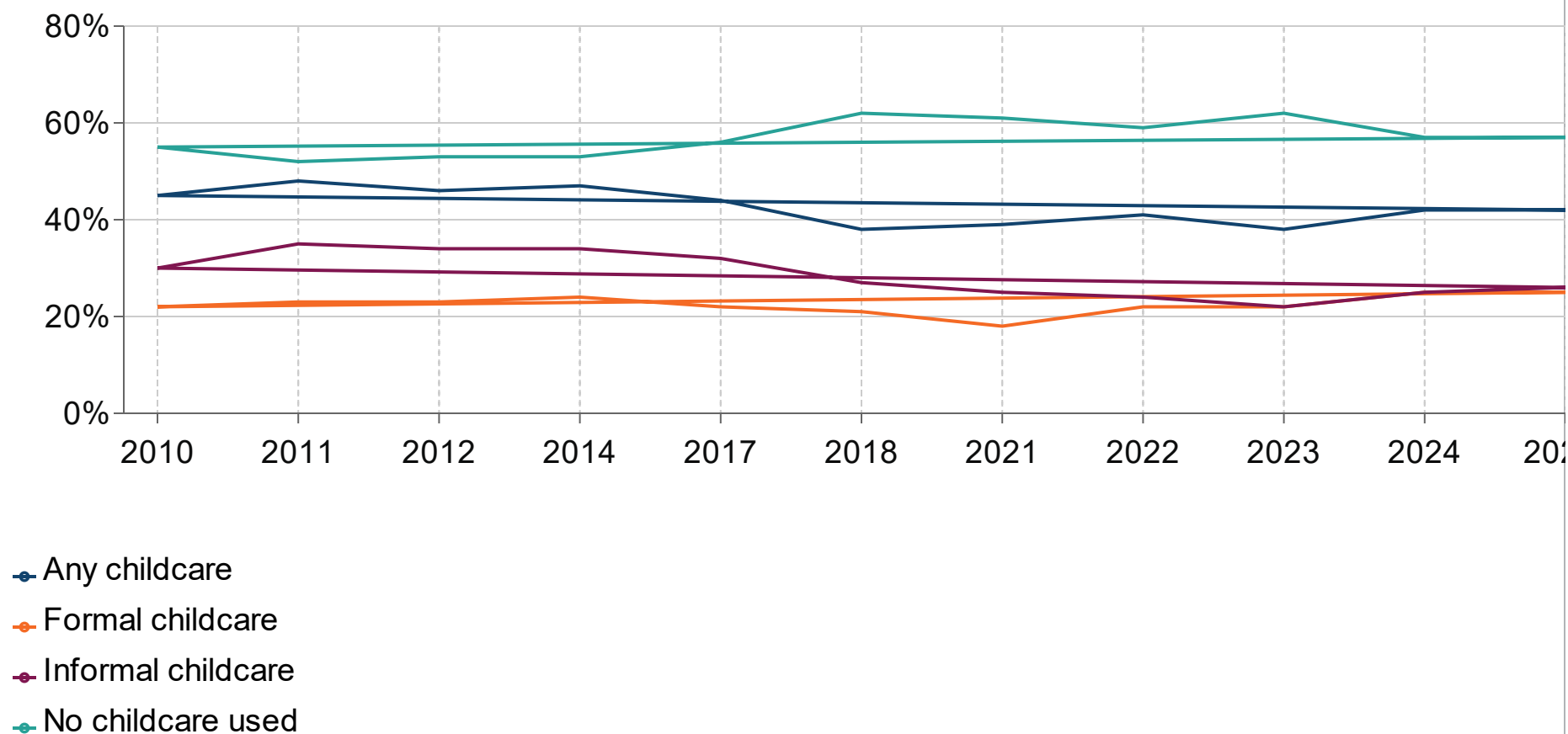
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Table

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Figure 1.7: Percentage of families with school-age children (aged 4-14) using childcare during school holidays, 2010 to 2025



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.

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Use of holiday childcare among school-age children

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

- Children aged 4, 5 to 7 years and 8 to 11 years were all more likely to receive any childcare during the school holidays in 2025 than children aged 12 to 14 years. The proportions were just over a third (35%) among children aged 4 years, 39% among children aged 5 to 7 years, and 40% among children aged 8 to 11 years compared to 27% among children aged 12 to 14 years.
- Younger children were more likely to receive formal childcare during school holidays than older children - 20% among children aged 4 years, 22% among children aged 5 to 7 years, and 26% among children aged 8 to 11 years compared to 11% among children aged 12 to 14 years.

Reasons for using formal childcare

Overview

- Among children aged 0 to 14 who attended a formal provider in the reference week, the main factors that parents considered when choosing a formal childcare provider 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), the provider’s reputation and concerns relating to the kind of care given (Accompanying Table 6.1).

- Among children aged 0 to 4 years, the provider’s reputation and the kind of care given were more likely to be reasons for choosing a formal provider compared to children aged 5 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 6.1).

Children aged 0 to 4 years

- Among children aged 0 to 4 years, the most common factors for choosing a formal provider were convenience (67%, in line with 64% in 2024), the provider’s reputation (58%, in line with 57% in 2024), and concerns relating to the kind of care given (56%, unchanged from 56% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 6.1).

Children aged 5 to 14 years

- Among children aged 5 to 14 years, the most common factors were the same as among children aged 0 to 4 years, namely convenience (65%, a rise from 58% in 2024), concerns relating to the kind of care given (43%, unchanged from 43% in 2024) and the provider’s reputation (36%, in line with 39% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 6.1).
- Among children aged 5 to 7 years, the most common factor was convenience (77%) followed by concerns relating to the kind of care given (55%) (Accompanying Table 6.1).
- Among children aged 8 to 11 years, the most common factor was also convenience (65%) followed by concerns relating to the kind of care given (39%) (Accompanying Table 6.1).
- Among older children aged 12 to 14, the provider’s reputation was the most common factor (41%) followed by convenience (38%) (Accompanying Table 6.1).

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Table 1.8: Reasons not using childcare in the last year, 2025

Proportion selecting each response

		2025		
		Pre-school only	School-age only	All
Choice	I would rather look after my child(ren) myself	67%	63%	65%
	I rarely need to be away from my child(ren)	25%	23%	24%
	My child(ren) are too young	12%	*	2%
	No need to use childcare	7%	5%	5%
	My/ my partner's work hours or conditions fit around child(ren)	3%	*	*
	My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	2%	23%	18%
	Respondent and/or partner is working from home	1%	*	*
	My child(ren) don't want to go	0%	2%	2%
Constraint	I cannot afford childcare	12%	6%	8%
	I cannot find a childcare place as local providers are full	4%	1%	1%
	There are no childcare providers that I could trust	4%	1%	2%
	The quality of childcare is not good enough	3%	2%	3%

	I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	2%	0%	*
	My child(ren) need special care	1%	8%	7%
	I have had a bad experience of using childcare in the past	0%	1%	1%
Other	Other reasons	7%	2%	3%

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Footnotes

1. * denotes a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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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.
- Around two thirds (65%) of parents who were not using childcare said this was because they would rather look after their child(ren) themselves (in line with 64% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.3).
- Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were less likely to say that they would rather look after their child(ren) themselves compared to parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years - 67% for parents with children aged between 0 and 4 years only, compared to 80% of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years.
- There were no differences in the likelihood of giving this response between parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only (67%) and parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only (63%) (Accompanying Table 5.3).
- Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years were more likely to say that they could not afford childcare (15%), compared to six per cent of those with children aged 5 to 14 years only (Accompanying Table 5.3). There was no difference between parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only and parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years in saying that they couldn't afford childcare.

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Table 1.9: Changes to childcare provision that would make it better suited to parents needs, 2025

	0 to 4	5 to 14	All
More affordable childcare	38%	25%	29%
More childcare available during school holidays	20%	22%	22%
More childcare places – general	20%	11%	14%

More information about what is available	16%	16%	16%
Higher quality childcare	15%	7%	9%
More flexibility about when childcare is available	14%	10%	12%
Longer opening hours	13%	13%	13%
Childcare more suited to my child's individual interests	9%	16%	14%
Making childcare available closer to where I live	8%	9%	9%
More convenient/accessible locations	8%	8%	8%
More childcare available during term time	7%	7%	7%
Childcare more suited to my child's special educational and disability needs	3%	9%	8%
Making childcare available closer to where I work	2%	2%	2%
Nothing	29%	38%	35%
Other	3%	5%	5%

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Changes to local childcare provision

All parents with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years 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 mostly in line with those from 2024, except for the proportion of parents seeking more affordable childcare, where the proportion of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only mentioning this fell this year compared to last.

- Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to want to see changes to childcare provision than parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only. This is based on the proportion of parents saying that nothing or no changes to childcare provision would make it better suited to their needs - 29% of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only stated this, compared to 38% of parents with 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, as was the case in 2024. However, the proportion of parents saying this fell in 2025 compared to 2024 (from 43% in 2024 to 38% in 2025). This was also the most frequently cited change among parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only, although to a lesser extent (25%, in line with 27% in 2024).
- A higher percentage of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only (compared to parents with children aged 5 to 14 only) also mentioned:
 - More childcare places in general: 20%, (in line with 23% in 2024), compared to 11% (also in line with 2024, 13%).

- Higher quality childcare: 15% (in line with 2024, 14%), compared to seven per cent (unchanged from 2024, also seven per cent).
- More flexibility about when childcare is available: 14% (in line with 2024, 16%), compared to 10% (in line with 2024, 11%).
- There was a difference among parents mentioning the provision of more childcare during school holidays (Accompanying Table 5.18).
 - Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years were more likely to mention this (27%) than families containing children aged 0 to 4 years only (20%) and families containing children aged 5 to 14 years only (22%).
- There were no differences between 2025 and 2024 in the proportion of parents mentioning the provision of more childcare during school holidays based on the age of children in the family.
 - The proportion of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only mentioning this change was 20%, in line with 2024 (21%).
 - The proportion of parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only was 22%, in line with 2024 (23%).
 - The proportion for parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years was 27%, in line with 2024 (25%).

Types of formal providers parents wanted to use more of

Almost three in five (58%) parents with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years said they did not want to use another formal childcare provider as they were happy with their current arrangements, in line with 2024 (56%) (Accompanying Table 5.20).

Of those parents that did want to use another formal provider, around a fifth (19%) said that they wanted to use a holiday club or scheme, in line with 2024 (20%).

- Parents in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more were less likely to report that they would like to use or use more of a holiday club or scheme (17%) compared to parents in families with an annual income of £45,000 - £64,999 (23%) and those in families with an annual income of £30,000 - £44,999 (also 23%).

- There was no difference between the proportion of parents reporting that they would like to use or use more of a holiday club or scheme in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more (17%) compared to parents in families with an annual income of under £20,000 (22%) and those in families with an annual income of £20,000 to £29,999 (21%).
- Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were less likely to want to use or use more of a holiday club/scheme (10%) than parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only (22%) and parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (17%).

After-school clubs and breakfast clubs

One in six (17%) parents with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years said that they would like to start using or use an after school club more, in line with 2024, 19% (Accompanying Table 5.20).

- There were no differences in parents wanting to use an after school club based on income this year.
- Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only (nine per cent) were less likely to want to use an after school club than parents of children aged 5 to 14 only (20%) and parents of children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (15%).

Fewer than one in ten (seven per cent) parents said that they would like to start using or use a breakfast club or before school club more, in line with 2024, nine per cent (Accompanying Table 5.20).

- There were some differences in the proportion of parents wanting to start using or use a breakfast club or before school club more, based on family annual income.
 - Parents in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more (5%) were less likely to say they would like to start using or use a breakfast club or before school club more compared to parents in families with an annual income of between £20,000 and £64,999 (9% of parents in families with an annual income of £20,000 - £29,999; 9% of those in families earning £30,000 - £44,999 and 10% for parents in families with an annual income of £45,000 - £64,999).
 - There was no difference in the likelihood of parents saying they would like to start using or use a breakfast club or before school club more between parents in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more (5%) and those in families with an annual income of under £20,000 (9%).

- There was a difference in the proportion of parents wanting to start using or use a breakfast club more, based on the age of children in the family.
 - Parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were less likely to say that they would like to start using or use a breakfast club or before school club more compared to parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years, and parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only.
 - Five per cent of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only gave this response compared to eight per cent of parents in each of the other family types.

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

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

Policy background on childcare and early education in England

Entitlements before September 2025

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare or early education in England. Some 2 year olds and some children aged from 9 months up to 2 are also entitled to 15 hours.

The 2 year olds are eligible for 15 hours if their parents are working or 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 \(opens in a new tab\).](#) [\(opens in new tab\)](#) The children aged from 9 months up to 2 years old are eligible

for 15 hours if their parents are working.

15 hours entitlement

Eligible 2 year olds and children aged between 9 months and up to 4 years with working parents 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 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 September 2025

All 2 year olds and children aged from 9 months up to 2 years old with working parents are eligible for a further 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.

Entitlements during fieldwork

Fieldwork for the 2025 survey took place between April and December 2025. At the start of fieldwork, 2-year-olds and children aged from 9 months up to 2 with working parents were eligible for 15 funded hours of childcare under the working parents offer. From September 2025, the number of hours available under the working parents offer for 2-year-olds and for children aged from 9 months up to 2 increased from 15 to 30 hours.

To avoid changing questions during fieldwork, the questions on the offer for 2-year-olds and for children aged 9 months up to 2 with working parents did not reference a specific number of hours. This is reflected in the

accompanying tables and this report.

In this section, the results relating to the funded hours offers are presented by the age group of the children receiving each offer, from youngest to oldest.

Working parents offer for children aged from 9 months up to 2

Awareness, take-up, and use of the offer

- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 1 years, around three-quarters (74%) were aware of the offer for children aged from 9 months old up to 2 with working parents (Accompanying Table 2.6).
- Over two thirds (69%) of working parents with a child aged between 0 and 1 that were aware of the offer for working parents had applied for the scheme and a further 24% were intending to apply for it (Accompanying Table 2.7).
- In 2025, almost nine in ten (90%) parents using the working parents offer for children aged from 9 months up to 2 were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child (Accompanying Table 2.10).

