

# Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experience

Caroline Bryson, Anne Kazimirski and Helen Southwood  
National Centre for Social Research

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education and Skills.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

This study had two key aims: to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use, views and experiences of childcare and early years provision, and to continue the time series data on these issues from two previous survey series. The two previous series are the Parents' Demand for Childcare series (the Childcare series) and the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and their use of Early Years Services series (the Early Years series). Overarching both these aims was a need for data to aid the evaluation of recent policy interventions in these areas.

Just under 8,000 parents in England were included in the study, interviewed between September 2004 and early January 2005. They were randomly selected from the Child Benefit records. All the parents selected had children aged 14 and under, to be comparable with the previous Childcare Survey series, and to focus on the age group most often included within government policy on childcare. We obtained a broad picture about childcare and early years provision use and needs for all the children in the family, but then randomly selected one child (in families where there were two or more) about whom to ask a more detailed set of questions.

Following the model of the previous Childcare Surveys, the study used a very inclusive definition of 'childcare and early years provision'. Parents were asked to include any time that their child is not with resident parents (or their current partner) or at school. Hence this covered informal care, such as grandparents, as well as formal care; and covered times when the parents were working, as well as times when they were not (and thus children were being looked after for other reasons). However, by asking parents for the reasons *why* they used their childcare or early years provision, we are able to report separately on childcare used for economic reasons (for parents to work or study), for the child's educational development, or for other reasons.

## Who uses what childcare and early years provision?

The data provide an overview of parents' use of childcare, over both the period of a year and of a week, and across different types of families (Chapter 2).

### *Over the last year...*

Almost nine in ten (86 per cent) families had used some form of childcare or early years provision – be it regular or ad hoc - within the last year. Over that period, a greater proportion of families (67 per cent) had used informal care than formal care (57 per cent). Of all providers, families were most likely to have used grandparents. Half of families (49 per cent) had done so at some point in the last year. It is worth noting that the three most commonly used childcare providers – when looking over the last year – were all informal. As well as grandparents, around a fifth of families had used other relatives (19 per cent) and friends or neighbours (23 per cent).

Among the formal providers used in the last year, families were most likely to have used a breakfast or after school club. A fifth (18 per cent) of families had used one (either on or off a school site).

Grossing up to national estimates<sup>1</sup>, these figures represent 5.16 million families having used childcare in the last year. 3.42 million families had used formal childcare or early years provision, and 4.02 million families had used informal childcare.

### *Over the last week...*

Two-thirds of families had used childcare in the last week: 41 per cent had used formal care, and 42 per cent had used informal care. As with use over the last year, out of all the childcare providers, families were most likely to have used a grandparent for childcare during the past week (26 per cent). Used by 12 per cent of families, out of school clubs (on or off school sites) were the most commonly used type of formal provision in the last week.

Looking across different family types, there were no significant differences in the levels of use of childcare and early years provision between lone parent and couple families. Comparing families with and without paid workers, use of childcare was higher among working families. Among lone parents, seven in ten families where the parent worked had used childcare in the last week (72 per cent), compared to 54 per cent of families where they were not working. Among couple families, seven in ten families where both parents worked had used childcare in the last week (69 per cent), compared to six in ten families where only one of the parents worked (60 per cent), and five in ten families where neither parent worked (48 per cent).

Comparing working and non-working families, parental working seems to have a greater association with levels of use of informal care than levels of use of formal care. Five in ten dual-worker couple families had used informal care in the last week (47 per cent), compared to three in ten single earner couple families (29 per cent), and two in ten non-working couple families (21 per cent). Thus, twice as many couple families used informal childcare if both parents were working, compared to those where neither were. This greater use of informal care is mainly based on a greater use of grandparents, with three times as many working couple families having used grandparents for childcare as non-working couple families (32 per cent compared to 10 per cent). Among lone parents, 59 per cent of working families had used informal care, compared to 37 per cent of non-working families.

Looking at use of formal childcare and early years provision, couple families where one or both parents were working were equally likely to have used formal care (44 per cent), and their level of use was only eight percentage points higher than couples in non-working families. Similarly, use of childcare and early years provision was only seven percentage points higher for working lone parents compared to non-working lone parents. This is explained by the inclusion of early years provision within our questions, as non-working families' greater use of nursery and reception

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<sup>1</sup> National estimates are based on data of families with children aged 0-14 receiving child benefit as at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2004, DWP Information and Analysis Directorate, Information Centre.

classes somewhat balance out greater use of day nurseries, childminders, and out-of-school clubs among working families.

Higher income families were more likely to have used childcare in the last week than lower income families. Three quarters (73 per cent) of families with a yearly income over £32,000 had used childcare in the last week, compared to just over half (56 per cent) of families with a yearly income of under £10,000. Of course, this relationship will be associated with the relationship between use of childcare and whether the parents are working. The association between higher family income and greater use of childcare is accounted for largely (but not solely) by a greater use of formal childcare and early years provision among those with higher incomes. Five in ten (52 per cent) families with a yearly income of £32,000 or more used formal childcare in the last week, compared to three in ten (31 per cent) of those with a yearly income under £10,000. Looking at particular types of formal provision, levels of use of the more traditional forms of early years provision (nursery schools, classes, playgroups, etc.) did not vary between those with low, middle or high incomes. Where differences appear, they are linked to the use of forms of childcare most often used for economic reasons.

Looking across the use of childcare for children of different ages, three and four year olds were the key age group for use of childcare and early years provision, with nine out of ten (89 per cent) having received childcare or early years provision in the last week. Combining the greater need for childcare for pre-school children with early years education for this group, this is as we would expect. Similarly, we are not surprised that children under three were the next most likely to have received childcare (61 per cent). Among school aged children, primary school children were more likely to have received childcare than secondary school children (53 per cent of 5 to 11 year olds compared to 36 per cent of 12 to 14 year olds). Although there are some differences in use of informal care by the age of the child, the differences in levels of overall use are largely explained by levels of use of formal childcare and early years provision.

When we looked at use of childcare and early years provision across different regions of England, we found few differences. The stark exception to this was London, where only 55 per cent of families used childcare, compared to around two-thirds in all the other areas. Splitting England into quintiles according to the index of multiple deprivation (IMD), we found a similar pattern of use of childcare and early years provision to the pattern across family income groups (that is, higher childcare use in more affluent areas). There was a ten percentage point difference in use of childcare between families in the least and most deprived areas, with those in the most deprived areas being less likely to use childcare (58 per cent compared to 68 per cent). A similar pattern is found for both formal and informal childcare.

### *Changes in levels of use in recent years...*

2004 shows an increase of eight percentage points from 2001 in the proportion of families using childcare or early years provision within the last week. This suggests that with the time elapsed since it was launched in 1998, the initiatives rising out of the National Childcare Strategy have been making an impact on the use of childcare. Comparing 2001 and 2004, the jump in use of childcare in the last week is seen within both formal care and informal care. However, the increase was more marked for formal care. This finding fits in with the recent policy focus on formal childcare – free part-time places for three and four year olds, tax credit eligibility, and so on. There was a ten percentage point rise in use of formal care, from 31 per cent in 2001 to 41 per cent in 2004. This compares to a 6 percentage point rise amongst informal care use from 36 per cent in 2001 to 42 per cent in 2004. A rise in the use of childcare could well be related to an increase in the number of working parents (particularly working mothers) over the past five years.

The increase in use of formal care is partly due to the proportions using out-of-school clubs doubling in size, with 12 per cent of families having used this provider in the last week in 2004, compared to just 6 per cent in 2001. This corresponds to the policy focus on increasing the provision of before and after-school clubs for school aged children. There is also an increase in the use of nursery and reception classes with 13 per cent of families having used at least one of these types of provision in the last week in 2004, compared to 7 per cent in 2001, which may relate to the increase in free nursery education places for three and four year olds.

Proportional rises are highest among –

- Couple families compared to lone parent families: There was a ten percentage point increase in use of childcare in the last week by couple families, compared to half that amount by lone parent families.
- Higher income families compared to lower income families: Use of childcare did increase among the lowest household income group (56 per cent in 2004 compared to 49 per cent in 2001), but the jump in use was still greater among the two highest income groups (11-12 per cent increase). While families in the highest income group increased their use of both types of care, the increase in childcare use among the second highest income group was mainly based on the increase in use of formal care.
- London compared to other regions: The use of childcare increased in all regions apart from London, by at least 6 percentage points (the 2 per cent change for London is not statistically significant).
- More affluent areas compared to more deprived areas: Although use of childcare did rise by 5 per cent in the most deprived areas, the increase was twice the size in the least deprived areas (10 per cent).

## **Why do parents use childcare or early years provision?**

Using data on *why* parents were using childcare and early years provision, we can explore how their levels of use vary according to their use for economic reasons (to work, job seek or study) or for their children's educational development (Chapter 3). Whilst 64 per cent of families had used some childcare in the last week, only 36 per cent had used it for reasons which included economic activities and 27 per cent for reasons which included the children's education.

Of course, some parents used services for *both* economic *and* educational reasons. Among parents who had used childcare or early years provision in the last week, a third (36 per cent) had done so for economic reasons, without referring to any educational needs for their children. A fifth (19 per cent) of families using childcare and early years provision were doing so for both economic *and* educational reasons. A quarter (23 per cent) were using it for educational – and not for any economic – reasons. In addition, around a fifth (22 per cent) of families using childcare in the last week were using their providers exclusively for reasons *other than* economic or educational purposes.

When we look solely at parents using childcare for economic reasons, a greater proportion uses informal than formal care. 18 per cent of parents had used formal childcare or early years provision for economic reasons in the last week, whilst 24 per cent of parents had used informal childcare for these reasons. By far the most commonly used providers for economic reasons were grandparents, used by 16 per cent of parents in the last week. The most commonly used formal provision for economic reasons were day nurseries (6 per cent of all parents), childminders (4 per cent) and out-of-school clubs on school sites (4 per cent).

As we would expect, childcare and early years provision used for educational reasons were predominantly from among the formal providers. A quarter (25 per cent) of parents had used formal providers for educational reasons in the last week, compared to only 2 per cent using informal care for these reasons. Most often used were reception classes (7 per cent of parents said this). Day nurseries were used for both economic and educational reasons, in a more equal measure than any other provider.

## **When do parents use or need childcare and early years provision?**

A detailed look at *when* parents use childcare across the week is interesting from a policy perspective as it gives an insight into the following issues:

- The ways that early years education is used alongside formal and informal childcare;
- The relative use of childcare for economic, educational and other reasons;
- The use of different forms of childcare at different times of the day and week (e.g. at atypical working times).

We have explored how use of different providers pans out across the week for different types of families, in terms of the number of providers used, number of days, the timing of sessions, and wraparound care (Chapter 4). Although patterns of use reflect the working week, the working day, and the availability of providers to a certain extent, there are interesting differences when we look across the different reasons for using the childcare or early years provision and across different types of families.

Use of more than one childcare or early years provider was common, with four in ten (42 per cent) of children being looked after by more than one provider in the last week. However, if we split providers into 'early years education', 'other formal provision' and 'informal provision', it was unusual for children to have been looked after by more than one of each type, suggesting that different providers are used to fulfil different roles.

Parents using childcare or early years provision for economic reasons as well as for the child's educational development were more likely than others to use more than one provider. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that three and four year olds stand out among all the age groups as being more likely to have more providers. 49 per cent of three to four year olds had received care from just one provider in the last week, compared to at least 58 per cent across the other age groups.

We have split the weekday into five time periods, and separated out use of childcare at the weekend, to look at the times of day and week that childcare tends to be used more or less often<sup>2</sup>. Weekday daytime (9am to 3.29pm) and weekday late afternoon (3.30pm to 5.59pm) were the most common times for the use of childcare, with just under two-thirds of children who had used childcare in that week having used childcare during those periods. Weekday evening (6pm to 9.59pm) was the next most likely time for using childcare. Around a third (30-32 per cent) in each case used childcare in a weekday early morning period (6am to 8.59am), or in a weekend period. The least likely time to be using childcare was the weekday night period (10pm to 5.59am).

The timing of sessions does of course vary hugely by provider type. Reflecting the greater flexibility of informal care, children were then much more likely to have received informal care than other types of care from late afternoon onwards and at the weekend.

Taking into account what the mother is doing during sessions, the early morning and late afternoon periods were associated more with economic activity than non-economic, with twice as many children having received early morning childcare during a period of economic activity as non-economic (21 per cent compared to 9 per cent), and almost twice as many in the late afternoon period (41 per cent compared to 24 per cent). In turn, evenings, nights and weekends were more associated with non-economic activities.

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<sup>2</sup> These are not exclusive categories, and a single extended period of childcare might cover several of them.

Couples and lone parents end up with quite different childcare patterns, due to their differences in provider types used, with lone parenthood sometimes overriding working status in driving childcare needs, particularly at times outside the typical working day. Half of children in lone parent families (48 per cent) had received childcare in the evening compared to a third of children in couple families (33 per cent), and a quarter in lone parent families (26 per cent) had received childcare at night compared to just 10 per cent of children in couple families.

Wraparound care is an issue of particular interest in the context of patterns of use of childcare, in terms of the way parents cope with matching their childcare and early education needs and the availability of providers. If one provider is not available for the complete period of time for which the parent needs childcare – or the provider does not provide the correct mix of education and care – then not only is another provider needed, but accompanying the child on the journey from one provider to another also needs to be organised<sup>3</sup>. One in three children (32 per cent) who had received childcare in the last week had been taken or collected by their childcare provider.

As would be expected, the use of wraparound care varies hugely by the age of the child. One in two (47 per cent) five to seven year olds had been taken or collected by their childcare provider at some point, compared to two in five (41 per cent) eight to 11 year olds, one in three (28 per cent) three to four year olds, and one in five of both 0 to two year olds and 12 to 14 year olds. This relates to, but is not solely based on the number of providers used by each age group.

Understandably, reflecting the number of parents being available to collect or take the child, more children in lone parent families had been taken or collected by a provider than in couple families: 38 per cent in comparison to 30 per cent out of all children, and 50 per cent in comparison to 43 per cent out of children who had gone to two providers. Again, as would be expected, work had a positive association with the use of wraparound care: dual-earner families and lone parent working families made particularly high use of wraparound care. Half of children in each of these subgroups where two providers had been used (47 per cent and 54 per cent respectively – no statistical difference between the two) had been taken or collected by the provider.

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<sup>3</sup> As well as childcare needs not matching the availability of childcare providers, there may be other reasons for use of more than one provider in succession, such as not wanting children to spend more than a certain amount of time with a particular provider.

## **The cost of childcare and early years provision**

The cost of childcare and early years provision has been a key concern reflected in recent childcare policy. It is often discussed as a barrier to employment, especially for mothers, and the way the costs should be shared between parents and the government has been an issue of recent debate. It is also an area where there have been several recent policy developments, such as the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, and free part-time nursery education places for three and four year olds. The cost of childcare is a complex issue to explore, and analysis relies on parents' awareness of any subsidies that they may be receiving. Nevertheless, a clear picture of the financial aspects of childcare for different types of families can be drawn (Chapter 5).

The average weekly cost of childcare and early years provision (including the subsidies) was £23.00 (median). The average hourly cost of childcare (including subsidies, and whether for formal or informal care) was £1.43 (median), but ranged from 30p for nursery classes (which tended to be for refreshments) to £5.51 for nannies or au pairs (which tended to be for childcare fees). Costs tend to be higher in the least deprived areas (regardless of family characteristics), and in London. This finding emphasises the need for policies that strive to make childcare affordable irrespective of location (such as the London Childcare Affordability Pilots). Across regions in England, the highest hourly cost by far was in London, at £1.98 (median).

Among those who pay for childcare, the amounts paid vary enormously, partly because of different types of provision used. Working families (regardless of income level) and those with higher incomes (regardless of whether they are a one or two dual-earner household) pay more. Lower earning families pay less, but also report finding it more difficult to pay. 21 per cent of those with an income under £10,000 found it difficult to pay the weekly cost, and 13 per cent found it very difficult.

15 per cent of families who had made a payment to at least one provider said they had received some financial help towards it. Financial help included any help from outside the family, paid either to the family or directly to the provider to cover childcare costs. Those with a lower income were more likely to say they had received financial help than the two highest income groups. Lone parent families were also more likely to say they had received some financial help (19 per cent compared to 14 per cent).

Families were also asked about receipt of tax credits. Two thirds (64 per cent) of families received Child Tax Credit: 27 per cent of families received it along with Working Tax Credit and 38 per cent received it on its own<sup>4</sup>. Of those receiving Working Tax Credit, around one in ten (11 per cent) were in receipt of the childcare element (a further 5 per cent were unsure)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families (whether working or not), which is paid in addition to Child Benefit and any Working Tax Credit. Working Tax Credit is a payment to top up the earnings of working people on low incomes, and includes support for the costs of qualifying childcare (the childcare element).

<sup>5</sup> Families can also benefit from the childcare element even if they are only receiving Child Tax Credit – as long as they are receiving more than the family element, meet the work criteria and declared eligible childcare cost in their application.



There is room for improvement in terms of increasing parents' awareness of the financial help available, especially amongst non-working families. Knowledge of the types of childcare that are in general eligible for the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is low. However, it is unclear to what degree this translates into families receiving less help than they are entitled to. Only two-thirds of parents recognised a registered childminder as being eligible for the childcare element, and one-fifth thought a nanny or au pair was eligible (while in general this type of provider is not eligible). Awareness of actual costs of childcare seems relatively good, based on the estimates of the cost of day nurseries and childminders.

### **What are the barriers to using childcare or early years provision?**

Parents face a diverse range of potential barriers to using childcare and early years (Chapter 6). Currently, formal childcare and early years provision is affordable (though by no means usually easily affordable) to some, but less affordable – and sometimes a barrier to its use – for others. Lower income families and lone parents found it harder, on average, to pay for their childcare and early years provision, than those in the highest income group (45 per cent compared to 25 per cent, respectively, said that affordability in the local area was 'very' or 'fairly' good).

For significant minorities, lack of affordable childcare was cited as a reason for not using it (11 per cent of those not using childcare said this was a reason) and for not working (10 per cent of those not working cited cost as a factor). Similarly, there were families with young children who did not send them to any or much early years provision because of its cost. For example, 19 per cent of those not using nursery education, said they did not do so due to high costs, and 21 per cent of those who did not use it every day in the reference week, said this was due to cost factors.

We also found evidence of a perceived shortfall among many parents in the number of formal childcare places in their local area (41 per cent of parents said there were not enough places available). In terms of the extent to which a lack of available places was a barrier to parents using childcare or early years provision or to working, evidence is mixed. It was not often cited unprompted as a reason for not using childcare or not working (although those who did were more likely to come from lower income and lone parent families). However, when asked whether they would work if they could arrange 'good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable', half (48 per cent) of non-working parents said that they would.

There appeared to be significant levels of unmet demand for formal childcare services during less traditional times, such as school holidays, weekends and evenings. For example, 43 per cent of parents whose main provider did not open in the school holidays, said they would like it to.

Parents – particularly parents who used some form of formal or informal childcare and early years provision – were largely positive about the quality of their own provision and of that available in their local area. 66 per cent of all parents rated the quality of local provision as 'very' or 'fairly' good.

A lack of information – or knowledge about where to seek it – may be a barrier to parents’ use of childcare and early years provision. When asked directly, four in ten (38 per cent) parents felt that they would like more information about the childcare in their local area. Specific areas about which parents asked for more information included school holiday provision, early years provision and the cost and quality of childcare. What is particularly interesting is the reliance on ‘word of mouth’ for obtaining information about all kinds of childcare and early years provision (37 per cent cited this source), coupled with a lack of awareness of two of the key government-led information sources, namely CIS and ChildcareLink (only 6 and 2 per cent of parents, respectively, cited these sources).

### **What do parents of pre-school children feel about their childcare and early years provision?**

When parents are choosing childcare and early years provision to look after and educate their child, they are looking for the provider to fulfil a variety of roles. Their opinion of how well their provider meets these needs can vary depending on the provider they are using and on their pre-existing expectations. When looking at these issues, given the often different needs from childcare (and early years provision) of pre-school and school aged children and their families, we have reported separately on these two age groups. We look firstly at pre-school children.

Parents’ decisions about which providers to use are often made having to take into account several competing factors. Some of these will be ideological, based on the kind of provision they would like for their child. Others will be practical, working within the constraints of the local childcare market, finding childcare to fit around parental work patterns, and so on. When asked why they chose their provider, overall, parents cited more ‘pull’ than ‘push’ factors, more often mentioning reasons why they were attracted to the provider than reasons around a lack of choice. The majority of parents felt that they had a real choice of providers, citing reasons such as trust in the carer and preferences to see their child educated as well as cared for.

Parents’ reasons for choosing their formal childcare providers differed according to the age of their children. Trust was key for parents of very young children (33 per cent), with concerns about educational development increasing as the children reached four and five (11 per cent).

Parents using a formal institutional provider or a childminder were asked what, in their view, could be improved about a range of services, from buildings and premises to staff qualifications. Overall, six in ten (58 per cent) parents using an institutional provider and 84 per cent of parents using childminders stated that none of the improvements were needed at their provider. The most frequently cited aspects that needed improving were buildings and premises and outdoor play and activities.

Parents were also asked to identify what academic and what social skills they thought their child was being encouraged to develop while they were at the (formal) provider. 72 per cent or more of parents said that each of the academic skills we asked about had been encouraged in their child at their main provider.

Parents were generally satisfied with the level of feedback they received about their children's progress at their formal providers: 94 per cent said they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the feedback they got.

Ofsted inspection results were an influencing factor for a significant minority of parents when deciding to use a formal provider. Nearly half (44 per cent) of parents who had received them said that inspection results had influenced their decision to use their main formal provider.

Childcare and early years providers have begun increasingly to offer services - such as health or education - which aim to assist the parents as well as their children. This movement has been part of the government's drive to integrate services at single sites, enabling parents access to a 'one stop shop' for advice not only about childcare, but about ways they might find training, support or access to employment, for health services for their children, and so on. Currently a minority of parents using childcare and early years provision said that their providers offered additional services (61 per cent of parents said that no services were offered). However, a substantial number of parents would like to see them available. Most commonly wanted were health services (26 per cent), courses or training (16 per cent), advice for parents (15 per cent) and parenting classes (11 per cent) and parent/childminder and toddler sessions (14 per cent).

### **What do parents of school age children feel about their childcare?**

Moving on to parents' views of the formal and informal childcare received by their school age children, parents' reasons for choosing their formal childcare providers differed according to the type of provider (Chapter 8). Trust and reliability were key issues for choosing childminders (44 per cent of these parents cited this reason). For users of out-of-school clubs, issues around how the care fitted in with their working hours and the choice of the children themselves were more important for choosing out-of-school care (9 per cent and 11 per cent cited these reasons, respectively). Educational reasons and the reputation of the provider were most often cited regarding reception classes, cited in each case by a quarter of parents using them as their main provider (26 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).

Most parents were largely content with their providers. 92 per cent of parents using childminders, 58 per cent of those using reception classes, and 69 per cent of those using out-of-school clubs could suggest no improvements.

Awareness of Ofsted inspection results was relatively high, particularly for reception classes, but also for out of school provision. 68 per cent of parents whose reception class had been inspected, had received results of the process.

Whilst currently a small minority of parents using out-of-school clubs said that their providers offered additional services, substantial numbers of parents would like to see them available. Most commonly wanted were courses or training (13 per cent), health services (6 per cent), and careers and job advice (4 per cent). However, demand was much lower than from parents with pre-school children.

## **Conclusions**

More families are using childcare and early years provision in 2004 than in 1999 and 2001, with the rise being largely explained by an increase in the numbers of parents using formal childcare and early years provision. These findings are an indication of the success of the policies which focus on formal childcare and early years provision arising from the National Childcare Strategy.

The consequences of the universal provision of free part-time early years education for three and four year olds are less clear. We found an increase in the use of nursery and reception classes (which both specialise in provision for three and four year olds), but not in nursery schools or day nurseries (and the data are less comparable), nor in childminders or playgroups.

Many of the childcare and early years initiatives have concentrated on improving the accessibility and affordability of childcare and early years provision to families that are less well-off. We would therefore expect to see some changes over the past few years in the profile of families using childcare and early years provision, with less of a concentration on the higher income families. In this study, we have found that lower income families have indeed increased their use of childcare, but increases in use are larger among higher income families. (Although, of course, as the study is cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal, we will not pick up whether families' incomes have increased over the period. The National Childcare Strategy may well have helped to lift some families' incomes, enabling them to take paid work.)

Most government policies have focused on issues surrounding the use of and demand for formal childcare and early years provision. Little has been done with regard to informal care, despite the fact that it makes up a large proportion of all childcare used – particularly among lower income families. However, our study clearly shows that informal childcare plays a key role among families in England. It is not only used as a cheaper option than formal care. It is often chosen because of the home environment, the trust which parents place in its providers and the flexibility in the arrangements which can be made. The extent to which these are particular issues for lone parents (who do not have the same opportunities as couple parents to shift-parent) are highlighted.

An integral part of government pledges on childcare and early years provision is a commitment to 'affordable' provision. Our study indeed suggests that currently, childcare is affordable (though by no means usually easily affordable) to some, but less affordable – and sometimes a barrier to its use – for others. The need for more information about the costs of childcare services – upon which parents can make informed decisions – is also apparent. The affordability of childcare is a particular issue in London, where the hourly cost of childcare is higher than in other regions. This highlights the importance of the planned pilot work to address issues around the cost of childcare in London.

Despite the government reports of an 88 per cent growth in the registered stock of childcare in England, we found evidence of a perceived shortfall among many parents in the number of childcare places in their local area. Four in ten parents said they thought there were too few places in their local area. Problems with availability may be greater at particular times. There appears to be significant unmet demand for childcare at atypical times.

A lack of information – or knowledge about where to seek it – is an important theme emerging from our study. There appears to be at least some level of discrepancy between parents' perceptions of the local childcare and early years provision market and what is actually reported by parents who use childcare. Specific areas about which parents ask for more information include school holiday provision, early years provision and the cost and quality of childcare.

This study includes a wealth of data on how parents use and view childcare and early years provision in England. This report provides an initial look across a range of dimensions and highlights many issues of key interest to policy makers and academics working in this area. However, on each of these dimensions – and on many more – there is much more in the datasets to quarry. We would hope that these data will be used to explore each of these issues in more depth in the coming years.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aims of the study

When the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to carry out this study, it was with two key substantive aims in mind. The first was to provide salient, up-to-date information on parents' use, views and experiences of childcare and early years provision. The second was to continue the time series data on these issues from two previous survey series. Overarching both these aims was a need for data to aid the evaluation of recent policy interventions in these areas.

## 1.2 Policy background: the National Childcare Strategy and beyond

The introduction of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998 marked a radical shift in government policy and for the first time put childcare provision firmly on the political map. The strategy clearly signalled the government's commitment to providing "good quality and affordable childcare provision ... in every neighbourhood". Then within its ten-year strategy for childcare, announced in late 2004, the Government signalled its plans to develop its policies to provide 'affordable, flexible, high-quality childcare for all parents who need it'<sup>6</sup>. At the heart of the strategy lies the belief that, like education, different forms of childcare play a major role in children's social, cultural and psychological development. The strategy is also closely linked to other key policy priorities, namely tackling child poverty, labour market disadvantage and social exclusion<sup>7</sup>.

Since 1998 a wide range of childcare initiatives and funding streams have been introduced, with linked but slightly different foci and aims. Some of these initiatives and funding are universal. An example of this is the provision of free part-time early years education for three and four year olds. The ten-year strategy aims to provide 20 hours a week of free high quality care for 38 weeks a year for all three and four year olds (15 hours by 2010). Other initiatives have been targeted at specific groups (e.g. low-income families and student parents). Some programmes have been launched nationwide, such as out-of-school childcare funding from the New Opportunities Fund. (The ten-year strategy also proposed to provide an out of school childcare place for all children aged 3 to 14 between 8am and 6pm each weekday by 2010.) Other programmes are provided only in the most disadvantaged areas, such as the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and Sure Start Local Programmes.

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<sup>6</sup> Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare, 2004

<sup>7</sup> DfEE (1998) *Meeting the Childcare Challenge: a Framework and Consultation Document*, London: The Stationery Office

Children's Centres are building on many of the programmes set up in the early years of the National Childcare Strategy (in particular Sure Start, the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and Early Excellence Centres) to bring together, under the same roof, childcare, early years education and a range of other family services. Children's Centres are expected to provide services for 650,000 children and their families by 2006, and the aim is for every community to have a Children's Centre by 2010, serving every child under 5, starting with the most deprived areas. Through Children's Centres in their local community, the ten-year strategy aims to give every family easy access to integrated services offering information, health, family support, childcare and other services for children.

A range of childcare subsidies is also now available directly to parents. The main demand-side funding is the childcare element within the Working Tax Credit (WTC), which is available to low and middle income parents working more than 16 hours a week (both parents in couple families). This was changed in April 2003 to make it more flexible and available to a greater number of families. There are further aims to expand this within the ten-year strategy. However, funding to help parents to pay for childcare is also available from a range of other sources (e.g. the Childcare Access Fund and the Childcare Grant for students; help with childcare costs provided as part of the New Deal for Lone Parents). There are also plans within the ten-year strategy to extend the childcare providers eligible for financial support via a childcare approval scheme and to extend support for employer-supported childcare. Recognising the need to address specifically the high costs of childcare in London, the government is funding a pilot project to look at affordability issues in this area.

The National Childcare Strategy also includes a commitment to raising the quality of childcare and giving parents the information they need to choose what is right for their children. Many studies have shown that positive outcomes for children are closely related to the quality of care children receive, as was shown by the study on the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education<sup>8</sup>. There is also plenty of evidence to suggest that parents will not use childcare services, unless they believe they are of acceptable quality and will meet their children's needs<sup>9</sup>.

In 2001, the National Standards were introduced. These set a baseline below which no (registered) service can fall. They cover all aspects of childcare provision, from health and safety to learning opportunities, and from staff qualifications to partnerships with parents. A new Early Years Directory within Ofsted was also created to inspect childcare services and to ensure that the required standards are met. While setting minimum standards, the government is also encouraging providers to raise the quality of their service beyond the baseline guaranteed by the National Standards, through quality assurance schemes, such as Investors in Children (for group-based providers) and Children Come First (for childminders).

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<sup>8</sup> Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Taggart, B. (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project: final report – a longitudinal study funded by the DfES 1997-2004*.

<sup>9</sup> La Valle I, Finch S, Nove A, Lewin C (2000) *Baseline Survey of Parents' Demand for Childcare*, Research Report 176, London: DfEE and Woodland S, Miller M, Tipping S (2002) *Repeat Study of Parents' Demand for Childcare*, Research Report 348, London: DfES

The ten-year strategy also includes proposals to ensure high quality childcare provision via reform of the childcare workforce, through additional funding and a new qualification and career structure. Via reform of the regulation procedures and inspections, there are proposals to improve standards and better inform parents.

Formal childcare is used mainly by working families, and parents who are studying or training in order to re-enter the labour market or change career. Therefore, the National Childcare Strategy places a great emphasis on ensuring that childcare services are sufficiently flexible to reflect changing employment patterns, and in particular trends in mothers' employment – as by and large, mothers still have main responsibility for childcare. This might mean, for example, an increasing need for childcare at non-standard times, a wide range of part-time arrangements, and wraparound childcare to combine with early years provision.

All in all, much has changed since the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy, which has encouraged a substantial increase in childcare services and a proliferation of delivery models. The government reports to have increased the stock of childcare places by 90 per cent since 1997, now providing 1.2 million registered places in England. The new Childcare Bill will enable local authorities to secure sufficient childcare places for their local areas.

### **1.3 History of the study**

As the childcare world has undergone – and continues to undergo – radical transformation, it has been vital for policy makers to have access to up-to-date, robust and comprehensive information on parents' use of, need for and attitudes towards childcare and early years provision.

The current study combines two series of surveys – the Parents' Demand for Childcare series (the Childcare series) and the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and their use of Early Years Services series (the Early Years series). These two survey series, both conducted by NatCen, have played a key role in helping to monitor, evaluate and further develop childcare policies. The Childcare series included two studies conducted in 1999 and 2001. Focusing on families with children aged 14 and under, it collected information on their use of childcare and early years provision over the past year and, in more detail, over the last week. With an interest in childcare used for economic and other reasons, it collected information about services used at any time during the day or week. The six surveys in the Early Years series were conducted between 1997 and 2002 and focused on families with children aged 3 and 4. With more of an interest in early years provision, it collected information only about services used Monday to Friday, 8am until 6pm<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> For more details about the two survey series, see Appendix II.



Whilst to some extent fulfilling different roles, given the high degree of commonality between the two survey series, NatCen was asked to assess the feasibility of combining them<sup>11</sup>. Concluding that combining them would be possible, we assessed how best to minimise any losses to each of the survey series, whilst facilitating a combined design. In addition, we evaluated the need for alterations to the interview questionnaire and to the study design as a result of the changing world of childcare and early years provision. The resultant 'Childcare and Early Years Services Study' was designed.

## **1.4 Overview of the study design**

### ***1.4.1 The interviews***

Just under 8,000 parents in England were included in the study, between September 2004 and early January 2005<sup>12</sup>. They were randomly selected from the Child Benefit records. Given the almost universal up-take of Child Benefit, its records provide a comprehensive sampling frame for families with dependent children. Excluding those removed from the sample frame before they were passed to us or those with untraceable addresses, 78 per cent of selected parents were interviewed. This represents a very good response rate and their socio-demographic profile very closely matches that of the Child Benefit record population.

All the parents selected had children aged 14 and under, to be comparable with the previous Childcare Survey series and to focus on the age group most often included within government policy on childcare. In order to have sufficient numbers of children attending early years provision, a boost of around 900 parents with two, three or four year olds were included amongst the 8,000. Combining these with the parents of two, three and four year olds in the main sample enabled the continuation of the Early Years Survey series. Given possible policy changes for two year olds (for example, introducing some free pre-school care for this age group), it was decided to include two year olds in the boost (rather than threes and fours which would have been directly comparable with the previous survey series).

Conducted in people's homes, the interview with parents lasted for an average of three-quarters of an hour. A parent with main or shared responsibility for childcare decisions was interviewed. Any partners at home during the interview were asked personally about their socio-demographics. For others, the main respondent was asked to provide proxy information about their partner. The interview focused on both childcare and early years provision. Because of time constraints, detailed information on the use and needs of all children in the family could not be collected. Rather, we obtained a broad picture about all the children, but then randomly selected one child (in families where there were two or more) about which to ask a more detailed set of questions. Similarly, if the 'selected' child had used more than one childcare or early years provider in the last week, we collected some information about all providers, but concentrated on their main provider (of formal care if they used any). The same decision was made about information about use in the last year

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<sup>11</sup> Finch S, Joy S, Tipping S (2003) *The Feasibility of Combining the Parents' Demand for Childcare and Parents of Three and Four Year Olds Series of Surveys*, DfES Methods Paper

<sup>12</sup> Just under 600 families in Wales were also included. Their data is being separately reported and not included here.

rather than in the last week. We collected brief details about use over the last year, but concentrated on the childcare and early years provision that they had used in the last week<sup>13</sup>. It was agreed that use in the last week would be more reflective of regular arrangements, and data on more recent use of childcare was less likely to be affected by recall issues.

The interview broadly covered –

*For all children in the family:*

Use of childcare and early years provision in the last year (in summary)

Use of childcare and early years provision in the last week

Costs of and paying for childcare and early years provision (for providers used in the last week)

Sources of information and attitudes towards childcare and early years provision in the local area

*For one randomly selected child:*

Detailed record of attendance in the last week

Reasons for using and views of the main formal provider

Reasons for using more than one provider

*As background:*

Family structure

Socio-demographics

Parents' work details

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

### ***1.4.2 Defining childcare***

Following the model of the previous Childcare Surveys, the study uses a very inclusive definition of 'childcare and early years provision'. Parents are asked to include *any* time that their child is not with resident parents (or their current partner) or at school<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the definition is much wider than other studies that focus on childcare use when parents are working or studying or on early years education. In order to remind parents to include all possible people or organisations that may be looking after their child, they were shown the following list –

#### ***Formal providers***

Nursery school

Nursery class

Reception class

Special day school or nursery or unit

Day nursery

Playgroup or pre-school

Childminder

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<sup>13</sup> Most parents were asked about childcare used in the last week. However, if the last week had been a school/nursery holiday, they were asked about the most recent normal week.