Perceived impact of the offer

Parents receiving free hours under the offer for working parents with children aged from 9 months up to 2 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 two in five (42%) parents said that in the absence of the offer they would be working the same number of hours, whereas two in five (40%) said that they would be working fewer hours (Accompanying Table 2.21).
- Around seven in ten (71%) of parents said that the offer has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work and just over half (52%) of parents said that the offer has given them more flexibility in which jobs they can do (Accompanying Table 2.24).
- Over two in five (45%) parents stated that the offer has given them slightly more money to spend now than before (Accompanying Table 2.22). Just over one in five (22%) parents stated that the offer had given them much more money to spend now than before.

- For just over a third (35%) of families the offer has made the overall quality of their family life much better (Accompanying Table 2.23). For under half (47%) of families, the offer has made the overall quality of their family life slightly better.

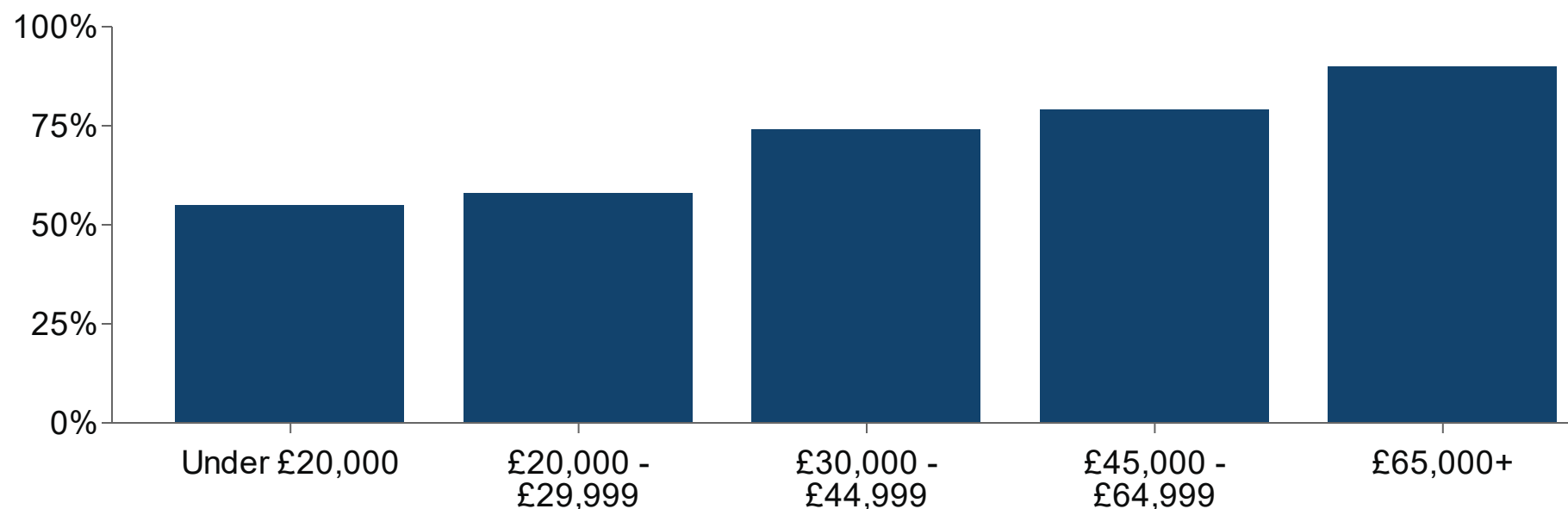
Chart

Table

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Figure 2.1: Awareness of the entitlement to government funded early education for children aged 9 months up to 2 years old by annual family income

(all families with a 0 to 1 year old)



Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Working parents offer for children aged 2

Awareness of the offer

- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years, over four in five (83%) were aware of the offer for working parents, a fall from 85% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.4).
- Just over four in five parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were aware of this offer (82%), compared to 83% of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 2.4). This difference is not statistically significant.
- Among families containing a child aged 0 to 2 years, parents in these families with an annual income under £20,000 per year were less likely to be aware of this offer (69%), compared to parents in families with an annual income of £30,000 - £44,999 (80%), those with an annual income of £45,000 - £64,999 (87%), or those with an annual income of £65,000 or more (93%) (Accompanying Table 2.4).
- There was no statistically significant difference in awareness of this offer between parents in families with an annual income of under £20,000 (69%) and those with an annual income between £20,000 - £29,999 (71%) (Accompanying Table 2.4).

Take-up and use of the offer

- Around seven in eight (87%) working parents with a child aged 2 years that were aware of the offer for working parents had applied for the scheme and a further nine per cent were intending to apply for it (Accompanying Table 2.7).
- Furthermore, around nine in ten (89%) parents using the 2 year old offer for working parents were satisfied with the way they were able to use the hours for their child, in line with 91% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.10).

Perceived impact of the offer

Parents with a 2-year-old that received free hours under the 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 under half (48%) of these parents said that in the absence of this offer they would be working the same number of hours, a fall from 62% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.21).
- In contrast, around a third (35%) said that they would be working fewer hours, a rise from 23% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.21).
- Around three quarters (74%) of parents said that this offer has given them more flexibility in the number of hours they can work, a rise from 59% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.24).
- Around three in five (59%) parents said that the offer has given them more flexibility in which jobs they can do (Accompanying Table 2.24), a rise from 43% in 2024.
- Over four in five (46%) parents stated that this offer has given them slightly more money to spend now than before (Accompanying Table 2.22).
- For around three in eight (38%) families this offer has made the overall quality of their family life much better (Accompanying Table 2.23).

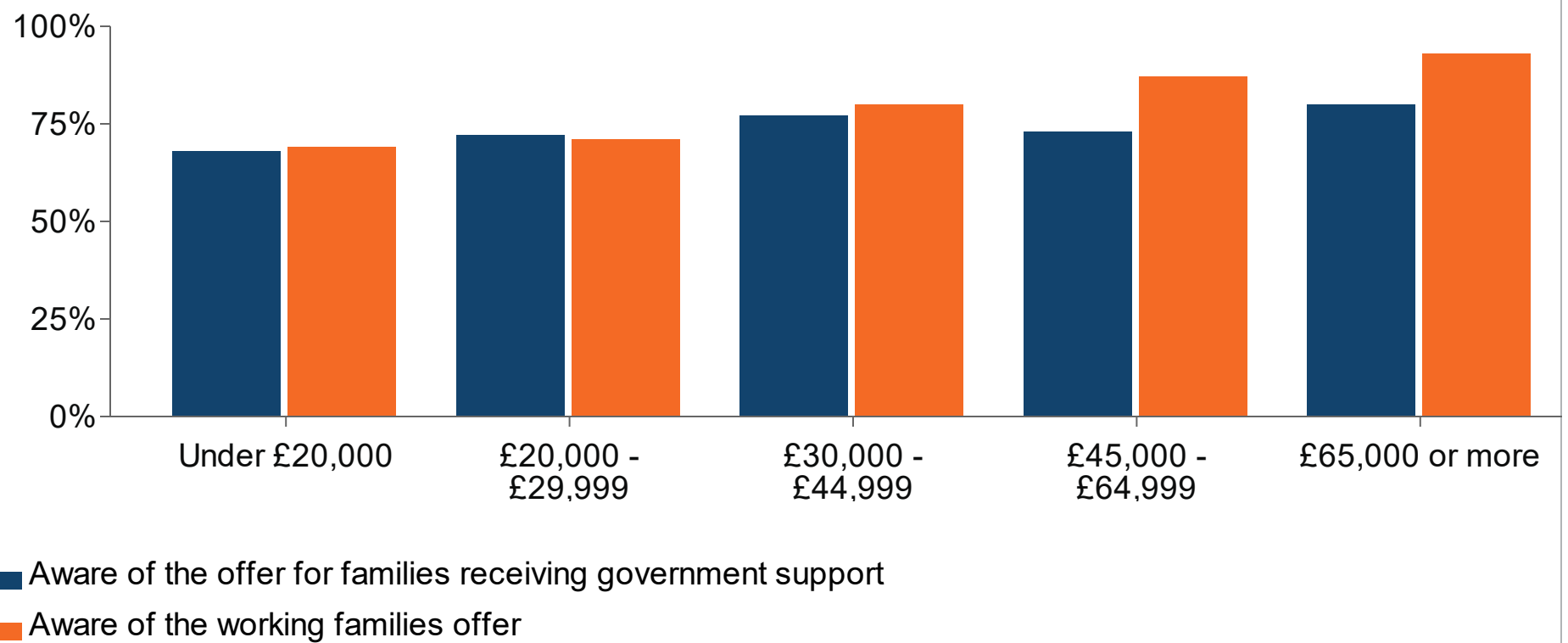
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Table

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Figure 2.2: Awareness of the entitlement to government funded early education for 2 year olds by family annual income, 2025

All families with a 0 to 2 year old



Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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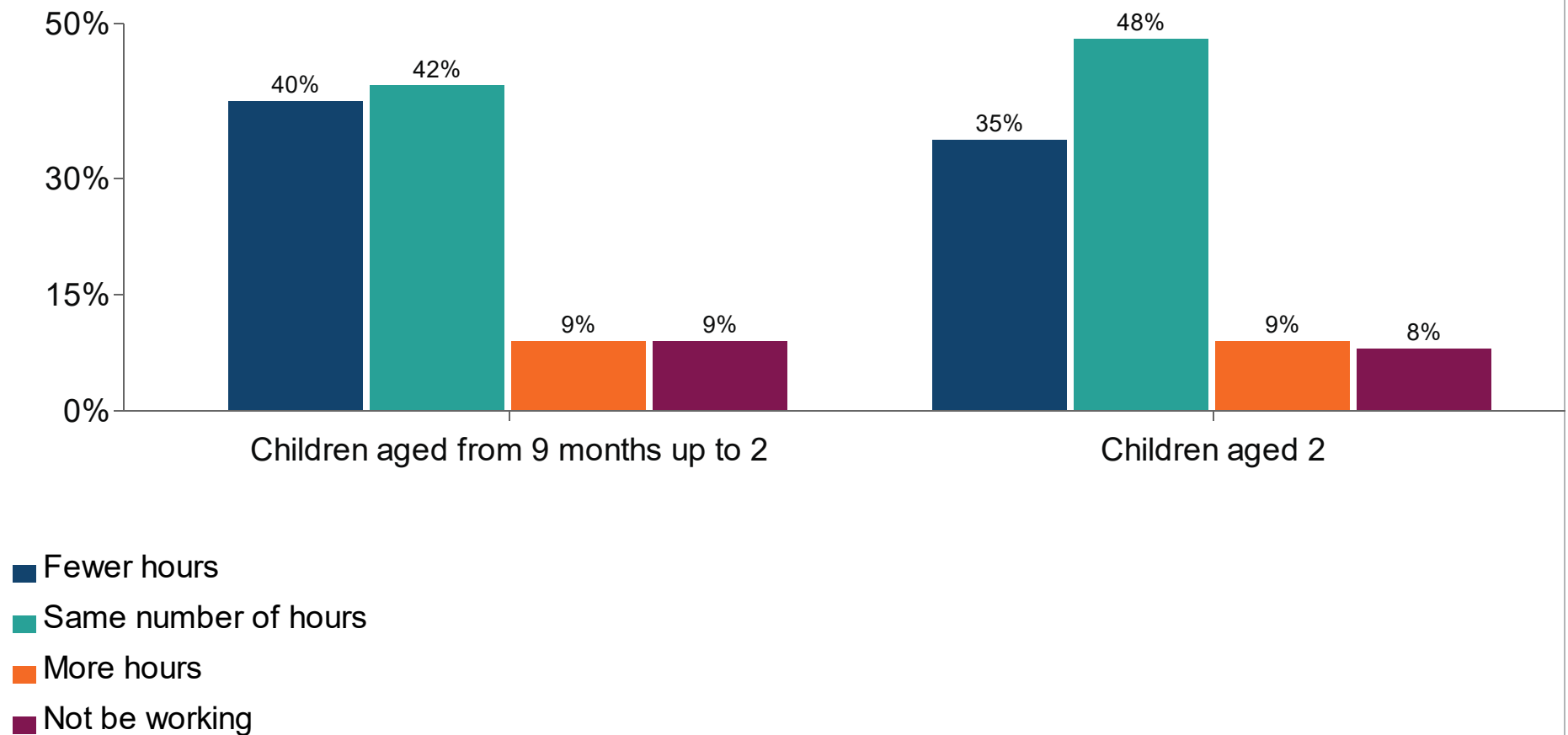
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Figure 2.3 Impact of funded hours for children aged 9 months to 2 years on hours worked

Were the funded hours offer not available, the parent would be working...



Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Table 2.4: Perceived impact of the funded hours for children aged 9 months to 2 years old for working families on their employment choices, 2025

	9m2yo	2yo
more flexibility in number of hours I can work	71%	74%
more flexibility in which jobs I can do	52%	59%

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[Data symbols](#) ?

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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15 hours offer for children aged 2 in receipt of some forms of government support

Awareness of the offer

- Among parents with a child aged between 0 and 2 years, three quarters (75%) were aware of the offer for children aged 2 in families in receipt of some forms of government support, unchanged from 75% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.4).
- Among families containing a child aged 0 to 2 years, parents in these families with an annual income under £20,000 per year were less likely to be aware of this offer (68%) compared to parents in families with an annual income between £30,000 - £44,999 (77%) or those with an annual income of £65,000 or more (80%).
- There was no statistically significant difference in awareness of this offer between parents in families with an annual income of under £20,000 (68%) and those with an annual income between £20,000 - £29,999 (72%) or those with an annual income between £45,000 - £64,999 (73%) (Accompanying Table 2.4).

Take-up and use of the offer

- Around three in eight (37%) parents with a child aged 2 years that were aware of the 15 hour offer for parents receiving some forms of government support, were claiming Universal Credit (Accompanying Table 2.25).
 - Of these parents, 71% had applied for the free hours offer, a further 19% were intending to apply for it and the remaining nine per cent did not intend to apply for it (Accompanying Table 2.8).
- Around five in eight (63%) parents with a child aged 2 years that were aware of the 15 hour offer for parents receiving some forms of government support, were not claiming Universal Credit (Accompanying Table 2.25).
- In 2025, 96% of 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, unchanged from 96% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.10).

Perceived eligibility for the offers for children aged 2 years old

- Among parents with a child aged 2, who were aware of (but had not used) the 2 year old offers, just over one in six (17%) thought that they were **eligible** for the working families offer compared to seven 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).