<sup>14</sup> Although a slight ambiguity is introduced, as parents are asked to think about 'childcare' that they use, before being given the broad definition.

Nanny or au pair  
Babysitter who came to home  
Breakfast/After School Club, on school site  
Breakfast/After School Club, not on school site  
Holiday club/scheme

Other nursery education provider (please specify)

***Informal providers***

My ex-husband/wife/partner/the child's other parent (who does not live in this family)

The child's grandparent(s)

The child's older brother/sister

Another relative

A friend or neighbour

Other childcare provider (please specify)

This inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision means that parents will have included time when their child was visiting friends or family, at a sport or leisure activity, and so on. In order to be able to look separately at childcare and early years provision used for economic reasons and for the education of the child, parents were asked the reasons for using each provider. Thus, we are able to re-define childcare and early years provision in different ways.

Deciding on the correct classification of the 'type' of provider can be complicated for parents, especially given the changing childcare and early years market. We have therefore checked the classifications given by parents with the providers themselves and/or with administrative data sources.

It is worth noting that we have classified providers according to the provision for which they were being used (e.g. day care, early years education, etc.). Thus, we have continued to use – and classify according to – terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than include forms of integrated provision such as Children's Centres.

## **1.5 The report**

### ***1.5.1 The content of the report***

The data from this study contain a level of detailed information that is not possible to cover in this initial 'broad sweep' report. Here, the aim is to provide an overview of the findings from the study. We report on all the major elements included in the interview with parents, and look across different types of families, children and childcare providers.

Chapter 2 addresses ‘Who uses what childcare and early years provision?’. Here, we look at the proportions of families using childcare and early years provision – both over the last year and in the last week. We explore differences between different types of families and across different childcare and early years providers. Particular focus is given to use of formal and informal provision. It is also in this chapter that we report on changes in levels of use from 1999 to 2004 and comment on the possible impact of various elements of the National Childcare Strategy.

In Chapter 3, ‘Why do parents use childcare or early years provision?’, we analyse levels of use of childcare and early years provision according to the reasons why the parents sent their children to these providers. We distinguish largely between ‘economic reasons’ (i.e. for parents’ work, study or job search), ‘educational reasons’ (i.e. development of the child) and ‘other reasons’ (e.g. social and leisure). Pertinent to policy debates about enabling parents to work, we are able to disaggregate use of childcare and early years provision for economic reasons from amongst our data.

Chapter 4, ‘When do parents use or need childcare and early years provision?’, focuses on one (randomly selected) child in the family. It uses retrospective diary data about the childcare and early years provision they received in the last week to report on patterns of use over the day and week. Such data enable us to look at issues around differential use of providers at different times of the day and week (e.g. what childcare is used at atypical times) and at ways in which parents ‘join up’ the use of different providers across the day (i.e. issues around integrated or wraparound provision).

The costs of childcare and early years provision are covered in Chapter 5. Looking across a range of dimensions including region, providers, different types of families, we report on the hourly and weekly amount parents pay for childcare and early years provision. We also take a wider look at parents’ awareness of the cost of various forms of childcare.

Chapter 6, ‘What are the barriers to using childcare or early years provision?’, covers a range of possible barriers, including cost, availability, quality and accessibility. It looks at the different types of barriers and the extent of the issues between different types of families and providers. Whilst not hard measures of unmet demand, the chapter provides an insight into the types of difficulties perceived or experienced by parents in obtaining the childcare or early years provision that they would ideally like or need.

Given the often different needs from childcare (and early years provision) of pre-school and school aged children and their families, Chapters 7 and 8 focus separately on these two age groups. In each chapter, we report on parents’ reasons for selecting their main providers and the balance between ‘choice’ and ‘necessity’. We also look at parents’ perceptions of the social and educational benefits of their child attending the main provider, and the perceived importance of Ofsted inspections.

Finally, Chapter 9 draws together the findings from the preceding chapters and addresses the question ‘From parents’ perspectives, how are childcare policies working in practice?’

An overview of the socio-demographic profile of the families who were interviewed as part of the study is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B provides full methodological details of the study. Appendix C provides details of the logistic regression models used in the report.

### ***1.5.2 Interpreting results in the report***

During the report, we use data about -

- The family
- The selected child
- The main (formal) provider

A 'family level' weight is applied to the family analysis. This weight ensures that the research findings are representative of the population of families in England in receipt of Child Benefit, and re-balances the relative proportions of the main and boost sample. A 'child level' weight is applied to the selected child and main provider analysis. This weight combines the family level weight with an adjustment for the probability of the child being selected for more detailed information. Full details of the weighting are provided in Appendix B.

The tables in this report contain the total number of cases in the whole sample or in the particular sub-group being analysed, and the base for different columns (e.g. different types of families, income groups, etc.). The total base figure includes all the eligible cases (i.e. all respondents or all respondents who were asked a particular question) minus any coded as 'don't know' or 'not answered'. Thus, whilst the base description may be the same across several tables (e.g. all families using childcare in the last week), the number bases may differ slightly due to the exclusion of those coded 'don't know' or 'not answered'<sup>15</sup>. In some tables, the column bases do not add up to the total base and this is mainly because some categories might not be included in the table, either because they are too small or are not useful for the purpose of the analysis.

Due to rounding, percentage figures may not add up to exactly 100 per cent.

Measures of local deprivation, as calculated by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister, have been matched to the survey data and are used for sub-group analysis throughout the report. Families have been split into quintiles according to their local area score on the index of multiple deprivation (IMD). Sub-group analysis by income is also used, reflecting the income groups used in the Childcare Survey series as much as possible.

The large sample size used for this survey means that the differences between percentages for most sub-groups of the sample are statistically significant. However, some bases for some estimates are still relatively small. It is therefore important to note the unweighted bases at the foot of the tables when drawing comparisons. Throughout the report, whenever the text comments on differences between sub-

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<sup>15</sup> Occasionally, the proportion of people saying 'don't know' was sufficiently high to warrant showing them within the table (and therefore they are included in the base). This is particularly the case for awareness questions.

groups of the sample, these differences have been tested for significance and found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence interval or above<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, standard deviations have been calculated when reporting on statistically significant differences in mean scores.

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

- [ ] to indicate a percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents
  - +
  - 0
- to indicate a percentage value of less than 0.5 per cent
- to indicate a percentage value of zero.

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<sup>16</sup> These confidence limits assume a simple random sample and no adjustment has been made for the effects of clustering. Although such an adjustment would increase the confidence limits slightly, they would not differ notably.

## **2 WHO USES WHAT CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION?**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, we provide an overview of families' use of childcare and early years provision. We take a brief look at their use over the last year. We then concentrate on families' use of childcare over the last week, looking at the use of different provider types by different types of families and children. Building up a picture of families who do or do not use various forms of childcare, we provide a backdrop, which will inform our understanding of the subsequent chapters of the report. With our ability to compare levels and types of use over a five-year period, going back to 1999, we can assess the extent to which recent government policies in this area have had an impact on families' levels of use.

In essence, this chapter addresses the following questions –

- What proportion of families used childcare in the last year?
  - What types of childcare did they use?
- What proportion of families used childcare in the last week?
  - What types of childcare did they use?
  - Where relevant, which providers were registered or approved?
- Which families used childcare in the last week?
- What variation is there in use across different regions and areas?
- How has this picture changed since the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy?

In order to be comparable with our previous studies, this chapter focuses on the use of childcare and early years provision using our very broad definition (see Chapter 1 for details). Hence, we report on families' use for all possible reasons – economic, educational and social. For an analysis of the use of childcare and early years providers for purely economic or purely educational reasons, the reader should refer to Chapter 3.

### **2.2 Use of childcare and early years provision in the last year**

#### ***2.2.1 Levels of use and providers used in the last year***

Almost nine in ten (86 per cent) families had used some form of childcare or early years provision – be it regular or ad hoc - within the last year<sup>17</sup>. Table 2.1 shows the types of providers – both formal and informal - that families had used in the last year.

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<sup>17</sup> Parents were asked about all children for whom they were responsible. Responsibility was defined as 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about any childcare or nursery education'.

**Table 2.1 Use of providers in the last year**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
<b><i>Any childcare</i></b>	<b>86</b>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>	<b>57</b>
Nursery school	6
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	7
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	13
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs	1
Day nursery	10
Playgroup or pre-school	11
Other nursery education provider	1
Childminder	7
Nanny or au pair	2
Babysitter who came to home	9
Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site	13
Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery site	6
Holiday club/scheme	9
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>	<b>67</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	9
The child's grandparent(s)	49
The child's older brother/sister	10
Another relative	19
A friend or neighbour	23
<b><i>Other</i></b>	
Leisure/sport activity	5
Other childcare provider	3
<b><i>No childcare used</i></b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7774</i>

*Note: as families may have used more than one provider, percentages add to more than 100.*

Within the last year, a greater proportion of families (67 per cent) had used informal care than formal care (57 per cent). Of all providers, families were most likely to have used grandparents. Half of families (49 per cent) had done so at some point in the last year. It is worth noting that the *three* most commonly used childcare providers – when looking over the last year – were all informal. As well as grandparents, around a fifth of families had used other relatives (19 per cent) and friends or neighbours (23 per cent).



If we focus on formal providers, families were most likely to have used a breakfast or after school club. A fifth (18 per cent<sup>18</sup>) of families had used one (either on or off a school site) within the last year.

Grossing up to national estimates<sup>19</sup>, these figures represent 5.16 million families having used childcare in the last year. 3.42 million families had used formal childcare or early years provision, and 4.02 million families had used informal childcare. The estimates for key formal providers are given in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 National estimates of use of key formal providers in the last year**

	<b>Number of families</b>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>	<b><i>3.42 million</i></b>
Nursery school	0.36 million
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	0.42 million
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	0.78 million
Day nursery	0.60 million
Playgroup or pre-school	0.66 million
Childminder	0.42 million
Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site	0.78 million
Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery site	0.36 million

Of course, we expect a great deal of variation in the levels of use of childcare and early years provision – and in the types of providers used – across different types of families. However, with our focus mainly on the use of childcare and early years provision within the last week (rather than the whole year), we report on these variations in Section 2.3 below.

### ***2.2.2 Holiday clubs***

Given that our interviews were carried out during term-time, families' use of holiday clubs was not picked up in the detailed questions that we asked about childcare use in the last week<sup>20</sup>. Hence before moving on to use of childcare during the last week, here is a look at use of holiday clubs in the last year by different family types.

Within the last year, one in ten (9 per cent) families had used holiday clubs. Table 2.3 shows that couples were more likely than lone parents to have used a holiday club (10 per cent in comparison to 7 per cent). However, if we look only at working families, working lone parents were just as likely to have used a holiday club as dual-earner couple families (10 and 12 per cent respectively). Reflecting the link with work, there is also a strong association with income, as the higher the income of the family, the more likely families were to have used a holiday club. Five times as

<sup>18</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 6 per cent and 13 per cent, the proportion is 18 per cent rather than 19 per cent due to rounding.

<sup>19</sup> National estimates are based on data of families with children aged 0-14 receiving child benefit as at 1<sup>st</sup> September 2004, DWP Information and Analysis Directorate, Information Centre.

<sup>20</sup> We did ask about whether their main provider offered care in the school holidays. This is reported in Chapter 6 (section 6.3)

many families with an income of £32,000 and over had used a holiday club (15 per cent) as families in the lowest income bracket (3 per cent).

**Table 2.3 Use of holiday clubs in the last year, by family characteristics**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Family type</i></b>		
Couple	10	5883
Lone parent	7	1891
<b><i>Family working status</i></b>		
Couple – both working	12	3434
Couple – one working	7	2052
Couple – neither working	3	397
Lone parent – working	10	841
Lone parent – not working	4	1050
<b><i>Family yearly income</i></b>		
Under £10,000	3	1201
£10,000-£19,999	7	2193
£20,000-£31,999	9	1870
£32,000+	15	1962

*Base: All families*

In Table 2.4, we order the regions of England by the proportions of families that had used a holiday club in the last year. There are big regional differences, with families in the South East being at least twice as likely to have used a holiday club as families in the North West, Yorkshire & the Humber, the North East and London.

The association with income is reflected in a similarly strong relationship with area deprivation, with families in the least deprived areas being three times as likely to have used a holiday club (15 per cent) as families in the most deprived areas (5 per cent).

**Table 2.4 Use of holiday clubs in the last year, by Government Office Region and index of multiple deprivation**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
<i>Government office region</i>		
South East	14	1286
Eastern	11	860
South West	10	790
East Midlands	9	644
West Midlands	8	865
North West	7	1016
Yorkshire & the Humber	6	828
North East	6	442
London	6	1043
<i>Index of multiple deprivation</i>		
1 <sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived	15	1479
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	11	1438
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	8	1406
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	7	1592
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived	5	1859

*Base: All families*

## **2.3 Use of childcare and early years provision in the last week**

### ***2.3.1 Defining the ‘last week’***

As outlined in Chapter 1, it was decided to focus the interviews with parents on childcare and early years provision that had been used in the last week<sup>21</sup>. (A very broad picture of the last year was collected.) Two thirds (64 per cent) of families had used childcare or early years provision in the last week.

### ***2.3.2 Types of childcare and early years provision used in the last week***

The most commonly used formal and informal providers in the last week were the same as those used in the last year (see Table 2.5). Grandparents were still the most likely provider of childcare for families, used by a quarter (26 per cent) of families in the last week. Used by 12 per cent<sup>22</sup> of families, out-of-school clubs (on or off school sites) were the most commonly used type of formal provision.

<sup>21</sup> Data are always more accurate if asking about very recent events. Most parents were asked about childcare used in the last week. However, if the last week had been a school/nursery holiday, they were asked about the most recent normal week.

<sup>22</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 4 per cent and 9 per cent, the proportion is 12 per cent rather than 13 per cent due to rounding.

**Table 2.5 Use of providers in the last week**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
<b><i>Any childcare</i></b>	<b>64</b>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>	<b>41</b>
Nursery school	3
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	5
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	8
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs	1
Day nursery	8
Playgroup or pre-school	7
Other nursery education provider	+
Childminder	4
Nanny or au pair	1
Babysitter who came to home	2
Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site	9
Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery site	4
Holiday club/scheme	+
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>	<b>42</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	6
The child's grandparent(s)	26
The child's older brother/sister	5
Another relative	6
A friend or neighbour	10
<b><i>Other</i></b>	
Leisure/sport activity	5
Other childcare provider	2
<b><i>No childcare used</i></b>	<b>36</b>
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

+ <0.5 per cent

When we look at the amount and types of childcare and early years provision used over the last week, we are taking a 'snapshot' in comparison to their use over the last year. We are less likely to pick up ad hoc (usually informal) arrangements, but almost equally likely to pick up people's regular on-going (formal or informal) arrangements, particularly those used during term-time. Thus, whilst - over the last year - more families had used informal arrangements than formal (67 per cent compared to 57 per cent), over the last week, the proportions using formal and informal care were virtually identical (41 per cent and 42 per cent).

Reflecting the regular use of formal childcare and early years provision, the proportions of families using each of these providers in the last week was only slightly lower than for the last year. For example, 4 per cent of families had used childminders in the last week, compared to 7 per cent in the last year. However, there are two formal providers for which this is not the case. Babysitters were used by only 2 per cent of families in the last week (but 9 per cent of families in the last year). As babysitters are perhaps at the 'informal' end of formal care, they are more often used on an ad hoc basis, rather than a regular basis. The second formal provider type for which the proportions of families using it varies a lot between the last week and the last year is the holiday club, where 9 per cent of families had used them over the last year, and less than 0.5 per cent had used them in the last week. This simply reflects the fact that interviews took place during the school term, as mentioned earlier.

In contrast to the pattern of use of formal provision, use of particular *informal* providers in the last week was much lower than use over the last year. For each informal provider, half or fewer than half the number of families had used them for childcare in the last week, compared to the last year. For example, a quarter (26 per cent) of families had used grandparents, compared to half (49 per cent) in the last year.

Looking at the combined use of formal and informal care, one fifth of families (20 per cent) had used both formal and informal care in the last week, one fifth had used only formal providers (21 per cent), and one fifth had used only informal providers (22 per cent).

### ***2.3.3 Registration and approval***

Parents who had used the following list of providers in the last week were asked whether – to their knowledge – the provider was 'registered' –

- Childminders
- Grandparents
- Other relatives
- Friends or neighbours

A registered childminder works in their own home and is registered and inspected by Ofsted, demonstrating the quality and standards of their care. Ofsted ensures that every childminder meets the national childcare standards, such as ensuring they are suitable to be with children. In addition, in order to become registered, a childminder must undertake police and health checks, have a regular inspection of their home and take an introductory childminding course and first aid training.

Awareness of the registration system was high, with very few parents saying that they were unaware of whether their provider was registered (Table 2.6). Nine out of ten parents using childminders said that their childminder was registered (87 per cent). As registration status is necessary for parents to be eligible to claim the Childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, we asked about registration of relatives and friends (although only the costs of childcare provided outside the home can be claimed if the provider is a relative of the child). However, registration of these informal providers was very rare (only 1 or 2 per cent).

**Table 2.6 Awareness of registration status of providers used in the last week**

	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Not registered</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Row per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Childminder	87	13	+	356
Grandparent	1	99	0	2069
Other relative	1	99	0	473
Friend/neighbour	2	98	1	777

*Base: All families who had used this provider in the last week*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

Approval was asked about for -

- Childminders
- Nannies/au pairs
- Babysitters
- Breakfast/After School Clubs (on or off school site)

An 'approved' provider is a childcare provider who has been approved by Ofsted, demonstrating that the provider has the required qualifications and has undergone police checks. The approval system was introduced only very recently. Parents' levels of awareness regarding whether their provider was approved were lower than for registration, but more importantly, the reported figures for approval were much higher than known estimates of approved providers in England, hence highlighting the lack of awareness and understanding of the system<sup>23</sup>.

For example, three-quarters (77 per cent) of families who had used a childminder stated that their childminder was 'an approved provider', and there was an extremely large overlap between parents who recognised their childminder as 'registered' and 'approved' (just 1 per cent of families had used an 'approved' childminder who was not registered).

The other reported levels of approval were 79 per cent for on-site clubs, 61 per cent for out-of-school clubs, 28 per cent for nannies or au pairs and 14 per cent for babysitters.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> There are only 400 childcare providers approved at the time of publication (based on DfES administrative records not in the public domain).

<sup>24</sup> We introduced questions about approval knowing that there would be a lack of awareness or of clarification about the system, given its recent introduction. The questions were added at this early stage in order to monitor changes in awareness over time, in future surveys in this series.

### ***2.3.4 Which families used childcare and early years provision in the last week?***

So, considering the two thirds (64 per cent) of families who had used childcare in the last week, what types of families were these? Who is more or less likely to use childcare – or particular types of childcare? In this section we report on this, looking at whether they are lone parent or couple families, the families' working status, their work at 'normal' and 'atypical' times and their income. Looking at the selected child<sup>25</sup>, we see whether there are differences in the levels and types of childcare use dependent on the age of the child, their ethnicity and whether they have any special educational needs<sup>26</sup>.

#### ***Couples and lone parents and their working status***

A simple look at lone parent and couple families suggests that there was little difference between them in terms of the proportion that had used childcare or early years provision in the last week. 65 per cent of couples had done so compared to 63 per cent of lone parents (difference not statistically significant) (Table 2.7). Comparing families with and without paid workers, use of childcare is higher among working families. Among lone parents, seven in ten families where the parent worked had used childcare in the last week (72 per cent), compared to 54 per cent of families where they were not working (Table 2.8). Among couple families, seven in ten families where *both* parents worked had used childcare in the last week (69 per cent), compared to six in ten families where only *one* of the parents worked (60 per cent), and five in ten families where *neither* parent worked (48 per cent). Thus, the proportion of working lone parents using childcare is comparable with couple families where both parents were working. This reflects the link between use of childcare and maternal work. The fact that non-working lone parents were still more likely to use childcare than non-working couple families (6 per cent difference) reflects the more varied reasons for using childcare, with their need to rely on external help more than couple parents. This is explored further in Chapter 3.

Whilst overall levels of use of childcare are similar between couple and lone parent families, the types of provision used are very different. Lone parent families were *less* likely than couple parents to have used formal childcare in the last week (33 per cent compared to 43 per cent) and *more* likely to have used informal childcare (48 per cent compared to 40 per cent). The additional use of informal childcare was explained by use of ex-partners (18 per cent compared to 2 per cent) and relatives other than grandparents or the child's siblings (8 per cent compared to 5 per cent). Interestingly, lone parents were no more or less likely to use grandparents as childcare than couple families.

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<sup>25</sup> The child randomly selected during the interview on which to concentrate some of the detailed questions.

<sup>26</sup> Parents were asked if their child had any special educational needs or other special needs.

**Table 2.7 Use of childcare in the last week by family type**

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
<b><i>Any childcare</i></b>	<b>65</b>	<b>63</b>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>	<b>43</b>	<b>33</b>
Nursery school	3	2
Nursery class	5	5
Reception class	8	6
Special day school or nursery	1	0
Day nursery	9	5
Playgroup or pre-school	8	4
Childminder	4	4
Nanny or au pair	1	1
Babysitter who came to home	2	2
Breakfast club or After school club, on-site	10	9
Breakfast club or After school club, not on-site	4	3
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	2	18
The child's grandparent(s)	26	26
The child's older brother/sister	5	6
Another relative	5	8
A friend or neighbour	10	10
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5722	2080

Comparing working and non-working families, parental working seems to have a greater association with levels of use of *informal* care than levels of use of formal care (Table 2.8). Five in ten dual-worker couple families had used informal care in the last week (47 per cent), compared to three in ten single earner couple families (29 per cent), and two in ten non-working couple families (21 per cent). Thus, twice as many couple families used informal childcare if both parents were working, compared to those where neither were. This greater use of informal care is mainly based on a greater use of grandparents, with three times as many working couple families having used grandparents for childcare as non-working couple families (32 per cent compared to 10 per cent). However, there were also relatively big differences in the use of siblings (6 per cent compared to 2 per cent) and friends or neighbours (12 per cent compared to 5 per cent). Among lone parents, 59 per cent of working families had used informal care, compared to 37 per cent of non-working families. This difference was based on the same provider categories as for couple families, with the obvious addition of ex-partners, with twice as many working lone parents having used their ex-partner for childcare as non-working families (24 per cent compared to 12 per cent).



Looking at use of formal childcare and early years provision, couple families where one or both parents were working were equally likely to have used formal care (44 per cent), and their level of use was only eight percentage points higher than couples in non-working families. Similarly, use of childcare and early years provision was only seven percentage points higher for working lone parents compared to non-working lone parents. This is explained by the inclusion of early years education within our questions, as non-working families' greater use of nursery and reception classes somewhat balance out greater use of day nurseries, childminders, and out-of-school clubs among working families.

**Table 2.8 Use of providers in the last week by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple – both working</b>	<b>Couple – one working</b>	<b>Couple – neither working</b>	<b>Lone parent – working</b>	<b>Lone parent – not working</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><i>Any childcare</i></b>	<b>69</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>54</b>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>30</b>
Nursery school	3	4	3	2	3
Nursery class	4	7	8	4	6
Reception class	7	11	9	4	8
Special day school or nursery	1	1	1	0	1
Day nursery	10	6	5	7	3
Playgroup or pre-school	6	10	7	4	5
Childminder	6	1	1	7	1
Nanny or au pair	1	1		1	0
Babysitter who came to home	3	3	1	2	1
Breakfast/After school club, on-site	11	9	5	12	6
Breakfast/After school club, not on-site	4	3	2	4	2
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>37</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	2	1	2	24	12
The child's grandparent(s)	32	18	10	33	19
The child's older brother/sister	6	3	2	7	4
Another relative	6	5	4	9	7
A friend or neighbour	12	8	5	13	7
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1052</i>

### **Working hours**

Working hours might also be expected to have an impact on use of childcare. Table 2.9 shows use of childcare by couple families' working hours, and it is clear that one parent, or both parents, working part-time (whether under or over 16 hours) in a dual-earner family, has no association with levels of childcare use (in comparisons to families where both parents work full-time). The lack of difference in levels of use of formal care is, again, explained by the inclusion of early years education in the definition of childcare. As for informal care, the lack of difference suggests that any work is associated with some need for informal care, even though the amount used is likely to differ by number of hours both parents are in work (the lower use of informal care where both parents work part-time is not statistically significant and has a confidence interval of +/-12 per cent).

However, within single earner families, part-time working is associated with lower levels of childcare use, with 55 per cent of families where the working parent is working part-time having used childcare in the last week compared to 61 per cent where the working parent is working full-time. This difference is solely based on lower use of formal care, and hence is likely to be associated with the cost of formal care, and lower part-time salaries.

**Table 2.9 Use of childcare in the last week, by couple families' working hours**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	<b>Both FT</b>	<b>FT + PT 16-29 hrs</b>	<b>FT + PT 1-15 hrs</b>	<b>Both PT</b>	<b>One FT, One not working</b>	<b>One PT, One not working</b>	<b>Non-working</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used childcare	70	68	69	66	61	55	48
Used formal care	43	43	45	44	46	37	36
Used informal care	47	46	47	37	30	30	21
<i>Base: All families</i>							
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1170</i>	<i>1540</i>	<i>669</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>1822</i>	<i>305</i>	<i>403</i>

For lone parent families, working hours have quite a different association with levels of childcare use (Table 2.10). Here, whether the parent worked over or under 16 hours did make a difference, as parents working 16 hours or more were just as likely to have used childcare as those working full-time (73-74 per cent), compared to 61 per cent of those working 15 hours or less. This gap was based on lower use of informal care, suggesting that it is not based on those working 15 hours or less being less likely to afford childcare. This is explored further in the multivariate analysis in Section 2.4.

**Table 2.10 Use of childcare in the last week, by lone parents' working hours**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>FT</b>	<b>PT 16-29 hrs</b>	<b>PT 1-15 hrs</b>	<b>Non-working</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used childcare	73	74	61	54
Used formal care	39	35	33	30
Used informal care	60	60	49	37
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>352</i>	<i>419</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1052</i>

***Working at atypical times***

Table 2.11 shows how use of childcare differed according to whether or not parents worked at atypical times (before 8am, after 6pm, or at the weekend)<sup>27</sup>. The table includes only working families, and compares couple families where at least one of the parents worked the type of atypical hours to working couple families where neither worked these atypical hours. Lone parents working each type of atypical hours are also compared to working lone parents not working atypical hours.

The key findings concerns lone parents' work at the weekend and couple parents work in the evenings, both of which were associated with higher levels of childcare use within the last week. 76 per cent of lone parents working at the weekend had used childcare in the last week, compared to 69 per cent of lone parents who work but never at the weekend. 67 per cent of couple families where at least one parent worked after 6pm had used childcare in the last week, compared to 60 per cent of other working couple families. Working before 8am was not associated with different levels of use of childcare.

<sup>27</sup> The definition of working at these times is 'usually or sometimes', as opposed to never.

**Table 2.11 Use of childcare in the last week, by atypical hours**

	<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>Couple working families - YES %</b>	<b>Couple working families - NO %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - YES %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - NO %</b>
Work before 8am	66	65	69	73
Work after 6pm	67	60	76	70
Work at weekend	66	63	76	69
<i>Base: All families Unweighted base (range)<sup>28</sup></i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>200-1052</i>	<i>200-1052</i>

As for the association between working atypical hours and the use of *formal* childcare, families with parents who worked after 6pm were more likely to have used formal childcare than other working families (50 per cent compared to 42 per cent among working couple families, and 45 per cent compared to 38 per cent among working lone parents) (Table 2.12). As discussed in Section 4.3, the main types of formal care being used after 6pm were nannies, au pairs, and off-site after school clubs.

**Table 2.12 Use of formal care in the last week, by atypical hours**

	<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>Couple working families - YES %</b>	<b>Couple working families - NO %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - YES %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - NO %</b>
Work before 8am	48	48	41	41
Work after 6pm	50	42	45	38
Work at weekend	48	48	42	40
<i>Base: All families Unweighted base (range)</i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>200-1052</i>	<i>200-1052</i>

<sup>28</sup> The unweighted bases are given as a range, as the base varies for each cell.

There was a stronger association between atypical hours and informal care (Table 2.13), with all types of atypical hours related to greater use of informal care, across both couple and lone parent families (the only insignificant relationship is for lone parents working before 8am). Hence working after 6pm was associated with more use of both types of childcare, while working before 8am and at the weekend was linked with more use of just informal care, highlighting the role of informal care at times at which formal care is less accessible (see Chapter 4 for more discussion of the times different types of childcare is used).

**Table 2.13** Use of informal care in the last week, by atypical hours

	<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>Couple working families - YES %</b>	<b>Couple working families - NO %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - YES %</b>	<b>Lone parent working family - NO %</b>
Work before 8am	42	37	56	61
Work after 6pm	42	34	67	55
Work at weekend	42	36	66	56
<i>Base: All families Unweighted base (range)</i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>403-4293</i>	<i>200-1052</i>	<i>200-1052</i>

### ***Family income***

Higher income families were more likely to have used childcare in the last week than lower income families. Three-quarters (73 per cent) of families with a yearly income over £32,000 had used childcare in the last week, compared to just over half (56 per cent) of families with a yearly income of under £10,000. Of course, this relationship may simply be a proxy for the relationship between use of childcare and whether the parents are working. Such issues are teased out using more complex analysis towards the end of Section 2.4, where the relative importance of the families' and children's characteristics is explored.

So, how do we account for higher income families using more childcare? Were they likely to be using more of particular types of childcare or early years provision, or is their greater use distributed across the different types of formal and informal provision? From Table 2.14 below, we see that the association between higher family income and greater use of childcare is accounted for largely (but not solely) by a greater use of *formal* childcare and early years provision among those with higher incomes. Five in ten (52 per cent) families with a yearly income of £32,000 or more used formal childcare in the last week, compared to three in ten (31 per cent) of those with a yearly income under £10,000. There is also a smaller but noteworthy gap in levels of use of informal care, with a seven percentage point difference between the lowest and highest income brackets (38 per cent compared to 45 per cent).

We can also see that this lower use of informal care among families with a lower income is based on being less likely to use *both* formal and informal care (14 per cent for the lowest income bracket compared to 25 per cent for the highest). The levels of exclusive use of informal care are very similar across income groups.

**Table 2.14 Use of childcare in the last week, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000-£19,999 %	£20,000-£31,999 %	£32,000+ %
Used any childcare	56	60	68	73
Used formal care	31	36	43	52
Used informal care	38	41	45	45
<i>Used both formal and informal care</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Used formal care only</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Used informal care only</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>20</i>
<hr/>				
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

Looking at particular types of formal provision (Table 2.15), levels of use of the more traditional forms of early years provision (nursery schools, classes, playgroups, etc.) did not vary between those with low, middle or high incomes. Where differences appear, they are linked to the use of forms of childcare most often used for economic reasons (as discussed in Chapter 3). Those with higher incomes (£32,000 or above) were three times more likely than those with incomes under £20,000 to use day nurseries (13 per cent compared to four to 5 per cent). Higher income families were also more likely than lower income families to use individual formal providers, such as childminders, nannies, au pairs and babysitters. As well as these forms of childcare being associated with economic reasons, cost plays a part, as these are among the most expensive types of providers (apart from babysitters) – see Chapter 5, Section 5.5.

When we look at the use of different types of informal providers, we realise that the overall figures for use of informal provision mask quite wide variations in the types of people used by families from different income groups. Use of grandparents, friends and neighbours increases according to levels of family income. For example, grandparents were used by two in ten (21 per cent) families in the lowest income group and by three in ten (28 per cent) families in the highest. However, the opposite relationship is found when looking at the numbers of families using ex-partners as childcare. Those with yearly incomes under £10,000 were five times as likely to use ex-partners than those with incomes of £32,000 or more (11 per cent compared to 2 per cent). Of course, to a certain extent, this reflects the lower incomes of lone parents and is an issue for further exploration in Section 2.4.

**Table 2.15 Use of providers in the last week, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000 %</b>	<b>£10,000- £19,999 %</b>	<b>£20,000- £31,999 %</b>	<b>£32,000+ %</b>
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>				
Nursery school	3	3	3	3
Nursery class	6	6	5	4
Reception class	7	8	8	8
Special day school or nursery or unit	1	+	1	1
Day nursery	4	5	8	13
Playgroup or pre-school	6	6	8	7
Childminder	1	3	5	7
Nanny or au pair	+	+	+	3
Babysitter	1	1	2	4
Out-of-school club on-site	5	8	10	14
Out-of-school club off-site	2	3	3	5
<i>Informal childcare</i>				
My ex-husband/wife/partner	11	9	5	2
The child's grandparent(s)	21	25	30	28
The child's older brother/sister	4	4	5	7
Another relative	7	6	6	5
A friend or neighbour	6	10	10	14
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

+ &lt;0.5 per cent

**Family size**

Moving on to family size, we find that families with between two and four children aged 14 and under were more likely to have used childcare than one-child families or large families with five or more children in that age group (Table 2.16). In the case of only child families, lower use of childcare (particularly formal care) is likely to be due to the lower age of children in only child families. A third of only child families had used formal care, compared to around half of all the other family sizes. As for large families, high numbers of children are associated with non-working families (see Section 3.4), which are less likely to use childcare, particularly informal care, as discussed above. One fifth of large families (five or more children) had used informal care, compared to at least a third of smaller families.

**Table 2.16 Use of childcare in the last week, by number of children 0-14**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>1</b> %	<b>2</b> %	<b>3</b> %	<b>4</b> %	<b>5+</b> %
Used any childcare	60	68	67	69	62
Used formal childcare	31	47	50	54	54
Used informal childcare	43	43	37	36	23
<hr/>					
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2083</i>	<i>3537</i>	<i>1545</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>181</i>

***Children's age***

Given the different need for childcare and early years provision for children of different ages, we expect children's ages to be a key determinant of families' use. Ethnicity and special educational needs are also possible key determinants. To look at these issues, we move from analysis of 'families' data to data for the selected child.

As seen in Table 2.17, three and four year olds were the key age group for use of childcare and early years provision, with nine out of ten (89 per cent) having received childcare or early years provision in the last week. Combining the greater need for childcare for pre-school children with early years education for this group, this is as we would expect. Similarly, we are not surprised that children under three were the next most likely to have received childcare (61 per cent). Among school aged children, primary school children were more likely to have received childcare than secondary school children (53 per cent of 5 to 11 year olds compared to 36 per cent of 12 to 14 year olds).



**Table 2.17 Use of childcare in the last week, by age of child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used any childcare	61	89	53	53	36	<b>55</b>
Used formal childcare	35	86	27	21	8	<b>30</b>
Used informal childcare	39	37	35	38	29	<b>35</b>
<i>Used both formal and informal care</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>3</i>	<i><b>12</b></i>
<i>Used formal care only</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>	<i><b>18</b></i>
<i>Used informal care only</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>26</i>	<i><b>23</b></i>
<i>Base: All children</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1451</i>	<i>1507</i>	<i>1348</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>1573</i>	<i>7802</i>

Although there are some differences in use of informal care by the age of the child, the differences in levels of overall use are largely explained by levels of use of formal childcare and early years provision. 86 per cent of three to four year olds had received formal childcare (without any use of informal care alongside for 51 per cent of three to four year olds), compared to around a third or less of each of the other age groups (and just 8 per cent of 12 to 14 year olds). Table 2.18 shows that this difference is based on greater use of early years education for three to four year olds rather than other formal childcare such as childminders. Out-of-school clubs were also more likely to have been used for five to 11 year olds than any other age group. The lower use of informal care for 12 to 14 year olds was largely based on less use of grandparents, with 13 per cent of children in that age group having received a grandparent's care, compared to at least 22 per cent for all other age groups. The types of providers used for different age groups is explored further in Chapter 3 through the analysis of the reasons for using different types of providers.