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Table 2.5: Receipt of government funded childcare, or early education, by age of child, 2025

	Percentage of children using childcare providers in the most recent term time week				
	2025				
	1	2	3	4	All
Attended school	0%	0%	0%	55%	17%
Working families offer for children aged 9 months up to 2 years	61%	0%	0%	0%	9%
2 year-old offer for working families	0%	59%	0%	0%	16%
2 year-old offer for families receiving government support	0%	9%	0%	0%	2%
15 free hours offer for 3 to 4 year-olds	0%	0%	42%	17%	17%
30 free hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds	0%	0%	41%	24%	18%
Early years provision but no government funded hours	5%	6%	3%	0%	3%
Received early years provision but not sure about government funded hours	1%	0%	*	0%	*
No early years provision	33%	26%	14%	3%	17%

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[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

1. * denotes a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Table 2.6: Satisfaction with the way the government funded hours could be used, 2025

	9 months up to 2 years	2 year olds		3 to 4 year olds	
	Working families	Families receiving government support	Working families	15 hours	30 hours
Very satisfied	64%	71%	63%	67%	68%
Fairly satisfied	26%	25%	26%	22%	24%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%	3%	5%	4%	3%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%	1%	5%	3%	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%	0%	1%	3%	1%

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[Data symbols](#) 

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 with working parents

Awareness of the offer

- Among parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years, 90% were aware of the current 30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 years with working parents, a rise from 86% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- Awareness varied by family working status, with dual-working couple households most likely to be aware of the offer than any other family working status (Accompanying Table 3.1).
 - 95% of dual-working couple households were aware, compared with four in five (80%) couple households where neither parent was in work (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- Awareness levels also varied by annual family income. Over four in five (83%) parents with children aged 0 to 4, whose family income was under £20,000 were aware of the offer, lower than parents whose family income was between £45,000 - £64,999 (94%) and whose family income was £65,000 or more per year (97%) (Accompanying Table 3.1).
- There were no statistically significant differences in awareness of the 30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 with working parents, between parents with two or more child(ren) aged 0 to 2 only (87%) and parents with two or more child(ren) aged 3 to 4 only (90%) (Accompanying Table 3.9).

Take-up of the offer

- Official statistics from the DfE's Early Years Census and Schools Census show that in January 2025, 379,000 children aged 3 to 4 had registered for the 30-hour entitlement up 5% from 2024.
- Just over 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 2.10), in line with 2024 (92%).
- Just under 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 2024 (58%).
- Among parents whose partner was not in work, and who were not already receiving or registered for the 30 hours, over two in five (45%) thought it likely that their partner would try and find paid work to become eligible for the 30 hours, (Accompanying Table 3.2), in line with 2024 (47%).

Perceived impact of the offer

Parents using the 30 hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds were asked to gauge the perceived impact of the hours on their work (Accompanying Table 3.3).

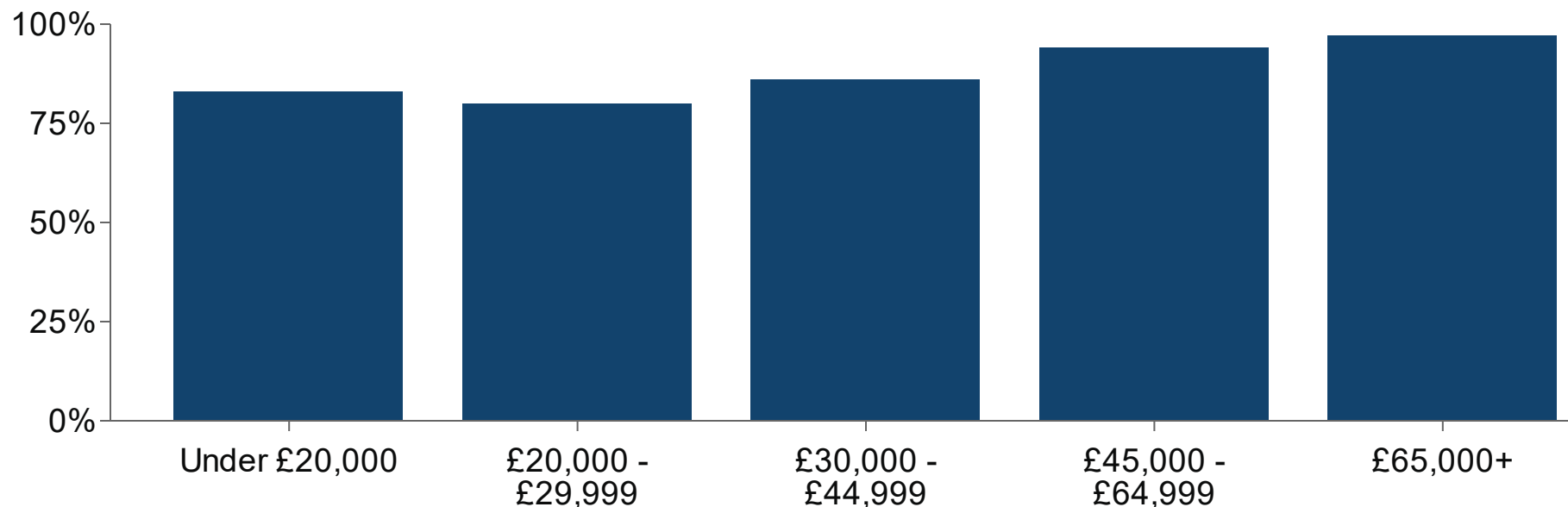
- Two in five (40%) parents said that in the absence of the 30 hours they would be working fewer hours, in line with 37% in 2024.
- Over two in five (46%) parents said that if the 30 hours were not available to them, they would still work the same number of hours, in line with 49% in 2024.
- Seven per cent of parents said they would be working more hours were the 30 hours not available to them, in line with 9% in 2024.
- Six per cent of parents said they would not be working were the 30 hours not available to them, in line with 2024 (6%).
- There were no statistically significant differences by family type in the proportion of parents who said they would work fewer hours.

Parents using the 30 hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds were asked 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. Three quarters (75%) of parents reported that the 30 hours had improved their family finances (in line with 74% in 2024). Under half (46%) of parents using the 30 hours said they had ‘slightly more money’ to spend than before, and 29% said they had ‘much more money’ to spend than before (Accompanying Table 3.5).
- Over four in five (84%) parents reported that the overall quality of their family life was better, compared with before they took up the 30 hours offer (Accompanying Table 3.7), in line with 2024 (83%).
- There were no statistically significant differences by family type in the proportion of parents who said the overall quality of their family life was better since taking up the 30 hours offer.

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Figure 2.4: Percentage of families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4 years aware of the 30 hours offer, by annual family income



Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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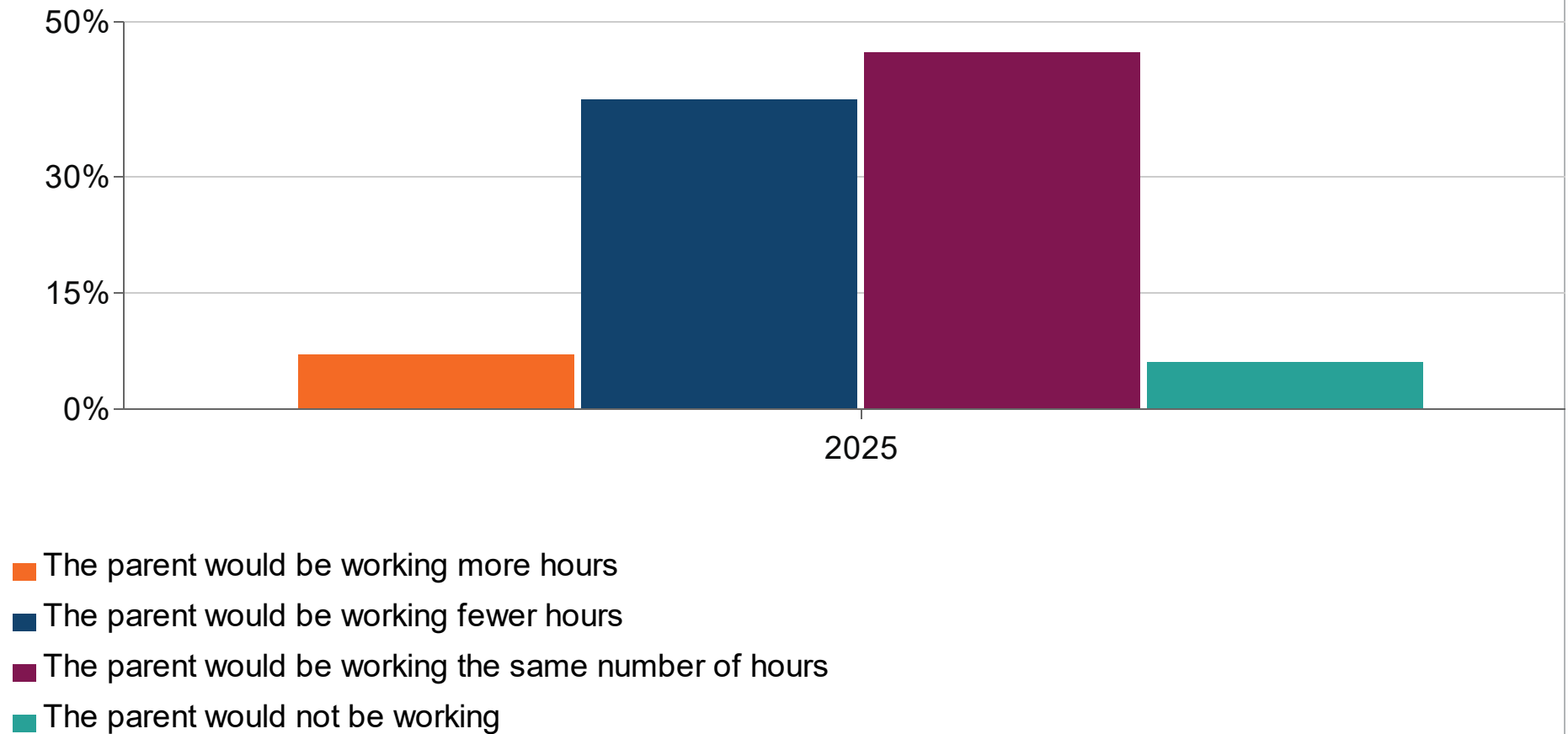
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Figure 2.5: Families using the 30 hours offer for 3 and 4 year olds and their perceptions of the impact of the offer on work

Were the 30 hours offer not available...



Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Use of childcare providers among those receiving funded hours

- Almost all children receiving government funded hours received their hours from a single childcare provider (97%), with the remainder receiving their hours from two or more providers (Accompanying Table 2.9). These proportions are in line with 2024 (96%).
- Among children receiving government funded hours from their main formal provider, just under seven in eight (86%) were attending their parents' first choice of provider, in line with 2024 (86%) (Accompanying Table 2.17).
- For over four in five (83%) children who were 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, in line with 2024 (83%) (Accompanying Table 2.19).

Additional charges

Parents who were aware of any of the funded 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, a rise from 80% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 2.26).
 - Among parents who were aware of any of the funded hours offers and were aware that providers can charge for certain extra services, under three quarters (72%) were aware that parents can choose not to receive, or pay, for these services. This is in line with 2024 (69%, Accompanying Table 2.27).
- Among parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years, who were aware that providers can charge for certain extra services and who were using free hours, just over one in ten (12%) said that it had stopped them from applying to a provider this is in line with 2024 (14%). Eight per cent said that it had stopped them from applying for

more free hours, in line with 2024 (nine per cent) (Accompanying Table 2.28).

There were some differences amongst parents with children aged 0 to 4 who were aware of any of the funded hours offers in awareness of the extra charges by annual income and family type (Accompanying Table 2.26).

- Parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 (73%) were less likely to be aware of the extra charges than those with an annual income of between £45,000 and £64,999 (89%) or with an annual income of £65,000 or more (93%).
- However, there were no statistically significant differences in awareness of the extra charges between parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 (73%) and parents in families with an annual income of between £20,000 and £29,999 (76%) or £30,000 and £44,999 (79%).
- Parents in couple households were more likely to be aware of additional charges than those in lone parent households (86%, compared to 77%).
- 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 (12%) compared to parents in families with an annual income of £65,000 or more (six per cent) (Accompanying Table 2.28).
- There were no statistically significant differences amongst parents who said that the possibility of additional charges had stopped them from applying for more free hours between parents in families with an annual income under £20,000 (12%) and parents in families with an annual income of £20,000 - £29,999 (8%), parents in families with an annual income of £30,000 - £44,999 (9%) or parents in families with an annual income of £45,000 - £64,999 (8%).
- There were no statistically significant differences amongst parents who were aware of the free hours offers in terms of whether the additional charges had stopped them from applying for more hours at an existing provider by family type.

Experience of applying for the funded hours offers

If a parent or their partner had applied for at least one of the funded hours offers, they were asked about their experience of doing so. Overall, over three quarters (76%) of parents said that they found the process 'very easy' or 'easy', whereas almost one in eight (12%) parents reported finding the application process 'difficult' or

‘very difficult’ (Accompanying Table 2.11).

- Just over three quarters (77%) of those applying for the working parents offer for children aged 2 only, and 77% of those applying for the 30 hours working parents offer for children aged 3 to 4 only, said that they found the process ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’.
- Around three quarters (76%) of those applying for the 15 hours offer for children aged 2 in families receiving government support found the process ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’.
- Seven in ten (70%) of those who applied for the working parents offer for children aged 9 months up to 2 years only said that they found the process ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’.
- Around four in five (79%) of parents that applied for more than one offer found the process ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’.

Those parents that reported finding the application process ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ were asked for the reasons for this. The most common reasons given were that the process was too complicated or burdensome (27%) and that parents didn't understand what they needed to do to apply (24%) (Accompanying Table 2.12).

Restrictions on using the funded hour offers

Parents whose child(ren) received funded hours of childcare from any of the offers during the reference week were asked whether there were any restrictions from their provider on when the funded hours could be used (Accompanying Table 2.13).

- One in five (20%) parents indicated that there were restrictions, compared to 80% who said that there were no such restrictions).
- Just under a quarter (23%) of working parents receiving funded hours under the offer for children aged 2 reported that there were restrictions, compared to just under one in five (18%) of working parents receiving free hours under the 30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 who reported this.
- Just over four in five (82%) of working parents receiving free hours under the 30 hours offer for children aged 3 to 4 reported that there were no such restrictions, compared to 77% of working parents receiving the offer for children aged 2.