**Table 2.18 Use of provider types in the last week, by age of child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>					
Nursery school	2	10	+	0	0
Nursery class	1	22	+	0	0
Reception class	0	28	5	0	0
Day nursery	18	12	+	0	0
Playgroup or pre-school	9	18	+	0	0
Childminder	5	5	4	3	1
Nanny or au pair	1	2	1	1	1
Babysitter	3	2	3	3	1
Out-of-school club on-site	+	2	13	13	3
Out-of-school club off-site	+	1	4	4	3
<i>Informal childcare</i>					
My ex-husband/wife/partner	3	4	5	6	4
The child's grandparent(s)	29	26	22	22	13
The child's older brother/sister	1	1	2	5	7
Another relative	7	6	5	4	3
A friend or neighbour	5	6	9	10	7
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1451</i>	<i>1507</i>	<i>1348</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>1578</i>

***Ethnicity***

Children of white, Black Caribbean, and mixed race origin were more likely to have received childcare in the last week than the main other ethnic groups<sup>29</sup> (Table 2.19). Whether this was based on greater use of formal or informal care varied according to the ethnic group. For example, the use of formal care for children of white origin was similar to children of Black African origin, but in much greater levels in comparison to children of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. Differences across ethnic groups in family working status and income are all likely to be associated with these differences in childcare use, as is shown in the multivariate analysis in Section 2.4.

<sup>29</sup> Although the difference between the Black African and mixed race figures is not statistically significant.

**Table 2.19 Use of childcare in the last week, by ethnicity of the child (main ethnic groups)<sup>30</sup>**

	<b>Used any childcare</b>	<b>Used formal childcare</b>	<b>Used informal childcare</b>	<b>Row per cent <i>Unweighted Base</i></b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
White	58	31	38	6575
Black – Caribbean	63	47	28	84
Black – African	48	28	23	111
Indian	44	25	26	184
Pakistani	29	15	16	198
Bangladeshi	24	12	10	99
Mixed race	55	33	34	318

*Base: All children*

### ***Special educational needs***

Children with special educational needs were less likely to have received childcare in the last week, and this is seen in lower use of both formal and informal childcare (Table 2.20). 51 per cent of children with special educational needs had received childcare in the last week compared to 56 per cent of children without such needs. The difference in the levels of use of formal care was five percentage points, and four percentage points in the case of informal care. This may largely be explained by the older age profile of children with special educational needs, as statements of need are rarely given until children reach school age. When we look at levels of childcare use for children with special educational needs across different age groups, (where base sizes were sufficient), we found that the picture broadly reflected the use of childcare by age when looking at all children (discussed earlier).

<sup>30</sup> The low bases for some of the ethnic groups are associated with confidence intervals of up to +/- 10 per cent.

**Table 2.20 Use of childcare in the last week, by special educational needs of the child**

	Column per cent	
	Special educational needs	No special educational needs
	%	%
Used any childcare	51	56
Used formal childcare	26	31
Used informal childcare	32	36
<hr/>		
<i>Base: All children</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	659	7129

### **2.3.5 What variation was there in use across different regions and areas?**

The characteristics of families and children who use childcare and early years provision is of key interest when deciding on and evaluating childcare and early years provision policies. However, the area in which families live can also be a key determinant to the availability, quality and cost of childcare and early years provision. We have looked at use of childcare and early years provision according to two dimensions of where people live: the region that they live in and the level of affluence or deprivation of their local area. Many of the recent policy initiatives have focussed on the most deprived areas of England. In terms of region, there is some evidence that suggests that childcare costs are much higher in London than in any other region in England, and this is supported by the childcare costs analysis in Chapter 5.

#### ***Region***

In Table 2.21, the nine Government Office Regions are listed in order of likelihood of families using childcare and early years provision in the last week. There was little difference across the country, apart from the case of London, where only 55 per cent of families used childcare, compared to around two-thirds in all the other areas. The extent to which this reflects differences in working patterns and income of families living in London, and the extent to which there is a specific 'London' effect will be explored in Section 2.4. Regardless of the underlying causes, this highlights the potential usefulness of pilot initiatives proposed in the ten-year strategy to look at affordability issues in London.

**Table 2.21 Use of childcare in the last week, by Government Office Region**

	<b>Row per cent</b>			
	<b>Any childcare %</b>	<b>Formal care %</b>	<b>Informal care %</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Yorkshire & the Humber	68	40	49	830
South East	68	42	46	1288
North East	67	38	46	442
Eastern	67	42	46	860
East Midlands	65	43	43	645
West Midlands	65	41	41	871
South West	64	42	40	792
North West	63	39	41	1018
London	55	39	29	1056

*Base: All families*

The balance between use of formal and use of informal provision varied across regions. Half of families in the Yorkshire and Humber region (49 per cent) had used informal care in the last week, compared to just under a third of families in the London region (29 per cent). This reflects parents in London being more likely to have moved away from their own families. Taking into account individual provider types supports this, as the gap in use of informal care is indeed largely based on use of grandparents, with 14 per cent of London families having used a grandparent for childcare in the last week, compared to at least 24 per cent in all other regions, and 34 per cent in the Yorkshire and Humber region (Table 2.23).

The similarity in levels of formal care use across the regions - when looking at formal care as a whole - hides differences in use of individual provider types (Table 2.22). The main differences are in the use of nursery classes, day nurseries, playgroups, childminders and nannies or au pairs, although the pattern of use is not straightforward. Families in London (7 per cent) and the North East (8 per cent) were more likely to use nursery classes than those in the South East and the South West (both 3 per cent - with the other regions falling in between). London and North East families were in turn less likely to use day nurseries, particularly in comparison to the East Midlands (both 6 per cent in comparison to 11 per cent - with the other regions falling in between). The use of playgroups shows the clearest regional divide, close to a North/South gap (with the exception of London): around one in ten families had used a playgroup in the South East, South West, East Midlands and Eastern regions (all eight to 10 per cent), while around one in twenty families had used a playgroup in the other areas (4 per cent in the North East, and 5 per cent in the North West, Yorkshire & the Humber, West Midlands, and London). Families in the East Midlands were twice as likely to have used a childminder (7 per cent) as those in the North East and West Midlands (3 per cent in both areas), and nannies or

au pairs were mainly used in London (4 per cent in comparison to 0 to 2 per cent in all other regions).

As well as family income and working status, these patterns are likely to relate to the difference in cost of specific provider types across regions (although this is explored to some extent in Chapter 5, analysis is limited due to small base sizes), as well as availability.

**Table 2.22 Use of formal provider types in the last week, by Government Office Region**

**Column per cent**

	<b>North East</b>	<b>North West</b>	<b>Yorkshire and Humber</b>	<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>South West</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Nursery school	2	3	2	3	3	2	4	3	3
Nursery class	8	5	6	4	6	4	7	3	3
Reception class	9	8	7	7	8	7	7	9	8
Day nursery	6	8	9	11	8	8	6	7	7
Playgroup or pre-school	4	5	5	8	5	10	5	8	10
Childminder	3	4	4	7	3	5	4	4	5
Nanny or au pair	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	2	0
Babysitter	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
Out-of-school club on-site	8	10	9	7	10	11	8	10	11
Out-of-school club off-site	2	3	2	5	4	4	3	5	3
<i>Base: All families</i>									
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>442</i>	<i>1018</i>	<i>830</i>	<i>645</i>	<i>871</i>	<i>860</i>	<i>1056</i>	<i>1288</i>	<i>792</i>

**Table 2.23 Use of informal provider types in the last week, by Government Office Region**

	<b>Column per cent</b>								
	<b>North East</b>	<b>North West</b>	<b>Yorkshire and Humber</b>	<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>South West</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	6	6	7	5	6	6	4	7	7
The child's grandparent(s)	32	29	34	27	26	30	14	24	26
The child's older brother/sister	7	4	4	5	5	5	4	6	4
Another relative	9	7	5	6	7	6	5	6	6
A friend or neighbour	6	7	10	9	8	11	8	17	10
<i>Base: All families</i>									
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>442</i>	<i>1018</i>	<i>830</i>	<i>645</i>	<i>871</i>	<i>860</i>	<i>1056</i>	<i>1288</i>	<i>792</i>



### ***Area deprivation***

Splitting England into quintiles according to the index of multiple deprivation (IMD), we found a similar pattern of use of childcare and early years provision to that found across family income groups (that is, higher childcare use in more affluent areas) (Table 2.24). There was a ten percentage point difference in use of childcare between families in the least and most deprived areas, with those in the most deprived areas being less likely to use childcare (58 per cent compared to 68 per cent). A similar pattern is found for both formal and informal childcare. In Section 2.4, we explore the extent to which these differences according to families' IMD are masking the effects of differences in income, family status, working status, and so on, or whether we are seeing an independent effect of the type of area in which people live.

**Table 2.24 Use of childcare in the last week, by index of multiple deprivation**

	<b>Used any childcare</b>	<b>Used formal childcare</b>	<b>Used informal childcare</b>	<b>Row per cent</b> <i>Unweighted base</i>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived	68	46	44	1480
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	67	43	45	1440
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	67	42	42	1409
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	63	38	42	1599
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived	58	36	37	1874

*Base: All families*

## **2.4 What family, child and area characteristics predict use of (formal and informal) childcare?**

We used multivariate analysis to explore the independent association between the use of childcare and early years provision in the last week and a child's socio-demographic profile. (We analysed at the level of the selected child, rather than the family, in order to take into account age, ethnicity and special educational needs of the child). All of the subgroups discussed above were included (see model in Appendix C). The following relationships remained significant once all other family, child and area characteristics were taken into account:

- the age of the child: three to four year olds were more likely to have received childcare or early years provision in the last week, and five to 14 year olds were less likely to have done so;
- the ethnic origin of the child: children of Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi origin were less likely to have received childcare;
- the family working status: children in working families were more likely to have received childcare in the last week;
- the income of the family: children in higher earning families were more likely to have received childcare in the last week;
- the region the family lives in: children in London were less likely to have received childcare in the last week.

Hence differences in levels of use by income are not simply based on working status, as even among couple families where both parents work, or among lone parent working families, higher earning families are more likely to use childcare. This points to cost having a large role in decisions around childcare, which is also supported by use of childcare in London not relating to family or child characteristics. The latter relationship also points to the importance of availability in childcare decisions<sup>31</sup>.

The number of 0 to 14 year old children in the family was also found to be significant, but confirming a different relationship to the one described above for use of childcare by families: while families with two to four children were more likely to have received childcare, children were less likely to have received childcare in families with three or more children. This is because the bigger the family, the more likely the child is to be older.

The following subgroups were not found to be significant in the multivariate analysis:

- whether the child had special educational needs;
- the family type (couple versus lone parent family);
- the working hours and atypical hours worked by the parent(s);
- the index of multiple deprivation for the area the family lived in.

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<sup>31</sup> Analysis of parents' views on availability and affordability of childcare by region confirm that these are issues particularly associated with London.

These relationships with these characteristics discussed earlier in this chapter can therefore be explained by the associations between them and the factors that are significant: the age of the child, the family working status and income of the family, and the region.

## **2.5 How has the picture changed since the introduction of the National Childcare Strategy?**

### ***2.5.1 Slight caveats***

One of the key aims of this study was to be able to report on changes in levels of use of childcare and early years provision over the past five years. In this way, the study can help in the evaluation of recent policies in the areas of childcare and early years provision. Thus, the study was designed to be comparable with the two previous Childcare surveys. (For details on the policy background and the study design, see Chapter 1). In this section, we report on changes in levels of use, from 1999 to 2004. We look at the overall level of use, within different types of providers, and across different types of families.

However, two methodological caveats should be borne in mind when interpreting our reported changes over time. They may have some slight impact on the levels of change that we report -

- In order to ensure that the study reflected the current market for childcare and early years provision, slight changes were made to the descriptions of different provider types. We also tried to ensure that we collected information about all providers used in the last week and therefore re-stressed that we were interested in all times that their children were not with them or their partner.
- The interviews were conducted during the autumn term. This was not comparable with the previous two studies (which in turn were conducted at different times of the year).

### ***2.5.2 Changes in use of childcare since 1999***

Since 1999, the proportion of families using childcare and early years provision in the last year has remained stable. 87 per cent of families interviewed in 1999 had used childcare in the last year, compared to 86 per cent in 2001 and 2004 (see Table 2.25).

In terms of use in the last week however, 2004 shows an increase of eight percentage points from 2001 in the proportion of families using childcare or early years provision. This suggests that with the time elapsed since it was launched in 1998, the initiatives rising out of the National Childcare Strategy have been making an impact on the use of childcare. The rise in figures on weekly use (compared to yearly use) suggests that we are measuring an increase in the use of regular on-going arrangements, as opposed to ad hoc irregular usage.

Comparing 2001 and 2004, the jump in use of childcare in the last week is seen within both formal care and informal care. However, the increase was more marked for formal care. This finding fits in with the recent policy focus on formal childcare – free part-time places for three and four year olds, tax credit eligibility, and so on. There was a ten percentage point rise in use of formal care, from 31 per cent in 2001

to 41 per cent in 2004. This compares to a six percentage point rise amongst informal care use from 36 per cent in 2001 to 42 per cent in 2004. A rise in the use of childcare could well be related to an increase in the number of working parents (particularly working mothers) over the past five years<sup>32</sup>. An increase in parents working atypical hours may also be behind the greater use of informal care<sup>33</sup>.

**Table 2.25 Use of childcare, by year**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>1999</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>change</b>	<b>2004</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used childcare in the last year	<b>87</b>	<i>-1</i>	<b>86</b>	<i>0</i>	<b>86</b>
Used childcare in the last week	<b>58</b>	<i>-2</i>	<b>56</b>	<i>+8</i>	<b>64</b>
Used formal care in the last week	<b>28</b>	<i>+3</i>	<b>31</b>	<i>+10</i>	<b>41</b>
Used informal care in the last week	<b>41</b>	<i>-5</i>	<b>36</b>	<i>+6</i>	<b>42</b>
<hr/>					
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4866</i>		<i>5416</i>		<i>7774-7802</i>

Slight changes in the way that childcare and early years providers were categorised in 1999/2001 compared to 2004 means that direct comparisons of all provider types are not possible<sup>34</sup>. Table 2.26 nevertheless shows the main provider types where comparisons can be made. The increase in use of formal care is partly due to the proportions using out-of-school clubs doubling in size, with 12 per cent of families having used this provider in the last week in 2004, compared just 6 per cent in 2001. This corresponds to the policy focus on increasing the provision of before and after school clubs for school aged children.

<sup>32</sup> According to the Labour Force Survey (UK) statistics on employment levels (full- or part-time) in 1994 and 2004, the employment rate increased from 64 to 71 per cent among married/cohabiting mothers; from 86 to 91 per cent among married/cohabiting fathers; and from 42 to 54 per cent among lone parents. Among working-age people without dependent children, the employment rate increased from 71 to 74 per cent over the same ten-year period. Overall, this results in women (in particular mothers) making up a greater proportion of the workforce.

<sup>33</sup> However, we should bear in mind the slight differences in the way that the questions on childcare were asked in 2004. Greater focus was placed on ensuring that respondents included all times when the child was not with them or their partner. A proportion of the increase in informal care may be to do with these methodological issues.

<sup>34</sup> In 2001 analysis, some provider types were grouped (e.g. Nursery class with Reception class), and Crèche was used as a category in 2001 but not in 2004, and was grouped with Nursery school and Day nursery.

There is also an increase in the use of nursery and reception classes with 13 per cent of families having used at least one of these types of provision in the last week in 2004, compared to 7 per cent in 2001, which may relate to the increase in free early years education places for three and four year olds. This could however relate to methodological issues, including the timing of the interviews and a greater emphasis in the interview on including as childcare reception classes before the age of compulsory school. A parallel increase in use in the last week of nursery schools and day nurseries might have been expected, but the proportion using this type of provider was the same in both 2001 and 2004. This may relate to the limitations on the number of free hours of early years education, and the high cost of day nurseries for care over and beyond the free hours (see Section 5.5). The remaining cost may still be a barrier for parents and discouraging greater use of day nurseries (this may also be a factor for nursery schools, even though nursery school costs are lower).

The increase in informal care seems to be mainly due to an increase in the use of friends or other relatives. 15 per cent of families used a friend or neighbour or other relative in 2004, compared to 10 per cent of families who used a friend or other relative in 2001<sup>35</sup>.

**Table 2.26 Use of providers in the last week, by year**

	Column per cent		
	2001 %	Change %	2004 %
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>			
Nursery school/ Day nursery ('04);	10	0	10
Crèche/ Nursery school/ Day nursery ('01)	7	+6	13
Nursery class/ Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	6	+1	7
Playgroup or pre-school	5	-1	4
Childminder	1	0	1
Nanny or au pair	2	0	2
Babysitter who came to home	6	+6	12
<i>Informal childcare</i>			
My ex-husband/wife/partner	4	+2	6
The child's grandparent(s)	24	+2	26
The child's older brother/sister	3	+2	5
Friend/relative/neighbour	10	+5	15
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5416		7802

<sup>35</sup> Again, there may be a methodological issue here.

### 2.5.3 How has childcare and early years provision use changed across different families?

We now focus on whether the changes discussed above were concentrated amongst specific subgroups of families, or whether the changes occurred across the board regardless of child, family or area characteristics. This section compares 2001 and 2004 family level and child level data.

#### *Child characteristics – the age of the child*

Use of childcare increased for all age groups except for five to seven year olds (the two percentage point difference there is not statistically significant), with a nine percentage point increase for three to four year olds, eight to 11 year olds and 12 to 14 year olds (Table 2.27). The proportion of 0 to two year olds having used childcare in the last week increased by five percentage points.

**Table 2.27 Use of childcare in the last week, by age of child and by year<sup>36</sup>**

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used any childcare - 2001	56	80	51	44	27	<b>50</b>
<i>Change (%)</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>+5</i>
Used any childcare - 2004	61	89	53	53	36	<b>55</b>
Used formal care – 2001	31	58	23	18	6	<b>17</b>
<i>Change (%)</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>+28</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>+13</i>
Used formal care - 2004	35	86	27	21	8	<b>30</b>
Used informal care – 2001	34	33	33	31	24	<b>31</b>
<i>Change (%)</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>+7</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>+4</i>
Used informal care - 2004	39	37	35	38	29	<b>35</b>
<i>Base: All children</i>						
<i>Unweighted base (2001 - 2004)</i>	<i>1548-</i>	<i>1184-</i>	<i>1866-</i>	<i>2454-</i>	<i>1605-</i>	<i>8657-</i>
	<i>1451</i>	<i>1507</i>	<i>1348</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>1573</i>	<i>7802</i>

+ <0.5 per cent

<sup>36</sup> This is child-level data, hence the proportions using childcare vary from the family-level data provided earlier in the chapter.

### *Family characteristics*

Use of childcare and use of specific provider types by family type and family working status in 2004 was very similar to 2001. Table 2.28 nevertheless shows that the jump in use of childcare was bigger for couple families and lone parents. There was a ten percentage point increase in use of childcare in the last week by couple families, compared to half that amount by lone parent families. As for use of specific provider types, the main point to note is that a higher proportion of lone parents identified their ex-partner as a provider of childcare: 18 per cent of lone parents in 2004 compared to 12 per cent in 2001. This difference was not just for working lone parents: the proportion of non-working lone parents having used their ex-partner for childcare doubled between 2001 and 2004 (6 per cent and 12 per cent respectively).<sup>37</sup>

**Table 2.28** Use of childcare in the last week, by family type

	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Cell per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<i>Unweighted base (2001 - 2004)</i>
Couple use of childcare	55	+10	65	4033-5722
Lone parent use of childcare	58	+5	63	1383-2080
Couple use of formal care	33	+10	43	4033-5722
Lone parent use of formal care	27	+6	33	1383-2080
Couple use of informal care	35	+5	40	4033-5722
Lone parent use of informal care	42	+3	48	1383-2080

*Base: All families*

In the policy context of an emphasis on improving the accessibility and affordability of childcare, a positive association between higher levels of childcare use and low incomes might have been expected. Due to changes in the income scales used, comparisons can only be approximate. Nevertheless, in Table 2.29, it can be seen that use of childcare did increase among the lowest family income group (56 per cent in 2004 compared to 49 per cent in 2001), but the jump in use was still greater among the two highest income groups (11-12 per cent increase). However, as can be seen in Tables 2.30 and 2.31, these two income groups do not show the same trend in terms of type of provision. While families in the highest income group increased their use of both types of care, the increase in childcare use among the second highest income group was mainly based on the increase in use of formal care.

<sup>37</sup> As previously noted, this finding may also be due to the emphasis on the encompassing definition of childcare and lone parents being more likely in the 2004 survey to identify their ex-partner as a provider of childcare.

**Table 2.29 Use of childcare in the last week, by family yearly income and year**

		<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>		<b>2004</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>	<i>(2001 – 2004)</i>
Under £10,400	49	+7	Under £10,000	56	1043-1202
£10,400-£20,799	57	+3	£10,000-£19,999	60	1309-2202
£20,800-£31,199	57	+11	£20,000-£31,999	68	1191-1880
£31,200 or more	61	+12	£32,000+	73	1491-1965

*Base: All families*

**Table 2.30 Use of formal childcare in the last week, by family yearly income and year**

		<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>		<b>2004</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>	<i>(2001 – 2004)</i>
Under £10,400	24	+7	Under £10,000	31	1043-1202
£10,400-£20,799	29	+7	£10,000-£19,999	36	1309-2202
£20,800-£31,199	29	+14	£20,000-£31,999	43	1191-1880
£31,200 or more	41	+11	£32,000+	52	1491-1965

*Base: All families*

**Table 2.31 Use of informal childcare in the last week, by family yearly income and year**

		<b>Cell per cent</b>			
	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>		<b>2004</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>	<i>(2001 – 2004)</i>
Under £10,400	33	+5	Under £10,000	38	1043-1202
£10,400-£20,799	41	0	£10,000-£19,999	41	1309-2202
£20,800-£31,199	39	+6	£20,000-£31,999	45	1191-1880
£31,200 or more	35	+10	£32,000+	45	1491-1965

*Base: All families*



### *Area characteristics*

Table 2.32 shows the regions in order of use of childcare in 2004: the use of childcare increased in all regions apart from London, by at least six percentage points (the 2 per cent change for London is not statistically significant). The two biggest increases in the use of childcare were in the South East (14 per cent increase) and the Eastern region (15 per cent increase). The lack of change for London suggests that the recent childcare policies have yet to have an impact on London – the continuing cost barrier in London is highlighted in Chapter 5.

**Table 2.32 Use of childcare in the last week, by Government Office Region<sup>38</sup> and by year**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Cell per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<i>Unweighted base 2001-2004</i>
Yorkshire & the Humber	60	+8	68	636-830
South East	54	+14	68	628-1288
North East	61	+6	67	786-442
Eastern	52	+15	67	323-860
East Midlands	57	+8	65	585-645
West Midlands	56	+9	65	497-871
South West	56	+8	64	622-792
North West	57	+6	63	474-1018
London	53	+2	55	731-1056

*Base: All families*

As in the case of income, the focus of childcare policy on deprived areas might have been expected to lead to the increase in use of childcare being concentrated in the most deprived areas. Table 2.33 shows that this is not the case. Although use of childcare did rise by 5 per cent in the most deprived areas, the increase was twice the size in the least deprived areas (10 per cent).

<sup>38</sup> In 2001 the region of Merseyside was separated out (the proportion who had used childcare in the last week in this area was 57 per cent).

**Table 2.33 Use of childcare in the last week, by index of multiple deprivation and by year**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Cell per cent</b>
	%	%	%	<i>Unweighted base (2001 – 2004)</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived	58	+10	68	1133-1480
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	55	+12	67	1084-1440
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	57	+10	67	1054-1409
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	56	+7	63	1064-1599
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived	53	+5	58	1049-1874

*Base: All families*

## 2.6 Summing up

This chapter has provided an overview of parents' use of childcare, over the period of a year as well as a week, and across all types of families.

Weekly use of childcare has increased since 2001, particularly formal care. These changes are associated more with higher income families and less deprived areas, although we do see childcare usage increasing for all groups. London has seen only a marginal increase in use, and currently stands out against all other regions as a region in which much less childcare is used, particularly informal provider types.

Two-thirds of families had used childcare in the last week: 41 per cent had used formal care, and 42 per cent had used informal care. Out of all the childcare providers, families were most likely to have used a grandparent for childcare (26 per cent). Used by 12 per cent of families, out-of-school clubs (on or off school sites) were the most commonly used type of formal provision.

Use of childcare was shown to be driven in particular by family working status, as work is associated with greater use of both formal and informal care, and lone parenthood (particularly if working 16 hours or more). Three-quarters of lone parents who worked 16 hours or more had used childcare in the last week (73 per cent of those working full-time and 74 per cent of those working 16 to 29 hours), compared to 61 per cent of lone parents working less than 16 hours, and 54 per cent of non-working lone parents.

The wide use of early years education providers for three to four year olds, including by non-working families, points to the role of educational reasons for childcare, explored in the next chapter. 86 per cent of children in this age group had received formal childcare in the last week, and this childcare consisted mainly of early years education providers.

Income is also highlighted as associated with the use of formal care, suggesting the importance of the cost of childcare (discussed in Chapter 5). The lower cost of some early years education providers in comparison to other types of formal care may indeed also be driving the wide use of these providers for three to four year olds.

Now that the scene has been set in terms of overall use of childcare, we can move on to make the important distinction between economic use and educational use, explored in the next chapter.

### **3 WHY DO PARENTS USE CHILDCARE OR EARLY YEARS PROVISION?**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the use of childcare and early years provision across different types of providers and by different families. In this chapter, we address the question of *why* parents were using this childcare and early years provision. How do levels of use - across different types of providers and across types of families - vary according to the reasons why the childcare or early years provision was being used? Our main focus is on use of childcare for economic reasons (parental work, job search or study) or for the educational development of the child. The chapter is divided along these lines.

In essence, this chapter addresses the following questions -

- What proportion of families used childcare in the last week for economic or educational reasons?
- What types of childcare did they use for these reasons?
- Which families used childcare in the last week for economic or educational reasons?
- What variation is there in these reasons for use across different regions and areas?

As in Chapter 2, we focus here on use in the last week.

#### **3.2 Reasons for using childcare or early years provision in the last week**

##### **3.2.1 Defining economic and educational**

Parents were asked their reasons for using each provider - both formal and informal - within the last week. They could give more than one answer to this question -

*Which of the things on this card best describe the reasons you used [provider's name] in the week beginning Monday [date]?*

Parents were given these options (those in brackets were only shown to parents in couple families, and codes 13 to 20 were additional categories developed from answers coded as 'other' during the interview):

**1 'So that I could work'**

**(2 'So that my husband/ wife/ partner could work')**

**3 'So that I could look for work'**

**(4 'So that my husband/ wife/ partner could look for work')**

**5 'So that I could study'**

**(6 'So that my husband/ wife/ partner could study')**

- 7 'So that I could look after the home / other children'
- 8 'So that I could go shopping / attend an appointment / socialise'
- 9 '*For my child's educational development*'
- 10 'Because my child likes spending time with/at the provider'
- 11 'So that my child could take part in a leisure activity'
- 12 'Other reason'
- 13 '**Because I am soon going to be working**'
- 14 '**Because I am soon going to be studying**'
- 15 'So that I could care for a relative/friend/neighbour'
- 16 'Because I was/am ill'
- 17 'So that my child and a relative could spend time together'
- 18 'For my child's social development'
- 19 'To keep the childcare place'
- 20 'So that I/we could have a break'

Answers relating to work and study, of either the respondent or their partner, were grouped during analysis and considered 'economic' reasons (highlighted in bold in the list above). Answers relating to the child's educational development were considered 'educational' for the purposes of this chapter (highlighted in italics in the list above).

### ***3.2.2 Reasons why parents used their childcare or early years providers in the last week***

The proportions of parents using various childcare and early years providers for economic and educational reasons are shown in Table 3.1. Whilst 64 per cent of families had used some childcare for *any* reason in the last week, only 36 per cent had used it for reasons which included economic activities and 27 per cent for reasons which included the children's education.

**Table 3.1 Use of providers in the last week, by reason for use**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Any reason %</b>	<b>Economic reasons %</b>	<b>Educational reasons %</b>
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>	41	18	25
Nursery school	3	1	2
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	5	1	4
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	8	2	7
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs	1	+	1
Day nursery	8	6	4
Playgroup or pre-school	7	2	5
Other nursery education provider	+	+	+
Childminder	4	4	+
Nanny or au pair	1	1	+
Babysitter who came to home	2	1	+
Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site	9	4	3
Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery site	4	1	1
Holiday club/scheme	+	+	+
<i>Informal childcare</i>	42	24	2
My ex-husband/wife/partner	6	1	+
The child's grandparent(s)	26	16	+
The child's older brother/sister	5	3	+
Another relative	6	3	+
A friend or neighbour	10	5	+
<i>Other</i>			
Leisure/sport activity	5	+	2
Other childcare provider	2	+	1
No childcare used	36	36	36
Used some childcare for economic reasons		36	
Did not use any of the childcare for economic reasons		29	
Used some childcare for educational reasons			27
Did not use any of the childcare for educational reasons			37
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802	7802	7802

+ &lt;0.5 per cent

Note: parents could say they had used their providers for more than one reason, so these subgroups are not mutually exclusive and families may have been represented twice.

When looking at use of childcare and early years provision for *any* reasons, levels of use of formal and informal care were almost equal (41 and 42 per cent respectively). However, this balance changes when we look solely at parents using childcare for economic reasons, with a greater use of informal than formal care. 18 per cent of parents had used formal childcare or early years provision for economic reasons in the last week, whilst 24 per cent of parents had used informal childcare for these reasons. By far the most commonly used providers for economic reasons were grandparents, used by 16 per cent of parents in the last week. The most commonly used formal provision for economic reasons were day nurseries (6 per cent of all parents), childminders (4 per cent) and out-of-school clubs on school sites (4 per cent).

As we would expect, childcare and early years provision used for educational reasons were predominantly from among the formal providers. A quarter (25 per cent) of parents had used formal providers for educational reasons in the last week, compared to only 2 per cent using informal care for these reasons. Most often used were reception classes (7 per cent of parents said this). Day nurseries were used for both economic and educational reasons, in a more equal measure than any other provider.

Table 3.1 showed the proportions of parents using childcare and early years provision for economic *or* for educational reasons. Of course, some parents used services for *both* economic *and* educational reasons. Table 3.2 shows the proportions of parents using it for either one reason or for a combination.

**Table 3.2 Use of childcare for economic reasons, educational reasons or both**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Economic reasons only	36
Educational reasons only	23
Economic and educational reasons	19
Other reasons only	22
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families who used childcare in the last week</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5348</i>

Among parents who had used childcare or early years provision in the last week, a third (36 per cent) had done so for economic reasons, without referring to any educational needs for their children. A fifth (19 per cent) of families using childcare and early years provision were doing so for both economic *and* educational reasons. A quarter (23 per cent) were using it for educational – and not for any economic – reasons. In addition, around a fifth (22 per cent) of families using childcare in the last week were using their providers exclusively for reasons *other than* economic or educational purposes.

### 3.3 Which types of childcare were used by which families for economic reasons?

So, we have an overall picture of the proportions of families using childcare or early years provision for economic reasons and for the children's educational development. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 report on the extent to which this varies across different types of providers (largely distinguishing between informal and formal) and across different families.

Here, in Section 3.3, we focus on childcare and early years provision used for economic reasons. We first examine the association between use and a family's working status and structure, and then look at how working atypical hours might have affected the decision to use childcare for economic reasons. Finally, we consider whether family income levels and the age of the children in the family affected levels of use.

#### 3.3.1 Which families used childcare or early years provision in the last week for economic reasons?

##### *The working status of couples and lone parents*

On the surface, it seems from Table 3.3 that a similar proportion of lone parents and couple families used childcare in order to go to work or to study.

**Table 3.3** Use of childcare for economic reasons, by family type

		<b>Row per cent</b>
	<i>%</i>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
Lone parent	35	1891
Couple	36	5909

*Base: All families*

However, when we look at how this use varies across different types of providers and across families with different working statuses, we find some pertinent differences. Overall (and not surprisingly), families where parents worked were more likely to use childcare for economic reasons, than those where the parents did not work. Table 3.4 shows that working lone parents were far more likely to use childcare for economic reasons than lone parents who were not working (59 per cent compared to 11 per cent).



**Table 3.4 Use of childcare for economic reasons by lone parents, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Lone parent - working %</b>	<b>Lone parent – not working %</b>
Used childcare for economic reasons	59	11
Used formal childcare for economic reasons	27	6
Used informal childcare for economic reasons	44	7
<i>Base: All lone parent families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1052</i>

Similarly, dual-earner couple families were far more likely to use childcare for economic reasons than if one or neither of them worked (51 per cent compared to 11 and 6 per cent) (Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5 Use of childcare for economic reasons by couple families, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple – both working %</b>	<b>Couple – one working %</b>	<b>Couple – neither working %</b>
Used childcare for economic reasons	51	11	6
Used formal childcare for economic reasons	27	7	5
Used informal childcare for economic reasons	34	6	2
<i>Base: All couple families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>

Looking at the proportions of these families using formal and informal childcare for economic reasons, again, we find differences. Whilst the same proportion (27 per cent) of working lone parents and dual-earner couple families used formal childcare for reasons which included economic factors, a greater number of working lone parents used informal care for these reasons (44 per cent compared to 34 per cent). This highlights working lone parents' needs to use informal care where dual-earner couple parents may rely on one another.

### *Family income*

Family income was shown, in Chapter 2, to have a strong relationship with the use of childcare and early years provision. Higher income families were seen to be using more childcare than lower income families, and in general this was accounted for by the higher income families using more formal childcare.

It is not surprising then, to see that, of the parents with the highest family incomes (£32,000 or more), nearly half (47 per cent) said they had used some kind of childcare for economic reasons. This compares with only a fifth (19 per cent) of parents with an income of under £10,000 (Table 3.6). (Of course, higher income families are more likely to contain dual-earners, who use more childcare for economic reasons.)

**Table 3.6 Use of childcare for economic reasons by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000+</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used childcare for economic reasons	19	32	42	47
Used formal childcare for economic reasons	10	13	20	30
Used informal childcare for economic reasons	13	24	29	27
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

The use of formal and informal childcare for economic reasons was also very different across families with different income levels. There was a greater disparity in the proportions of high and low-income families using formal care for economic reasons than for use of informal care. Table 3.6 shows that three times as many of the highest income families (over £32,000) said they had used formal childcare for economic reasons, compared to the lowest income families (under £10,000) (30 per cent compared to 10 per cent). Such a difference between families of higher and lower incomes may reflect the cost of formal care. Use of informal childcare for economic reasons was only *twice* as prevalent among the highest income group, compared to the lowest income group (27 per cent compared to 13 per cent).

We took the eight most-used formal providers and the two most commonly used informal providers (see Table 3.1) and examined whether or not each of them was used for economic reasons, across different family types. Table 3.7 shows that specific provider types were more likely to have been used for economic reasons by some family income groups than others.

**Table 3.7 Use of provider types for economic reasons, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000 +</b>
	%	%	%	%
Nursery School	1	1	1	1
Nursery Class	1	1	1	1
Reception Class	1	2	2	2
Day Nursery	3	3	7	11
Playgroup or pre-school	1	2	2	2
Childminder	1	3	5	6
Out-of-school club on-site	2	3	5	8
Out-of-school club off-site	1	1	1	2
Grandparent	8	15	21	18
Friend or neighbour	2	5	5	6
<hr/>				
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

Approximately the same proportion of parents – regardless of their family income – used nursery schools, nursery classes, reception classes, playgroups and off-site breakfast clubs for economic reasons. This may be partly related to the almost universal uptake of free part-time early years education places for three and four year olds. Similarly, parents do not usually pay for reception classes. Given that nursery school, nursery class and reception class are very much associated with children’s educational development, it is perhaps not surprising that the proportion of families who said they had used them for economic reasons was very low.