3. Paying for childcare

This section describes the perceptions around the cost of childcare in terms of affordability and the ease of paying for childcare. The second part of this section focusses on financial help with childcare costs, the impact of any government-funded and employer-provided childcare support, and awareness and the use of tax-free childcare.

Weekly cost of childcare

- Among children who received paid formal childcare, a median of £25.00 was spent on their childcare per week (Accompanying Table 4.6), in line with 2024 (£26.00). Child-level payments are influenced by the total number of hours children spend in formal childcare, the age of the child as well as the types of providers used. As such, any changes in payments over survey years do not necessarily reflect changes in the fees and charges levied by childcare providers.
- The median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers was higher among preschool children compared to school-age children (Accompanying Table 4.6). Among children aged 0 to 4 years, the median amount spent was £47.57, compared to £18.00 for children aged 5 to 14 years.
- The median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers among children aged 0 to 4 years fell from £60.00 in 2024 to £47.57 this year (Accompanying Table 4.6).
 - Among children aged 0 to 2 years, there was a fall in the median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers from £108.00 in 2024 to £75.00 in 2025.
 - However, among children aged 3 to 4 years, there was no statistically significant difference in the median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers between 2024 (£32.00) and 2025 (£30.00).
- Among children aged 5 to 14 years, the median weekly amount paid to formal childcare providers of

£18.00 was in line with 2024 (£20.00) (Accompanying Table 4.6).

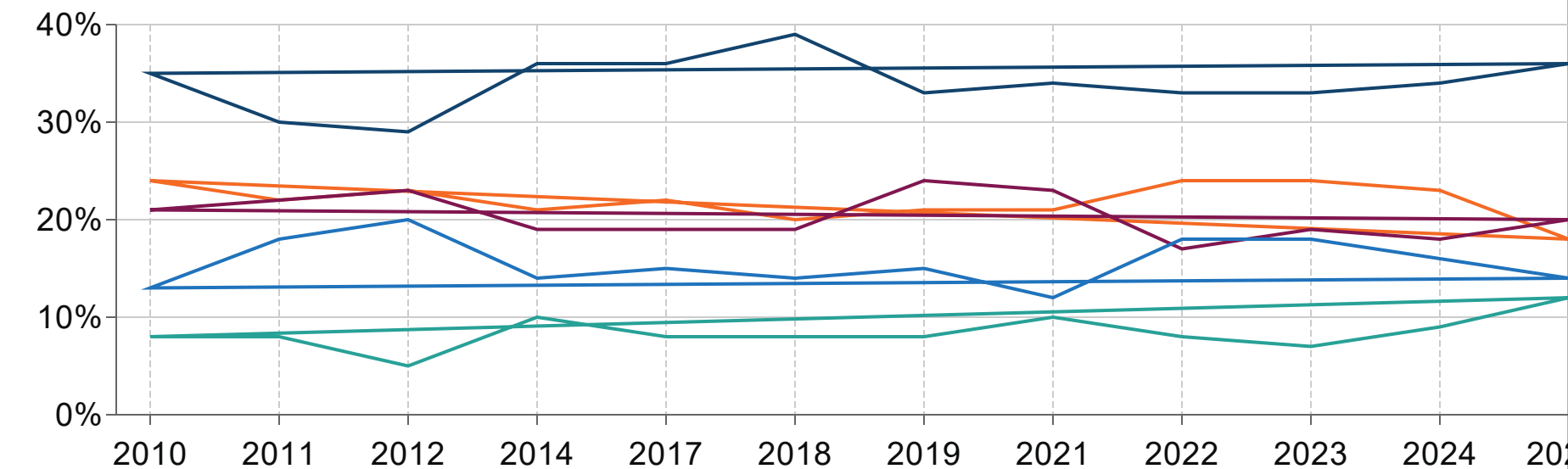
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Figure 3.1: Parents' perceptions of the affordability of local childcare provision, 2010 to 2025

All families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only



- Fairly good
- Fairly poor
- Not sure
- Very good
- Very poor

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 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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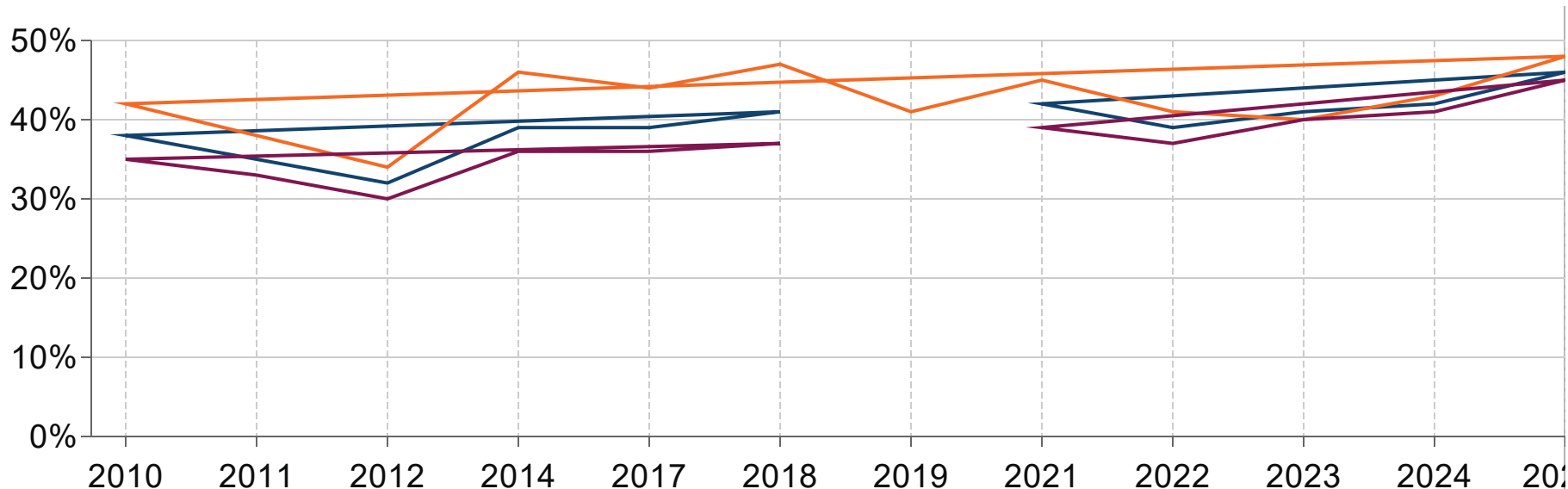
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Table

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Figure 3.2: Percentage of parents rating the affordability of local childcare as very or fairly good, 2010 to 2025



- All families
- Families with 0-4s only
- Families with 5-14s only

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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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Perceptions around the cost of childcare

Perceptions of affordability

Perceptions of affordability were explored by the age of children in the family - those with children aged 0 to 4 years only, aged 5 to 14 years only and families with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 5.2) .

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only:
 - Just under half (48%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good, a rise from 43% in 2024.
 - Around a third (32%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' poor, a fall from 39% in 2024 .

There is a difference in rating the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' poor based on the age of children in the family. Parents with children aged 0 and 4 years only are more likely to say this compared to parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only. The proportions were 32% in families with children aged 0 and 4 years only and 26% in families with children aged 5 to 14) (Accompanying Table 5.2).

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years:
 - Under half (47%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good (Accompanying Table 5.2), in line with 2024 (45%).
 - Just over a third (35%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' poor, in line with 2024 (37%) (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only:

- Over two fifths (45%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good, a rise from 41% in 2024.
- Around a quarter (26%) of parents rated the affordability of local childcare as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor, a fall from 32% in 2024 (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 and families with children aged 5 to 14 years only who paid for childcare in the last week (Accompanying Table 4.3).

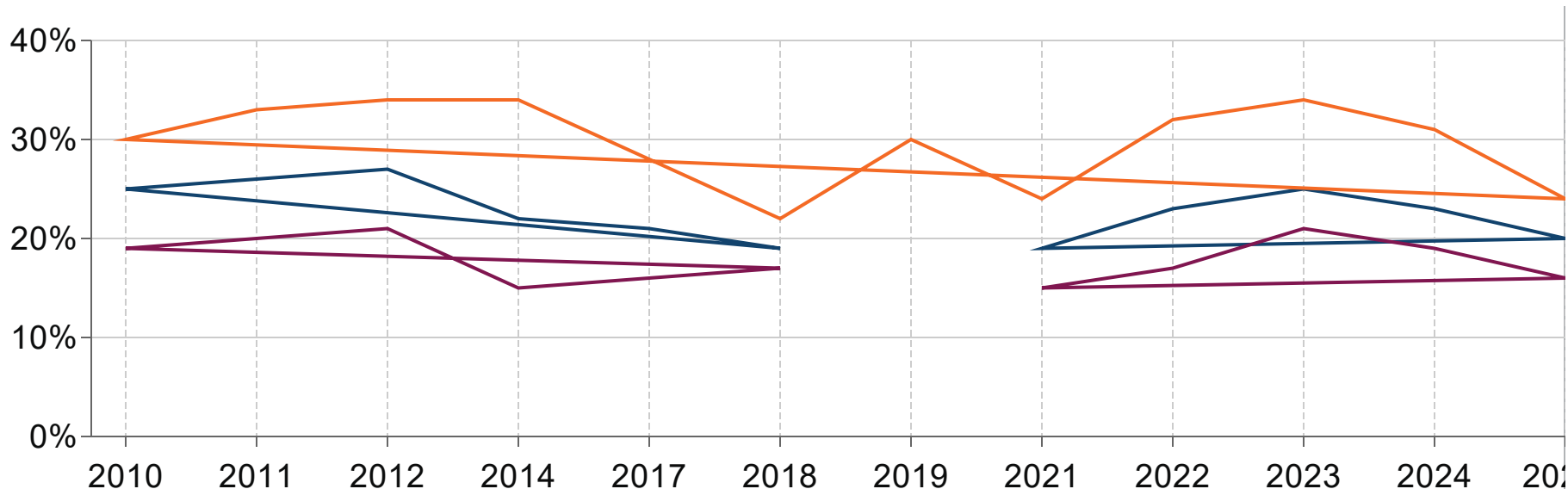
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, half (50%) of parents who paid for childcare said it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to meet their childcare costs, a rise from 41% in 2024.
- Around a quarter (24%) of families with children aged 0 to 4 years only who paid for childcare found it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to meet their childcare costs, a fall from 31% in 2024.
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, around three in five (61%) parents who paid for childcare said it was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to meet their childcare costs, in line with 2024 (59%).
- Around one in six (16%) of families with children aged 5 to 14 years only who paid for childcare found it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to meet their childcare costs, in line with 18% in 2024.

Chart

Table

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Figure 3.3: Percentage of parents finding it difficult or very difficult to meet their childcare costs, 2010 to 2025



- All families
- Families with 0-4s only
- Families with 5-14s only

Footnotes

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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Impact of government-funded and employer-provided support

Parents in work and receiving one or more forms of government-funded or employer-provided support were asked what impact, if any, this support had had on their (and on their partner's) job.

The forms of support were:

- Government funded hours of childcare under the 15 hour or 30 hour offers;
- Tax-Free Childcare; Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit;
- employer-provided childcare vouchers;
- direct payments to a childcare provider made by an employer;
- and a childcare provider located at the parent or partner's place of work.

There was a difference by the age of the children in the family about what impact the financial support had (Accompanying Table 4.15).

- Families with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to say that the support they received enabled them to stay in work, 44%, a rise from 37% in 2024, compared to 30% among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, in line with 2024, 27%.
- Families with children aged 0 to 4 years only were also more likely to say that the support they received enabled them to increase their working hours, 26%, a rise from 18% in 2024, compared to 11% among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, in line with 16% in 2024.
- There is no statistically significant difference between families with children aged 0 to 4 years only compared to families with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years - for either being able to stay in work OR to increase their working hours.

All parents with children aged 0 to 14 were asked if they had ever heard of Universal Credit.

- Among families with a child aged 0 to 4 years only, around three quarters (76%) were aware of Universal Credit (Accompanying Table 4.12) in line with 79% in 2024.

Those who were aware of Universal Credit were also asked if they were aware that they may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs if they were claiming Universal Credit.

- Among families with a child aged 0 to 4 years only, 44% were aware of this (Accompanying Table 4.13) in line with 46% in 2024.
- Among families that were receiving Universal Credit and paid for childcare (formal or informal) in the reference week, 40% were currently claiming back any of their childcare costs through Universal Credit) in line with 42% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 4.14).

Tax-Free Childcare

Awareness and take-up by parents with a child aged under 12

- Over half (55%) of parents with a child aged under 12 were aware of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, in line with 52% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.21).
- By family work status, around two thirds (66%) of dual-working couple families were aware of the scheme and were most likely to be aware compared to all other family work statuses.
- Half (50%) of all working lone parent families were aware of Tax Free Childcare. This group were more likely to be aware of Tax-Free Childcare than couple families with one parent working (34% awareness), lone parents who were not working (30% awareness) and couples where neither parent was working (27% awareness) (Accompanying Table 5.21).
- The proportion of parents with a child aged under 12 who were aware of Tax Free Childcare this year was in line with 2024 – there were no statistically significant differences based on work status:
 - Couple – both working: 66% in line with 65% in 2024
 - Couple – one working: 34% in line with 31% in 2024
 - Couple – neither working: 27% in line with 26% in 2024

- Lone parent – working: 50% in line with 49% in 2024
- Lone parent – not working: 30% in line with 34% in 2024
- Around a quarter (26%) of parents with child(ren) aged under 12 reported that they had applied for and used Tax-Free Childcare, a rise from 23% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.21).
- Among parents with a child aged under 12 who were unaware of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme or who were aware of it, but who had not applied for it, 20% said they would ‘definitely’ or ‘probably’ apply in the future, in line with 2024 (19%) (Accompanying Table 5.23).
- For those parents who did not intend to apply for Tax-Free Childcare in the future, the main reasons were because they claimed Universal Credit (27%), because they did not use formal childcare (19%) or because they thought they (or their partner’s) income was too high (12%) (Accompanying Table 5.24).

Awareness and take-up among families with children of different ages

- Just over three in five (62%) parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only were aware of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, in line with 65% in 2024. These families were more likely to be aware of the scheme than parents with children aged 5 to 14 years only (where 50% were aware, in line with 48% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.21).
- Over a third (36%) of parents with children aged 0 to 4 years only who had not applied to the scheme said that they intended to apply for Tax-Free Childcare. This is a higher proportion than families with children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 14 years (24%) and families with children aged 5 to 14 years only (16%) (Accompanying Table 5.23).

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4. Perceptions of childcare and early years provision

This chapter 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.

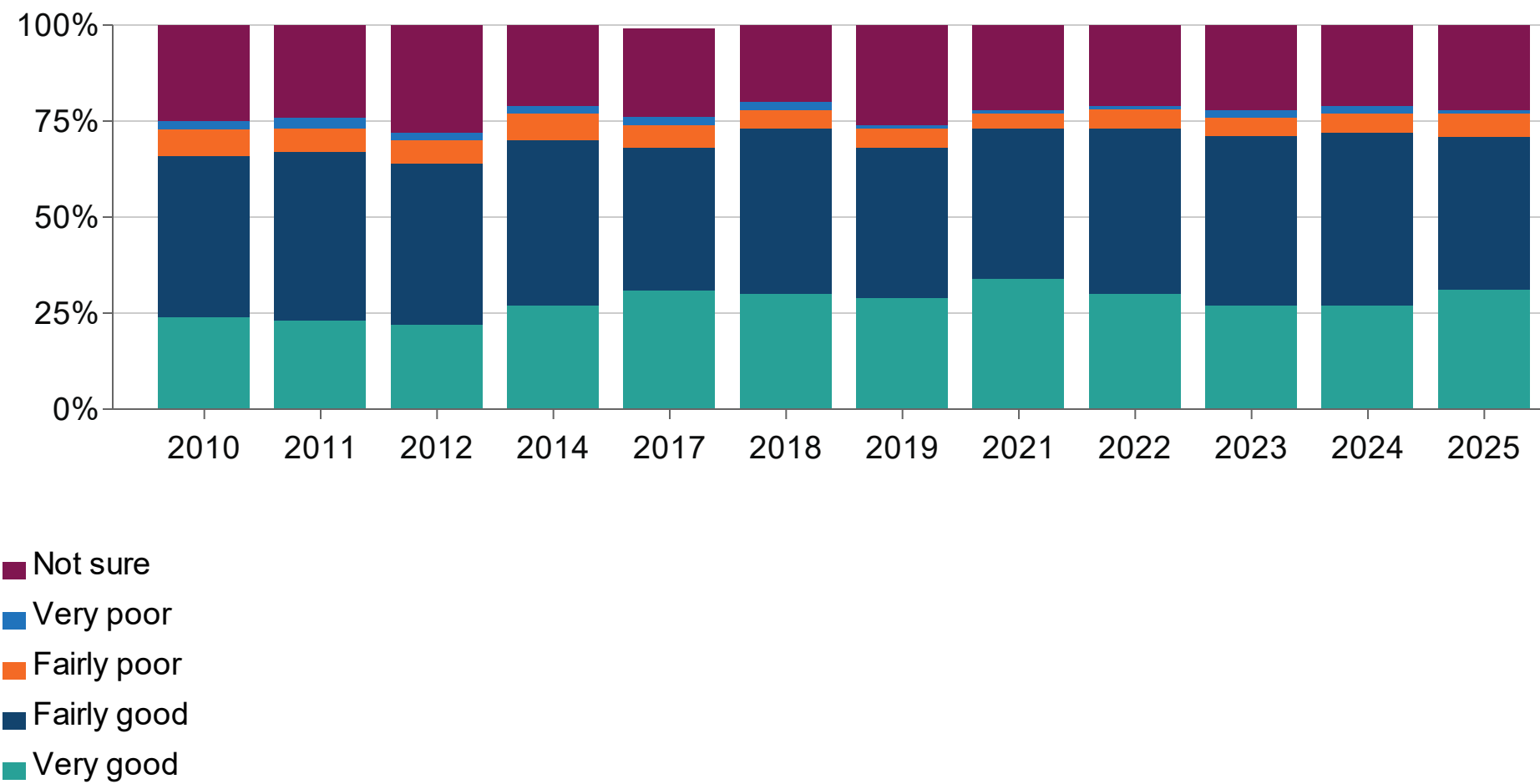
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Figure 4.1: Perceptions of the quality of local childcare provision, 2010 to 2025

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.
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Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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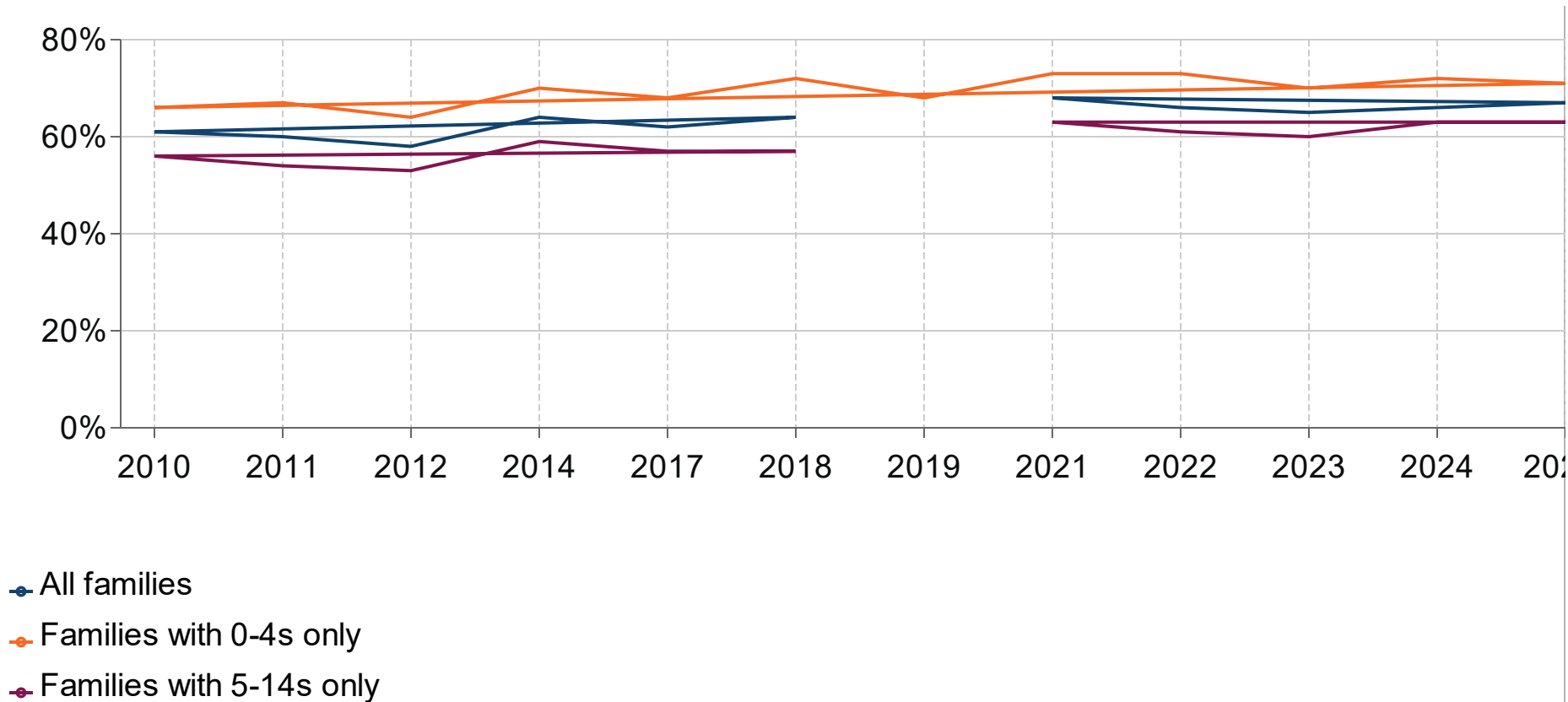
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Table 4.2: Percentage of parents rating the quality of local childcare as very or fairly good, 2010 to 2025



Footnotes

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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: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Perceptions of quality

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

- Over two thirds (71%) of parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as 'very' or 'fairly' good, in line with 2024 (72%).
- Seven per cent rated it as 'very' or 'fairly' poor, unchanged from 2024 (7%).

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

- Around five in eight (63%) parents rated the overall quality of local childcare provision as 'very' or 'fairly' good, in line with 2024 (62%).
- Eight per cent of parents rated it as 'very' or 'fairly' poor, unchanged from 2024 (8%).

A lower proportion of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, compared to parents in families 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 proportion of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only saying they were 'not sure' about the quality of childcare (28%), compared to 22% of parents in 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 in families 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 5.12). The most important factor reported was

activities that encourage the child to socialise with other children (55%), in line with 2024 (56%), followed by each staff member only having a small number of children to look after (48%) in line with 2024 (49%) and receiving regular feedback on their child’s progress (35%) in line with 2024 (34%).

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. The most important factor was activities that encourage the child to socialise with other children (54%, in line with 55% in 2024), having staff that are qualified for their role (36%, a rise from 32% in 2024) and having clear safeguarding policies in place (30% unchanged from 30% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.25).

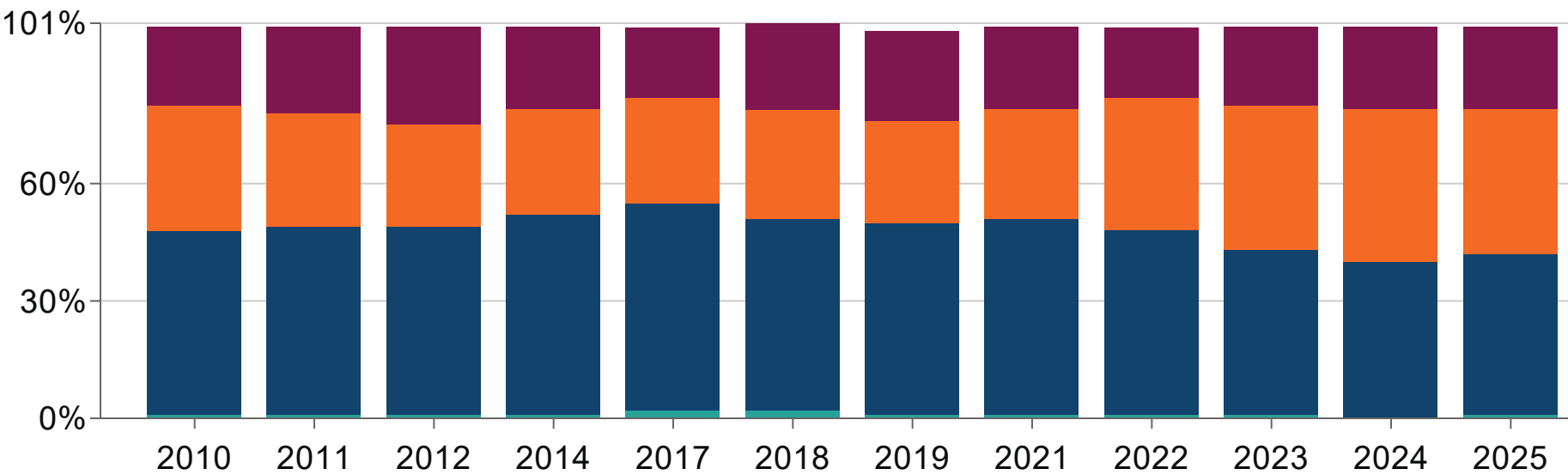
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Figure 4.3: Parents' perceptions of the availability of local childcare provision, 2010 to 2025

All families with children aged 0 to 4 years old only



- Not sure
- Not enough
- About the right number
- Too many

Footnotes

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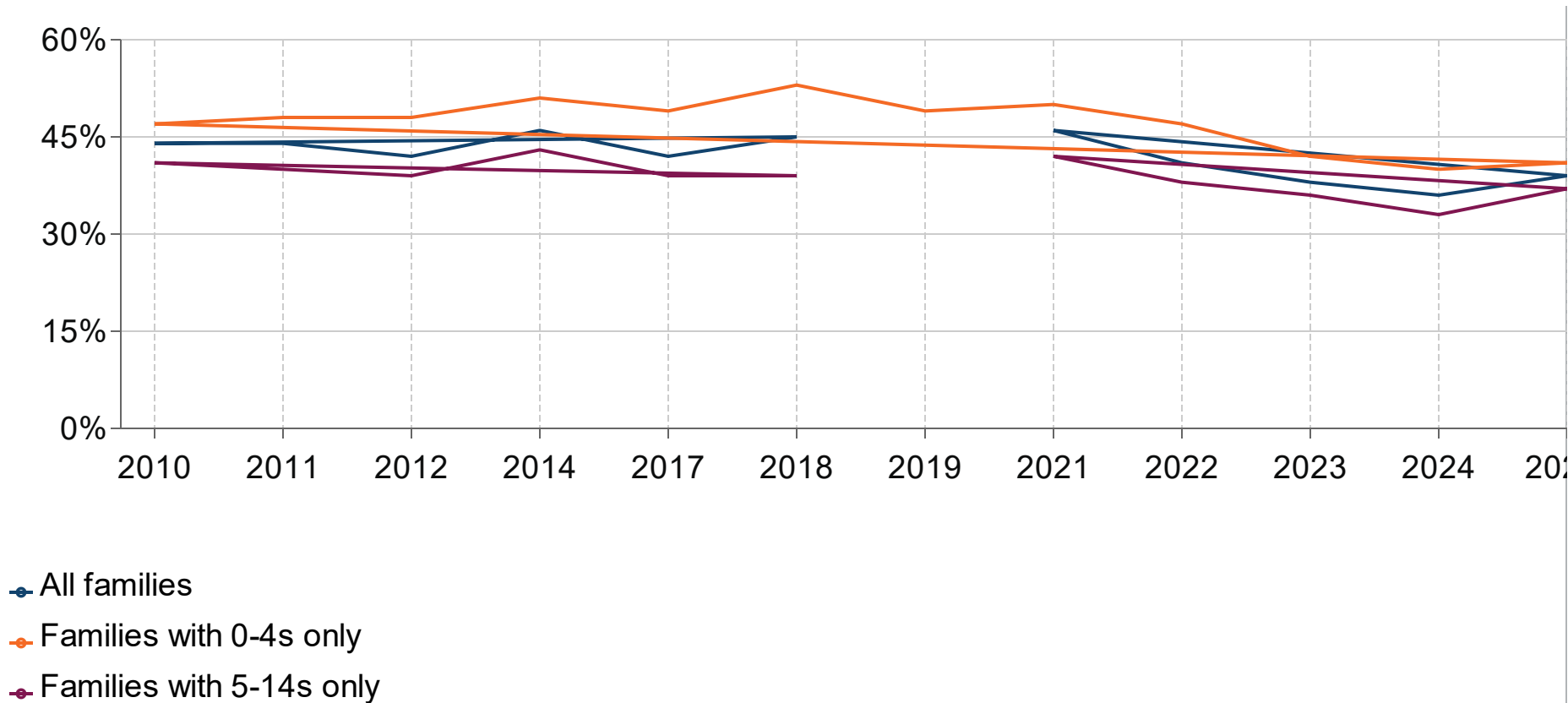
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Figure 4.4: Percentage of parents saying the availability of local childcare places is ‘about right’, 2010 to 2025