A very different pattern can be seen for other - more traditional ‘childcare’ - provider types. For example, there was an eight percentage point difference between parents in the lowest income groups (under £10,000 per year) and those in the highest income groups (over £32,000 per year) using day nurseries for economic reasons (3 per cent compared to 11 per cent). Given that day nurseries tend to be a more expensive form of childcare – used for full-time places and mainly found in the private sector – it is not surprising that wealthier families were using this form of childcare, more than other families.

Similarly, affordability may be the reason why 8 per cent of parents in families with an income of over £32,000 had used on-site out-of-school childcare for economic reasons, compared to only 2 per cent of parents with the lowest family incomes.

Grandparents were a key provider of childcare for economic reasons for all families, but Table 3.7 shows they were more likely to be used by parents with higher family incomes: around one in five (18 per cent) parents in the highest income group used grandparents for economic reasons, compared to one in ten (8 per cent) parents in the lowest income group. The parents in higher income groups may also come from families with higher incomes; their own parents thus finding themselves with enough resources to retire and help look after their grandchildren, than those in lower income groups.

### *Children's age*

We know that children of different ages have a different propensity to use childcare – and particular types of providers (see Chapters 2, 7 and 8), with families with pre-school (particularly three and four year olds) children most likely to have used any childcare or early years provision. This is partly explained by the early years education of these pre-school children. To what extent does this hold true when we look at childcare used for economic reasons? In this analysis, we look at the use of childcare by the selected child.

Chapter 2 showed that three and four year olds were more likely to have received childcare, and also more likely to have received formal childcare or early years provision. As will be shown later, the main reason parents gave for children of this age group to be attending childcare or early years education services, was related to their wish to further their child's educational development. This is not surprising given that it is these children who are eligible for free early years education under the Government's current initiatives.

However, parents of this age group also appeared to be the most likely group to be using childcare for economic reasons (Table 3.8). Pre-school children were most likely to have received childcare for economic reasons (reflecting the greater need for childcare before children start school). Four in ten (40 per cent) of parents of three and four year olds were using some kind of childcare for reasons that included economic activities, while three in ten (29 per cent) parents of five to seven year olds were doing so. In turn, primary school children were more likely to have received childcare than those in secondary school for economic reasons (29 per cent of five to 11 year olds, compared to 17 per cent of 12 to 14 year olds).

**Table 3.8 Use of provider types for economic reasons, by age of the ‘selected’ child**

	Column per cent					
	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-7 %	8-11 %	12-14 %	All %
Any economic reasons for using any childcare	37	40	29	28	17	<b>29</b>
Any economic reasons for using any formal childcare	23	28	14	10	2	<b>14</b>
Any economic reasons for using any informal childcare	22	22	18	21	15	<b>20</b>
<i>Base: All ‘selected’ children</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1451</i>	<i>1507</i>	<i>1348</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>1578</i>	<i><b>7800</b></i>

Turning now to the use of *formal* childcare for economic reasons, amongst children of different age groups, the use of formal childcare for economic reasons was highest among those children aged four or under: 25 per cent of these children said they had used a formal provider while they were working or studying. This compares to 12 per cent of parents of primary school age children (five to 11), and 2 per cent of parents of secondary school age children (12 to 14).

Levels of use of *informal* care for economic reasons were more evenly spread across the age groups. This even included the 12 to 14 year olds: 22 per cent of parents of three and four year olds, and 15 per cent of parents of 12 to 14 year olds said they had used informal care while they worked or studied. If formal childcare for economic reasons was more common amongst parents of pre-school age children, we can assume it was because parents required childcare during the day in a way that was not necessary when children were at school. The similar use of informal care for economic reasons across all the age ranges suggests that this type of childcare frequently fulfils a role which formal childcare or school hours do not.

### **3.3.2 What variation was there in use across different regions and areas?**

#### ***Government region***

Use of childcare and early years provision for economic reasons varied somewhat across different parts of the country. Table 3.9 shows the proportions of parents in each government region who used any of their childcare providers, any of their *formal* providers, or any of their *informal* providers for economic reasons.

Parents most likely to be have used any childcare so that they could work or study were those in Yorkshire and the Humber (41 per cent). Least likely were those in London (29 per cent). Given that 32 per cent of the families in London were dual-earners, compared to 47 per cent of the families in Yorkshire, this pattern is not surprising. Dual-earners, as we have seen, tended to need childcare for economic reasons, more than any other type of family.

**Table 3.9 Use of childcare for economic reasons, by Government Office Region**

	<b>Childcare used for economic reasons</b>	<b>Formal childcare used for economic reasons</b>	<b>Informal childcare used for economic reasons</b>	<b>Row per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b><i>Unweighted base</i></b>
Yorkshire & the Humber	41	20	30	830
North East	38	16	28	442
North West	38	21	25	1018
East Midlands	37	21	23	645
Eastern	36	15	26	860
West Midlands	35	19	23	871
South East	35	17	24	1288
South West	34	17	22	792
London	29	18	16	1056

*Base: All families*

When we examine the reasons for using providers according to whether they were formal or informal services, a slightly different pattern emerges. The proportions of parents using *formal* childcare for economic reasons were evenly spread. No more than 21 per cent of parents and no less than 15 per cent of parents in each locality said that they had used a formal provider while they were working or studying.

Looking at *informal* childcare, parents in London were the least likely to be using it while they worked or studied, while those in Yorkshire and the Humber remained the most likely to do so (16 per cent compared to 30 per cent). This is a more exaggerated difference than when we were looking at childcare more generally, maybe suggesting that parents in London had more difficulty finding informal sources of care who can fill the gap in formal childcare while they are studying or working, than other parents. One suggestion for this could be that parents in London may be more geographically dislocated from close family networks, than other parents.

### *Area deprivation*

We saw in Chapter 2 that families in the most deprived areas of the country (according to the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation figures) were least likely to be using childcare. But do these differences hold when we look solely at childcare use for economic reasons (Table 3.10)? Overall, use of any kind of childcare for economic reasons increased according to the affluence of the area.

**Table 3.10 Use of childcare for economic reasons, by Index of Multiple Deprivation**

	Column per cent				
	1 <sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived	2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	5 <sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived
	%	%	%	%	%
Used any childcare for economic reasons	40	40	38	36	27
Used any formal childcare for economic reasons	21	21	21	17	13
Used any informal childcare for economic reasons	26	26	25	25	18
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1480</i>	<i>1440</i>	<i>1409</i>	<i>1599</i>	<i>1874</i>

There was a 13 percentage point difference in the use of childcare for economic reasons between families in the least deprived and the most deprived areas, with those in the least deprived areas least likely to be using it for economic reasons (27 per cent compared with 40 per cent). This may reflect the higher levels of unemployment seen in more deprived areas – if parents were not likely to be working, they were also not likely to be using childcare for this purpose.

We can also see a similar trend in the use of formal and informal types of childcare for economic reasons. One in five (21 per cent) of parents in the least deprived areas of the country used some formal childcare for the purposes of working or studying, while only one in ten (13 per cent) of those in the least deprived areas did so. Parents using *informal* care for economic reasons were also fewer in the most deprived areas (18 per cent) than in the least deprived areas (26 per cent).

### 3.4 Which types of childcare are used by which families for educational reasons?

We have seen that childcare use for economic reasons is more often linked with certain characteristics, such as having pre-school children, working and having higher incomes. This section now asks what characteristics are associated with using childcare and early years provision for reasons linked to the child's educational development. We begin with a look at family structure and work status, and then examine who gave educational reasons for using childcare by the children's ages, the family income and the area in which the family lived.

#### 3.4.1 Which families used childcare or early years provision in the last week for educational reasons?

##### *Couples and lone parents and their working status*

We saw, above, that both couple families and lone parents were just as likely to be using childcare for economic reasons. However, couple families were slightly more likely to be using childcare for educational reasons (29 per cent compared to 21 per cent of lone parents) (Table 3.11).

**Table 3.11 Use of childcare for educational reasons, by family type**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
Lone parent	21	<i>1891</i>
Couple	29	<i>5909</i>

*Base: All families*

Many of the children in lone parent families were aged eight or over (56 per cent<sup>39</sup>) while a smaller proportion of couple families' children were this age (46 per cent<sup>40</sup>) (Table 3.12). Thus, lone parents might have been less likely to cite educational reasons for using their childcare, because a larger number of their children were already in school. These parents may have felt that educational childcare outside of these hours was not necessary.

<sup>39</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 32 per cent and 25 per cent, the proportion is 56 per cent rather than 57 per cent due to rounding

<sup>40</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 20 per cent and 27 per cent, the proportion is 46 per cent rather than 47 per cent due to rounding.



**Table 3.12** Age of 'selected' children, by family type

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Lone parents</b> %	<b>Couple</b> %
0-2	13	20
3-4	12	13
5-6	19	21
8-11	32	27
12-14	25	20
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>5909</i>

In general, childcare and early years provision was used for educational reasons more by single-earner couple families than by any other group (36 per cent compared to 28 and 26 per cent of other groups) (Table 3.13). As Table 3.14 shows, this group of parents was also more likely to have children aged three or four, which may explain this variation, as most three and four year olds were attending free part-time early years education places.

Among lone parents, non-workers were more likely to have used childcare for educational reasons than working lone parents (23 per cent compared with 18 per cent) (Table 3.15). Again, this will be explained by the fact that more non-working lone parents had children in the age three to four age group (14 per cent) than working lone parents (9 per cent) (Table 3.16).

**Table 3.13** Use of childcare for educational reasons, by couples' family working status

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple – both working</b> %	<b>Couple – one working</b> %	<b>Couple – neither working</b> %
Used childcare for educational reasons	26	36	28
Used formal childcare for educational reasons	23	34	27
Used informal childcare for educational reasons	2	2	1
<i>Base: All couple families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>

**Table 3.14** Age of 'selected' children by couples' family working status

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple – both working</b> %	<b>Couple – one working</b> %	<b>Couple – neither working</b> %
0-2	16	26	22
3-4	12	15	12
5-6	20	22	22
8-11	29	23	26
12-14	23	14	18
<i>Base: All couple families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>

**Table 3.15** Use of childcare for educational reasons, by lone parents' family working status

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Lone parent – working</b> %	<b>Lone parent - not working</b> %
Used childcare for educational reasons	18	23
Used formal childcare for educational reasons	17	22
Used informal childcare for educational reasons	1	1
<i>Base: All lone parent families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1052</i>

**Table 3.16** Age of 'selected' children by lone parents' family working status

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Lone parent – working %</b>	<b>Lone parent not working %</b>
0-2	9	17
3-4	9	14
5-6	17	20
8-11	35	29
12-14	30	21
<i>Base: All lone parent families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1050</i>

Given that virtually all childcare used for educational reasons was formal, the pattern of use for formal and informal care does not vary to that given above.

### ***Family income***

Family income has been shown to be a key factor influencing the use of childcare, and in particular formal childcare. Also apparent is the fact that this relationship is particularly strong when we focus solely on childcare used for economic reasons.

But are families' incomes also associated with their use of childcare for educational reasons? It would appear so, if we look at Table 3.17.

**Table 3.17** Use of childcare for educational reasons, by family yearly income

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000 %</b>	<b>£10,000-19,999 %</b>	<b>£20,000-31,999 %</b>	<b>£32,000+ %</b>
Used childcare for educational reasons	23	26	27	31
Used formal childcare for educational reasons	21	24	25	28
Used informal childcare for educational reasons	2	1	2	2
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

However, the relationship was not nearly as strong as for use of childcare for economic reasons. There was an eight percentage point difference in the use of childcare for an educational reason, between the highest and lowest income groups.

This compares with a 28 percentage point difference in using care for economic reasons, between the highest and lowest income groups (see Table 3.6).

Unlike their use of formal and informal childcare for the purposes of working and studying, parents' use of the different types of childcare did not vary greatly between formal and informal services. There was a seven percentage point difference in the use of formal childcare for educational reasons by parents in the highest and lowest income brackets, compared to a 20 percentage point difference in the uses of childcare for economic reasons between the same groups (Table 3.6). As has been seen in other analysis here of informal childcare for educational reasons, there is very little variation between income groups. Only 1 or 2 per cent of any parents had used it for their child's educational development.

### *Children's age*

We saw, above, that younger children were more likely to be attending childcare services (whether informal or formal) for reasons relating to their parents' work or study arrangements. But what patterns emerge when we look at the use of childcare and early years provision by different age groups, for educational reasons?

Table 3.18 shows that those aged three and four were more likely than others to be receiving childcare for educational reasons, with three-quarters (73 per cent) doing so.

**Table 3.18** Use of childcare for educational reasons, by age of the 'selected' child

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Used childcare for educational reasons	18	73	11	8	5	<b>18</b>
Used formal childcare for educational reasons	17	72	9	6	3	<b>16</b>
Used informal childcare for educational reasons	1	1	1	+	+	<b>1</b>
<hr/>						
<i>Base: All children</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1451	1507	1348	1916	1578	7800

+ <0.5 per cent

We are not surprised to find that pre-school children were more likely to be receiving childcare for reasons including their education than primary school age children. Among school age children, there were fewer children receiving childcare for educational reasons, particularly among the oldest children.

We also looked at which providers were providing care for which age groups of children (Table 3.19). As would be expected, early years education services such as nursery classes and reception classes were most used for educational reasons especially for children aged three and four.

**Table 3.19 Use of providers for educational reasons, by the age of the 'selected' child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>	17	72	9	6	3	<b>16</b>
Nursery school	1	8	+	0	0	<b>1</b>
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	+	19	+	0	0	<b>3</b>
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	0	25	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs	+	+	+	+	+	+
Day nursery	7	7	+	0	0	<b>2</b>
Playgroup or pre-school	7	15	+	0	0	<b>3</b>
Other nursery education provider	0	+	0	0	0	+
Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site	+	1	4	4	2	<b>2</b>
Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery site	0	+	1	2	1	<b>1</b>
Holiday club/scheme	0	0	+	0	0	+
Childminder	1	+	+	0	0	+
Nanny or au pair	+	+	+	+	+	+
Babysitter who came to home	+	0	0	0	0	+
<i>Informal childcare</i>	1	1	1	+	+	<b>1</b>
My ex-husband/wife/partner	0	+	+	0	0	+
The child's grandparent(s)	1	1	+	+	+	+
The child's older brother/sister	0	0	0	0	+	+
Another relative	0	0	0	+	+	+
A friend or neighbour	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Other</i>						
Leisure/sport activity	+	1	2	2	1	<b>1</b>
Other childcare provider	+	1	1	2	1	<b>1</b>
No childcare used by 'selected' child	40	11	47	47	64	<b>45</b>
<i>Base: All families</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1451	1507	1348	1916	1578	<b>7800</b>

+ <0.5 per cent

Children at primary school (five to 11) were the most likely groups to be receiving care for reasons that included their education from breakfast or after school clubs on school sites. 4 per cent of children this age received childcare from these providers for educational reasons, compared to only 2 per cent of children aged 12 to 14, and 1 per cent of three and four year olds.

For parents of three and four year olds, many providers were clearly chosen for reasons which included their child's education. 25 per cent of these parents used reception classes for educational reasons, along with 19 per cent using nursery classes, 15 per cent using playgroups, and 8 per cent using nursery schools.

### **3.4.2 What variation was there in use across different regions and areas?**

#### ***Region***

We saw in Section 3.3.2 (above) that parents in different areas of the country used childcare providers for economic reasons in varying levels, with those in London being least likely to use childcare while they worked or studied. Indeed, Section 2.5.3 showed that families in London were the least likely to use any form of childcare in comparison to all other areas.

Does the same hold true when we look at parents' use of childcare for educational reasons? Table 3.20 shows what proportions of parents used providers for educational reasons – by examining their use, in turn, of: *any* childcare, *formal* providers, and *informal* providers. It is clear that parents in London – although not the most likely to use any childcare for any reason – *are* one of the most likely groups to use childcare for educational reasons (27 per cent compared to 23 per cent in Yorkshire and the Humber). This difference is largely accounted for by their use of formal childcare for educational reasons. However, overall, the differences between parents in different areas using childcare for educational reasons were not very large, with only an eight percentage point difference, compared to a 13 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest-using areas when we look at overall use (Table 2.26).

**Table 3.20 Use of childcare for educational reasons, by Government Office Region**

	<b>Any childcare used for educational reasons %</b>	<b>Any formal childcare used for educational reasons %</b>	<b>Any informal childcare used for educational reasons %</b>	<b>Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i></b>
East Midlands	31	27	2	645
Eastern	31	28	2	860
South East	29	26	2	1288
London	27	25	1	1056
North East	25	24	2	442
West Midlands	25	24	2	871
South West	25	23	1	792
North West	24	22	1	1018
Yorkshire & the Humber	23	21	1	830

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*Base: All families*

So, we can see an eight percentage point gap between parents in different areas who gave educational reasons for using any childcare. This was a smaller gap than that between the parents in different areas who used childcare for economic reasons (12 percentage points). We can conclude that educational reasons for using childcare did not vary so much across different regions as did economic reasons, perhaps because it is not so closely linked to the employment levels or wider economic expectations of an area, as say, finding work or studying might have been.

Looking at the use of *formal* childcare, specifically, for educational reasons, we can see that the variation between regions was even less (28 per cent of parents in the East of England gave this reason, compared to 21 per cent of parents in Yorkshire and the Humber).

#### ***Area deprivation***

Parents in the least deprived areas of the country were more likely to use childcare for economic reasons. A somewhat similar pattern (but not nearly as pronounced) emerges for the use of childcare providers for educational reasons (see Table 3.21). Use of any childcare for educational reasons was four percentage points higher in the highest quintile compared to the lowest (29 per cent compared to 25 per cent).

**Table 3.21 Use of childcare for educational reasons, by Index of Multiple Deprivation**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived %</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> quintile %</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> quintile %</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> quintile %</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> quintile – most deprived %</b>
Used childcare for educational reasons	29	27	28	25	25
Used formal childcare for educational reasons	26	25	26	24	23
Used informal childcare for educational reasons	2	2	2	2	1
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1480</i>	<i>1440</i>	<i>1409</i>	<i>1599</i>	<i>1874</i>

### **3.5 Summing up**

This chapter has explored the numbers of parents who used childcare and early years provision in order to work or study, or for their children’s educational development. We have looked at different types of provision and across different family structures and work statuses, the age of the children, the family’s income, and by considering the different regions in which the families lived.

The chapter has highlighted how levels and types of childcare use differed according to why parents were using it. On the whole, parents were most likely to say that they used childcare for economic reasons (36 per cent), although a large proportion (27 per cent) also said that they used childcare for educational reasons. Formal childcare was the main type used for educational reasons (25 per cent), but both informal and formal providers were used when the parent was working or studying (18 and 24 per cent respectively).

Formal *and* informal childcare was found to be fulfilling a role before the children started school, enabling parents to work or study. 22 per cent of parents with children aged four or under had used formal childcare for this reason, and 23 per cent had used informal care for this reason. However, formal childcare was also enabling parents with these pre-school children to help their child’s educational development – over three-quarters (73 per cent) of parents of three and four year olds said they were using their main formal provider for educational reasons.



As would be expected, working parents were more likely to use their childcare (especially formal childcare) so that they could work or study (27 per cent of both lone working parents and dual-earner couple families said this about their formal provider). Conversely, it was non-working parents that seemed more likely to use childcare for educational reasons (22 per cent of non-working lone parents, compared to 17 per cent of working lone parents said they used their formal providers for educational reasons, for example). It was suggested this was because non-workers were more likely to have younger children. The universal availability of free early years education for all three and four year olds will also undoubtedly have played a role in this, whatever the parents' current or intended working status.

The use of childcare for both economic and educational reasons was seen to be associated with families' financial contexts. Across England, parents in the more deprived areas were the least likely to be using childcare for their own work or study, or for their child's educational development (13 per cent of those in the most deprived areas used formal childcare for economic reasons, compared to 21 per cent of families in the least deprived areas, for example).

Family income was a considerable factor in parents' use of childcare, whether for economic or educational reasons. 30 per cent of parents in the highest income bracket used formal childcare for economic reasons, compared to 10 per cent of those in the lowest income group; 28 per cent of families in the highest income group used formal childcare for educational reasons compared to 21 per cent in the lowest income group. This correlates with the results in Chapter 2, where we saw that parents in lower income families were less frequent users of formal and informal childcare whatever their reasons for doing so.

If we are to understand why parents have used childcare, we must also ask when they were using it. The next chapter considers, in detail, when parents used different providers during the last week.

## 4 WHEN DO PARENTS USE OR NEED CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION?

### 4.1 Introduction

Within this chapter, we provide a picture of parents' use of childcare and early years provision by describing the pattern of use across the last week, in terms of number of providers used, as well as the number of days and the timing of sessions. A detailed look at *when* parents use childcare across the week is interesting from a policy perspective as it gives an insight into the following issues:

- The ways that early years education is used alongside formal and informal childcare;
- The relative use of childcare for economic, educational and other reasons;
- The use of different forms of childcare at different times of the day and week (e.g. at atypical working times)

Describing these patterns for couple versus lone parent families, and across families with different working statuses and income, enables us to provide a picture of how childcare and early years provision is used within the current policy world, and may help to identify possible policy changes which might impact on these patterns (e.g. by increasing provision of wraparound care).

This chapter focuses on the selected child only, as the information is based on an attendance diary for the last week, asked only about the selected child. Detailed information was collected day by day, and session by session, about all childcare and early years provision used by the selected child in the last week.

### 4.2 Patterns of use across the week

#### 4.2.1 *Number of providers*

Use of more than one childcare or early years provider was common. Whilst six in ten children who had received childcare in the last week had done so from only one provider (58 per cent), three in ten had had two providers (28 per cent) and one in ten (9 per cent) had had three or more.

Table 4.1 shows the number of different provider types used, separating out early years education providers versus other formal childcare and informal childcare. A third of children who had received childcare or early years provision had done so from one early years education provider (30 per cent), a quarter had received childcare from one formal provider (24 per cent), and half from one informal provider (52 per cent). Most children who had used more than one provider had used only one of each type (early years provision/other formal childcare/informal). Where more than one provider of the same type *had* been used, it was most often using more than one *informal* carer. 11 per cent of children who had received childcare had had two informal providers compared to 1 per cent in the case of early years education and 3 per cent in the case of 'other formal' childcare.

**Table 4.1** Number of different provider types used in the last week

	Column per cent		
	Early years provision <sup>41</sup> %	Other formal <sup>42</sup> %	Informal %
0	69	73	36
1	30	24	52
2	1	3	11
3+	+	+	1
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>

+ &lt;0.5 per cent

Turning to the number of providers used for different reasons, we can see in Table 4.2 that children receiving care from more than one provider tends to be associated with use for different reasons. One in three children had received childcare from just one provider for economic reasons only (29 per cent), one in ten had received childcare from just one provider for educational reasons only (12 per cent), and one in ten again had received childcare from just one provider for both economic and educational reasons (8 per cent). Although the figure is low, children were more likely to receive childcare from two providers for economic reasons only (7 per cent compared to 1 per cent or under in the case of educational reasons only or both types of reason).

**Table 4.2** Number of providers used for different reasons in the last week

	Column per cent			
	Economic reasons only %	Educational reasons only %	Economic & educational %	Neither %
0	63	87	92	55
1	29	12	8	34
2	7	+	1	8
3+	1	+	+	2
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>

+ &lt;0.5 per cent

<sup>41</sup> Early education is defined as 'Nursery school, Nursery class, Reception class, Special day school/nursery, Day Nursery, Playgroup/pre-school, Other nursery education provider'.

<sup>42</sup> Other formal is defined as 'Childminder, Nanny or au pair, Babysitter, Breakfast/afterschool club, Holiday club'.

The age of the child is an important factor associated with the number of providers used (Table 4.3), with three to four year olds being much less likely to have only one provider (49 per cent, compared to at least 58 per cent in the case of each of the other age groups). The findings from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 suggest that this is due to their being more likely to use different types of formal childcare and early years provision, and also more likely to use childcare for both economic reasons and educational reasons. This fits in with the association seen, above, between the number of providers used, the different types of providers and different reasons for using childcare.

**Table 4.3** Number of providers used in the last week, by age of child

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
1	61	49	58	59	67	58
2	30	34	26	26	25	28
3	7	13	9	10	6	9
4+	2	4	6	6	2	4
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>959</i>	<i>1343</i>	<i>725</i>	<i>1024</i>	<i>572</i>	<i>4631</i>

There were no significant variations in the number of providers used by couples and lone parents. However, there were large variations between working and non-working families. Looking at couple families first, children whose parents were not working were much more likely to receive care from only one provider (80 per cent), compared to couples where one parent was working (65 per cent), and both of these groups were in turn more likely than couples where both parents were working to use a single provider (55 per cent). Among lone parents, two-thirds of children in non-working lone parent families had received care from only one provider, compared to half of children in working lone parent families.

It is interesting to note that lone parents who were not working were still more likely to use multiple providers than non-working couple families (Table 4.4). This is likely to be linked to the reasons for using childcare. Even though the lone parent may not be in work, potentially not having regular shared care with a partner; the other non-work related reasons for using childcare may mean that they still need multiple providers more than non-working couples. Lone parents also use more informal care, which is associated above with multiple provider use.

**Table 4.4** Number of providers used in the last week, by family working status

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent – working	Lone parent – not working
	%	%	%	%	%
1	55	65	80	48	65
2	30	25	13	33	26
3	10	7	5	12	7
4+	5	4	2	6	3
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2255</i>	<i>1064</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>607</i>	<i>543</i>

Children in higher earning families were more likely than children in lower earning families to receive care from more than one provider (Table 4.5). Half (52 per cent) of children in families with an annual income of £32,000 or more had only one provider, compared to two-thirds (66 per cent) of those in families in the lowest income bracket. This reflects higher earning families using more childcare for economic and educational reasons (as found in Chapter 3).

**Table 4.5** Number of providers used in the last week, by family income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£31,999	£32,000+
	%	%	%	%
1	66	60	58	52
2	26	28	28	31
3	6	8	10	11
4+	2	4	4	7
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>645</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>1162</i>	<i>1350</i>

#### 4.2.2 Number of days used

Three in ten children had received childcare on five days of the week (29 per cent), reflecting the traditional pattern of working life. Two in ten (18 per cent) children received childcare on one day only and two in ten (18 per cent) on two days. Receipt of childcare on every day of the week (including weekends) was rare, at 3 per cent.

Table 4.6 shows that the type of childcare received for five days of the week was more likely to be early years education, as 16 per cent of children had received care from an early years education provider for five days of the week, compared to 6 per cent in the case of other formal childcare, and 8 per cent in the case of informal care. Other formal care and informal care was more likely to have been used on just one day, especially in the case of informal provider types. 9 per cent of children had received other formal care on just one day, compared to 6 per cent or less for every other number of days, while one in five children had received informal care on just one day (21 per cent), compared to 16 per cent or less for every other number of days. This reflects the more ad hoc nature of informal childcare provision.

**Table 4.6** Number of days different provider types used in the last week

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Early years education</b>	<b>Other formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
	%	%	%
0	68	73	36
1	3	9	21
2	5	6	16
3	5	4	10
4	3	2	6
5	16	6	8
6	+	+	2
7	+	+	1
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	4631	4631	4631

+ <0.5 per cent

The pattern of use across the week also varies within the categories of early education and other formal care. Table 4.7 focuses on the number of days children received childcare from formal provider types. Children were more likely to go to a nursery class and reception class on five days of the week (75 and 89 per cent respectively, of those who had received childcare from this provider). Four in ten children attending nursery schools (42 per cent) or having nannies or au pairs (38 per cent) received this care for five days of the week.

Out-of-school clubs were more likely to have been used just for one day: 41 per cent in the case of on-site clubs and 46 per cent in the case of off-site clubs. In the case of babysitters however, three-quarters (76 per cent) of children had received care from this provider on just one day, highlighting the more ad hoc nature of this childcare arrangement.

**Table 4.7 Number of days received childcare in the last week, by formal provider type**

	Column per cent									
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup/ pre-school	Child-minder	Nanny/ au pair	Babysitter	On-site club	Off-site club
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	4	4	2	12	23	15	15	76	41	46
2	19	5	1	28	27	23	10	15	21	20
3	21	7	3	26	20	22	12	6	10	12
4	14	8	5	12	11	9	21	3	8	5
5	42	75	89	21	19	15	38	1	20	17
6	0	1	0	+	0	0	4	0	+	+
7	0	+	1	+	0	+	0	0	+	0
<i>Base: All children who had used this provider in the last week</i>										
<i>Unweighted base</i>	287	352	489	396	455	285	82	178	451	256

+ <0.5 per cent

The pattern of use across the week also varies by informal provider type, although not quite as much as among formal providers. On the whole, informal providers were more likely than formal providers to be used on only one or two days in the week. In the case of relatives (other than grandparents or ex-partners) and friends or neighbours, over half of children had received care from them for only one day in the last week (59 and 56 per cent respectively). Of all the informal providers, children were most likely to have received care for two or more days from their non-resident parents (only 22 per cent had been with them for only one day in the week).

**Table 4.8** Number of days used childcare in the last week, by informal provider type

	Column per cent				
	Ex-partner %	Grandparents %	Sibling %	Another relative %	Friend/ neighbour %
1	22	39	46	59	56
2	37	26	22	22	23
3	25	15	6	7	9
4	8	7	7	5	5
5	7	11	16	7	6
6	1	2	3	+	1
7	1	1	1	1	0
<i>Base: All children who had used this provider in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	377	1792	266	392	596

+ <0.5 per cent

Information was collected about what the parents were doing during each session of childcare. Table 4.9 shows the number of days in which childcare was used whilst the mother was working, looking for work or studying versus the number of days where the mother was not doing any economic activity for any of the sessions of childcare used. For half (49 per cent) of the children who had received childcare in the last week, none of their childcare was in order for their mother to work or study. Conversely, for a third (35 per cent) of the children who had received childcare in the last week, all their childcare sessions were in order for their mother to work or study.



**Table 4.9** Number of days of economic activity and non-economic activities (mother's activities)<sup>43</sup>

	Column per cent	
	Economic activity only %	Non-economic activity only <sup>44</sup> %
0	49	35
1	29	33
2	14	18
3	6	9
4	2	3
5	1	2
6	+	+
7	0	+
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>

+ <0.5 per cent

As the main users of early years provision, three to four year olds were much more likely to have received childcare for five days of the week: more than double the proportions of any other age group at 59 per cent (Table 4.10). Only 2 per cent of three to four year olds who received childcare did so only for one day of the week, compared to one in five of 0 to two year olds (19 per cent), and five to 11 year olds (21 to 22 per cent). The differences between the other age groups are also likely to be based largely on types of providers used by each age group.

**Table 4.10** Number of days received childcare in the last week, by age of child

	Column per cent					
	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-7 %	8-11 %	12-14 %	All %
1	19	2	21	22	27	18
2	21	4	17	22	25	18
3	20	8	16	16	17	15
4	15	12	11	11	11	12
5	20	59	26	21	15	29
6	3	10	6	6	4	6
7	2	5	3	3	2	3
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>959</i>	<i>1344</i>	<i>726</i>	<i>1027</i>	<i>574</i>	<i>4631</i>

<sup>43</sup> This will include a small proportion of female carers who were not the mother of the children (e.g. grandmothers)

<sup>44</sup> Non-economic activities included looking after the home or other children, caring for someone else, shopping, attending an appointment and socialising.

The pattern of use over the week varied by family type. Lone parents used childcare on more days than couples, as bigger users of informal care and more providers (Table 4.11). 13 per cent of children in lone parent families used childcare on only one day, compared to 20 per cent of children in couple families. Twice as many children in lone parent families used childcare on at least six days (14 per cent compared to 7 per cent). Hence although overall childcare use in the last week varies little by family type, where lone parents do use it they use it more often.

**Table 4.11** Number of days used in the last week, by family type

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Couples</b>	<b>Lone parents</b>
	%	%
1	20	13
2	18	17
3	16	13
4	12	12
5	28	31
6	5	8
7	2	6
<hr/>		
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3478</i>	<i>1152</i>

Within family types, there is also an association between work and the use of childcare across the week. Working families used childcare on more days than non-working families. Among couple families, the differences are clearer when comparing couple families where both parents work to those where one parent is working: 26 per cent of children in the latter group had received childcare on just one day of the week compared to 17 per cent of children from dual-earner families. Non-working couple families do not however follow the same pattern: an even higher proportion receiving childcare on just one day might have been expected, but at 22 per cent, this figure probably reflects the use of childcare as early education.

No trend has been identified in variation in the number of days used by family income.

**Table 4.12** Number of days used in the last week, by family working status

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent – working	Lone parent – not working
	%	%	%	%	%
1	17	26	22	9	17
2	17	20	16	13	21
3	16	16	19	14	13
4	14	9	4	15	10
5	29	24	32	33	29
6	6	4	5	10	6
7	2	2	2	7	5
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2259</i>	<i>1069</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>609</i>	<i>543</i>

### 4.3 Patterns of use across the day

We have split the weekday into five time periods, and separated out use of childcare at the weekend, to look at the times of day and week that childcare tends to be used more or less often<sup>45</sup>. Weekday daytime (9am to 3.29pm) and weekday late afternoon (3.30pm to 5.59pm) were the most common times for the use of childcare, with just under two-thirds of children who had used childcare in that week having used childcare during those periods. Weekday evening (6pm to 9.59pm) was the next most likely time for using childcare. Around a third (30-32 per cent) in each case used childcare in a weekday early morning period (6am to 8.59am), or in a weekend period. The least likely time to be using childcare was the weekday night period (10pm to 5.59am).

The timing of sessions does of course vary hugely by provider type. Table 4.13 shows that a third of children had received early education care in the daytime compared to just 12 per cent having received other formal care in that time period. Reflecting the greater flexibility of informal care, children were then much more likely to have received informal care than other types of care from late afternoon onwards and at the weekend.

<sup>45</sup> These are not exclusive categories, and a single extended period of childcare might cover several of them.

**Table 4.13 Timing of sessions with different provider types**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Early years education %</b>	<b>Other formal %</b>	<b>Informal %</b>
Weekday early morning	10	8	14
Weekday daytime	31	12	27
Weekday late afternoon	8	20	40
Weekday evening	+	7	27
Weekday night	+	2	12
Weekend	+	3	26
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>

Table 4.14 provides the detail of the timing of sessions by formal provider type (with the base being children who had received care from this provider, rather than all children who had received childcare). The timing of sessions matches when we know these providers to be available. Babysitters stand out among the other formal providers as being much more likely to be used on weekday nights and at the weekend, with a third of children who had received childcare from a babysitter having done so at each of those times.

**Table 4.14 Timing of sessions in the last week, by formal provider type**

	Column per cent									
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup / pre-school	Child-minder	Nanny/ au pair	Babysitter	On-site club	Off-site club
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Weekday early morning	30	15	36	54	2	46	42	4	27	12
Weekday daytime	94	95	97	95	95	61	52	10	44	27
Weekday late afternoon	33	+	45	71	4	72	77	14	78	75
Weekday evening	+	0	1	2	+	12	50	56	7	30
Weekday night	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	32	+	0
Weekend	0	0	1	+	1	2	9	33	2	12
<i>Base: All children who had used this provider in the last week</i>										
<i>Unweighted base</i>	297	352	499	406	465	295	92	188	461	266

+ <0.5 per cent

A look at the timing of sessions in the last week by informal provider type confirms that all types of informal care are being used at all times of the day. Children were however more likely to have received care from an ex-partner in the evening, at night or at the weekend than at other times (62, 43 and 68 per cent, compared to around a third or less across all the other informal providers at these times), while all other forms of informal care were more likely in late afternoon (than at other times of the day).