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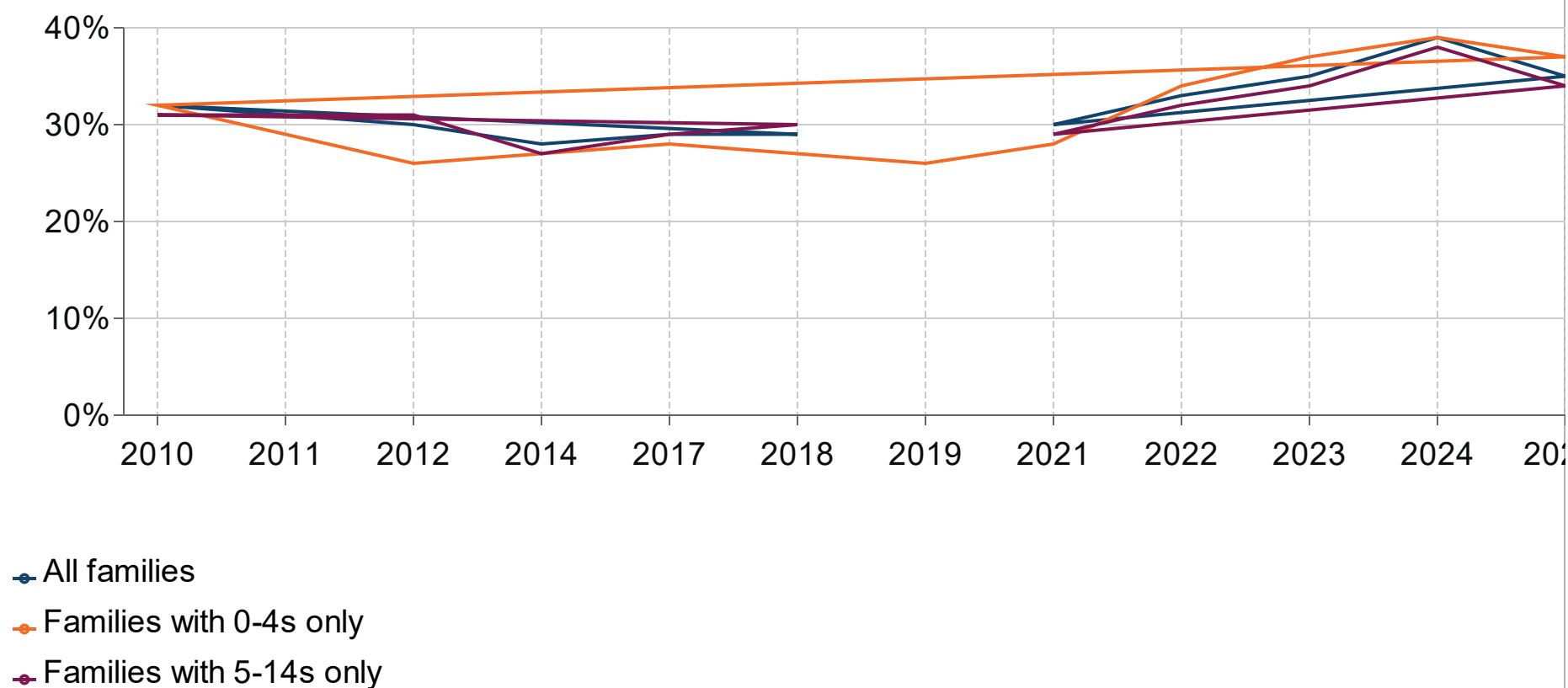
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Figure 4.5: Percentage of parents saying the availability of local childcare places is 'not enough', 2010 to 2025



Footnotes

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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: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Perceptions of availability and flexibility

General perceptions

Parents were asked about their general perceptions about the availability and flexibility of childcare provision.

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, around two fifths (41%) of parents felt the number of local childcare places was 'about right' (in line with 40% in 2024), whilst around three in eight (37%) said there were not enough places (in line with 39% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- A fifth (20%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 only, reported problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs, in line with 23% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.16).
- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 only, with a working parent[1], around two thirds (68%) said that they were able to find term-time childcare that fitted in with their (and/or their partner's) working hours, a rise from 64% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.16).
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, 37% of parents felt the number of local childcare places

was 'about right' (in line with 33% in 2024), while 34% said there were not enough places (in line with 38% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.2).

- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 only, around a fifth (21%) of parents reported problems with finding childcare flexible enough to meet their needs, in line with 22% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.16).

Waiting lists

Parents with a child aged 0 to 4 years, were asked if their child was on a waiting list for another childcare provider.

- Just under a sixth (14%) of children aged 0 to 4 years who are currently using formal childcare are also on a waiting list for another childcare provider (Accompanying Table 5.26).
 - Of those children aged 0 to 4 years who are currently using formal childcare and were on a waiting list for another formal provider, 80% had been waiting for one month or more for a place to become available at a different formal provider (Accompanying Table 5.27).
- Around a quarter (26%) of children aged 0 to 4 years who are not currently using formal childcare are also on a waiting list for a childcare provider (Accompanying Table 5.26).
 - Around four in five (81%) children aged 0 to 4 years not currently using formal childcare but 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

In families with child(ren) aged 5 to 14 years only, 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).

- Around a third (33%) of 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.
- In general, parents felt that more affordable childcare at their child's school or in the local area would make

childcare provision better suited to their work needs.

- Around one in six (16%) parents felt that more affordable childcare after school and a further 16% of parents felt that more affordable childcare before school at their child(ren)'s school would suit their work needs best.
- Around one in eight (13%) parents felt that more affordable childcare in the evening or at the weekend would suit their work needs best.
- Over two fifths (43%) 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.
- A further 16% of parents indicated that, in general, none of the changes that they were asked about would make term time childcare provision better suited to their work needs.

Wraparound care

Parents with children aged 4 to 14 years who used a breakfast club or before school club were asked how satisfied they were with the overall affordability and availability of a place at the club they used. Overall, levels of satisfaction were high.

- Around four in five (79%) parents were very or fairly satisfied with the overall affordability of the breakfast club or before school club that they use (Accompanying Table 6.21).
- Around seven in eight (88%) parents were very or fairly satisfied with the availability of a place at the breakfast club or before school club that they use (Accompanying Table 6.21).

Parents with children aged 4 to 14 years who used an after school club were asked how satisfied they were with the overall affordability and availability of a place at the club they used. Overall, levels of satisfaction were high.

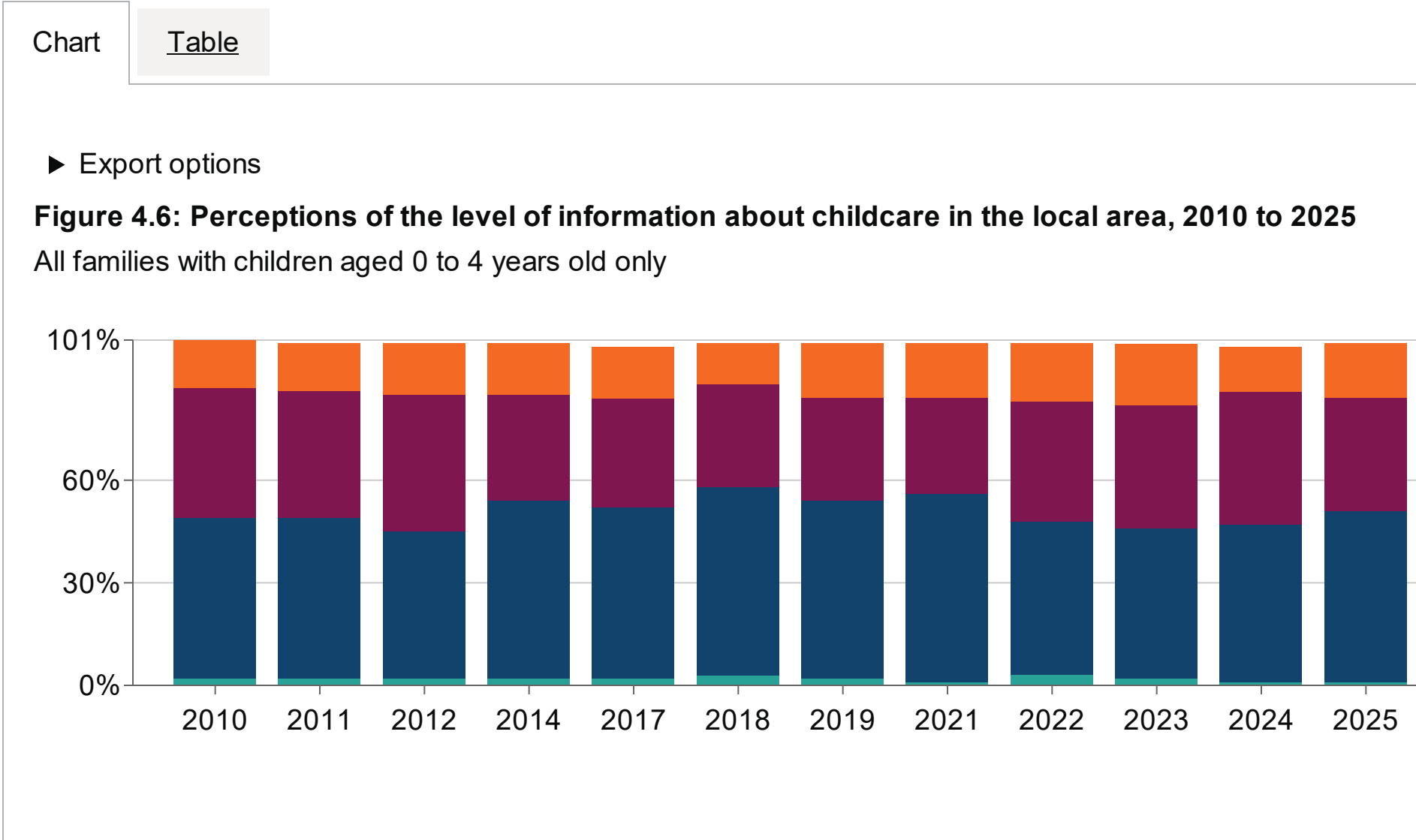
- Around four in five (79%) parents were very or fairly satisfied with the overall affordability of the after school club that they use (Accompanying Table 6.22).
- Over four in five (83%) parents were very or fairly satisfied with the availability of a place at the after school club that they use (Accompanying Table 6.22).

Parents with children aged 4 to 14 who did not use afterschool clubs, breakfast or before school clubs were asked the reasons for this (Accompanying Table 6.23). The most common reason given was that there was no

need to use a breakfast or before school clubs (41%) or an after school club (39%). The second most common reason was convenience - either to give children breakfast at home (30%) or to bring children straight home after school (16%).

A smaller proportion of these parents also mentioned affordability – 11% of parents indicated that they did not use afterschool clubs because they couldn't afford them or that they were too expensive compared to eight per cent indicating the same about breakfast clubs or before school clubs.

[1] Couple families with one or both parents in work and working lone-parent families.



- Not sure
- Too little
- About right
- Too much

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 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Availability of information about local childcare provision

Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only

- Half (50%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only said the level of information available to them about childcare in their local area was 'about right' a rise from 46% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.1).
- Around a third (33%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only thought there was 'too little'

information, a fall from 39% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.1).

- Around a sixth (16%) of parents in families with children aged 0 to 4 years only were 'not sure' about the level of information available about childcare in their local area, in line with 13% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.1).

Parents of children aged 5 to 14 years only

- Over two fifths (43%) of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only said that the information available to them about childcare in their local area was 'about right', a rise from 37% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- Around a third (34%) of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only thought there was 'too little' information, a fall from 41% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.2).
- Around a fifth (21%) of parents in families with children aged 5 to 14 years only were 'not sure' about the level of information available about childcare in their local area, in line with 20% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 5.2).

Identifying and accessing formal providers

- Among parents whose child(ren) received childcare from a formal provider, four in five (80%) said it was 'easy' or 'very easy' to identify a provider that met their child(ren)'s needs (Accompanying Table 2.19), in line with 2024 (77%). In contrast, around one in eight (13%) reported that they found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult', in line with 2024 (15%).
- Parents were asked about the information available to them about the care their formal provider gave to their child(ren). Over nine in ten (94%) said this was 'fairly good' or 'very' good (Accompanying Table 2.19), in line with 2024 (93%). The remaining six per cent said that it was 'fairly poor' or 'very poor', in line with 2024 (eight per cent).

Source of information about local childcare provision

- Over two in five parents (43%) reported that they received information about childcare via word of mouth, for example from friends or relatives, in line with 2024 (44%). Over a third (36%) of parents reported receiving such information from school, unchanged from 2024 (also 36%). Parents also received information about childcare from social media (22%), in line with 2024 (24%) (Accompanying Table 5.4).

- Just under a fifth (18%) of parents of children aged 0 to 4 years only who used a formal provider in the reference week and 15% 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).

Perceptions of special educational needs and disabilities provision

Just under one in six (14%) children aged 0 to 14 years had a special educational need, and just under one in ten (eight per cent) 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).

Ease of finding a local provider

- Over half (54%) of parents said that they found it difficult or very difficult to find a local provider that could cater for their child(ren)'s special educational, health or disability needs (Accompanying Table 5.15). This is in line with 51% in 2024.
- Around five in eight (62%) 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(ren)'s special educational, health or disability needs (Accompanying Table 5.15). This is in line with 2024, where 54% of parents using informal or other childcare providers reported this.
- Around two in five (39%) parents with a child receiving support for a special educational, health or disability need, and using a formal childcare provider, reported finding it difficult or very difficult to find a local provider that could cater for their child's needs. The decrease from 48% in 2024 is not statistically significant (due to a small sample). This comes after a rise from 29% in 2023.

Ease of finding information about local providers

- Overall, over two in five (45%) parents disagreed or disagreed strongly that it was easy to find out information about childcare providers in the local area that met their child(ren)'s needs (Accompanying Table 5.15). This is

in line with 2024, where 43% of parents using a childcare provider reported this.

Availability of hours for those using a formal childcare provider

- Just over two thirds (69%) of parents using a formal provider for their child(ren) with special educational or disability needs were more likely to agree or agree strongly that the hours available at their childcare provider fitted in with their other daily commitments compared to parents in 2024, a rise from 49% of parents in 2024 who agreed or agreed strongly (Accompanying Table 5.15).
- Just over one in five (22%) of the same group of parents disagreed or disagreed strongly that the hours available at their childcare provider fitted in with their other daily commitments. This is in line with 2024 (26%).

Money paid to formal childcare provider to support child's needs

- 96% of parents whose child was 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 four per cent of parents did (Accompanying Table 5.15).

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

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.

► Export options

Table 5.1: Frequency with which children aged 0 to 5 years old engage in home learning activities with someone at home, by activity, 2025

	% More than once a day	% Once a day	% Several times a week	% Once a week	% Occasionally or less than once a week	% Never
Learn songs, poems or nursery rhymes	35%	24%	27%	4%	2%	7%
Play pretend games together, or take turns in fun activities (with interviewed parent)	34%	24%	31%	4%	3%	3%
Look at books or read	30%	35%	25%	3%	2%	6%
Learn numbers or count	27%	28%	31%	4%	1%	9%
Learn the alphabet or recognise words	21%	30%	31%	5%	2%	11%
Paint or draw	11%	18%	38%	13%	6%	14%

[Show full screen table](#)

[Data symbols](#) 

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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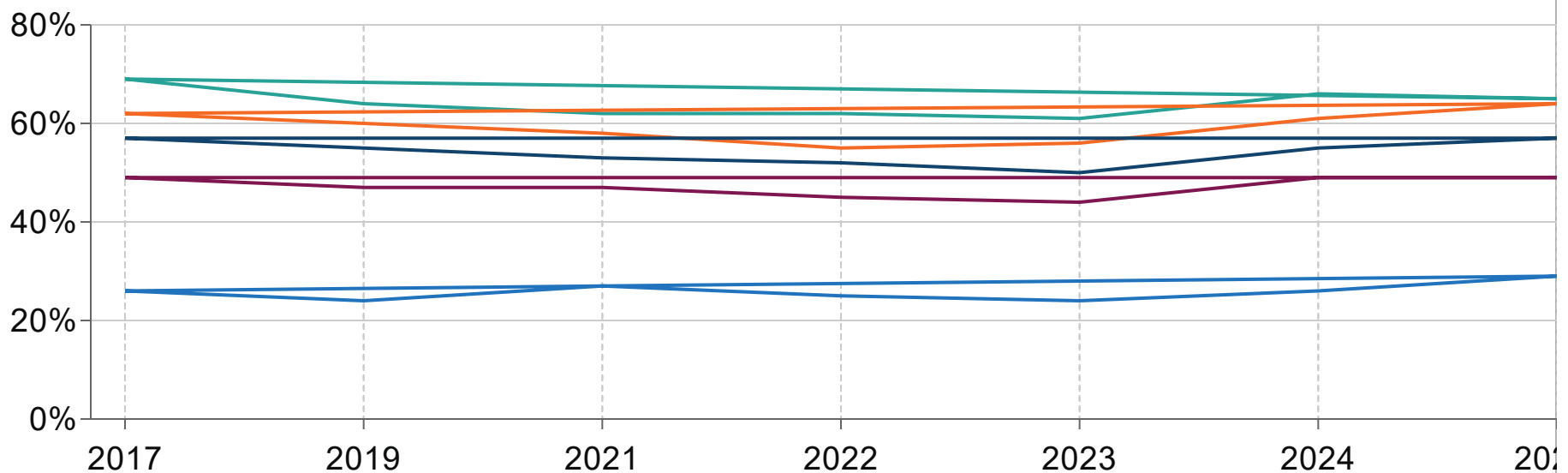
Chart

Table

► Export options

Figure 5.2: Proportion of families engaging in home learning activities at least once a day, by activity, 2017 to 2025

Among children aged 0 to 4 years old



- 🔍 Look at books or read
- 🎵 Learn songs, poems or nursery rhymes
- 🔢 Learn numbers or count
- 🔤 Learn the alphabet or recognise words
- 🎨 Paint or draw

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 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

Explore and edit this data online

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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 just under two thirds (65%) of parents reporting that someone at home does this activity at least once a day with their child (Accompanying Table 6.6), in line with 66% in 2024.
- The next most frequently conducted home learning activities were learning songs, poems or nursery rhymes

(59% of parents reported that someone at home does this at least once a day with their child, in line with 56% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 6.6), and playing pretend games together, or taking turns in fun activities (58% of parents reported that someone at home does this at least once a day with their child, unchanged from 58% in 2024) (Accompanying Table 6.6).

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. Around three in five (61%) parents reported that they received such information from friends or relatives, under half (47%) used social media, just under two in five (38%) received information and ideas from other parents and just over a third (35%) used internet sites (Accompanying Table 6.20).

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

All parents with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years 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.

Around 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.
 - Parents with children aged 0 to 4 only were more likely to be aware of a family hub or children's centre in their local area than parents with children aged 5 to 14 only, 63% compared to 43% respectively (Accompanying Table 6.13).
 - However, there was no statistically significant difference in awareness between parents with children aged 0 to 4 only (63%) and parents with children aged 0 to 4 and children aged 5 to 14 (64%) (Accompanying Table 6.13).

Amongst families who were aware of a family hub or children's centre in their local area, just over one in five (22%) had accessed one or more services from any of these sites in the last year (Accompanying Table 6.13).

- Among parents who were aware of a family hub or children's centre in their local area, parents with children aged 0 to 4 only were more likely to have accessed services from a family hub or children's centre in their local area (43%) compared to parents with children aged 0 to 4 and children aged 5 to 14 (31%), and parents with children aged 5 to 14 only (10%) (Accompanying Table 6.13).

Among child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years whose parents had accessed any service through a family hub or children's centre in their local area, a range of services or sources of help or support had been accessed in the last year.

- Support with early years education was accessed the most (50%), followed by midwifery, maternity or child health services (29%) (Accompanying Table 6.14).
- 89% of selected child(ren) that 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).
- Over two in five (45%) selected child(ren) 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).
- Just over one in five (22%) selected child(ren) that received any help or support from a family hub or children's centre in their local area had done so at least once a week (Accompanying Table 6.16).

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6. Mothers, work and childcare

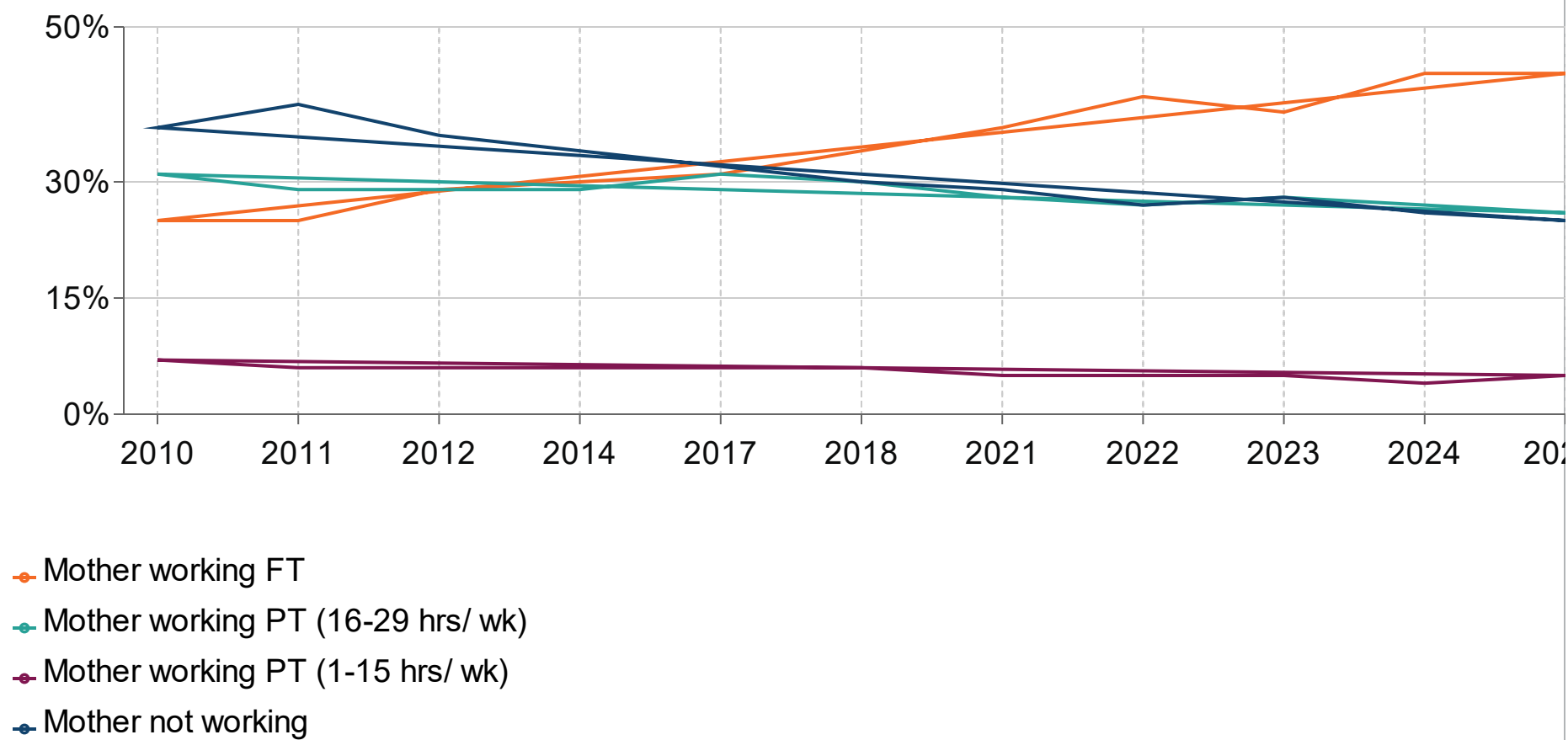
The following section focusses primarily on mother's work patterns, and which factors influenced them to go out to work.

Chart

Table

► Export options

Figure 6.1: Maternal employment patterns, 2010 to 2025



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 1 more footnote](#)

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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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), unchanged from 2024. This is compared to 94% of fathers.

- Of these mothers, over two in five (44%) reported that they were working full-time, also unchanged from 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).
- Of these mothers, the proportion who reported that they were working part-time was 31%, unchanged from 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

In families with children aged 0 to 4 years only, over two thirds (72%) of mothers reported that they were in work, in line with 73% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

The proportion of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only working full-time or part-time were in line with 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

- For those working full-time: 42% in 2025, in line with 39% in 2024

- For those working part-time: 30% in 2025, in line with 34% in 2024.

In families with children aged 5 to 14 years only, over three quarters (78%) of mothers reported that they were in work, in line with 2024 (77%) (Accompanying Table 8.5).

The proportion of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only working full-time was 47% in 2025, in line with 48% in 2024; similarly, the proportion of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only that were working part-time was 31% in 2025, in line with 29% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were less likely to be in work (72%), than mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only (78%) but more likely to be in work than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years (65%) (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to be working full-time than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years but less likely to be working full-time than mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only.

- Just over two in five (42%) mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were working full-time, compared to around a third (32%) of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years and under half (47%) of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Just under a third (31%) of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only were in part-time work compared to 30% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only and 33% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Non-working mothers

A quarter (25%) of all mothers were not working, in line with 26% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years were more likely to be non-working than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only and mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only.

- Just over a third (35%) of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and aged 5 to 14 years reported not being in

work compared to 27% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only and 23% of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 only (Accompanying Table 8.5).

- In addition, mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only, were more likely to be non-working (27%) than mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only (23%), and less likely to be working than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (35%) (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Lone mothers with children aged 0 to 14 years were more likely to report that they were not working compared to partnered mothers. Around three in eight (37%) lone mothers reported this compared to around one in five (21%) partnered mothers (Accompanying Table 8.6).

Just over one in six (18%) mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only reported that they were not working due to childcare issues, a fall from 2024 (25%) (Accompanying Table 8.12).

- Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to cite this as a reason for not working compared to mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only, where eight per cent of mothers chose this reason.
- However, mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were less likely to cite this as a reason for not working compared to mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years, where 24% of mothers chose this reason.

Having a longstanding illness or disability was cited as a reason for not working by 22% of all mothers with children aged 0 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 8.12).

- Lone mothers were more likely than partnered mothers to cite this as a reason for not working with 30% of lone mothers choosing this reason, compared to 15% of partnered mothers.
- Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and with children aged 5 to 14 years were less likely to report having a longstanding illness or disability as a reason for not working, with 15% choosing this reason, compared to 27% of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only.
- Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were also less likely to report having a longstanding illness or disability as a reason for not working, with 13% choosing this reason compared to 27% of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only.
- However, there was no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of this reason being reported

between mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and with children aged 5 to 14 years (15%) and mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only (13%).

Having to look after children who have special needs was cited as a reason for not working by 17% of all mothers with children aged 0 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 8.12).

- Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years and mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only were more likely to cite this reason than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only.
- Around a fifth (21%) of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 14 years and 19% of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only cited this reason, compared to seven per cent of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only.

Under half (47%) of all non-working mothers with children aged 0 to 14 years said that if they could arrange good quality childcare that was convenient, reliable and affordable, they would prefer to go out to work (Accompanying Table 8.13), unchanged from 2024.

Over half (53%) of non-working mothers 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 2024 (54%) (Accompanying Table 8.13). This was a higher proportion compared to non-working mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only (42%, in line with 41% in 2024).