**Table 4.15 Timing of sessions in the last week, by informal provider type**

	Column per cent				
	Ex-partner	Grandparents	Sibling	Another relative	Friend/ neighbour
	%	%	%	%	%
Weekday early morning	20	22	11	15	15
Weekday daytime	18	47	16	37	35
Weekday late afternoon	45	64	54	48	59
Weekday evening	62	36	36	35	34
Weekday night	43	15	10	12	9
Weekend	68	34	28	28	25
<i>Base: All children who had used this provider in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>387</i>	<i>1802</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>402</i>	<i>606</i>

Taking into account what the mother is doing during sessions (Table 4.16), the early morning and late afternoon periods were associated more with economic activity than non-economic, with twice as many children having received early morning childcare during a period of economic activity as non-economic (21 per cent compared to 9 per cent), and almost twice as many in the late afternoon period (41 per cent compared to 24 per cent). In turn, evenings, nights and weekend were more associated with non-economic activities.

**Table 4.16 Timing of session by economic activity and non-economic activities (mother's activities)<sup>46</sup>**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Economic activity only</b>	<b>Non-economic activity only</b>
	%	%
Weekday early morning	21	9
Weekday daytime	33	30
Weekday late afternoon	41	24
Weekday evening	14	24
Weekday night	3	10
Weekend	7	25
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4631</i>	<i>4631</i>

Table 4.17, showing the timing of sessions by the age of the child, reflects the associations discussed above between provider types and the timing of sessions, and in Chapter 2 between provider types and the age of the child. Virtually all three to four year olds who had received childcare had done so in the daytime, as they are more likely to have received early education. Older children, being more likely to go to out-of-school clubs, were much more likely to have received childcare late afternoon or evenings.

**Table 4.17 Timing of sessions of childcare, by age of child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>					
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-11</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Weekday early morning	41	36	28	25	16	30
Weekday daytime	88	99	50	35	22	60
Weekday late afternoon	56	41	75	75	65	63
Weekday evening	23	18	41	50	55	37
Weekday night	10	7	16	18	19	14
Weekend	25	19	35	39	40	32
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>959</i>	<i>1344</i>	<i>726</i>	<i>1027</i>	<i>574</i>	<i>4631</i>

+ <0.5 per cent

The timing of sessions used by lone parent families compared to couple families reflects the different childcare patterns of the two types of families (Table 4.18). Children in lone parent families were much more likely to have received childcare in the evening, at night and at the weekend, reflecting the time spent by children with ex-partners. Children in couple families were more likely to have received childcare

<sup>46</sup> This will include a small proportion of female carers who were not the mother of the children (e.g. grandmothers)

during the daytime (62 per cent) than those in lone parent families (55 per cent), reflecting the finding in Chapter 2 that children in couple families are more likely to use formal care. Parents' working patterns also have a role here, and are explored below.

**Table 4.18** Timing of sessions, by family type

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Couple</b> %	<b>Lone parent</b> %
Weekday early morning	29	32
Weekday daytime	62	55
Weekday late afternoon	63	62
Weekday evening	33	48
Weekday night	10	26
Weekend	28	44
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3478</i>	<i>1152</i>

Table 4.19 shows the timing of sessions by family working status. The use of childcare in the early morning and late afternoon is associated with parents in work, reflecting the need for childcare before and after school. 35 per cent of children in families where both parents worked had received childcare in the early morning, compared to 15 per cent of children in non-working couple families, with a similar gap between working and non-working lone parents. The similarity between working and non-working families in their levels of use of childcare at night and at the weekend reflects the fact that childcare at these times is less likely to be used for economic reasons.

**Table 4.19** Timing of sessions, by family working status

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple – both working</b> %	<b>Couple – one working</b> %	<b>Couple – neither working</b> %	<b>Lone parent working</b> %	<b>Lone parent not working</b> %
Weekday early morning	35	18	15	41	21
Weekday daytime	61	63	63	54	56
Weekday late afternoon	73	45	34	76	47
Weekday evening	34	31	24	52	43
Weekday night	10	10	10	27	25
Weekend	26	30	31	44	43
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2104</i>	<i>970</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>504</i>



Taking into account the hours worked in working couple families further highlights the relationship between using childcare for economic reasons and the times of day that the childcare is used (Table 4.20). Children in families where both parents worked full-time were more likely to have received childcare in the early morning or late afternoon than families where one parent worked full-time and the other worked 16 to 29 hours (45 per cent compared to 34 per cent for early morning use, 84 per cent compared to 73 per cent for late afternoon use). In turn, whether the parent working part-time worked more or less than 16 hours had an effect on all times of the day childcare was used, apart from at night. However, its association was particularly strong for early morning and late afternoon use: the proportion of children receiving late afternoon childcare was three-quarters where the parent worked 16 hours or more and half where the parent worked less than 16 hours.

Interestingly, these families (where one parent worked less than 16 hours) were then more likely to have used childcare at the weekend: a third of children (36 per cent) compared to a quarter of children in families where one parent worked full-time and the other worked at least 16 hours (23-25 per cent). This suggests that the 15 hours or less part-time work may tend to include weekend working.

Among couple families where only one parent worked, those with a full-time worker, compared to those with a part-time worker, were more likely to use daytime sessions (64 per cent compared to 54 per cent). On the other hand, those with a part-time working parent were more likely than those with the full-time working parent to use late afternoon sessions (64 per cent compared to 43 per cent).

**Table 4.20**      **Timing of sessions, by couple families' working hours**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	<b>Both FT</b>	<b>FT + PT 16-29 hrs</b>	<b>FT + PT 1-15 hrs</b>	<b>Both PT</b>	<b>One FT, One not working</b>	<b>One PT, One not working</b>	<b>Non-working</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Weekday early morning	45	34	20	[26]	18	14	15
Weekday daytime	60	64	57	[61]	64	54	63
Weekday late afternoon	84	73	54	[55]	43	64	34
Weekday evening	32	34	40	[38]	32	30	24
Weekday night	9	10	11	[14]	10	9	10
Weekend	23	25	36	[31]	30	29	31
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>							
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>797</i>	<i>1004</i>	<i>423</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>958</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>154</i>

[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents

The association between lone parents working full-time or between 16 and 29 hours and when they use childcare is illustrated in Table 4.21 (the base is too low to make comparisons against part-time work under 16 hours). As in the case of couple families, the key differences were in the use of early morning and late afternoon childcare, with working full-time being associated with higher use at these times,

reflecting the fact that the full-time working day is longer than the standard childcare or school day. 49 per cent of the children of full-time working lone parents had received childcare in the early morning compared to 37 per cent of the children of those working 16 to 29 hours, and 88 per cent of the children of full-time working lone parents had received late afternoon care compared to 71 per cent of the children of those working 16 to 29 hours.

**Table 4.21** Timing of sessions, by lone parents' working hours

	Column per cent			
	FT %	PT 16-29 hrs %	PT 1-15 hrs %	Non-working %
Weekday early morning	49	37	[19]	21
Weekday daytime	51	57	[43]	56
Weekday late afternoon	88	71	[35]	47
Weekday evening	54	54	[35]	43
Weekday night	24	31	[24]	25
Weekend	38	45	[72]	43
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	262	305	42	543

[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents

Table 4.22 shows the timing of sessions by whether at least one parent in working couple families worked each type of atypical hours, and the figures in bold are where the type of atypical hours matches the timing of the session used. For couple families, the only type of atypical working which led to greater use of childcare at these times was working past 6pm, with children in families where at least one parent did so being more likely to receive care in the late afternoon (67 per cent compared to 56 per cent) and the evening (35 per cent compared to 27 per cent).

**Table 4.22** Timing of sessions, by working couple families' atypical hours

	Column per cent					
	Work pre 8am - YES %	Work pre 8am - NO %	Work post 6pm - YES %	Work post 6pm - NO %	Work w'kend - YES %	Work w'kend - NO %
Weekday early morning	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	30	30	30	30
Weekday daytime	61	63	60	66	61	62
Weekday late afternoon	65	64	<b>67</b>	<b>56</b>	66	61
Weekday evening	35	31	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	34	31
Weekday night	10	10	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	11	9
Weekend	29	24	28	24	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2243	1004	2655	601	2522	735

As would be expected (shift-parenting less of a possibility), lone parents' atypical hours had a much larger association with the timing of sessions used (Table 4.23). Twice as many children where the lone parent worked before 8am had received care in the early morning (66 per cent) as those where the lone parent worked but not before 8am (34 per cent), and twice as many children where the lone parent worked after 6pm had received care in the evening or at night (72 and 38 per cent) as those where the lone parent did not work after 6pm (37 and 19 per cent). There was also a smaller but still important difference in late afternoon use, of eight percentage points. Half of children with a weekend working lone parent had received childcare at the weekend, compared to a third of those whose parent did not work at the weekend.

**Table 4.23** Timing of sessions, by working lone parents' atypical hours

	Column per cent					
	Work pre 8am - YES %	Work pre 8am - NO %	Work post 6pm - YES %	Work post 6pm - NO %	Work w'kend - YES %	Work w'kend - NO %
Weekday early morning	<b>66</b>	<b>34</b>	43	40	41	41
Weekday daytime	52	54	51	56	53	55
Weekday late afternoon	78	75	<b>80</b>	<b>72</b>	77	74
Weekday evening	53	52	<b>72</b>	<b>37</b>	59	47
Weekday night	27	27	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	32	23
Weekend	46	43	51	43	<b>54</b>	<b>36</b>
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>465</i>	<i>269</i>	<i>340</i>	<i>292</i>	<i>317</i>

Children in higher earning families received more childcare in the early morning and late afternoon, as these are more likely to be families where both parents work (Table 4.24). Higher earners are more likely to use providers who are available at these times, such as day nurseries and childminders. Use of childcare at night and at the weekend is associated more with lower income families, due to lone parents' use of ex-partners and atypical working hours at these times.

**Table 4.24** Timing of sessions, by income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- £19,999 %	£20,000- £31,999 %	£32,000 or more %
Weekday early morning	22	27	31	36
Weekday daytime	59	60	61	59
Weekday late afternoon	48	60	66	71
Weekday evening	38	39	34	38
Weekday night	21	17	11	12
Weekend	39	36	27	29
<i>Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>585</i>	<i>1129</i>	<i>1073</i>	<i>1274</i>

## 4.4 Wraparound care

Wraparound care is an issue of particular interest in the context of patterns of use of childcare, in terms of the way parents cope with matching their childcare and early education needs and the availability of providers. If one provider is not available for the complete period of time for which the parent needs childcare – or the provider does not provide the correct mix of education and care – then not only is another provider needed, but accompanying the child on the journey from one provider to another also needs to be organised<sup>47</sup>.

For every session of childcare recorded in the attendance diary, information was collected on who had taken and who had collected the child for every session. Looking at where this was a childcare or early years provider gives us an indication of how much wraparound care is being used, and how this varies by child and family characteristics.

### 4.4.1 Use of wraparound care

One in three children (32 per cent) who had received childcare in the last week had been taken or collected by their childcare provider. The frequency of being taken or collected by a provider inevitably increases with the number of providers used: one in two children (45 per cent) who had received childcare from two providers had used wraparound care, and this proportion increases to 59 per cent where three providers had been used, and 65 per cent where four or more providers had been used.

Table 4.25 outlines use of wraparound care across child and family characteristics – as some of the differences are due to variation in the number of providers used, this table also provides wraparound care information for children who had received care from two providers, to be more comparable<sup>48</sup>.

As would be expected, the use of wraparound care varies hugely by the age of the child. One in two (47 per cent) five to seven year olds had been taken or collected by their childcare provider at some point, compared to two in five (41 per cent) eight to 11 year olds, one in three (28 per cent) three to four year olds, and one in five of both 0 to two year olds (17 per cent) and 12 to 14 year olds (20 per cent).

This relates to, but is not solely based on the number of providers used by each age group (discussed in Section 4.2.1). Comparing age groups who had used the same number of providers is required to distinguish the effect of the number of providers used: among those who had used two providers, five to seven year olds are still the most likely to have been taken or collected, at 61 per cent, compared to half of both three to four year olds (46 per cent) and eight to 11 year olds (51 per cent), and a third of 0 to two year olds (29 per cent) and 12 to 14 year olds (34 per cent). Use of childcare, in terms of provider types, is very similar between five to seven year olds and eight to 11 year olds, but five to seven year olds were more likely to have received childcare in the daytime, in contrast to eight to 11 year olds having received

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<sup>47</sup> As well as childcare needs not matching the availability of childcare providers, there may be other reasons for use of more than one provider in succession, such as not wanting children to spend more than a certain amount of time with a particular provider.

<sup>48</sup> Analysis of higher number of providers by subgroups is limited due to small bases.

more care in the evening (see Table 4.17). This explains the slightly greater needs for wraparound care at a time when parents, especially working parents, are less likely to be available to take the child from one provider to another.

The slightly lower use of wraparound care for three to four year olds than five to seven year olds is likely to relate to greater use of early education providers, for educational reasons, meaning that a higher proportion of parents are available to take or collect the child rather than the childcare needs being driven by inflexible employment timetables. The even lower use (but still relatively high at one third) of wraparound care for the youngest age group is potentially due to the availability of the providers used for this age group (day nurseries, the main provider for 0 to two year olds, cannot generally offer to take or collect children). In the case of the oldest age group, more children are making the journey to and from childcare providers (which are mainly informal) on their own.

Understandably, reflecting the number of parents being available to collect or take the child, more children in lone parent families had been taken or collected by a provider than in couple families: 38 per cent in comparison to 30 per cent out of all children, and 50 per cent in comparison to 43 per cent out of children who had gone to two providers. Again, as would be expected, work had a positive association with the use of wraparound care: dual-earner families and lone parent working families made particularly high use of wraparound care. Half of children in each of these subgroups where two providers had been used (47 per cent and 54 per cent respectively – no statistical difference between the two) had been taken or collected by the provider.

There were no differences in use of wraparound care by family income.

**Table 4.25**      **Wraparound care, by child and family characteristics**

	<b>2 providers</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Row per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Age of the child</i></b>			
0-2	29	17	305 - 959
3-4	46	28	470 - 1344
5-7	61	47	192 - 726
8-11	51	41	269 - 1027
12-14	34	20	143 - 575
<b><i>Family type</i></b>			
Couple	43	30	1022 - 3478
Lone parent	50	38	357 - 1153
<b><i>Family working status</i></b>			
Couple – both working	47	35	723 - 2259
Couple – one working	34	20	277 - 1065
Couple – neither working	n/a	15	low base - 154
Lone parent – working	54	45	210 - 610
Lone parent – not working	43	31	147 - 543

*Base: All children who had received childcare in the last week*

## **4.5 Summing up**

This chapter has provided a picture of how use of different providers pans out across the week for different types of families, in terms of the number of providers used, number of days, the timing of sessions, and wraparound care.

Although patterns of use reflect the working week, the working day, and the availability of providers to a certain extent, there are interesting differences according to the reasons for the childcare or early years provision as well as family characteristics.

Economic reasons as well as educational reasons for using childcare and early years provision have a clear impact on patterns of use. The combination of these reasons lead to more providers being used, as it is rare for just one provider to be used for both types of reasons, and to be available at all times required. Three to four year olds stand out among all the age groups as having quite distinctive childcare patterns – using more providers, more daytime care, etc. 49 per cent of three to four year olds had received care from just one provider in the last week, compared to at least 58 per cent across the other age groups, and virtually all (99 per cent) of three to four year olds who had received childcare had done so in the daytime. This highlights the differences between early education provision against other types of childcare.

Couples and lone parents end up with quite different childcare patterns, due to their differences in provider types used, with lone parenthood sometimes overriding working status in driving childcare needs, particularly at times outside the typical working day. Half of children in lone parent families (48 per cent) had received childcare in the evening compared to a third of children in couple families (33 per cent), and a quarter in lone parent families (26 per cent) had received childcare at night compared to just 10 per cent of children in couple families.

Use of wraparound care was common, across all ages, and particularly among lone parents, and working families. One in three children (32 per cent) who had received childcare or early years provision in the last week had been taken or collected by their childcare provider.

Having analysed parents' needs and use of childcare in detail, it is now important to work out the role of cost in childcare use, which is discussed in the next chapter.

## **5 THE COST OF CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The cost of childcare and early years provision has been a key concern reflected in recent childcare policy. It is often discussed as a barrier to employment, especially for mothers, and the way the costs should be shared between parents and the government has been an issue of recent debate. It is also an area, as discussed in Chapter 1, where there have been several recent policy developments, such as the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, and free part-time early years education places for three and four year olds.

All families who had used childcare or early years provision in the last week were asked detailed questions about any payments made in that week to the childcare providers they had used, including payments made from outside the family as well as directly by the family. This chapter explores which families are paying for childcare, and what they are paying for in terms of types of fees and types of providers. Financial help with regard to subsidies from outside the family are also discussed. The actual weekly and hourly costs paid by families are given in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, looking at different provider types and between different types of families. Receipt and awareness of tax credits and childcare costs, as well as views on affordability are examined in Sections 5.6 and 5.7. Such issues allow us to examine the extent to which parents' perceptions of the costs of childcare may affect their use.

### **5.2 What proportion of families pay for their childcare or early years provision?**

Half of families who had used some childcare or early years provision in the last week had made a payment to at least one of their childcare providers<sup>49</sup> (52 per cent). The payments referred to could have been paid by the families themselves or via subsidies from other people or organisations. As would be expected, families were more likely to make a payment to a formal provider than to an informal one (Table 5.1).

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<sup>49</sup>Families were asked about any money that was paid before or after the reference week to cover costs for that week (including statutory free nursery education).

**Table 5.1 Whether payment was made, by provider type**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
<i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i>		
Nursery school	75	306
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	51	576
Day nursery	94	664
Playgroup or pre-school	75	729
Childminder	95	358
Nanny or au pair	94	91
Babysitter who came to home	81	200
Breakfast club or After school club, on-site	65	761
Breakfast club or After school club, not on-site	76	288
<i>Informal childcare</i>		
The child's grandparent(s)	6	2069
The child's older brother/sister	9	303
Another relative	8	473
A friend or neighbour	11	784

*Base: All families who had used this provider*

Almost all families who had used a day nursery, a childminder, a nanny or au pair had made a payment to them for that week (all 94 to 95 per cent). Among the other types of formal care or early years provision, proportions who had made a payment ranged from half (51 per cent) in the case of nursery classes, to three-quarters (75 to 76 per cent) in the case of nursery schools, playgroups, and off-site out-of-school clubs, and four-fifths (81 per cent) in the case of babysitters. On-site out-of-school clubs were less likely to have been paid than off-site clubs (65 per cent of families had made a payment).

Although some publicly-run early years services, such as nursery classes and nursery schools, are free at source, we still think that the proportions paying for formal care in an establishment setting are likely to be underestimated, as we are reliant on families' awareness of any subsidies made towards the costs of the provision.

Among informal providers, around one in ten or fewer parents had made a payment for the last week. Grandparents were half as likely to have been paid as friends or neighbours (6 per cent compared to 11 per cent of families). This is not surprising given what we know about grandparents' use for free childcare. Also, as we found in Chapter 3, many children are visiting grandparents as much for social reasons as for childcare for economic reasons.

Couples, higher earners, and working families were all more likely to have made a payment for their childcare and early years provision (Table 5.2).



**Table 5.2 Whether payment was made, by family characteristics**

	<b>Row per cent</b>	
	%	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Family type</i></b>		
Couple	56	4077
Lone parent	42	1271
<b><i>Family yearly income</i></b>		
Under £10,000	37	728
£10,000-£19,999	43	1425
£20,000-£31,999	55	1360
£32,000+	66	1505
<b><i>Family working status</i></b>		
Couple – both working	58	2497
Couple – one working	52	1363
Couple – neither working	44	217
Lone parent – working	48	644
Lone parent – not working	34	627
<b><i>Number of children</i></b>		
1	49	1322
2	55	2509
3	53	1080
4	46	320
5+	51	117
<i>Base: All families who had used childcare in the last week</i>		

56 per cent of couple families had made a payment compared to 42 of lone parent families and around twice as many high earning families had made a payment as low earning families (66 per cent compared to 37 per cent). Couple families where both parents worked were the most likely group to have made a payment (58 per cent, in comparison to all other types of family working status). Among non-working families, lone parents were less likely than couple families to have paid for the childcare that they had used (34 per cent compared to 44 per cent). These relationships reflect types of childcare used, as the families more likely to make a payment are the same families who are more likely to use formal care, as discussed in Chapter 2.

As for the number of children in the family, there was no clear pattern, as families with two children were slightly more likely to have made a payment than one child families (55 per cent compared to 49 per cent), but a greater number of children did not automatically mean the family was more likely to make a payment. This is due to less childcare being used as well as greater choice in terms of flexibility and hence cost, as analysis of number of children by family working status shows that the more children in the family, the less likely couple families are to be dual-earner families, and lone parents to be working.

### **5.2.1 Types of services paid for**

Table 5.3 shows what services the payments covered, for each provider type<sup>50</sup>. Overall, the main types of services paid for were education fees, childcare fees, and refreshments or meals, although they varied hugely by provider type.

In the case of nursery schools, the proportion of families who paid for each of these services was very similar, while among families using nursery classes, families were more likely to be paying for refreshments than either education or childcare fees (33 per cent compared to 11 and 7 per cent respectively).

Those using day nurseries were much more likely to be paying for childcare fees than education fees or refreshments (80 per cent compared to 20 and 24 per cent respectively), reflecting the overall nature of this type of childcare in comparison to nursery school and nursery classes, which are more slanted towards early years education. In the case of playgroups, childcare fees also topped the list (42 per cent), although education fees (31 per cent) and refreshments (21 per cent) were not as far behind as for day nurseries.

Childminders and babysitters were mainly paid for childcare (94 per cent and 72 per cent) with only small proportions of families paying for other services. Nannies and au pairs, on the other hand, were paid for a wide range of services in comparison to all the other types of providers. Around a fifth of families who had used a nanny or au pair in each case paid for travel costs, trips or outings, education fees, and refreshments, although the majority were still paying for childcare fees (76 per cent).

As for out-of-school clubs, those not on-site were more likely to be associated with education fees (31 per cent compared to 17 per cent off-site) and use of equipment (17 per cent compared to 6 per cent off-site). The latter may be linked to sporting activities.

Among informal providers, childcare was the main service paid for to the child's siblings and friends or neighbours (7 per cent in each case compared to a maximum of 2 per cent for any other services).

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<sup>50</sup> The base is all families who had used this provider rather than all families who made a payment, as the base would become too small for analysis in the case of the informal provider types.

**Table 5.3 Payments covered, by provider type**

	<b>Row per cent – Multiple response</b>							
	<b>Education fees</b>	<b>Childcare fees</b>	<b>Refreshments/ meals</b>	<b>Use of equipment</b>	<b>Travel costs</b>	<b>Trips/ outings</b>	<b>Other</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	
<i><b>Early years provision and formal childcare</b></i>								
Nursery school	34	30	28	4	1	5	2	306
Nursery class	11	7	33	3	1	5	3	573
Day nursery	20	80	24	6	1	2	1	663
Playgroup or pre-school	31	42	21	9	1	2	3	728
Childminder	3	94	11	1	1	2	+	358
Nanny or au pair	16	76	15	3	20	17	12	91
Babysitter who came to home	3	72	2	0	3	0	7	200
Breakfast club or After school club, on-site	17	39	19	6	2	3	4	761
Breakfast club or After school club, not on-site	31	32	14	17	1	4	12	288
<i><b>Informal childcare</b></i>								
The child's grandparent(s)	+	3	2	+	2	1	1	2069
The child's older brother/sister	+	7	+	0	1	+	1	303
Another relative	1	3	3	+	1	1	+	473
A friend or neighbour	1	7	2	+	1	1	2	784
<i>Base: All families who had used this provider</i>								

+ <0.5 per cent

### 5.3 Financial help towards childcare and early years provision

15 per cent of families who had made a payment to at least one provider said they had received some financial help towards it. Financial help included any help from outside the family, paid either to the family or directly to the provider to cover childcare costs. The sources of financial help asked about ranged from the Local Education Authority to an ex-partner, but excluded tax credits. It should be emphasised that as receipt of financial help here is based on parents' awareness of payments made directly to providers, the proportion saying that they receive help is likely to be an underestimate.

Those with a lower income were more likely to say they had received financial help than the two highest income groups (Table 5.4). Lone parent families were also more likely to say they had received some financial help (19 per cent of lone parents said this compared to 14 per cent of couple families).

**Table 5.4 Financial help received, by family yearly income**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
Under £10,000	20	303
£10,000-£19,999	16	659
£20,000-£31,999	14	795
£32,000+	14	1038

*Base: All families for whom a payment had been made*

Among couple families, families where both parents were working were less likely to receive financial help than those where one parent was working (12 per cent compared to 18 per cent – there were no statistical differences in comparison to non-working couple families due to the small base, and the difference among lone parents is not statistically significant).

**Table 5.5 Financial help received, by family work status**

	%	Row per cent <i>Unweighted base</i>
Couple – both working	12	1548
Couple – one working	18	753
Couple – neither working	15	95
Lone parent – working	17	339
Lone parent – not working	23	244

*Base: All families for whom a payment had been made*

Analysis of receipt of financial help by the number of children in the family indicates that families with two or three children were slightly more likely to have received help than one-child families (17 per cent compared to 12 per cent) <sup>51</sup>.

### 5.3.1 Sources of help

The most common source of financial help was the Local Education Authority: 59 per cent of families who had received some financial help had done so from this source (Table 5.6). Although this was true for both couple and lone parent families, the proportion of lone parents receiving help from the LEA was much lower, at 37 per cent. A major source of help for one third of lone parents (31 per cent) was their ex-partner.

Seven per cent of couple families who had received financial help had received some financial help from Social Services. Many more (18 per cent) lone parent families had done so.

Only a small proportion of families had received help from an employer (7 per cent), and, as Table 5.7 shows, these families were mainly couple families where both parents worked.

**Table 5.6 Sources of financial help, by family type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple %</b>	<b>Lone parent %</b>	<b>All %</b>
Local Education Authority	68	37	59
Local Authority Social Services Department	7	18	10
An employer	9	1	7
Childcare support fund/ Access Fund	6	6	6
An ex-husband/wife/partner	2	31	10
Other person (e.g. relative) or organisation	8	13	9
<i>Base: All families who received financial help</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>521</i>

<sup>51</sup> The base for families with four or more children is too small to produce statistically significant differences.

**Table 5.7 Sources of financial help, by family working status<sup>52</sup>**

	Column per cent	
	Both working %	Couple – one working %
Local Education Authority	67	72
Local Authority Social Services Department	7	7
An employer	14	1
Childcare support fund/ Access Fund	5	7
An ex-husband/wife/partner	1	3
Other person (e.g. relative) or organisation	8	7
<i>Base: All families who received financial help</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>230</i>	<i>153</i>

Looking across families with different income levels, Local Education Authorities were the main source of financial help across all income groups, although the proportion of families receiving help from this source increased with income (Table 5.8). Social Services was the other major source of help for the lowest income group (26 per cent).

**Table 5.8 Sources of financial help, by family income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- £19,999 %	£20,000- £31,999 %	£32,000 or more %
Local Education Authority	33	50	64	71
Local Authority Social Services Department	26	10	8	6
An employer	2	4	7	12
Childcare support fund/ Access Fund	5	14	6	2
An ex-husband/wife/partner	18	12	8	8
Other person (e.g. relative) or organisation	15	11	6	7
<i>Base: All families who received financial help</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>182</i>

Families with just one child aged 0 to 14 years old differed in their sources of help from larger families, with half of one-child families receiving help from the Local Education Authority compared to around two-thirds of families with more than one child (Table 5.9). Both Social Services and ex-partners were more likely to be a source of help for one-child families as well, reflecting the fact that lone parent families were more likely to be one-child families.

<sup>52</sup> Family working status sub-groups with low bases have been left out.

**Table 5.9 Sources of financial help, by number of children 0-14**

	Column per cent		
	One %	Two %	Three+ %
Local Education Authority	46	64	68
Local Authority Social Services Department	19	5	9
An employer	9	7	4
Childcare support fund/ Access Fund	7	7	4
An ex-husband/ wife/ partner	17	7	6
Other person (e.g. relative) or organisation	11	8	9
<i>Base: All families who received financial help</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>267</i>	<i>150</i>

**5.3.2 Receipt of tax credits**

Families were also asked about receipt of tax credits (Table 5.10). Two-thirds (64 per cent<sup>53</sup>) of families received Child Tax Credit: 27 per cent of families received it along with Working Tax Credit and 38 per cent received it on its own<sup>54</sup>. Of those receiving Working Tax Credit, only one in ten (11 per cent) were in receipt of the childcare element (a further 5 per cent were unsure)<sup>55</sup>.

**Table 5.10 Receipt of tax credits, by family type**

	Column per cent		
	Couples %	Lone parents %	All
Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit	24	35	27
Child Tax Credit only	43	23	38
None of these	34	43	36
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5809</i>	<i>1882</i>	<i>7691</i>

Looking across different types of families, in terms of their working status, family set-up and income, working lone parent families and middle income earners were most likely to be in receipt of tax credits. 85 per cent of working lone parent families were receiving tax credits, in comparison to around two-thirds of each category of

<sup>53</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 27 per cent and 38 per cent, the proportion is 64 per cent rather than 65 per cent due to rounding.

<sup>54</sup> Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families (whether working or not), which is paid in addition to Child Benefit and any Working Tax Credit. Working Tax Credit is a payment to top up the earnings of working people on low incomes, and includes support for the costs of qualifying childcare (the childcare element).

<sup>55</sup> Families can also benefit from the childcare element even if they are only receiving Child Tax Credit – as long as they are receiving more than the family element, meet the work criteria and declared eligible childcare cost in their application.

couple working families, and around one-third of couple and lone-parent non-working families (Table 5.11). Around three-quarters of each middle income group were receiving tax credits in comparison to half of the lowest and highest income groups (Table 5.12). This reflects the eligibility rules of tax credits, which benefit lower earning working families, as well as the fact that non-working families receiving Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance have not yet been migrated onto Child Tax Credit <sup>56</sup>.

Within couple families and lone parent families overall, couple families were more likely to receive tax credits in general, and specifically the Child Tax Credit only (43 per cent compared to 23 per cent), while lone parent families were more likely to receive both tax credits (35 per cent compared to 24 per cent) and to receive the childcare element (19 per cent of lone parents receiving Working Tax Credit, compared to 6 per cent of couple families) – reflecting the lower income of lone parent families (Table 5.10).

As would be expected, very few non-working families were receiving both tax credits (the fact there are any doing so suggests either a lack of understanding of the different types of tax credits or recent changes in circumstances). Two-thirds of working lone parent families were receiving both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, compared to 19 per cent of couple families where both parents were working and 37 per cent of couple families where one parent was working (the latter trend also being linked to the lower income of this family working status) (Table 5.11).

The low proportion of the lower income group receiving Child Tax Credit (Table 5.12) essentially reflects the fact that non-working families are more likely to still be on Income Support or Jobseeker’s Allowance.

**Table 5.11 Whether receive tax credits, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Both working</b>	<b>Couple – one working</b>	<b>Couple – Neither working</b>	<b>Lone parent working</b>	<b>Lone parent not working</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Working Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit	19	37	5	67	3
Child Tax Credit only	48	35	38	18	27
None of these	34	29	57	15	69
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3382</i>	<i>2030</i>	<i>397</i>	<i>837</i>	<i>1045</i>

<sup>56</sup> The aim of Child Tax Credit is to bring together the financial support available for children from both out of work benefits (IS and JSA) and tax credits. The first step towards this was to equalise the payments between the two systems so that they provided the same level of support regardless of which a family was receiving; the second step will be to deliver the IS/JSA support via CTC – involving the “migration” of families from the IS/JSA system to the CTC system.



**Table 5.12 Whether receive tax credits, by family yearly income**

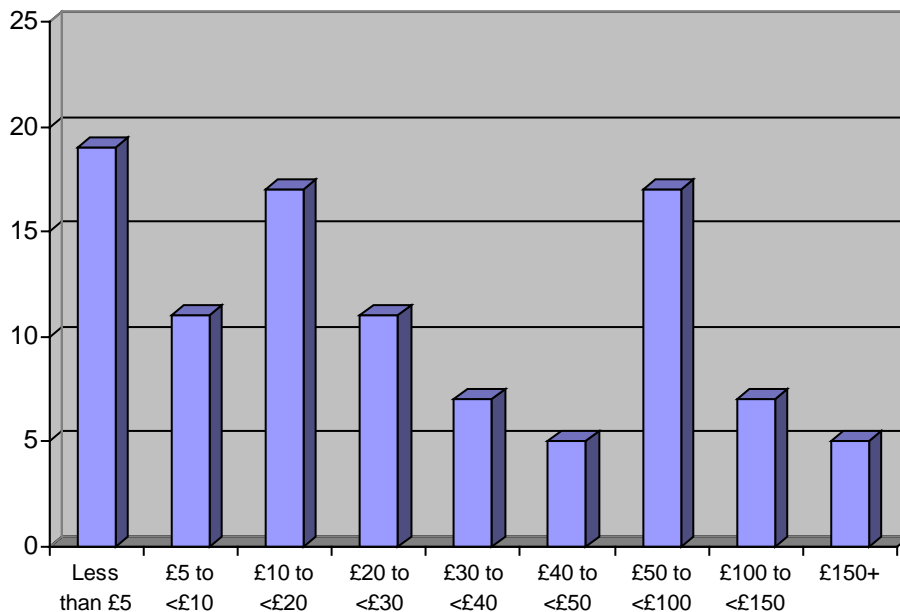
	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- £19,999 %	£20,000- £31,999 %	£32,000+ %
Working Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit	23	48	23	9
Child Tax Credit only	25	29	55	40
None of these	52	23	23	51
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1193</i>	<i>2189</i>	<i>1854</i>	<i>1929</i>

#### 5.4 The weekly cost of childcare and early years provision

Families who had made a payment for childcare in the last week were asked a set of detailed questions about the amount that they had paid. Information was asked of each provider used for any of the children in the family. Hence, we have been able to calculate the weekly cost of childcare for the whole family.

Including subsidies - the help with payments discussed in Section 5.3 - the average weekly cost of childcare and early years provision was £23.00<sup>57</sup> for those who had paid anything in the last week. Not including the subsidies, the average weekly cost paid by families was £20.00. These average costs mask a wide variation in the amounts paid by different families (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 Weekly childcare and early years provision cost (not including subsidies)**



*Base: All families who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies (2686)*

<sup>57</sup> The average cost given here is the median (rather than the mean). Weekly costs were collected by provider for the reference week, a total was calculated and the respondent was asked if this was their usual weekly cost; if not, they were asked for the usual cost, which is the figure used in this section.

We also found a wide variation in the weekly cost of different childcare and early years providers. These variations reflect both differences in the amount of hours that the children spent with the provider as well as hourly cost (see Table 5.20 for hourly costs). The highest weekly cost was for nannies or au pairs, at an average of £100 a week, with day nurseries at £72 a week. The average weekly cost of childminders was half that of day nurseries at £36, followed by nursery schools at £22.25. Although - as discussed earlier - families were much less likely to pay grandparents for childcare, those who did pay had a similar weekly cost to some of the formal providers, with an average of £20.00.

**Table 5.13 Weekly cost including subsidies, by provider type**

	£	<b>Median cost</b> <i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>		
Nursery school	22.25	210
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	1.50	262
Day nursery	72.00	616
Playgroup or pre-school	11.00	532
Childminder	36.00	338
Nanny or au pair	100.00	86
Babysitter who came to home	15.00	160
Breakfast club or After school club, on-site	8.69	484
Breakfast club or After school club, not on-site	5.40	223
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>		
The child's grandparent(s)	20.00	116
A friend or neighbour	10.00	92

*Base: All families for whom a payment had been made to that provider<sup>58</sup>*

Table 5.14 shows how the weekly costs varied across families with different incomes, working status and number of children.

<sup>58</sup> As this relates to costs including subsidies, the base includes cases where all costs were covered by subsidies. Provider types where the base is too low have been left out.