- There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of non-working mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only saying this, compared to mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years (55%), unchanged from 2024) (Accompanying Table 8.13).

Trends in working patterns

Full-time work

In terms of longer-term trends in mothers' work patterns, there has been a rise in the proportion 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 risen to 41%. In 2025, the

proportion of all mothers working full-time was 44%, unchanged from 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.5).

The rise in the proportion of mothers working full-time between 2010–11 and 2025 was smaller among mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only than among mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only (Accompanying Table 8.5).

- In 2010-2011, among mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only, 31% worked full-time and by 2025 this had risen to 47%, whereas among mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only 21% were working full-time in 2010-11, but by 2025 this had risen to 42%.

There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of mothers working full-time between 2010–11 and 2025 between mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only and mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (Accompanying Table 8.5).

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 2025, this had risen to 32% (Accompanying Table 8.5).

Part-time work and non-working mothers

The rise in full-time working among mothers with children aged 0 to 14 years between 2010-11 and 2025 was accompanied by a fall in working part-time or not working at all (Accompanying Table 8.5).

- In 2010-2011, 38% of all mothers were working part-time and 37% of mothers were not working; by 2025 this has fallen to 31% working part-time and fallen to 25% not working.

Part-time

In 2010-2011, 40% of mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only were in part-time work and by 2025 this had fallen to 31%.

In 2010-2011, 38% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were working part-time and by 2025 this had fallen to 30% in 2025.

There were no statistically significant differences in part-time working among mothers of children aged 5 to 14

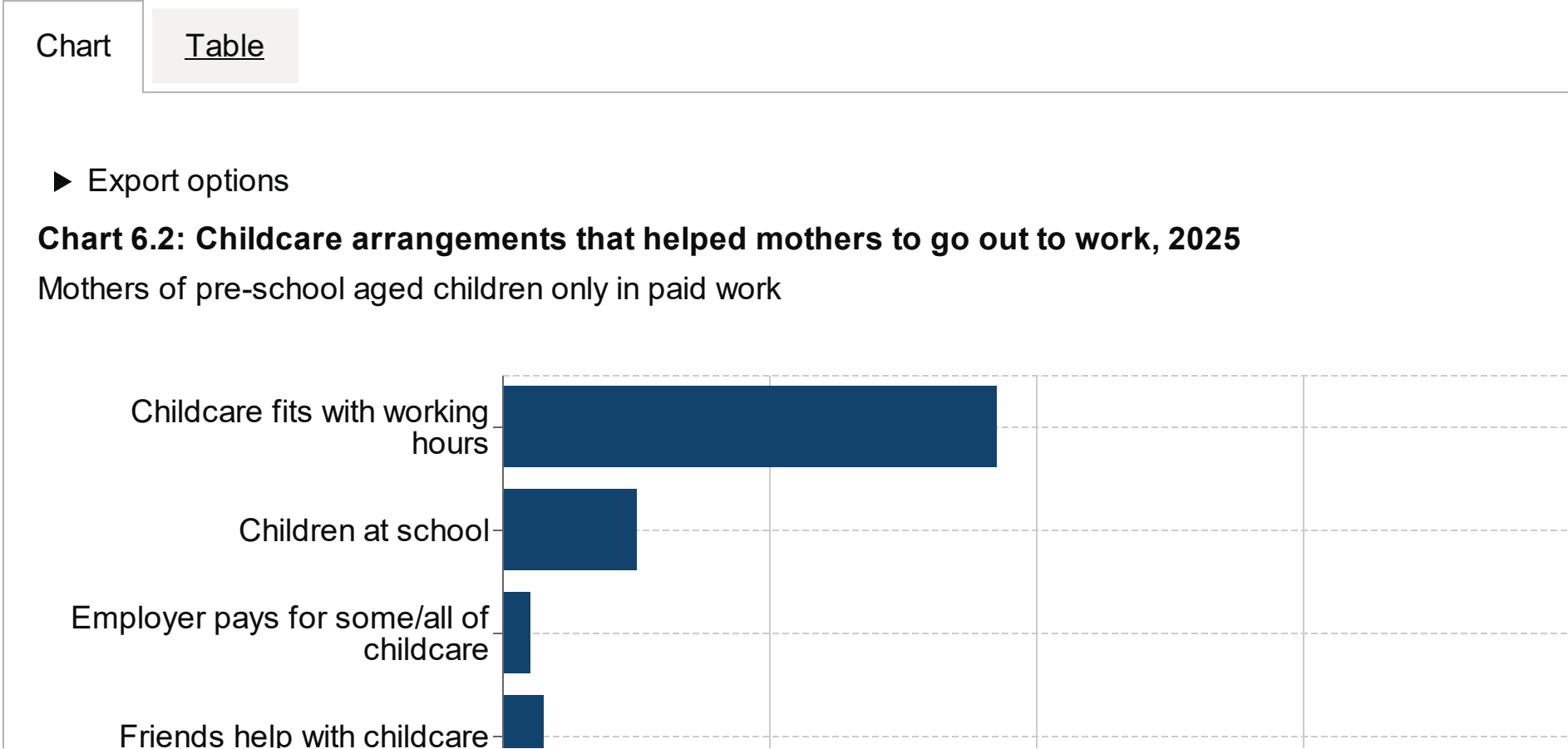
years compared to mothers of children aged 0 to 4 years between 2024 and 2025.

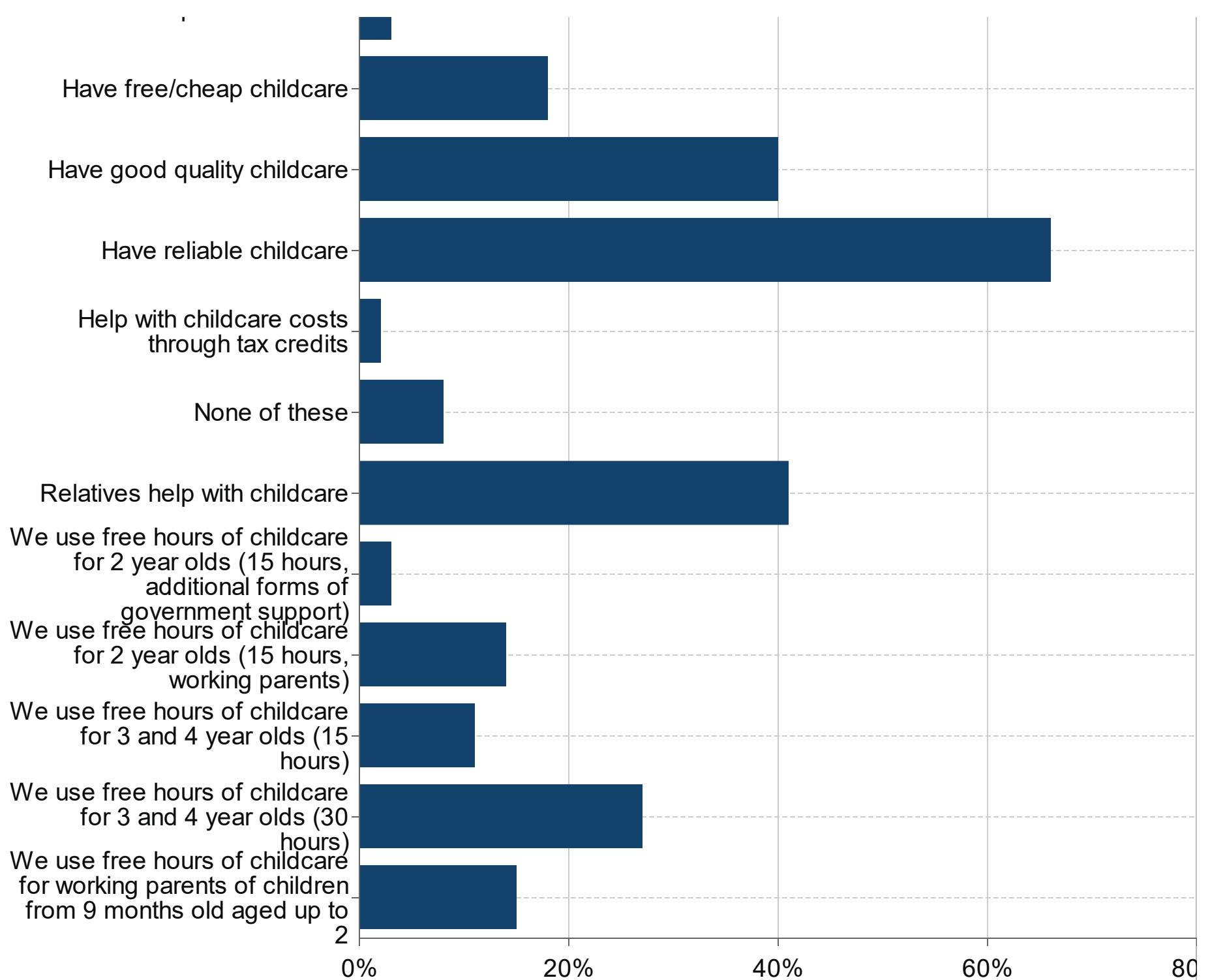
Among mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years, there was no such fall in part-time working and the trend for this group remained stable between 2010 and 2025. In 2010-11, 32% of mothers who had children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years worked part-time, in 2025 the percentage was 33%.

Non-working

There was a greater fall in the proportion of mothers not working among those with children aged 0 to 4 years only than among mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only.

- In 2010-11, 41% of mothers of children aged 0 to 4 years only were not working, by 2025 this had fallen to 27% and during the same period, mothers of children aged 5 to 14 years only not working had fallen from 30% in 2010-11 to 23% in 2025 (Accompanying Table 8.5).





Footnotes

1. * denotes a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero.

Source: Childcare and early years survey of parents 2025

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Factors influencing going out to work

All working mothers with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years were asked what influenced their decision to go out to work. The two most common influences reported were “needing the money” (68%, in line with 69% in 2024) and “enjoying working” (66%, unchanged from 2024) (Accompanying Table 8.11).

- Lone mothers with child(ren) aged 0 to 14 years were more likely to cite “needing the money” as a factor influencing their decision to go out to work than partnered mothers, with around three quarters (76%) of lone mothers choosing this reason compared to just under two thirds (65%) of partnered mothers.

There was a difference in the proportion of working mothers who reported “enjoying working” as a factor influencing their decision to go out to work, based on the ages of children in the family.

- Working mothers with child(ren) aged 0 to 4 years and children aged 5 to 14 years were more likely to cite “enjoying working” as a factor influencing their decision to go out to work (69%) than working mothers of children aged 0 to 4 only (65%) (Accompanying Table 8.11).

Reasons for returning to work in the past two years

Among all mothers who had entered the workforce in the past two years, the most common reasons for starting work were finding a job that enabled them to combine work with their child(ren) (23%) and their child(ren) starting school (also 23%) (Accompanying Table 8.9).

- 5 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 (32%), because of their financial situation (for example, partner lost job) (21%) or because their children were old enough to use childcare (19%) (Accompanying Table 8.10).

- 14 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

Mothers in paid work were asked what childcare arrangements, if any, helped them to work (Accompanying Table 8.3).

Mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only were more likely to mention having reliable childcare (66%, in line with 64% in 2024) compared to mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years and 5 to 14 years (56%, unchanged from 2024) and those with children aged 5-14 years only (31%, in line with 32% in 2024).

Around two in five (41%) mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only, mentioned having relatives who could help with childcare, in line with 45% in 2024. Around three in eight (37%) mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only mentioned this unchanged from 2024.

Among mothers in paid work 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 27%, in line with 24% in 2024).

- 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%, unchanged from 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.3).
- The proportion that mentioned that the free hours of childcare for 2 year olds (under the free hours scheme for working parents) helped them to work was 14%, a fall from 20% in 2024 (Accompanying Table 8.3).
- The proportion that mentioned that the free hours of childcare for 2 year olds (under the 15 free hours scheme for parents receiving additional forms of government support) helped them to work was three per cent, unchanged from 2024 (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).

- Just over two in five (42%) mothers reported that being able to afford suitable childcare would help them, in line with 2024 (43%).
- Just over a quarter (27%) of parents reported that if there was good quality local childcare available this would help them change their working hours. Similarly, 27% said that if they were able to work flexitime, this would help them change their working hours. These results are both in line with 2024, with 23% of mothers reporting the availability of good quality childcare and 22% reporting being able to work flexi-time in 2024.

Around a quarter (26%) of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only cited the reason “if relatives or friends were able to help with childcare” as a factor that would help them increase their working hours or work full-time, compared to over one in five (23%) mothers with children aged between 5 to 14 years only (Accompanying Table 8.2). This difference was not statistically significant.

Just over one in five (22%) mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only cited the reason “my employer gave me the option of working more hours / working full time” as a factor that would help increase their working hours or work full-time, compared to 15% of mothers with children aged 0 to 4 years only (Accompanying Table 8.2). This difference was not statistically significant.

Mothers with children aged 5 to 14 years only were more likely to cite the reason “my employer gave me the option of working more hours / working full time” as a factor that would help increase their working hours or work

full-time than mothers with children aged 0 to 4 and children aged 5 to 14 (12%) (Accompanying Table 8.2).

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

Among mothers working part-time, under three in five (56%) said that even if there were no barriers to doing so, they would not change their working hours (Accompanying Table 8.1), in line with 51% in 2024.

Under a third (31%) 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 2024 (35%).

Around one in eight (13%) mothers working part-time said that, in the absence of any barriers, they would move into full-time work (Accompanying Table 8.1).

- Among families with children aged 0 to 4 years only this proportion was 11%.
- Among families with children aged 5 to 14 years only this proportion was 14%.
- These results are all in line with 2024.

Mothers in lone parent households that were working part-time were more likely than those in couple households to express a desire to move to full-time work (19% compared to 11% respectively) (Accompanying Table 8.1).

By annual family income, mothers at the lowest end of the income distribution were most likely to express a desire to move from part-time to full-time work. Around one in six (17%) mothers in families with an annual income under £20,000 said this, compared to six per cent among those in families with an annual income £65,000 or more (Accompanying Table 8.1).

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Early Years Analysis and Research

Email: EY.ANALYSISANDRESEARCH@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Rachel Murphy

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

Public enquiries

If you have a general enquiry about the Department for Education (DfE) or education:

Phone: 0370 000 2288

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