**Table 5.14 Weekly cost excluding subsidies, by family characteristics**

	<b>Median cost</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<i><b>Family yearly income</b></i>		
Under £10,000	9.55	244
£10,000-£19,999	12.00	601
£20,000-£31,999	20.00	708
£32,000+	32.00	974
<i><b>Family working status</b></i>		
Couple – both working	28.00	1447
Couple – one working	12.00	657
Couple – neither working	6.00	79
Lone parent – working	30.00	313
Lone parent – not working	6.00	190
<i><b>Number of children 0-14</b></i>		
1	25.00	656
2	20.00	1303
3	17.48	541
4	12.00	132
5+	9.77	54

*Base: All families who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies*

The average weekly cost increased with earnings, with families in the highest income group paying an average of three times as much as those in the lowest income bracket (£32.00 compared to £9.55). Couple families where both parents worked and working lone parents paid a similar amount (average of £28.00-30.00) – more than three times as much as their non-working counterparts (£6.00 in each case). The average weekly cost for couples where one parent was working was in-between those two extremes, at £12.00. As for the size of the family, the more children in the family, the lower the weekly cost, probably due to the association between higher numbers of children with non-working families (and hence less complex childcare needs) as identified earlier.

Multivariate analysis (binomial logistic regression) was carried out using all the subgroups in the table, as well as region, index of multiple deprivation, number of hours used, the age of children in the family and whether formal or informal care was used (see model in Appendix C). All the relationships described above proved to remain significant, and are hence not simply based on the amount of childcare used. Taking into account the different profile of families in London and scores on the index of multiple deprivation, living in London was significantly associated with paying a higher weekly cost than in other regions. The deprivation of the area also showed a significant association, with the average weekly cost in the least deprived areas being twice as much as the most deprived (£24.00 compared to £12.00).

Families with pre-school children were associated with lower weekly costs (hence regardless of whether formal or informal care had been used) and so were families who had used only informal care. As all of these associations exist regardless of the number of hours used, it is clear that they are based on hourly cost differences, discussed later in Section 5.5.

#### 5.4.1 How easy do parents find it to pay?

Families who had paid for childcare in the last week were asked how easy or difficult they found it to afford these costs. Views on affordability of their weekly costs were mixed (Table 5.15). Twice as many parents said that it was very easy or easy than parents who said that it was difficult or very difficult (52 per cent compared to 22 per cent<sup>59</sup>).

**Table 5.15 How easy or difficult families found it to pay the weekly cost**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Very easy	26
Easy	26
Neither easy nor difficult	26
Difficult	17
Very difficult	6
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2770</i>

Of course, we need to bear in mind that this is not a complete picture of the affordability of childcare. These parents had all used childcare and had therefore found some way of affording it. We know from Chapter 2 that users of childcare had higher incomes on average than other families. In Chapter 6, we explore parents' perceptions about the affordability of childcare in their local area. This provides a broader picture, including both users and non-users of childcare and early years provision. Here, we shed light on which families found their own childcare and early years provision more or less affordable by looking at the above question across families with different working statuses, family set-ups, income, and current payment level.

Lone parent families found it more difficult to pay the weekly cost than couple families (Table 5.16): 37 per cent (difficult or very difficult) in comparison to 19 per cent. This difference between family types is also apparent when taking into account family work status (Table 5.17).

<sup>59</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 6 per cent and 17 per cent, the proportion is 22 per cent rather than 23 per cent due to rounding.

Working lone parents were almost twice as likely to find their weekly cost difficult or very difficult to pay as dual-earner families (37 per cent and 19 per cent respectively). This is not surprising given that their weekly cost is the same (see Table 5.14), but their income is much lower than couple families. Non-working lone parents found it almost equally difficult as working lone parents (36 per cent for non-working parents and 37 per cent for working lone parents). A positive association between working and finding it easier to pay is only found among couple families.

**Table 5.16** How easy or difficult families found it to pay the weekly cost, by family type

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
Very easy	28	17
Easy	27	21
Neither easy nor difficult	26	25
Difficult	15	24
Very difficult	4	13
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2183	502

**Table 5.17** How easy or difficult families found it to pay the weekly cost, by family working status

	Column per cent				
	Both working %	Couple – one working %	Couple – Neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %
Very easy	27	31	20	14	25
Easy	27	28	16	22	20
Neither easy nor difficult	26	23	36	28	19
Difficult	15	14	20	25	22
Very difficult	4	4	9	12	14
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1447	657	79	312	190

Although they are paying less, lower earning families found it more difficult to pay their weekly cost, with 21 per cent finding it difficult and 13 per cent finding it very difficult. This suggests that for higher earning families, although they are paying more, the amount is more within their means.

**Table 5.18**      **How easy or difficult families found it to pay the weekly cost, by income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000- £19,999</b>	<b>£20,000- £31,999</b>	<b>£32,000 or more</b>
	%	%	%	%
Very easy	22	23	26	29
Easy	22	24	24	30
Neither easy nor difficult	23	22	28	26
Difficult	21	22	17	13
Very difficult	13	9	6	2
<hr/>				
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>244</i>	<i>601</i>	<i>707</i>	<i>974</i>

As would be expected, there is a direct relationship between how easy or difficult families found paying their weekly cost with the actual amount they paid, illustrated in Table 5.19. The more families were paying, the more difficult they found it to pay this amount. However, income would be expected to be a mitigating factor, as the relationship between ease of paying and higher earnings highlighted by the family type and income analysis above would suggest that even though costs are high, the ratio of costs against earnings is reduced. This is possibly behind the similarity between the proportion paying £40 to less than £50 (12 per cent) and the proportion of those paying at least three times as much (16 per cent) who found it very difficult to pay.

Interestingly, ease of paying did not vary at all by the number of children in the family, perhaps because the ratio of costs to earnings remains the same across families with different numbers of children.

**Table 5.19 How easy or difficult families found it to pay the weekly cost, by amount paid**

	Column per cent								
	Less than £5	£5 to less than £10	£10 to less than £20	£20 to less than £30	£30 to less than £40	£40 to less than £50	£50 to less than £100	£100 to less than £150	£150 or more
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	69	32	23	19	12	6	7	5	5
Easy	21	33	34	29	31	27	23	18	14
Neither easy nor difficult	8	22	27	31	29	32	34	35	34
Difficult	2	13	13	17	21	22	28	32	31
Very difficult	1	1	3	5	7	12	9	10	16
<i>Base: All families</i>									
<i>Unweighted base</i>	526	307	483	275	192	120	416	196	170

## 5.5 The hourly cost of childcare and early years provision

The hourly cost of childcare and early years provision has been calculated from the weekly cost and number of hours of childcare used. It has been calculated for all families who had made a payment to a provider in the last week. The hourly cost also takes into account the number of children looked after at the same time, and hence is worked out to represent the hourly cost per child.

Including subsidies, the average hourly cost was £1.43<sup>60</sup>. Not including subsidies, the average hourly cost was £1.33. This average hourly cost is calculated from all payments made to all providers, whether formal or informal. It is hence more informative to look at hourly costs by provider type (Table 5.20).

**Table 5.20 Hourly cost including subsidies, by provider type**

	£	Median cost <i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Early years provision and formal childcare</i></b>		
Nursery school	2.43	203
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	0.30	204
Day nursery	3.39	615
Playgroup or pre-school	1.67	527
Childminder	3.13	340
Nanny or au pair	5.51	86
Babysitter who came to home	2.43	159
Breakfast club or After school club, on-site	2.50	492
Breakfast club or After school club, not on-site	3.33	226
<b><i>Informal childcare</i></b>		
The child's grandparent(s)	1.11	126
A friend or neighbour	2.48	102

*Base: All families for whom a payment had been made to that provider<sup>61</sup>*

Nannies and au pairs (which also had the highest weekly costs) were the most expensive at £5.51 an hour. Unlike weekly cost trends however, day nurseries, childminders and off-site out-of-school clubs formed the next most expensive group of providers, with average hourly costs between £3.00 and £3.50. The differences here in comparison to weekly costs reflect intensity of use. For example, although the hourly cost of off-site out-of-school clubs is relatively high, they tend to be used for fewer hours than most other providers and hence have a low average weekly cost.

<sup>60</sup> The average cost given here is the median (rather than the mean).

<sup>61</sup> As this relates to costs including subsidies, the base includes cases where all costs were covered by subsidies.



Nursery schools, babysitters, on-site out-of-school clubs, and friends or neighbours all had a similar hourly cost, close to an average of £2.50 an hour, with playgroups quite a bit less at an average of £1.67. Grandparents had a low average hourly cost at £1.11, and nursery classes had the lowest at 30 pence (which as seen earlier tended to be mainly for refreshments).

In Table 5.21, the nine Government Office Regions are listed in order of decreasing hourly cost. London had the highest hourly cost by far at £1.98 (compared to 85p in the Yorkshire & the Humber region, the lowest cost). An effective comparison between the regions nevertheless needs to take into account family characteristics associated with each region, hence multivariate analysis has been carried out, and the findings discussed below.

**Table 5.21 Hourly cost excluding subsidies, by region**

	<b>Median cost</b>	
	£	<i>Unweighted base</i>
London	1.98	310
North West	1.35	338
Eastern	1.18	319
East Midlands	1.15	238
South East	1.15	493
South West	1.04	<b>285</b>
North East	1.00	129
West Midlands	1.00	295
Yorkshire & the Humber	0.85	275

*Base: All families who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies*

In Table 5.22, it can be seen that couple families paid almost twice the hourly cost as lone parent families, that the average hourly cost increased with income, and decreased with the number of children 0 to 14 years old. Within family types, working families also paid more per hour than non-working families. These relationships are hence behind the associations identified in Section 5.4 between weekly cost and the same family characteristics.

**Table 5.22 Hourly cost excluding subsidies, by family characteristics**

	<b>Median cost</b>	
	<b>£</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<i><b>Family type</b></i>		
Couple families	1.33	2182
Lone parent families	0.75	500
<i><b>Family yearly income</b></i>		
Under £10,000	0.44	243
£10,000-£19,999	0.75	599
£20,000-£31,999	1.13	707
£32,000+	1.89	974
<i><b>Family working status</b></i>		
Couple – both working	1.58	1447
Couple – one working	0.85	656
Couple – neither working	0.49	79
Lone parent – working	1.18	311
Lone parent – not working	0.25	189
<i><b>Number of children 0-14</b></i>		
1	1.67	655
2	1.14	1301
3	0.82	540
4	0.32	132
5+	0.33	54

*Base: All families who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies*

Taking into account the interaction between these characteristics is important to distinguish the factors that are driving the patterns identified. Multivariate analysis (binomial logistic regression) was carried out using all the subgroups in the table, as well as region, index of multiple deprivation, number of hours used, presence of pre-school and school-aged children, and use of formal and informal care (see model in Appendix C). The relationships between cost and the number of children, working status, and income were confirmed as significant, hence potentially larger families were able to make cost savings by having more than one child with the same provider. It is also interesting that working families were paying more an hour than non-working families regardless of the number of hours used or income, probably reflecting types of childcare used, and less choice for working families.

Again, costs in London were found to be higher than in any other region, although no other significant differences were found between other regions. Looking at the index of multiple deprivation, being in the most deprived quintile was significantly associated with lower hourly costs compared to the other quintiles.

However, family type was *not* found to be significant once all other factors are taken into account, meaning that working status and the number of children overrides differences in family type.

## **5.6 Awareness of childcare costs and help with payment**

A key issue for tax credit policy is how aware families are of what financial help is available. In this section, awareness of the childcare element is explored, as well as where families obtain information. Families' knowledge of which providers are covered by the childcare element, and of the cost of childminders and day nurseries is also covered.

### ***5.6.1 Awareness of the childcare element and sources of information***

Families who were not receiving the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and who usually paid for childcare were asked whether they were aware that the Government offers extra help with the costs of certain types of childcare and early years provision through the tax credit system. Two thirds (65 per cent) of these parents said that they were aware.

Table 5.23 shows the extent to which levels of awareness varied across different families. Levels of awareness were higher among working families than non-working families. In turn, among working families, lone parents showed higher levels of awareness of the childcare element than couple families (74 per cent compared to 63 per cent of single earner couple families and 68 per cent of dual-earner couple families). A similar pattern is evident among non-working families, with lone parents more likely to be aware of the childcare element of the tax credit system than couple families (58 per cent compared to 50 per cent).

Levels of awareness increased with family income. In particular, those in the lowest income group (many of whom are likely to be non-working families) were less likely to be aware of the childcare element than those in the other three groups (60 per cent compared to 67 to 69 per cent).

**Table 5.23 Awareness of the childcare element, by family characteristics**

	%	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b><i>Family yearly income</i></b>		
Under £10,000	60	696
£10,000-£19,999	67	1365
£20,000-£31,999	67	1226
£32,000+	69	1335
<b><i>Family working status</i></b>		
Couple – both working	68	2302
Couple – one working	63	1292
Couple – neither working	50	188
Lone parent – working	74	519
Lone parent – not working	58	599
<b><i>Number of children 0-14</i></b>		
1	66	1323
2	66	2264
3	64	967
4	56	257
5+	50	89
<i>Base: All families not receiving the childcare element and who usually pay for childcare, after subsidies</i>		

Parents who were in receipt of or aware of the childcare element of the tax credit system had found out about it from quite a wide range of sources (Table 5.24). The main sources were TV advertising (cited by 30 per cent), the tax credits application pack (24 per cent) and by word of mouth (relatives/friends/neighbours, 18 per cent). Of possible interest are those sources rarely mentioned. Very few parents had found out about the childcare element from their employer or from their childcare provider.

**Table 5.24 Sources of information on the childcare element**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
TV adverts	30
Received tax credits application pack	24
Relatives/Friends/ neighbours	18
Letter from Inland Revenue	11
Newspaper/magazine	9
Tax Credit Office or Inland Revenue Official	6
Job Centre/Job Centre Plus/ New Deal advisor	5
Employer/Workmates	5
Other leaflets	5
Department of Work and Pensions	4
Radio adverts	4
Leaflet in Post Office	3
Childcare provider	3
Letter from DWP	3
Internet	2
Hospital/ surgery/ clinic/ GP/ Health visitor	2
Notice in Child Benefit book	2
Other advert	2
Citizen's Advice Bureau	1
Children's Information Services	1
Accountant/ solicitor/ financial advisor	1
Radio/TV news	+
Just started claiming Child Benefit	+
Welfare Rights Worker	+
From own/partner's employment being related to tax credit system	+
Other	2
<i>Base: All families who received or were aware of the childcare element</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7198</i>

### **5.6.2 Awareness of eligibility for childcare element**

The childcare element of Working Tax Credit currently covers only certain formal childcare providers. However, widening eligibility to other providers, including informal types, has been considered. In this policy context, current awareness of eligibility is useful to inform the debate.

Parents were given a list of providers and asked which they thought were eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit (including those who had not previously heard of the childcare element). In Table 5.25, we split the providers shown to parents into those that are - on the whole - currently eligible (as for example not all after school clubs are eligible) and those that in general are not.

Looking firstly at those providers who are generally eligible, more parents recognised registered childminders as eligible than any other provider. Two thirds (68 per cent) of parents thought that registered childminders were eligible, compared to just over half (55 and 53 per cent) who thought that a Local Authority day nursery or private day nursery would be eligible. Awareness was lowest for out-of-school clubs, identified by just over a third (37 per cent).

Among the generally ineligible providers, one in five (20 per cent) parents thought that nannies and au pairs were eligible<sup>62</sup>. 14 per cent thought that grandparents were eligible.

The lack of awareness about eligible providers, together with the not insignificant proportions of parents thinking that nannies, au pairs and grandparents were among the eligible providers for the childcare element, shows some confusion among parents about these issues.

**Table 5.25 Awareness of eligibility for tax credits**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	<b>All</b>
<b><i>Generally eligible</i></b>	
Registered childminder	68
Local Authority day nursery	55
Private day nursery	53
After school/holiday club	37
<b><i>Not generally eligible but thought to be</i></b>	
Nanny or au pair	20
Grandparent	14
Friend or neighbour	8
Unregistered childminder	4
Another type of provider	1
None of these	9
Don't know	8
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7802</i>

<sup>62</sup> From April 2005, the childcare approval scheme was introduced in England: this is a voluntary scheme for which nannies and au pairs can apply and thus become eligible providers.

### 5.6.3 Awareness of the real costs of childminders and day nurseries

Parents (regardless of their own use) were asked to estimate the cost of using a childminder and a day nursery for an eight-hour day. The average cost estimated by parents was £30 for both childminders and day nurseries.

In Table 5.26, we show how parents' estimated costs compare to the real costs of spending eight hours with each provider, as calculated from the information provided by parents in our study. Overall, parents tended to overestimate the cost of using such providers. Whilst the estimated cost of using a childminder was £30, the actual cost was £5 less at £25. The estimated cost of a day nursery was an overestimation of around £3, at £30 instead of the real cost of £27.09.

**Table 5.26 Estimated and real costs of childminders and day nurseries**

	<b>Median cost</b>	
	<b>Estimated £</b>	<b>Real £</b>
Childminder (8 hours use)	30.00	25.00
Day nursery (8 hours use)	30.00	27.09
<i>Base: All families (estimated); All families for whom a payment had been made to that provider (real)</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>4106</i>	<i>4114</i>

Having used a childminder made a difference to the childminder estimate, with parents who had used a childminder giving the accurate figure of £25 (median estimate) compared to £30 for those who had not used a childminder. Having used a day nursery did not however make a difference to the estimate (£30 whether or not the parent had used a day nursery), but the estimate was close to the real figure in the first place.

### 5.7 Summing up

The cost of childcare is a complex issue to explore, as this chapter has shown, and analysis relies on parents' awareness of subsidies. A clear picture of the financial aspects of childcare for different types of families has nevertheless been achieved.

This chapter has focused on the half of families who pay for their childcare, although this relates to the other half who do not pay, as cost clearly drives the patterns of use described in the earlier chapters. For example, higher costs are associated with the region where the least childcare is used (London) and with the provider types used by the higher earning families.

The average weekly cost of childcare and early years provision (including the subsidies) was £23.00 (median). The average hourly cost of childcare (including subsidies, and whether for formal or informal care) was £1.43 (median), but ranged from 30p for nursery classes (which tended to be for refreshments) to £5.51 for nannies or au pairs.

The association of higher costs with the least deprived areas (regardless of family characteristics), and with London, emphasises the need for childcare policy that helps make sure childcare is affordable irrespective of location (such as the London Childcare Affordability Pilots). The highest hourly cost by far was in London, at £1.98 (median).

Among those who pay, the amounts paid vary enormously, partly because of different types of provision used, but working families (regardless of pay) and those earning more (regardless of whether they are a single or dual-earner family) pay more – pointing to the importance of choice. Lower earning families pay less, but find it more difficult to pay. 21 per cent of those with an income under £10,000 found it difficult to pay the weekly cost, and 13 per cent found it very difficult.

There is some room for improvement in terms of increasing parents' awareness of the help available, especially amongst non-working families. Knowledge of the types of childcare eligible for the childcare element is low, however, it is unclear to what degree this translates into families receiving less help than they are entitled to. Only two-thirds of parents recognised a registered childminder as being eligible for the childcare element, and one-fifth thought a nanny or au pair was eligible (while in general this type of provider is not eligible). Awareness of actual costs seems relatively good, based on the estimates of the cost of day nurseries and childminders.

Having identified cost as a barrier for some families, how important is it as a barrier, versus availability for example? This is explored in the next chapter.



## 6 WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO USING CHILDCARE OR EARLY YEARS PROVISION?

### 6.1 Introduction

Within its ten-year strategy for childcare, the Government has signalled its plans to develop its policies to provide ‘affordable, flexible, high-quality childcare for all parents who need it’<sup>63</sup>. This builds on the National Childcare Strategy, which aspired to provide ‘good quality and affordable childcare provision ... in every neighbourhood’. The policies – and proposed policies – which work towards these broad aims, should have benefits for families and children across a range of perspectives. Good quality childcare and early years provision has been shown to have positive outcomes for children in terms of their educational and social development. Affordable childcare can enable parents (particularly mothers and lone parents) to enter the labour market or increase their hours, thus tackling issues around child poverty, labour market disadvantage and social exclusion.

In preceding chapters, we have reported largely on families’ *use* of childcare and early years provision. How many families used it? What types of families? How much did they pay? When did they use it? Why did they use it? And so on. These are all key data for assessing how well government policies are targeting different types of families – and different types of childcare. However, in order to better assess recent childcare policies, we also need to look at the *barriers* – both perceived and experienced – faced by parents with regards to using the types and the amount of childcare that they would ideally choose. An understanding of these barriers will inform future policy – be it about the provision of better information or the actual childcare market.

This chapter covers a wide range of issues that may impact on families’ uses of childcare and early years provision. They include both barriers that have been *experienced* by parents and parents’ *perceptions* about provision in the local area which might influence their childcare decisions. These are investigated in terms of –

- Costs and affordability of childcare and early years provision
- Times that childcare and early years provision is available
- Availability of childcare and early years provision in their local area
- Quality of available childcare and early years provision
- Access to information on childcare and early years provision
- Distances travelled to childcare and early years providers

Some of the questions on barriers are general questions, asking about a broad range of issues which cut across the six areas listed above. For these questions, rather than repeat them within each section, we have provided full tables in Section 6.9, referring to them as relevant and picking out the key points within the text in each section.

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<sup>63</sup> Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare, 2004

## 6.2 Costs and affordability

Chapter 5 provided details of the cost of childcare for parents who had used it during the last week. In that chapter, we also reported on parents' perceptions of the cost of childminders and day nurseries. This gave us some indication that parents who do not use these providers overestimated how much this childcare costs. This is an important finding in terms of the extent to which parents' perceptions of the cost of childcare may have influenced their decisions to use it. Here, in Section 6.2, we look at this issue in a little more detail, reporting on parents' views on the affordability of childcare in their local area (and how this varied across different types of families) and the extent to which parents cited 'cost' as a reason for not working or not using (much) childcare.

### 6.2.1 Affordability in the local area

Parents were asked what they thought about the childcare costs in their local area -

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

Their answers (using a four-point scale) are shown in Table 6.1 below. Because of the high proportion (28 per cent) of parents who were unaware of the affordability of local childcare (and thus answered 'don't know'), they are included in the percentage breakdown in the table.

**Table 6.1 Views of affordability of childcare in local area**

	Column per cent
	%
Very good	6
Fairly good	29
Fairly poor	25
Very poor	12
Don't Know	28
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7796

It was rare for parents to rate the affordability of local childcare as 'very good'. Whilst twice as many parents rated the affordability as 'very poor' than 'very good' (12 per cent compared to 6 per cent), most parents chose to use more moderate ratings. The most commonly expressed views were that affordability was either fairly good (29 per cent) or fairly poor (25 per cent).

#### ***Does use of childcare affect views of local childcare costs?***

Parents who *had* used childcare in the last week were understandably more likely to have an opinion about the affordability of local childcare than parents who had not used it (Table 6.2). A quarter of parents who had used childcare in the last week nevertheless said they did not know whether or not local childcare was good in terms of affordability (24 per cent, compared to 37 per cent of parents who had not

used it). Parents were more likely to say that local childcare was ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good in terms of affordability if they had used it (40 per cent compared to 27 per cent of those parents who had not used childcare), whilst rating the affordability as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ poor did not vary according to use (36 to 37 per cent<sup>64</sup>).

**Table 6.2 Views of affordability of childcare in local area by whether or not the family used childcare in the last week**

	Column per cent		
	Used childcare in the last week	Did not use childcare in the last week	Total
	%	%	%
Very good	8	4	6
Fairly good	32	23	29
Fairly poor	25	23	25
Very poor	11	13	12
Don't know	24	37	28
<hr/>			
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2450</i>	<i>5346</i>	<i>7796</i>

So, were parents who have used childcare more positive about its affordability because of a greater knowledge of the cost of childcare? Or was it because they tended to come from groups more able to pay for childcare, with higher incomes and levels of employment? As we can see below (Table 6.3) parents with higher incomes were generally more positive about the affordability of local childcare.

#### ***Views on costs of local childcare by income***

Parents with higher incomes rated the affordability of local childcare more favourably. 45 per cent<sup>65</sup> of parents with a family income of over £32,000 rated it as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good compared to 25 per cent of parents with a family income of under £10,000. Conversely, they were less likely to rate it as very poor, although there is less variation on this across the different income groups (Table 6.3).

<sup>64</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 23 per cent and 13 per cent, the proportion is 37 per cent rather than 36 per cent due to rounding.

<sup>65</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 10 per cent and 36 per cent, the proportion is 45 per cent rather than 46 per cent due to rounding.

**Table 6.3 Views of affordability of childcare in local area by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000- 19,999</b>	<b>£20,000- 31,999</b>	<b>£32,000 or more</b>	<b>Total</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	4	5	6	10	6
Fairly good	21	27	32	36	29
Fairly poor	23	26	26	25	25
Very poor	17	13	11	10	12
Don't Know	35	29	26	21	27
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2201</i>	<i>2518</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>7248</i>

***Views on cost of local childcare by the amounts paid for own childcare***

When we look at how affordability was rated amongst families who paid different amounts for their childcare a more complex picture emerges. It should be borne in mind that mainly *formal* childcare was paid for, thus these views are of those families who had probably used and paid for at least one type of formal childcare. Among parents paying for childcare in the last week, parents paying more for their own children's childcare were more likely to rate the affordability of childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' poor (for example 51 per cent of those paying £150 or more said so, compared to 32 per cent of those paying less than £5). A similar pattern emerges when we look at parents who rate the affordability of local childcare as 'very good': those paying less were more likely to rate it as such (for example, 14 per cent of parents paying less than £5 said so, compared to 5 per cent of those paying £150 or more) (Table 6.4).

However, paying more for childcare was also associated with a greater likelihood of rating local childcare as 'fairly good'. 30 per cent of parents paying less than £5 said this, compared to 43 per cent of parents paying between £100 and £150 (Table 6.4). Those paying less were more likely to say that they could not rate local affordability. More complex regression analysis (below), controlling for income levels, helps to clarify whether there is a relationship between the cost of childcare and the rating of affordability.

**Table 6.4 Views of affordability of childcare in the local area by how much the family paid for providers in the last week**

	<b>Column per cent</b>								
	<b>Less than £5</b>	<b>£5 to less than £10</b>	<b>£10 to less than £20</b>	<b>£20 to less than £30</b>	<b>£30 to less than £40</b>	<b>£40 to less than £50</b>	<b>£50 to less than £100</b>	<b>£100 to less than £150</b>	<b>£150 or more</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very good	14	10	11	12	6	5	6	3	5
Fairly good	30	38	38	34	47	45	45	43	34
Fairly poor	24	27	28	29	27	28	30	32	28
Very poor	8	8	10	10	10	13	13	13	23
Don't Know	25	17	14	15	10	10	5	9	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>526</i>	<i>307</i>	<i>484</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>416</i>	<i>196</i>	<i>170</i>

*Base: All families who used and paid for childcare in the last week*

***Does the family's structure and working capacity affect views on local childcare costs?***

Table 6.5 shows the views of the affordability of local childcare of parents in lone parent and couple families, splitting them into working and non-working families. Overall, those who were working tended to be more positive about local childcare costs than those who were not. However, parents in working couple families (be they single or dual-earners) were more positive about affordability than working lone parents. Around four in ten (40 per cent) parents from working couple families rated the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good compared to 31 per cent of working lone parents.

**Table 6.5 Views of affordability of childcare in the local area, by family working status**

	Column per cent					
	Couple - Both working %	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %	Total %
Very good	7	7	5	4	5	6
Fairly good	33	30	21	27	18	29
Fairly poor	26	23	23	26	23	25
Very poor	10	10	14	16	17	12
Don't Know	25	29	38	28	36	28
<i>Base: All families</i>						
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2064</i>	<i>401</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1050</i>	<i>7796</i>

Given the results in Table 6.5 above, it is not surprising to find that overall, lone parents were more critical than couple parents about the cost of local childcare (Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6 Views of affordability of childcare in local area, by family type**

	Column per cent		
	Couple %	Lone parent %	Total %
Very good	7	4	6
Fairly good	31	23	29
Fairly poor	25	24	25
Very poor	10	16	12
Don't Know	27	32	28
<i>Unweighted base</i>			
	<i>5905</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>7796</i>
<i>Base: All families</i>			

***Opinions about the cost of childcare and the age of children in the family***

Table 6.7 provides a picture of parents' views about the affordability of local childcare, looking across parents with pre-school and school age children. There were no discernible differences between the ratings of the affordability of local childcare, according to whether or not the family included a pre-school or school age child.

**Table 6.7 Views of affordability of childcare in the local area by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Pre-school age children present</b>	<b>School age children present</b>
	%	%
Very good	7	6
Fairly good	33	28
Fairly poor	27	24
Very poor	13	12
Don't know	20	30
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3544</i>	<i>6591</i>
<i>Base: All families. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		

Multivariate analysis (binomial logistic regression) was carried out using family type, family working status, region, index of multiple deprivation, cost of childcare in the reference week, income, the age of children in the family and whether formal or informal care was used (see model in Appendix C). Controlling for the independent association of each of these factors to parents' views on affordability, we found that a higher family income and paying a lower amount for their own childcare are both significantly associated with having more positive views about the affordability. After controlling for other factors, the family type, family working status and the age of the children in the family were not significantly associated with parents' views on the affordability of local childcare.

### **6.2.2 Cost as a barrier to using childcare**

In Chapters 7 and 8, we report on parents' reasons for choosing their providers. The extent to which cost and affordability came into their decision-making is highlighted. Here, we look at the extent to which cost and affordability have been barriers to not using childcare or early years provision. We also report on the extent to which parents' decisions to use more than one childcare or early years provider was related to costs. Finally, we report on the numbers of non-working parents who cited the cost of childcare as a reason for not working.

#### ***Cost as a reason for not using childcare in the previous year***

Parents who had not used any childcare – whether formal or informal - in the past year were asked about their reasons for not doing so (see Table 6.51 in Section 6.9). Concentrating here on any reasons cited relating to cost, around one in ten (11 per cent) parents who had not used childcare in the previous year said that this was because they could not afford it. Cost of childcare was a greater barrier for parents with lower family incomes, cited by 17 per cent of parents with incomes of under £10,000 compared to 5 per cent of parents with incomes of £32,000 or more (Table 6.52). Non-working lone parents were more likely to cite affordability as a reason for not using childcare, than working lone parents (16 per cent compared to 5 per cent, respectively) (Table 6.53). Parents with pre-school children and parents with more than one child were also more likely to cite childcare costs as a reason for not using it (see Tables 6.54 and 6.56).

### ***Cost as a reason for not using any (or more) early years education***

In terms of *formal* childcare for pre-school children, cost appeared to be a barrier to using early years education for a significant minority of parents. Parents whose selected child was aged between two and five years old who were not currently using any early years education services were asked why this was. Table 6.57 (in Section 6.9) shows the answers given to this question. 19 per cent of these parents said that this was because they could not afford it.

Parents whose two to five year olds attended early years education on some but not on all weekdays were asked why they did not use it every day (Table 6.58). One in five (21 per cent) of these parents said that this was because they could not afford any more sessions. Working lone parents were more likely to cite cost as the reason than other parents (32 per cent compared to 19 to 21 per cent of other groups of parents) (Table 6.59). The Nursery Education Grant (NEG) which offers free early years education (up to 3 hours each day) for three and four year olds would appear to have enabled many families to use early years education, but a significant number are apparently prevented from extending these hours through their own resources, because of cost issues.

### ***Cost as a reason for using more than one childcare or early years provider***

The survey included questions to try to untangle why parents used more than one childcare or early years provider – whether formal or informal – for their child. Within the debates about the need for integrated provision, we wanted to find out the extent to which combining providers was due to choice or necessity (e.g. cost constraints). 13 per cent of parents who used more than one provider cited financial issues as a reason for this (Table 6.65). This appears to be particularly an issue for parents with younger children (Table 6.66), working parents (Table 6.68) and middle income parents (probably related to working status) (Table 6.67).

Chapter 2 showed that the higher the income of the family, the more likely they were to be using formal childcare (Table 2.12). Although 43 per cent of families earning £20,000 to £31,999 per year used formal childcare, it seems they found this more of a struggle than those in the other brackets, as it was this group of families who were most likely to cite cost as a reason for using more than one childcare provider (19 per cent compared to 10 to 12 per cent in other income groups) (Table 6.67). This may also be reflected in the fact that these middle income families were using just as much informal childcare as the highest income families (Table 2.12), suggesting they reached their financial limit with formal care, and then shifted to using informal care.

### ***Cost of childcare as a reason for not working***

Parents who were not working (excluding those on maternity leave or long term disabled or sick) were asked if issues about childcare were part of their decision not to work. Again, the cost of childcare was an issue for a significant minority of non-working parents (see Table 6.60). As it is formal childcare that parents generally pay for (see Table 5.1), it is assumed that these cost factors are related to perceived or actual barriers to using formal childcare, rather than informal. For the majority of these non-working parents, however, it was their *choice* to stay at home with their child rather than work. Despite this, 15 per cent said that they could not find childcare that would make working worthwhile and 10 per cent said that they could



not afford quality childcare. This was a bigger issue for non-working parents in lower income families (Table 6.61), non-working lone parents (Table 6.62) and parents with pre-school children (Table 6.64).

### **6.3 Times that childcare and early years provision is available**

The growth of a '24-7' society means that an increasing number of parents are having to work at times which have traditionally been regarded as 'family times' such as evenings and weekends. Work outside what used to be the 'standard' nine to five, Monday to Friday week is now the norm for many parents, rather than the exception. Thus the 'standard hours' for the purpose of this survey were considered as Monday to Friday, eight until six. The majority of recent childcare policies focus on formal childcare, which is largely available at these 'standard' hours. Little has been proposed to facilitate the provision of informal childcare or formal childcare at atypical times. Indeed, there are debates around the extent to which the use of informal childcare can or should be facilitated (e.g. eligibility for tax credits, approval schemes). There are also issues around what types of childcare parents would ideally choose during atypical times (e.g. more home-based care; informal care).

In contrast, parents with young children have potentially benefited from a number of policies designed to make work more attractive by promoting ways of working that enable employees to combine paid work with other aspects of their lives more effectively. Parents with young children have the right to ask for flexible arrangements, such as part-time work and term-time contracts. The government's Work-Life Balance Campaign, launched in 2000, has sought to raise awareness among employers of the advantages of allowing staff to work flexibly in ways that successfully reconcile the needs of both parties. This is a trend that accords with several European Union directives promoting choice for workers over working arrangements. Such moves may potentially decrease demand for childcare in times such as school holidays.

Furthermore, the government's 'extended schools' initiatives (launched in 1998) have been designed to tackle the longer working hours culture, and to help parents find solutions to childcare problems while they travel to and from work before 9am and after 5pm. 'After school' and 'breakfast clubs' have been established in many areas, to offer childcare services for parents whose working patterns requires childcare assistance outside of the normal '9 to 5' hours (see Chapter 8 for more on these initiatives).

In this section, we take a brief look at the extent to which the times at which childcare is – and is not - available may have caused barriers to parents using childcare or going out to work. We look firstly at childcare during school holidays, secondly at childcare issues for atypical workers, and finally the extent to which times, generally, were cited as a barrier to using childcare or going out to work.

### ***6.3.1 Coping with the school holidays***

#### ***Are providers open in the holidays?***

When asked about availability of childcare in the school holidays, four in ten (40 per cent) parents reported that their main formal provider<sup>66</sup> was open, at least some of the time, in the school holidays (Table 6.8). Holiday care availability was greatest amongst the more traditional ‘childcare’ settings and least amongst traditional ‘early years’ settings. Childminders and day nurseries were most likely to be available or open in the holidays (88 per cent and 93 per cent), whilst Nursery Classes and Reception Classes were least likely (9 per cent in both cases). We may expect this to change with the rollout of Children’s Centres in the coming years. A third (36 per cent on average) of parents whose main formal provider was an out-of-school club said that it was open in the holidays.

#### ***Are providers open enough in the holidays?***

Those parents whose main formal provider opened in the holidays were asked whether their provider’s opening hours in the holidays were sufficient for them. The vast majority (93 per cent) said that it was (although we have no information about what these opening hours were). Findings were very similar (around nine in ten) across all the formal providers asked about (Table 6.9).

There was some evidence that parents with younger children (pre-school and key stage 1) were happier with the holiday opening times than parents with older children.

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<sup>66</sup> For the selected child.

**Table 6.8 Whether main provider is open in the holidays, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>							
	<b>Nursery school</b>	<b>Nursery class</b>	<b>Reception class</b>	<b>Day nursery</b>	<b>Play-Group</b>	<b>Child-minder</b>	<b>Breakfast club or After school club, not on school site</b>	<b>Breakfast club or After school club, on school site</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes or sometimes	36	9	9	93	17	88	42	30
No	62	86	88	6	80	11	53	68
Not sure or don't know	2	5	4	1	2	1	6	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>492</i>	<i>458</i>	<i>390</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>152</i>	<i>430</i>

*Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider is a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, childminder, after school, breakfast or holiday club, or other nursery education provider, and which is open in the holidays*

*Note: Holiday clubs, special day nurseries and other nursery education providers are not shown because the bases were too small*

**Table 6.9 Whether main provider is open enough in the holidays, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>							
	<b>Nursery School</b>	<b>Nursery class</b>	<b>Reception class</b>	<b>Day Nursery</b>	<b>Playgroup or pre-school</b>	<b>Childminder</b>	<b>Breakfast club or After school club, not on school site</b>	<b>Breakfast club or After school club, on school site</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enough time in holidays	83	[91]	[91]	98	89	93	88	92
Not enough time in holidays	17	[9]	[9]	2	12	7	12	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>421</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child who uses a formal institutional provider or childminder and which is open in the holidays</i>								

*Note: Holiday clubs, special day nurseries and other nursery education providers are not shown because the bases were too small*

*[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents*

### ***Would parents like their providers to be open in the holidays if they are not already?***

Parents whose formal providers were *not* open in the holidays were asked if they would like them to be. Demand was quite high, with 43 per cent of these parents saying that they would like their provider to offer care in the holidays.

There was no variation in levels of demand across different provider types or children of different ages. However, demand was highest among parents with lower incomes. 53 per cent of parents with a family income of under £10,000 said they would like their provider to be open in the holidays, compared to 35 per cent of parents in the highest income quartile. Lone parents were particularly keen, compared to parents in couple families (57 per cent of lone parents who are not offered holiday care said they would like it compared to 40 per cent of couple parents). This may reflect the reduced ability to 'shift-parent' amongst lone parents, thus relying more on the formal childcare market.

### ***6.3.2 Needing childcare at atypical hours***

During the interview we asked parents who had ever worked before 8am –

*'Does starting work before 8am cause you or your partner any particular problems in terms of your childcare arrangements?'*

*Parents could answer 'Yes' or 'No'.*

We used a similar wording for those who had told us they had ever worked after 6pm, and those who worked on Saturdays or Sundays. The fact that they found these arrangements difficult does not assume that they could not actually make the arrangements possible.

Working atypical hours was a cause of difficulties for parents in trying to organise and secure their childcare arrangements (though no distinction was made between informal and formal childcare in this question). A quarter of parents working early mornings (before 8am) or evenings (after 6pm) said that their working hours caused problems with childcare arrangements (24 per cent and 26 per cent respectively).

Problems were greatest for dual-earner families who worked atypical hours. Dual-earner families with an early morning worker were more likely than their single-earner couple family counterparts to find that working before 8am caused them problems with childcare arrangements (23 per cent compared with 10 per cent). A fifth of parents who worked on Saturdays (20 per cent) or on Sundays (19 per cent) experienced problems arranging their childcare around work.

Problems were worse for lone parents who worked at the weekend. 29 per cent of lone parents who worked on Saturdays said that childcare problems arose because of these hours, compared to 14 per cent of single-earner couple families where a parent worked on Saturdays. 31 per cent of lone parents working on Sundays said that Sunday working caused difficulties and 10 per cent of single-earner couple families with a Sunday worker said it was a cause of problems. We saw in Chapter 4 (Section

4.3) that lone parents were more likely to have used childcare at weekends, probably reflecting their greater use of the child's other parent as an informal provider.

In Table 2.8 we saw that dual-earner families used less nursery class, reception class and playgroup provision than single-earner families. However, we do not have a single question that asked parents what kinds of childcare they wanted to use but found they could not access. Indeed, when we asked all dual-earners why they did not use early years education every day for their pre-school children, a third (28 per cent) responded that it was because they only needed it on specific days, or at times that suited their working patterns, compared to 6 per cent of single-earner couples who said this.

The income of families and whether their atypical working hours caused them problems arranging childcare had little correlation, except where the respondents or their partners were regularly working after 6pm. In these cases, those with the highest incomes (over £32,000 per year) had the most problems with a third (34 per cent) saying this caused difficulties. Only a fifth of those in the two lowest income brackets said their working after 6pm caused childcare difficulties for their families (19 per cent for those with an income of £10,000 to £19,000, and 21 per cent for those earning under £10,000).

### ***6.3.3 Lack of available childcare hours as a barrier to working***

#### ***Lack of available childcare hours as a reason for using more than one childcare or early years providers***

Parents who used more than one childcare or early years provider – whether formal or informal - for the selected child were asked why they had chosen to do this. Choosing from a list of options (see Table 6.65), 8 per cent of parents said that they used more than one provider because one of their provider(s) did not offer *enough* sessions and 12 per cent said that it was due to the providers not being available on the *days* that they needed them. Again, working lone parents and parents with younger children (particularly those three and under and five to seven year olds) were more likely than others to cite these difficulties (see Tables 6.66 and 6.68).

#### ***Lack of available childcare hours as a reason for not working***

Parents who were not working (excluding those on maternity leave or long term disabled or sick) were asked if issues about childcare – whether formal or informal - were part of their decision not to work. 6 per cent of non-working parents said this was – at least partly – due to a lack of available childcare hours (see Table 6.60 in Section 6.9).

## 6.4 Availability of childcare and early years provision

The cost of childcare and the times when it is available are two important barriers to its use. However, there is a general issue about the extent to which parents perceive that there are sufficient numbers of formal childcare places available to parents in their local area. In this section, we report on parents' views, both generally on the availability in their local area and, more specifically, about the extent to which a lack of childcare places has been a reason for their not using childcare or not going out to work.

### 6.4.1 Views on availability of places in local area

Parents were asked -

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

Table 6.10 shows the breakdown of parents' views. Whilst four in ten (40 per cent) thought there were enough places, the same proportion (41 per cent) – a very large minority - thought there were not enough. As with perceptions of affordability, quite a substantial proportion (19 per cent) of parents said that they did not know about the availability of places.

**Table 6.10 Views on the availability of places in the local area**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Too many	1
About the right number	40
Not enough	41
Don't know	19
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7797</i>

These negative views do not appear to be associated to any large extent with a lack of contact with the local childcare market (Table 6.11). Views on availability of places were to be only slightly more negative amongst those who had not used childcare in the last week. 42 per cent of those who had used childcare in the last week said that they thought there were too few places, compared to 37 per cent of those parents who had not. Understandably, those parents who had not used childcare in the last week, were more likely to say that they did not know the answer than those who had (24 per cent compared to 16 per cent).

**Table 6.11 Views on the availability of places in the local area by whether or not the family used childcare in the last week**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Used childcare in the last week</b>	<b>Did not use childcare in the last week</b>
	%	%
Too many	1	1
About the right number	41	38
Not enough	42	37
Don't know	16	24
<hr/>		
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5347</i>	<i>2450</i>

#### **6.4.2 Lack of availability as barrier to using childcare**

A lack of availability of childcare or early years places was an issue for a minority of parents when asked why they did not use childcare or early years education or why they were not currently working.

#### ***Lack of availability as a reason for not using childcare in the previous year***

Parents who had not used any childcare in the past year were asked about their reasons for not doing so (see Table 6.51 in Section 6.9). 5 per cent of parents cited a lack of availability as a reason for not using childcare, although this could refer to both informal and formal providers. We did not find any significant differences between different types of parents or families on this issue.

#### ***Lack of availability as a barrier to using any early years education***

In terms of *formal* providers, parents whose selected child was aged between two and five years old who were not currently using any early years education services were asked why this was. Table 6.57 shows the answers given to this question. 8 per cent of these parents said that this was because of a lack of availability (they could not get a place or there were no local providers).

#### **6.4.3 Lack of availability as a reason for not working**

Parents who were not working (excluding those on maternity leave or long term disabled or sick), were asked if issues about childcare were part of their decision not to work. Tables 6.60 to 6.64 (in Section 6.9) show how parents responded to this question. 4 per cent of non-working parents said that they did not work, at least in part, because they cannot find childcare – whether informal or formal – near to where they lived. Across different families, lower income families and lone parents were most likely to cite lack of available childcare.

Non-working parents were asked (using a five-point scale) to agree or disagree with this statement –



*'If I could arrange good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable, I would prefer to go out to work.'*

Table 6.12 shows the extent to which the availability of such childcare would be an important factor in influencing parents to take up paid work. Although not distinguishing between formal and informal childcare, the question did reveal that around half (48 per cent) of non-working parents agreed with the statement.

**Table 6.12 Whether the respondent would work if they could arrange reliable and quality childcare**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Agree strongly	19
Agree	29
Neither agree or disagree	14
Disagree	24
Disagree strongly	14
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All respondents who were not in paid work during the last week</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3186</i>

This was much more of an issue for lower income families (see Table 6.13). Twice as many non-working parents in families with an income of under £10,000 agreed with the statement compared to their counterparts with incomes of £32,000 or over (60 per cent compared to 32 per cent). Table 6.61 shows that more parents in the lower income group (18 per cent) could not find childcare which would make working worthwhile, than those in the highest income group (11 per cent). These findings are not surprising, given that lower income groups are probably in these brackets because they are not working. However, they do reveal that lack of available childcare cheap enough to make their working worthwhile, is a considerable issue for low-income families. Again, a lack of available childcare close to home was more of a barrier to lower income families' working, than those in the highest income group (6 per cent compared to 1 per cent respectively).

Probably linked to income, more lone parents agreed with the statement than couple parents (see Table 6.14). When we look more closely at specific childcare-related reasons why lone parents and couples do not work, we can see that availability of cheap childcare to make working worthwhile, was a bigger problem for lone parents (18 per cent) than for couples (13 per cent) (Table 6.62). Childcare available at the hours that the respondent needed was an issue for many parents, although more so for lone parents (8 per cent) than for couples (6 per cent).

These findings suggest that parents juggling work and caring for their children may face more difficulty in finding available childcare, ultimately forcing some of them to choose the latter over the former. This is demonstrated further in Table 6.62 which shows that lone parents who are not working are more likely than couples where neither partner works, to find that there is no childcare available that makes their working worthwhile (18 per cent compared to 8 per cent).

**Table 6.13 Whether the respondent would work if they could arrange reliable and quality childcare, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- £19,999 %	£20,000- £31,999 %	£32,000+ %
Agree strongly	27	18	17	10
Agree	33	31	26	22
Neither agree or disagree	17	14	11	11
Disagree	16	25	30	35
Disagree strongly	8	14	16	22
<i>Base: All respondents who were not in paid work during the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>883</i>	<i>1042</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>470</i>

**Table 6.14 Whether the respondent would work if they could arrange reliable and quality childcare, by family working status**

	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent not working
	%	%	%
Agree strongly	13	19	26
Agree	27	27	34
Neither agree or disagree	12	18	15
Disagree	30	21	17
Disagree strongly	18	16	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1761</i>	<i>390</i>	<i>1035</i>
<i>Bases: All respondents who were not in paid work during the last week</i>			

#### **6.4.4 Views on availability in different regions**

Parents in Yorkshire and the Humber, London, and the South West were amongst those most likely to think that there were ‘not enough’ formal childcare places available in their local area (43 to 45 per cent said this). This compares to between 36 and 39 per cent of parents in other regions who regarded the availability of places as poor (Table 6.15).

**Table 6.15 Views on the availability of places in the local area by Government region**

	<b>About the right number</b>	<b>Not enough</b>	<b>Too many</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Row per cent Unweighted base</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		
East Midlands	48	36	1	15	645
Eastern	45	39	1	15	859
North East	43	38	1	18	442
North West	42	39	2	17	1018
West Midlands	42	39	1	18	871
South East	40	39	2	19	1288
South West	37	45	1	17	792
Yorkshire & the Humber	36	43	2	20	828
London	30	45	2	24	1054

*Base: All families*

## **6.5 Quality of available childcare and early years provision**

Government policies have not focused solely on the *quantity* of childcare and early years places. It has clearly stated the importance (following several studies highlighting this) of *good quality* provision. In this section, we report on the extent to which parents feel that such provision is available in their local area and whether a lack of quality childcare has influenced their decisions not to use childcare or not to go out to work. In other words, to what extent is a lack of quality a barrier to using childcare?

### **6.5.1 Views on quality of childcare in local area**

Parents were asked to rate the overall quality of the childcare in their local area, using a four-point scale –

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

As seen in Table 6.16, very few parents rated the quality as poor. However, although one in five (19 per cent) felt it was ‘very’ good, the largest group (42 per cent) rated it as ‘fairly’ good. Again, a significant proportion of parents (28 per cent) felt they could not make a judgement on the quality of local childcare.

**Table 6.16 Parents views on the quality of childcare in the local area**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Very good	19
Fairly good	42
Fairly poor	9
Very poor	2
Don't know	28
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7796

Parents who had used childcare in the last week were more positive about the quality of childcare than other parents (Table 6.17). Two thirds (66 per cent) rated it as 'very' or 'fairly' good compared to half (51 per cent) of parents who had not used any childcare. This may reflect the fact that these parents felt that they had found good quality childcare (with others not using childcare feeling they had not). Alternatively, it could reflect the fact that parents who had used childcare had personal experience of its quality.

**Table 6.17 Views on quality of childcare in the local area, by whether or not the family used childcare in the last week**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Used childcare in the last week</b>	<b>Did not use childcare in the last week</b>
	%	%
Very good	22	13
Fairly good	44	38
Fairly poor	9	10
Very poor	2	3
Don't know	23	36
<hr/>		
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5346	2450

When we look more closely at the opinions of parents who had not used childcare, we can see some differences may relate to their working status. Lone parents who were not working were most likely to rate the quality of local childcare services as 'fairly' or 'very' poor (20 per cent<sup>67</sup>). This compares to the smaller proportions of parents in all other families, who rated the quality in this way (no more than 12 per cent<sup>68</sup> in each working type) (Table 6.18)

<sup>67</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 5 per cent and 16 per cent, the proportion is 20 per cent rather than 21 per cent due to rounding.

<sup>68</sup> Although the highest percentages being added together are 5 per cent and 8 per cent, the proportion is 12 per cent rather than 13 per cent due to rounding.

**Table 6.18 Views of parents who did not use childcare in the last week, by family working status**

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent – working	Lone parent – not working
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	16	17	4	8	9
Fairly good	43	33	39	41	29
Fairly poor	9	10	9	8	16
Very poor	2	2	3	5	5
Don't know	30	38	45	39	42
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>943</i>	<i>702</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>424</i>

Similarly, dual-earners who had not used childcare in the last week were more likely to rate the quality of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good, than couple families where neither partner worked (59 per cent compared to 43 per cent respectively). This shows that dual-earners are more positive about the quality of local childcare even when they did not need or want to use it, and may help to explain why dual-earners were more likely than non-working couple families to use any childcare (see Table 2.8 in Chapter 2).

Parents with higher incomes, parents in working families and parents in couple families were all more likely than their counterparts to rate positively the quality of local childcare (Tables 6.19 to 6.21). All these groups are more likely to have used childcare themselves.

**Table 6.19 Views on quality of childcare in the local area by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£31,999	£32,000+
	%	%	%	%
Very good	12	17	22	23
Fairly good	38	42	43	45
Fairly poor	12	10	9	8
Very poor	4	3	2	1
Don't know	34	28	25	23
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2201</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

**Table 6.20 Views on quality of childcare in the local area, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple – both working</b> %	<b>Couple – one working</b> %	<b>Couple – neither working</b> %	<b>Lone parent working</b> %	<b>Lone parent not working</b> %
Very good	21	21	12	16	13
Fairly good	45	42	41	39	35
Fairly poor	8	8	10	11	12
Very poor	2	2	5	4	4
Don't know	24	28	33	29	35
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2064</i>	<i>401</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1050</i>

**Table 6.21 Views on quality of childcare in the local area, by family type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Lone parent</b> %	<b>Couple</b> %
Very good	15	21
Fairly good	37	43
Fairly poor	12	8
Very poor	4	2
Don't know	32	26
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>5905</i>

Parents of pre-school children were more positive about local childcare than parents of school age children (67 per cent compared to 60 per cent rated it as very or fairly good) (Table 6.22).

**Table 6.22 Views on the quality of childcare in the local area, by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Pre-school children present</b>	<b>School age children present</b>
	%	%
Very good	22	19
Fairly good	45	41
Fairly poor	10	9
Very poor	2	3
Don't know	21	28
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3544</i>	<i>6591</i>
<i>Base: All families. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		

### **6.5.2 Lack of good quality childcare available as a reason for not working**

When non-working parents were asked about their choices and barriers to work, 5 per cent cited a lack of good quality childcare – whether formal or informal - as a reason for their not working (Table 6.60 in Section 6.9). 10 per cent also said that they could not *afford* good quality childcare. The picture here of the quality childcare acting as barrier to parents' work, may be a complex one.

In Section 6.4.2 we saw that nearly half (48 per cent) of all parents who were not currently working said that they would work if they could arrange 'convenient, reliable and affordable' and 'good quality' childcare. However, we can see here that when we asked for the childcare-related reasons for not working, these divided into many reasons and quality was one of many factors that influenced this decision. The desire for parents to stay with their children, concern that their children are too young for childcare, or would suffer if they went to work were much larger factors in comparison. Lone parents were more likely to say that quality childcare was either not available or not affordable (Table 6.62) than single-earner couple families.

## **6.6 Access to information on childcare and early years provision**

Potentially, a major barrier to accessing good quality, affordable childcare at the times when parents need it could be a lack of information about how and where to find it. Therefore, we report here on the sources from which parents get their information, what they think about it, and what more information they would like.

### 6.6.1 What sources of information do parents use?

Parents were asked about the sources of information they used to find out about all kinds of childcare in their local area. They were able to cite any of the sources shown on a showcard, and also say if they had received them from another source, and these 'other' sources have also been included in Table 6.23. Any parent who did not use any sources of information to find out about childcare (perhaps because they did not need to know any information) are included in the category 'no sources of information used'. Table 6.23 shows the percentage of parents that mentioned each source (from a list that was shown to them).

**Table 6.23** Where respondents found information about childcare in their area

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	37
School	19
Local advertising	9
Health visitor/ clinic	8
Local Authority	8
Children's Information Services	6
Childcare provider	5
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	5
Local library	5
Doctors surgery	4
Internet	4
Church or religious organisation	3
Your employer	3
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	2
Local community centre	2
Yellow Pages	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB)	1
Other	1
Sure Start	+
No sources of information used	40
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7793</i>

Most frequently (cited by 37 per cent), parents got their information about childcare from talking to friends and relatives (word of mouth). Among more formal routes, schools played an important part in providing information, with 19 per cent of parents citing this as a source. Several other sources were cited each by under 10 per cent of parents. In particular, we should note the 6 per cent of parents using Children's Information Services (CIS) and 2 per cent of parents citing Childcare Link. A substantial number (40 per cent) of parents had not found out any information



about childcare from any of the sources listed (or from any alternative sources which they could have mentioned).

In Tables 6.24 to 6.28, we look at the different sources of information cited by different types of family. In these tables the sources of information are listed in order of decreasing frequency.

Not surprisingly, parents who had used childcare in the last week were more likely to have found out information from these sources. Conversely, parents who had not used childcare were more likely to say that they had used none of the listed sources (54 per cent compared to 33 per cent) (Table 6.24). With the exception of JobCentre Plus and doctor's surgeries, all sources were cited by more parents who had used childcare than those who had not.

**Table 6.24** Where respondents found information about childcare in their area, by whether or not the family used childcare in the last week

	Column per cent	
	Used childcare in the last week %	Did not use childcare in the last week %
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	43	26
School	21	15
Local advertising	11	7
Local Authority	10	5
Health visitor/ clinic	9	6
Children's Information Services	7	4
Childcare provider	7	3
Local library	5	4
Internet	5	2
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	4	6
Your employer	4	3
Doctor's surgery	4	5
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	3	1
Yellow Pages	3	2
Local community centre	2	2
Church or religious organisation	4	2
National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB)	1	1
Other	1	1
None of these	33	54
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5344	2449

*Note: base includes Sure Start but these have been removed from the table because less than 100 people gave these as a source of information.*

Looking across families with different levels of income (Table 6.25), parents with higher incomes were more likely to have accessed information from the sources listed. Beyond this overall finding, it is worth noting that lower income families and lone parents were more likely than others to have used the Jobcentre for information (Tables 6.26 and 6.27).

**Table 6.25** Where respondents found information about childcare in their local area, by family yearly income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- 19,999 %	£20,000- 31,999 %	£32,000 or more %
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	34	35	38	42
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	16	5	1	1
School	15	17	21	22
Health visitor/ clinic	10	9	7	7
Local advertising	8	8	9	13
Local Authority	6	7	9	11
Doctor's surgery	5	5	4	4
Children's Information Services	4	5	7	7
Local library	4	5	5	5
Childcare provider	3	5	7	8
Yellow Pages	2	2	3	4
Local community centre	2	3	2	2
Internet	2	2	5	7
Church or religious organisation	2	3	3	4
Other	2	1	1	2
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	1	2	2	3
Your employer	+	3	5	5
None of these	38	43	39	36
<hr/>				
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1201</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1877</i>	<i>1965</i>

*+<0.5 per cent*

*Note: base includes National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB) and Sure Start but these have been removed from the table because less than 100 people gave these as a source of information.*

**Table 6.26 Where respondents found information about childcare in their local area, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple - both working %</b>	<b>Couple - one working %</b>	<b>Couple - neither working %</b>	<b>Lone parent working %</b>	<b>Lone parent not working %</b>
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	38	42	28	30	33
School	21	18	17	15	14
Local advertising	10	10	7	7	7
Local Authority	9	8	7	9	7
Children's Information Services	7	6	2	7	4
Childcare provider	6	6	3	5	3
Health visitor/ clinic	6	11	12	5	10
Your employer	5	1	0	5	+
Local library	5	6	5	2	4
Internet	5	4	2	3	1
Doctor's surgery	4	5	7	3	5
Yellow Pages	3	3	3	1	2
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	3	2	+	3	1
Church or religious organisation	3	3	3	3	2
Local community centre	2	3	2	2	2
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	1	2	6	7	20
Other	1	1	3	1	2
None of these	40	39	44	46	37
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2061</i>	<i>401</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1050</i>

*+<0.5 per cent*

*Note: base includes National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB) and Sure Start but these have been removed from the table because less than 100 people gave these as a source of information.*

**Table 6.27** Where respondents found information about childcare in their area, by family type

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	39	32
School	20	15
Local advertising	10	7
Local Authority	9	8
Health visitor/ clinic	8	7
Childcare provider	6	4
Children's Information Services	6	5
Local library	5	3
Internet	5	2
Your employer	4	2
Doctor's surgery	5	4
Yellow Pages	3	2
Church or religious organisation	3	3
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	2	14
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	2	2
Local community centre	2	2
Other	1	1
None of these	40	42
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	5902	1891

*Note: base includes National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB) and Sure Start but these have been removed from the table because less than 100 people gave these as a source of information.*

Information sources used by parents with pre-school and school age children appear to differ more than can be explained by their greater likelihood of using childcare (Table 6.28). Parents with pre-school children were more likely to have got information on childcare from health visitors or GPs (17 per cent compared to 5 per cent). Conversely (and not surprisingly), they were less likely to have got information on childcare from schools (13 per cent compared to 22 per cent).

**Table 6.28** Where respondents found information about childcare in their local area by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family

	Column per cent	
	Pre-school age children present %	School age children present %
Word of mouth (e.g. friends or relatives)	53	32
Health visitor/ clinic	17	5
School	13	22
Local advertising	11	8
Childcare provider	10	5
Local Authority	10	8
Children's Information Services	9	5
Internet	7	3
Doctors surgery	6	4
Local library	5	4
Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus Office or Benefits Office	5	5
Yellow Pages	4	2
ChildcareLink (the national helpline and web site)	4	2
Your employer	3	3
Local community centre	2	2
Church or religious organisation	3	3
Other	1	1
None of these	23	45
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3540</i>	<i>6589</i>

*Base: All families. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.*

*Note: base includes National organisation(s) (e.g. 4Children, CAB) and Sure Start but these have been removed from the table because less than 100 people gave these as a source of information.*

### **6.6.2 Were the sources of information helpful?**

For each of the six main sources of information that parents cited, we have looked at parents' perceptions of how helpful these sources were to them. Parents using CIS, word of mouth, schools, health visitors and local authorities were most pleased with the information they had received. In each case, around eight in ten parents said that the source had been 'very' or 'quite' helpful<sup>69</sup>. Around two thirds (64 per cent) of the parents who used GPs rated them as 'very' or 'quite' helpful, and the same proportion of those who used Jobcentre Plus (65 per cent) rated them in this way. A slightly smaller proportion of parents who had used these two sources were, therefore, pleased with the information they got, than parents who used other key sources.

<sup>69</sup> Children's Information Service (CIS) – 80 per cent; Schools – 79 per cent; Word of mouth – 79 per cent; Health visitors – 78 per cent; the local authority – 78 per cent.

Parents were asked whether they had used the source to find any of their current providers. Those who had used ‘word of mouth’ had been most likely to have done so (57 per cent) followed by schools (40 per cent), the local authority (34 per cent) and CIS (28 per cent). In line with fewer parents finding the health visitor, GP or JobCentre Plus as helpful, they were also less likely to have found a provider via this source. Two in ten (18 per cent) had found one via the health visitor. One in ten (9 per cent) had done so via Jobcentre Plus, and the same proportion of those who used a GP (9 per cent) had found childcare through them.

### 6.6.3 ChildcareLink

2 per cent of parents said that they had used ChildcareLink to find out about childcare in their local area. Parents who did not mention ChildcareLink as an information source were asked directly whether they were aware of it. Awareness of ChildcareLink was low, with 87 per cent of parents unaware of it (after prompting). Parents in higher income families (Table 6.29) and working families (Table 6.30) were more likely to be aware of ChildcareLink than other parents. (Levels of awareness did not differ between parents with pre-school or school age children.)

**Table 6.29 Awareness of Childcare link, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000+</b>
	%	%	%	%
Yes	9	12	14	15
No	91	88	86	85
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

**Table 6.30 Awareness of Childcare link, by family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple – both working</b>	<b>Couple – one working</b>	<b>Couple – neither working</b>	<b>Lone parent working</b>	<b>Lone parent not working</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	15	12	7	16	9
No	85	88	93	84	92
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1052</i>

4 per cent of parents said that they had used ChildcareLink in the past year. Reflecting levels of awareness, parents in higher family incomes and in working families were more likely to have used ChildcareLink (Table 6.31).

**Table 6.31 Use of Childcare link, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000+</b>
	%	%	%	%
Yes	2	4	4	6
No	98	96	96	94
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

Three-quarters (76 per cent) of users of ChildcareLink had done so via the Internet. 38 per cent had contacted it by phone (Table 6.32).

**Table 6.32 Methods of using ChildcareLink**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Phone	24
Internet	62
Phone and internet	14
<i>Base: All respondents who used childcare link (prompted and unprompted)</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>318</i>

#### **6.6.4 Children's Information Service (CIS)**

As with ChildcareLink, parents who had not mentioned the CIS as an information source were asked directly whether they were aware of it. 6 per cent had mentioned it as an information source. A further 16 per cent were aware when prompted. Thus a quarter (22 per cent) of parents were aware overall, making awareness of CIS higher than for ChildcareLink. As with ChildcareLink, awareness was higher amongst parents in higher income families and in working families (Tables 6.33 and 6.34).

**Table 6.33 Awareness of CIS, by family yearly income.**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000+</b>
	%	%	%	%
Yes	17	19	25	27
No	83	81	75	73
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

**Table 6.34 Awareness of CIS, by family working status**

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent working	Lone parent not working
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	25	21	11	24	17
No	75	79	89	76	83
<i>Base: All families</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2066</i>	<i>403</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1052</i>

Reflecting higher levels of awareness than for ChildcareLink, more parents had used the CIS in the past year. One in ten (10 per cent) parents said they had used the CIS, with usage greater for parents with higher family incomes (Table 6.35).

**Table 6.35 Use of CIS, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£31,999	£32,000+
	%	%	%	%
Yes	7	8	13	13
No	93	92	87	87
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1202</i>	<i>2202</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>1965</i>

### 6.6.5 Is this enough information?

So far in this section, we have reported on where parents have found information on childcare, how many had done so, and how helpful they found it. Here, we turn to the issue of whether parents felt that there was *sufficient* information available to them about the childcare in their local area. From Table 6.36 it is clear that a significant proportion (38 per cent) of parents would have liked more information.

**Table 6.36 Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area**

	Column per cent
	%
About right	38
Too much	1
Too little	38
Don't know or not sure	23
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7797</i>



The parents wanting *more* information were more likely to come from the family types who were *less* likely to be using current sources (Tables 6.37 to 6.41). This points to a potential need to increase awareness of where parents should go for information on childcare (at least in parallel with the need for an increase in the information available). Parents who were not using childcare were more likely to want additional information than those who did use childcare (33 per cent compared to 41 per cent). Parents with lower incomes were more likely to want additional information, as were lone parents and parents in non-working families. Parents with pre-school children were more content with the amount of information available, than those with school age children.

**Table 6.37** Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area, by whether or not the family used childcare in the last week

	Column per cent	
	Did not use childcare in the last week %	Used childcare in the last week %
About right	33	41
Too much	1	1
Too little	36	39
Don't know or not sure	30	19
<i>Base: All families</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	2450	5347

**Table 6.38** Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area, by family yearly income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000-£19,999 %	£20,000-£31,999 %	£32,000+ %
About right	34	36	40	43
Too much	1	1	1	1
Too little	43	40	39	34
Don't know or not sure	21	23	21	22
<i>Base: All families</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1202	2202	1880	1965

**Table 6.39** Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area, by family working status

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working %	Couple – one working %	Couple – neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %
About right	40	39	31	35	35
Too much	1	1	1	1	1
Too little	37	37	40	42	41
Don't know or not sure	22	23	29	22	23
<i>Base: All families Unweighted base</i>	<i>3440</i>	<i>2065</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>841</i>	<i>1051</i>

**Table 6.40** Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area, by family type

	Column per cent	
	Lone parents %	Couple Parents %
About right	35	39
Too much	1	1
Too little	41	37
Don't know or not sure	22	23
<i>Base: All families Unweighted base</i>	<i>1892</i>	<i>5905</i>

**Table 6.41 Whether parents receive enough information about childcare in their local area, by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family**

	Column per cent	
	Pre-school age children present %	School age Children present %
About right	43	37
Too much	1	1
Too little	42	37
Don't know or not sure	14	25
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>3544</i>	<i>6592</i>
<i>Base: All families. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		

### **6.6.6 What more information would parents like?**

Parents who said that they thought there was too little information available about childcare were asked what more information they would like. They were given a list of options (plus the ability to give another answer) and asked to pick as many as applied to them. The most commonly cited areas about which more information was needed were:

- General information about childcare in local area (33 per cent)
- Childcare during the school holidays (35 per cent)
- Costs of available childcare (36 per cent)
- Quality of available childcare (25 per cent)
- Pre-school provision (18 per cent)

We should note the close links between these most commonly cited issues and parents' views and perceptions of these discussed in earlier sections. This is particularly interesting when we look at the information needs of different types of parents. Working lone parents were more likely than any other groups of parents to want more information about childcare during the holidays. Of these parents, 42 per cent requested this information, compared with 36 per cent of couples with both parents working. Lone parents were also somewhat more likely than couple parents to cite cost of childcare as an issue about which they would like more information. 40 per cent of lone parents cited this compared to 34 per cent of parents in couple families.

Parents with pre-school children were more concerned about information on childcare costs than parents with school age children. 44 per cent said they would like some information on the cost of childcare, compared with only 33 per cent of parents with school age children. They also wanted more information on the quality of local childcare. 32 per cent said that they would like to know more about the quality of local childcare, compared with only 22 per cent of those with school age children (Table 6.42). Parents with school age children were more concerned than parents with pre-school children about information about childcare during school holidays and childcare for older children.

**Table 6.42** What more information parents would like, by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family

	Column per cent	
	Pre-school children present	School age children present
	%	%
Schools	19	9
Pre-school childcare options	42	11
Childcare before or after the school day	25	24
Childcare during the school holidays	31	36
Childminders, nannies, au-pairs	14	6
Childcare for older children	9	19
General information on childcare in the local area	42	30
Quality of childcare available	32	22
Hours of childcare available	24	20
Costs of available childcare	44	33
Other information	2	2
Childcare for children with special needs/ disabilities	1	1
Don't need more information	3	11
Don't need childcare	1	3
Don't Know	4	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1863</i>	<i>3628</i>
<i>Base: All families who thought too little information was available. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		

## 6.7 Distances travelled to current provider

In this final section, we report on the distances which parents travelled to get to their main formal providers, and the extent to which their journey lengths caused them difficulties. Not having suitable childcare that is local to home can be a barrier to using childcare – or using more childcare – especially for families without private transport. Distances which parents choose to travel can also be indications of the availability of suitable childcare in their local area.

### 6.7.1 How far away is the main provider for parents and does it cause problems?

Parents were asked how long it would take to walk from their home to their main formal provider (Table 6.43). Three-quarters of journeys (76 per cent), by foot, to the main provider would take half an hour or less. 15 per cent of journeys would take between half an hour to an hour. For one in twenty parents (5 per cent), their journeys would take longer than 90 minutes by foot.

**Table 6.43 Estimated minutes taken to walk to main provider**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
No mins	+
1 to 30 mins	76
31 to 60 mins	15
61 to 90 mins	5
91 to 120 mins	3
121 to 180 mins	1
More than 180 mins	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2412</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>	

*+<0.5 per cent*

Looking across different types of families (Tables 6.44 and 6.45), parents with children aged three and under had longer journeys to their providers than other parents. Those with children aged three to seven had the shortest journeys. Those with higher incomes were travelling further to their providers than those on lower incomes. This highlights the need for parents to travel further for childcare (e.g. day nurseries) than for early years providers, which tend to have a more local catchment. It also worth noting that for parents whose childcare provider was between 61 and 90 minutes away (by foot), the large majority (78 per cent) found this an easy distance to travel.

**Table 6.44 Estimated minutes taken to walk to main provider, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000-£19,999</b>	<b>£20,000-£31,999</b>	<b>£32,000+</b>
	%	%	%	%
No mins	+	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	+
1 to 30 mins	83	82	74	67
31 to 60 mins	11	12	17	18
61 to 90 mins	3	3	5	6
91 to 120 mins	2	1	2	5
121 to 180 mins	1	1	1	1
More than 180 mins	1	+	1	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>594</i>	<i>717</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>				

*+<0.5 per cent*

**Table 6.45** Estimated minutes taken to walk to main provider, by the age of the 'selected' child

	Column per cent				
	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-7 %	8-11 %	12-14 %
No mins	+	0	0	+	0
1 to 30 mins	66	80	80	74	64
31 to 60 mins	21	12	12	16	14
61 to 90 mins	5	4	4	6	8
91 to 120 mins	5	2	2	1	7
121 to 180 mins	1	1	1	1	2
More than 180 mins	2	1	1	1	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>1243</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>291</i>	<i>99</i>

*Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider*

*+<0.5 per cent*

On the whole parents found it easy to get to their main formal provider (Table 6.46). Overall, 87 per cent of these parents said this was the case. Those with longer journeys were more likely to find the journey difficult (Table 6.47). However, despite their longer journeys on average, parents with the highest family income were less likely to find their journey to the provider difficult than those with the lowest incomes (Table 6.49).

**Table 6.46** How difficult parents find it to get to main provider

	Column per cent %
Easy	87
Difficult	9
Neither	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2436</i>

*Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider*

**Table 6.47** How difficult parents find it to get to main provider, by estimated minutes taken to walk to the main provider

	Column per cent		
	1 to 30 mins %	31 to 60 mins %	61 to 90 mins %
Easy	92	74	78
Difficult	5	19	15
Neither	3	8	7
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1835</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>			

**Table 6.48** How difficult parents find it to get to main provider, by the age of the 'selected' child

	Column per cent				
	0-2 %	3-4 %	5-7 %	8-11 %	12-14 %
Easy	89	87	86	82	88
Difficult	6	8	9	13	9
Neither	5	5	4	5	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>509</i>	<i>1253</i>	<i>278</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>101</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>					

**Table 6.49** How difficult parents find it to get to main provider, by family yearly income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000-£19,999 %	£20,000-£31,999 %	£32,000+ %
Easy	85	89	87	86
Difficult	12	8	8	8
Neither	3	3	5	6
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>349</i>	<i>608</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>727</i>
<i>Base: All families with a 'selected' child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>				

Parents with children with special educational needs were much more likely than other parents to say that they found it difficult getting to their main formal provider (19 per cent compared to 8 per cent) (Table 6.50). This may be an indication of a lack of suitable childcare places in the local area for these parents.

**Table 6.50** How difficult parents find it to get to main provider, by whether or not the ‘selected’ child has special educational needs

	Column per cent	
	Yes	No
	%	%
Easy	78	88
Difficult	19	8
Neither	4	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>2258</i>
<i>Base: All families with a ‘selected’ child whose main provider was a nursery school, nursery class, reception class, special day nursery, day nursery, playgroup or pre-school, after school or breakfast club, holiday club or other nursery education provider</i>		

## 6.8 Summing up

In this chapter, we have highlighted the diverse range of *potential* barriers to using childcare and early years provision that parents can face – reporting on views of formal childcare provision, as well as perceptions of childcare provision as a whole. We have shown the extent to which each of these barriers has been a problem for parents (and if so, to which parents in particular). Conversely, it shows the extent to which these potential barriers have proved not to be issues for many parents. In summary -

- Currently, formal childcare and early years provision is affordable (though by no means usually easily affordable) to some, but less affordable – and sometimes a barrier to its use – for others. Lower income families and lone parents found it harder, on average, to pay for their childcare and early years provision, than those in the highest income group (45 per cent compared to 25 per cent, respectively, said that affordability in the local area was ‘very ‘ or ‘fairly’ good).
- For significant minorities, lack of affordable childcare is cited as a reason for not using it (11 per cent of those not using said this was a reason) and for not working (10 per cent of those not working cited cost as a factor). Similarly, there are families with young children who do not send them to any or much early years provision because of its cost. For example, 19 per cent of those not using early years education, said they did not do so due to high costs, and 21 per cent of those who did not use it every day in the reference week, said this was due to cost factors.
- We also found evidence of a perceived shortfall among many parents in the *number* of formal childcare places in their local area (41 per cent of parents said there were not enough places available).
- In terms of the extent to which a lack of available places was a barrier to parents using childcare or early years provision or to working, evidence is mixed. It was not often cited unprompted as a reason for not using childcare or not working (although those who did were more likely to come from lower income and lone parent families). However, when asked whether they would work if they could arrange ‘good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable’, half (48 per cent) of non-working parents said that they would.



- There appear to be significant levels of unmet demand for formal childcare services during less traditional times, such as school holidays, weekends and evenings. For example, 43 per cent of parents whose main provider did not open in the school holidays, said they would like it to.
- Parents – particularly parents who used some form of formal or informal childcare and early years provision – are largely positive about the *quality* of their own provision and of that available in their local area. 61 per cent of all parents rated the quality of local provision as ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ good.
- A lack of information – or knowledge about where to seek it – is a barrier to parents’ use of childcare and early years provision. When asked directly, four in ten (38 per cent) parents felt that they would like more information about the childcare in their local area.
- Specific areas about which parents ask for more information include school holiday provision, early years provision and the cost and quality of childcare. What is particularly interesting is the reliance on ‘word of mouth’ for obtaining information about all kinds of childcare and early years provision (37 per cent cited this source), coupled with a lack of awareness of two of the key government-led information sources, namely CIS and ChildcareLink (only 6 and 2 per cent of parents, respectively, cited these sources).

## 6.9 Key tables referred to throughout the chapter

The tables below are referred to in several sections within this chapter. Rather than repeat them several times, readers have been referred to this section.

### *Why did parents not use childcare in the last year?*

Parents were asked -

*‘Why have you chosen not to use any childcare in the past year?’*

- and asked to give as many appropriate answers as they liked. Table 6.51 summarises the percentage breakdown of their responses.

**Table 6.51**      **Reasons for not using childcare in the last year**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
I’d rather look after my child(ren) myself	58
I rarely need to be away from my children	21
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	21
I cannot afford childcare	11
Other reasons	9
My/partner’s work hours or conditions fit around children	7
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	5
My child(ren) need special care	3
The quality of childcare is not good enough	1
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	1
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last year</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>864</i>

Table 6.52 shows the reasons why childcare was not used by parents who had not used any childcare in the last year, dividing parents into family income quartiles. Table 6.53 to 6.58 group respondents according to other groups that are used throughout the chapter to explore some of the issues associated with cost, quality and accessibility of childcare.

**Table 6.52**      **Reasons for not using childcare in the last year, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000 %</b>	<b>£10,000- 19,999 %</b>	<b>£20,000- 31,999 %</b>	<b>£32,000 or more %</b>
I'd rather look after my child(ren) myself	67	61	46	48
I rarely need to be away from my children	25	19	24	19
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	8	5	5	5
I cannot afford childcare	17	10	12	5
The quality of childcare is not good enough	+	1	3	2
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	10	24	25	35
My child(ren) need special care	4	3	1	0
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	1	+	0	0
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	2	1	0
Other reasons	8	7	12	12
My/partner's work hours or conditions fit around children	3	4	14	14
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last year</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>274</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>120</i>

+ <0.5 per cent

**Table 6.53 Reasons for not using childcare in the last year by, family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Couple - both working %</b>	<b>Couple - one working %</b>	<b>Couple - neither working %</b>	<b>Lone parent working %</b>	<b>Lone parent not working %</b>
I'd rather look after my child(ren) myself	47	66	68	41	70
I rarely need to be away from my children	20	22	37	9	24
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	5	6	5	4	7
I cannot afford childcare	10	12	10	5	16
The quality of childcare is not good enough	2	1	1	0	1
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	31	9	10	49	13
My child(ren) need special care	0	3	9	1	8
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	0	1	2	1	0
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	1	0	3	1
Other reasons	10	13	11	4	5
My/partner's work hours or conditions fit around children	13	5	4	4	0
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last year</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>256</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>168</i>

**Table 6.54 Reasons for not using childcare in the last year by number of children under 15 in family**

	Column per cent		
	1 %	2 %	3 %
I'd rather look after my child(ren) myself	50	67	67
I rarely need to be away from my children	21	23	16
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	5	6	5
I cannot afford childcare	7	15	19
The quality of childcare is not good enough	1	1	1
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	32	9	7
My child(ren) need special care	2	5	5
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	+	1	1
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	2	0
Other reasons	10	9	8
My/partner's work hours or conditions fit around children	7	7	6
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last year</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	325	358	149

+ <0.5 per cent

**Table 6.55 Reasons for not using childcare in the last year by family type**

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
I'd rather look after my child(ren) myself	57	60
I rarely need to be away from my children	22	19
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	5	6
I cannot afford childcare	11	12
The quality of childcare is not good enough	2	1
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	20	25
My child(ren) need special care	2	5
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	1	+
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	2
Other reasons	11	5
My/partner's work hours or conditions fit around children	9	2
<i>Base: All families who did not use childcare in the last year</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	625	239

+ <0.5 per cent

**Table 6.56 Reasons for not using childcare in the last year by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family**

	Column per cent	
	Pre-school children present %	School age children present %
I'd rather look after my child(ren) myself	70	57
I rarely need to be away from my children	14	22
There are no childcare providers available that I could trust	6	5
I cannot afford childcare	20	10
The quality of childcare is not good enough	2	1
My child(ren) are old enough to look after themselves	2	24
My child(ren) need special care	5	3
I have had bad experience using childcare in the past	1	1
I would have transport difficulties getting to a provider	1	1
Other reasons	17	8
My/partner's work hours or conditions fit around children	3	7
<hr/>		
<i>Base: All who did not use childcare in the last year. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	183	791

+ <0.5 per cent

***Why the 'selected' child does not receive early years education***

Table 6.57 shows the reasons given by parents as to why they did not use early years education for the 'selected' child, where that child was aged two to five years old. Parents were asked -

*'Why doesn't [child's name] have any nursery education outside the home at the moment?'*

- and given several answer categories, of which they could choose more than one.

Further examination of the reasons given here, in terms of cost, availability and access is undertaken in earlier parts of this chapter.

**Table 6.57** Reasons 'selected' child does not use early years education

	Column per cent
	%
Child too young for local providers	41
Prefer to look after child at home	35
Too expensive/ can't afford it/ other cost factors	19
Other	15
Prefer to teach child myself	10
Child not yet developed enough to benefit	7
Local providers full/ could not get a place	6
Child dislikes/ is unhappy in nursery education	5
No local providers	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>451</i>
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child is two to five years old and does not attend Nursery school, Nursery class, Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs or other nursery education</i>	

**Reasons why 'selected' child does not use early years education every day****Table 6.58** Reasons 'selected' child does not use early years education every day

	Column per cent
	%
Prefer to have child at home some of the time	32
Child is too young to go every day	31
Cannot afford any more	21
I only need to use it on these days/I only work on certain days	18
Provider not flexible enough/ cannot accept child every day	15
Other reasons	8
Child was unwell	6
Other one-off occurrence	4
Could not get a state nursery place	2
Prefer to have child with other relatives some of the time	1
Transport difficulties to get to provider	1
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child is two to five years old and does not attend Nursery school, Nursery class, Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs or other nursery education provider everyday</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>794</i>

**Table 6.59** Reasons 'selected' child does not use early years education every day by family working status

	Column per cent				
	Couple - both working %	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %
Cannot afford any more	20	21	[19]	32	20
Provider not flexible enough/ cannot accept child every day	12	18	[16]	12	15
Could not get a state nursery place	2	1	[0]	0	1
Prefer to have child at home some of the time	35	36	[20]	25	14
Child is too young to go every day	27	37	[58]	13	26
I only need to use it on these days/I only work on certain days	28	6	[6]	24	10
Prefer to have child with other relatives some of the time	2	0	[0]	0	0
Transport difficulties to get to provider	+	1	[3]	0	0
Child was unwell	3	7	[14]	3	15
Other one-off occurrence	3	5	[0]	0	7
Other reasons	9	4	[7]	18	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>379</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>70</i>

*Base: All families whose 'selected' child is two to five years old and does not attend Nursery school, Nursery class, Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special needs or other nursery education provider everyday*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

*[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents*

***Do parents find they cannot work because of childcare issues?***

Parents were shown a showcard of 10 reasons related to childcare, and asked -

*'Could you look at this card and tell me if you are also not working for any of these reasons?'*

Respondents could give more than one answer. Overall, 20 per cent of respondents said they did not work for at least one of the following reasons:

- I cannot afford quality childcare
- I cannot find reliable childcare
- I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need
- I cannot find good quality childcare
- I cannot find childcare near where I live

Table 6.60 shows the proportion of parents who gave each answer. Tables 6.61 to 6.64 look at the same question by different subgroups.

**Table 6.60 Childcare-related reasons why the respondent is not working**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
I want to stay with my child(ren)	50
My child(ren) is/are too young	27
My child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	21
None of these	19
I cannot find childcare which would make working worthwhile	15
I cannot afford quality childcare	10
Child(ren) has/have a long term illness/disability/special needs and need(s) a lot of attention	10
I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need	6
I cannot find good quality childcare	5
I cannot find reliable childcare	4
I cannot find childcare near where I live	4
Other	3
<hr/>	
<i>Base: Families where the respondent is not working</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2774</i>

*+ <0.5 per cent*



**Table 6.61** Childcare-related reasons for not working, by family yearly income

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- 19,999 %	£20,000- 31,999 %	£32,000 or more %
I cannot find free/cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	18	15	13	11
I cannot find good quality childcare	7	4	5	3
I cannot afford good quality childcare	13	11	10	3
I cannot find reliable childcare	6	5	2	3
I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need for work	8	7	4	6
I cannot find childcare near where I live	6	4	3	1
I want to stay with my child(ren)	40	45	62	65
My child(ren) is/are too young	25	28	28	31
My child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	17	21	21	32
My child(ren) has/have a long term illness/disability/special need	9	12	9	7
Other reason(s)	4	3	3	2
None of these	22	19	18	13
<i>Base: respondents who are not working, excluding those on maternity leave or long term sick or disabled</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>782</i>	<i>881</i>	<i>445</i>	<i>420</i>

**Table 6.62** Childcare-related reasons for not working, by family working status

	Column per cent		
	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent not working %
I cannot find free/cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	13	8	18
I cannot find good quality childcare	4	4	7
I cannot afford good quality childcare	9	8	13
I cannot find reliable childcare	3	2	7
I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need for work	6	3	8
I cannot find childcare near where I live	2	2	6
I want to stay with my child(ren)	61	32	39
My child(ren) is/are too young	29	25	23
My child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	25	14	19
My child(ren) has/have a long term illness/disability/special need	7	13	12
Other reason(s)	3	6	3
None of these	16	31	21
<i>Base: respondents who are not working, excluding those on maternity leave or long term sick or disabled</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1565</i>	<i>306</i>	<i>903</i>

**Table 6.63** Childcare-related reasons for not working, by family type

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
I cannot find free/cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	13	18
I cannot find good quality childcare	4	7
I cannot afford good quality childcare	9	13
I cannot find reliable childcare	3	7
I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need for work	5	8
I cannot find childcare near where I live	2	6
I want to stay with my child(ren)	56	39
My child(ren) is/are too young	28	23
My child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	23	19
My child(ren) has/have a long term illness/disability/special needs	8	12
Other reason(s)	3	3
None of these	18	21
<i>Base: respondents who are not working, excluding those on maternity leave or long term sick or disabled</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1871</i>	<i>903</i>

**Table 6.64** Childcare-related reasons for not working, by presence of pre-school age or school age children in the family

	Column per cent	
	Pre-school children present %	School age children present %
I cannot find free/cheap childcare which would make working worthwhile	18	13
I cannot find good quality childcare	6	5
I cannot afford good quality childcare	12	10
I cannot find reliable childcare	4	5
I cannot find childcare for the hours/days I need for work	6	7
I cannot find childcare near where I live	4	3
I want to stay with my child(ren)	58	48
My child(ren) is/are too young	42	24
My child(ren) would suffer if I went out to work	23	22
My child(ren) has/have a long term illness/disability/special need	6	11
Other reason(s)	3	3
None of these	11	20
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1643</i>	<i>2317</i>
<i>Base: respondents who are not working, excluding those on maternity leave or long term sick or disabled. Because some families have both pre-school and school age children present, some families may be represented twice.</i>		

***Why do parents use more than one provider?***

If parents used more than one provider for the selected child in the last week, they were asked about why they chose to do this. The question they answered was -

*'And did you use more than one place or person for [childcare or nursery education / childcare] for [child's name] in that week for any of **these** reasons?'*

Respondents could give as many answers as they wished. Table 6.65 shows the proportion of parents who gave each answer to this question. Tables 6.66 to 6.69 show some results of this question, by different subgroups.

**Table 6.65** Reasons for using more than one provider for the 'selected' child in last week

	Column per cent
	%
None of these reasons	44
I need more than one provider because I work/ study	28
Cost/ financial reasons	13
The provider(s) are not available on all the days I want	12
To meet/ keep in touch with other local parents/ children	10
The provider(s) do not offer enough sessions/ hours	8
Other	6
Contact with relative enjoyed (as well as formal childcare)	3
<i>Base: Families where the 'selected' child uses more than one provider in the last week</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2023</i>
<i>+ &lt;0.5 per cent</i>	

**Table 6.66** Reasons for using more than one provider for 'selected' child in last week by the age of 'selected' child

	Column per cent				
	0-2	3-4	5-7	8-11	12-14
	%	%	%	%	%
I need more than one provider because I work/ study	25	39	30	23	13
The provider(s) do not offer enough sessions/ hours	9	14	7	4	4
The provider(s) are not available on all the days I want	16	10	15	11	9
Cost/ financial reasons	20	15	10	10	5
To meet/ keep in touch with other local parents/ children	10	11	10	9	12
Other	6	4	7	6	8
None of these reasons	34	37	43	51	56
Contact with relative enjoyed (as well as formal childcare)	4	2	2	3	3
<i>Base: Families where the 'selected' child uses more than one provider in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>396</i>	<i>699</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>432</i>	<i>188</i>
<i>+ &lt;0.5 per cent</i>					

**Table 6.67 Reasons for using more than one provider for 'selected' child in last week by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- 19,999 %	£20,000- 31,999 %	£32,000 or more %
I need more than one provider because I work/ study	24	29	33	24
The provider(s) do not offer enough sessions/ hours	4	6	9	11
The provider(s) are not available on all the days I want	12	12	12	12
Cost/ financial reasons	12	10	19	11
To meet/ keep in touch with other local parents/ children	7	11	9	11
Other	5	4	7	7
None of these reasons	49	47	36	45
Contact with relative enjoyed (as well as formal childcare)	4	2	3	2
<i>Base: Families where the 'selected' child uses more than one provider in the last week</i>				
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>229</i>	<i>501</i>	<i>512</i>	<i>682</i>

**Table 6.68 Reasons for using more than one provider for 'selected' child in last week by family working status**

	Column per cent				
	Couple - both working %	Couple - one working %	Couple - neither working %	Lone parent working %	Lone parent not working %
I need more than one provider because I work/ study	32	7	[8]	47	14
The provider(s) do not offer enough sessions/ hours	9	6	[2]	9	4
The provider(s) are not available on all the days I want	12	9	[2]	17	13
Cost/ financial reasons	15	5	[2]	17	9
To meet/ keep in touch with other local parents/ children	11	13	[13]	7	8
Other	6	7	[3]	4	5
None of these reasons	38	61	[74]	30	57
Contact with relative enjoyed (as well as formal childcare)	2	1	[2]	4	4
<i>Base: Families where the 'selected' child uses more than one provider in the last week</i>					
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1071</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>200</i>

[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents

**Table 6.69 Reasons for using more than one provider for 'selected' child in last week by family type**

	Column per cent	
	Couple %	Lone parent %
I need more than one provider because I work/ study	25	35
The provider(s) do not offer enough sessions/ hours	8	7
The provider(s) are not available on all the days I want	11	16
Cost/ financial reasons	12	14
To meet/ keep in touch with other local parents/ children	11	7
Other	6	5
None of these reasons	45	40
Contact with relative enjoyed (as well as formal childcare)	2	4
<i>Base: Families where the 'selected' child uses more than one provider in the last week</i>		
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1487</i>	<i>536</i>

## **7 WHAT DO PARENTS OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN FEEL ABOUT THEIR CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION?**

### **7.1 Introduction**

When parents are choosing childcare and early years providers to look after and educate their child, they are looking for the provider to fulfil a variety of roles. Their opinion of how well their provider meets these needs can vary depending on the provider they are using and on their pre-existing expectations. In this chapter we explore what parents think about the early years education and childcare that their children receive. Given differences in the educational and care needs of pre-school and school age children, and in kinds of childcare provision used by the two groups, we report on the two groups separately. In this chapter, we focus on pre-school children. In Chapter 8, we report on similar issues for school age children.

Here, we have defined pre-school as ‘children aged five and under who do not yet attend full-time school’.<sup>70</sup> Thus, we are taking a look at parents’ views of the broad variety of services available to parents of all children five and under – from very young babies to children who have started school at reception class, albeit part-time.

This chapter will investigate the degree of choice that parents have when they select their providers, both informal and formal, asking whether certain parents have more choice available to them than others. We then go on to report parents’ opinions about how the provider could improve its services. One way that the government has sought to ensure quality of childcare and early years education is to commission Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) to carry out inspections, and Section 7.5 explores parents’ awareness of Ofsted, as well as how they make use of Ofsted’s inspection results. Following on from this, we examine parents’ views of the skills that they feel their child is learning at their provider, and then ask about the feedback they receive relating to their child’s progress. Section 7.8 examines the views of parents whose children have recently started attending reception class full-time or part-time, exploring what measures are in place to ease this transition from childcare to full-time education. Finally, in Section 7.9, we report on the extent to which providers were offering the types of integrated services which are being developed as part of initiatives such as Children’s Centres, Sure Start and Neighbourhood Nurseries.

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<sup>70</sup> Thus, children who attend full-time school but have not yet reached the age at which they are legally required to attend school are counted as school age. This definition for the pre-school:school age split was decided on the basis of changes in childcare requirements once a child starts full-time school.

## 7.2 'Main' providers

### 7.2.1 'Main formal' providers

Throughout this chapter (and Chapter 8), we focus primarily on the *main formal* childcare or early years providers used by the parents for the 'selected' child (as randomly chosen during the interview) <sup>71</sup>. In addition, a small number of questions were asked about informal providers as discussed below.

Table 7.1 shows the breakdown of main formal providers, split into institutional and individual providers. Far more parents were using an institutional provider as their main provider for their pre-school child than individual formal providers (88 per cent compared to the 12 per cent using individual providers). The most commonly used of these institutional providers were day nurseries, identified by three in ten (31 per cent) families with a pre-school child as the main formal provider. As we would expect with this age group, very small numbers of families were using breakfast or after school clubs as their main provider. Amongst the individual formal providers, childminders made up the vast majority, used by 8 per cent of families who have a main formal provider<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> The computer program identified the formal provider used for the greatest number of hours in the last week. Respondents were asked whether this was their main formal provider and given the opportunity of identifying an alternative if appropriate.

<sup>72</sup> Whilst we sometimes combine 'institutional providers' and analyse them as a group, the same rationale did not apply to combine the individual formal providers. Given that the small numbers of nannies/au pairs (30) and babysitters (23) would not allow for separate analysis, and that many questions were not relevant to their services, they have been excluded from most of the analysis in this chapter. Rather, we report mainly on institutional providers (as a group and individually) and on childminders, except where stated. Similarly, whilst breakfast and after school clubs and special needs schools are included in the base of 'all institutional providers', their small numbers mean that they are not shown as separate categories in this analysis.



**Table 7.1 Main formal providers used for the ‘selected’ child**

	Column per cent
	%
<i>Institutional provider</i>	88
<b>Day nursery</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Playgroup or pre-school</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Nursery class attached to primary or infants school</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Nursery school</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Reception class attached to a primary or infants school</b>	<b>5</b>
Special day school or nursery or unit	1
Breakfast club/After school club on-site	+
Breakfast club or After school club off-site	+
Other nursery education provider	+
<i>Individual providers</i>	12
<b>Childminder</b>	<b>8</b>
Nanny/au pair	2
Babysitter	2
<i>Other</i>	+
Leisure or sports activity	+
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1568
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age ‘selected’ child, who mainly used a formal provider for this child in the last week.</i>	

+ <0.5 per cent

Throughout this chapter, we report the opinions of parents using the following rationale –

- The focus is on the provider types shown in bold in Table 7.1 (the number of parents using the other providers was too small for separate analysis).
- Where the questions are relevant to childminders rather than to nannies or au pairs, childminders have been included in the analysis alongside formal institutional providers.
- ‘Formal institutional providers’ includes all those under that heading in Table 7.1 (in bold and not) (Individual formal providers are not reported as a group, as detailed in footnote 61).

### **7.2.2 ‘Main’ providers – formal or informal**

In some sections of the chapter, we focus on the child’s main provider - be it formal or informal. In these cases we include analysis of main informal providers.<sup>73</sup> Table 7.2 shows the breakdown of these informal providers. By far the most common informal provider was the child’s grandparents, identified by three-quarters (73 per cent) of parents who mainly used an informal provider.

<sup>73</sup> Parents using formal and informal providers were asked which was their main provider overall. Parents who identified an informal provider as their ‘main provider’ were asked about reasons for choosing that provider (as well as reasons for choosing their main formal provider). Parents using only informal providers were asked to identify their main informal provider and asked about reasons for choosing that provider.

**Table 7.2 Main informal provider for the 'selected' child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
The child's grandparent(s)	73
Another relative	13
My ex-husband/wife/partner / the child's other parent	7
A friend or neighbour	7
The child's older brother/sister	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>417</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who only used an informal provider for this child in the last week, plus those parents who did have a formal provider but identified an informal provider as their main provider.</i>	

**7.2.3 'Main' providers for children of different ages**

Throughout this chapter, most analysis compares different provider types. It is therefore important to note that types of provider used were closely linked to the age of the child, as Table 7.3 shows. Children aged one and under were most likely to be at day nursery (55 per cent) or with a childminder (17 per cent), for example. Overall, they were less likely to have an institutional provider than older pre-school children. Parents with children aged two and three tended to use day nurseries and playgroups in almost equal measure (29 and 30 per cent), and were also starting to use nursery classes and nursery schools more (20 and 10 per cent). In the later pre-school years, children were most likely to be attending early years education services such as nursery class (29 per cent) and reception class (28 per cent), and only a smaller percentage were attending day nurseries (11 per cent) or childminders (2 per cent).

**Table 7.3 Main formal provider types used by different age groups**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>0-1</b>	<b>2-3</b>	<b>4-5</b>
	%	%	%
<i>Institutional provider</i>	71	91	96
Nursery school	3	10	15
Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school	0	20	29
Reception class attached to primary or infants' school	0	1	28
Day nursery	55	29	11
Playgroup or pre-school	11	30	13
Other nursery education provider	1	1	0
Breakfast or after school club on school site	1	0	0
Breakfast or after school club not on school site	1	+	0
<i>Individual provider</i>	29	9	4
Childminder	17	6	2
Babysitter	8	1	1
Nanny or au pair	5	2	1
<i>Other</i>	0	+	0
Leisure and sports activity	0	+	0
<i>Unweighted base</i>	180	1090	298

*Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider for this child in the last week*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

### **7.3 How do parents select providers? What degree of choice do they have?**

Parents' decisions about which providers to use are often made having to take into account several competing factors. Some of these will be ideological, based on the kind of provision they would like for their child. Others will be practical, working within the constraints of the local childcare market, finding childcare to fit around parental work patterns, and so on. In the end, many parents will have decided on particular providers by balancing out various 'push' and 'pull' factors. We are able to look at these issues with regard to the main providers used by parents. By analysing the reasons why parents chose the provider, we draw out the extent to which parents did actually 'choose' their providers. Linked with this, by looking at the extent to which – and in what ways – parents felt that the provider could make *improvements* in their provision we give further indications of what parents felt about the providers they used (see Section 7.4). In the following tables about parents' choices, we have included parents who used any kind of formal provider – be it an institution or an individual.

### 7.3.1 Reasons for choosing formal providers

Parents were asked the single most important reason why they chose their main formal provider. They were asked:

*'People have different reasons for choosing childcare or nursery education. From this card, why did you choose [provider's name] to look after [child's name]?'*

The results can be seen in Table 7.4. Overall, parents cited more 'pull' than 'push' factors, more often mentioning reasons why they were attracted to the provider than reasons around a lack of choice.

**Table 7.4 Main reason for choosing main formal providers, by provider type**

	Column per cent						
	Nursery School	Nursery Class	Reception Class	Day Nursery	Playgroup or pre-school	Total – all formal institutional childcare	Child-minders
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I could trust this person/these people	16	9	6	18	18	15	55
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	27	24	18	11	15	17	0
I wanted my child to mix with other children	15	12	4	9	25	14	1
It had a good reputation	10	15	36	10	13	13	5
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	6	4	0	12	4	7	6
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	6	10	11	5	4	6	4
It was recommended to me	2	3	2	9	7	6	4
It is easy to get to	6	8	7	4	6	6	1
It was low cost	2	1	0	1	3	2	2
Fitted in with my/my partner's working hours	1	1	1	4	1	2	4
I wanted reliable arrangements	1	1	0	6	1	2	0
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	1	3	0	1	1	1	0
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	1	+	0	2	1	1	2
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	1	2	0	2	1	1	8
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	0	1	0	+	0	+	4
Could receive help from tax credits with this provider	0	0	0	1	0	+	1
My employer subsidises this childcare	0	0	0	1	0	+	0
No other choices available to me	2	2	7	2	1	2	0
Other reason(s)	4	5	8	5	2	4	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>162</i>	<i>287</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>455</i>	<i>383</i>	<i>1398</i>	<i>104</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week</i>							

*+ <0.5 per cent*

### **7.3.2 Reasons for choosing formal institutional providers**

On the whole, parents did not appear to have chosen their main provider through a lack of choice or because of practical factors that forced them to make their decision. Of all parents whose child used an institutional provider, only 2 per cent said that it was because they had 'no other choices available to them'. Most likely to say this, however, were parents who used a reception class for their child (7 per cent). They were significantly more likely to give this reason, compared to parents who used nursery classes, day nurseries and playgroups. This may simply reflect the 'catchment area' system of most state primary schools.

Other 'push' factors also seem to be low on the list of reasons why parents chose their providers: the low cost of the service was mentioned by 2 per cent of those using childminders and 2 per cent of those using formal institutional providers. Similarly, the fact that the arrangements at the provider fitted in with the parents' working patterns, was only a factor for 2 per cent of parents using formal institutional providers, and 4 per cent of those using childminders.

If we look across provider types, we can see that in most cases, parents chose their main providers due to a number of factors which 'pulled' them to the provider. The most frequently stated main reason for choosing a formal institutional provider was that it enabled parents to have their child looked after as well as educated. Over one quarter (27 per cent) of parents whose child mainly used a nursery school gave this reason, as did nearly the same proportion (24 per cent) of parents who mainly used a nursery class. Only one in ten (11 per cent) parents using a day nursery cited this as a main reason. This is not surprising given the early years education focus of nursery classes and nursery schools.

The reputation of the provider was a factor that drew many parents to use them. Parents using reception classes most commonly cited this. A third (36 per cent) of these parents cited reputation as the most important factor in their choice of provider, compared to 10 per cent of parents who used nursery schools or day nurseries.

Parents often use childcare providers if they feel they can trust them. The parents most likely to give this as a reason for their choice of provider, were those who used day nurseries and playgroups (18 per cent in both cases). This is a significant difference between parents using other providers. Of those who used reception classes, only 6 per cent said that trust was the most important factor. This may be linked to the age of the children involved (see Section 7.3.3), with parents most concerned about trust when leaving very young children.

Linked to the idea of trusting a provider is the issue of using providers who have properly trained staff. 12 per cent of parents using day nurseries said that this was the most important reason for their choosing this provider. This compares to the much smaller proportions of parents using other providers saying this – for example, no parents using reception classes cited training as a reason why they chose their provider. This may be due to the fact that parents assume certain standards from staff employed in Ofsted-inspected schools, so may be more concerned about staff training in private nursery environments.

Parents using playgroups as their main provider for a pre-school child were most likely to cite choosing their provider so that their child could mix with other children, (25 per cent compared to only 15 per cent of those using nursery schools, for example). Only 4 per cent of parents whose child mainly used reception classes said that they chose to use this provider so their child could mix with others.

So, all in all, parents with pre-school children tended to cite positive ('pull') factors for choosing their institutional providers. Those using day nurseries were more concerned about issues around the 'care' of their child, whilst those using early years education were more likely to cite issues relating to education.

### ***7.3.3 Why parents chose childminders***

Most notable about the choices made by parents using childminders is that none of them mentioned that they chose them so that their child could be educated while also being looked after (Table 7.4). This compares with 17 per cent of all parents using formal institutional providers. However, we can see that parents' choice of childminders was overwhelmingly related to the fact that they could trust the provider. Over half (55 per cent) of parents whose pre-school child mainly used a childminder gave this reason, a proportion that compares significantly with the 15 per cent of parents who used formal institutional providers giving this reason. None of the parents using childminders said they had been 'pushed' into using them because they had no other choices.

### ***7.3.4 The child's age as a factor for choosing a formal provider***

As Table 7.3 shows, the types of main providers used by parents were clearly linked to the age of the child. It is no surprise, then, that the reasons parents chose their providers were also strongly associated with the age of the child receiving care at the provider. Table 7.5 shows that nearly one in four parents (22 per cent) whose child was four or five said that they chose the provider because they wanted their child looked after and educated simultaneously, and around one in five (19 per cent) said it was because of the provider's good reputation. Most four and five year olds were attending reception class as their main provider, so it is not surprising that these reasons were also given by parents using reception classes (see Table 7.4). Along with the good reputation of reception classes, many parents may have chosen to use this provider type because of admission arrangements at primary schools, which in turn may have influenced the reputation that they receive. In some schools, parents are asked to use the reception classes at the start of the academic year, or risk losing the place at that school altogether.

For one in ten (9 per cent) parents of four and five year olds, the ease of getting to the provider was a key factor. Parents of this age group were most likely to say this - only 1 per cent of parents of children aged one and under gave this reason. This probably reflects parents' expectations that schools will have a tighter catchment compared to the private childcare sector.

33 per cent of parents whose child was one or under said that they chose their provider because they could trust them. This is a significant difference from those whose children were four or five (only 11 per cent). Trust was also cited as an important issue for 18 per cent of parents choosing day nurseries (see Table 7.4), suggesting this relationship is due to the age of the child and the provider type.

The need for reliable arrangements was also an important part of the choice made by parents of very young children. 5 per cent of these parents gave this reason, compared to only 1 per cent of parents of four and five year olds. The flexibility and all-day care offered by day nurseries (which are the most commonly used provider amongst this group) may help explain why parents of very young children were those who said their choice was based on reliable childcare arrangements. Perhaps parents of this age group had not yet decided on childcare for educational reasons, as the child was very young, but were using childcare to go to work or for studying, where reliability would be a key factor.

**Table 7.5 Reasons for choosing a main formal childcare provider by the age of 'selected' child**

	Column per cent			
	0-1 %	2-3 %	4-5 %	Total %
I could trust this person/these people	33	19	11	20
I wanted my child to be educated while being looked after	5	16	22	15
I wanted my child to mix with other children	13	14	9	13
It had a good reputation	6	12	19	12
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	7	8	5	7
It is easy to get to	1	5	9	5
It was recommended to me	7	6	4	5
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	4	6	7	5
I knew they would bring up my child the same way I would	3	2	1	2
It was low cost	2	2	1	2
It fitted in with my/my husband/wife/ partner s working hours	2	3	1	2
I wanted reliable arrangements	5	2	1	2
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	1	1	2	1
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	3	1	1	1
I wanted someone who would show my child affection	2	1	1	1
No other choices available to me	3	1	4	2
Other reason(s)	4	4	4	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>1084</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>1555</i>

*Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week*

*Note: The reasons 'employer subsidies' and 'help through tax credits' are not included in this table due to low percentages.*

### 7.3.5 Do parents' choices of formal providers vary according to their working status and income?

Parents' reasons for choosing formal providers varied somewhat according to their income (Table 7.6). However, these can be difficult to interpret given the association between income level and the types of providers used (e.g. higher income families are more likely to be working and use day nurseries). We therefore tried to concentrate on the issue of whether lower income families cited more 'push' factors than higher income families. That is, did lower income families tend to feel that they had less choice when deciding on their providers?

In summary, lower income families, if they did feel that they have any less choice, were not markedly different to higher income families. They were no more likely to say that there were 'no other choices available to me', than other families.

**Table 7.6 Reasons for choosing a formal provider, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent				
	Under £10,000 %	£10,000- 19,999 %	£20,000- 31,999 %	£32,000 or more %	Total %
I could trust this person/these people	15	18	21	24	20
I wanted my child to be educated while being looked after	17	17	14	12	14
I wanted my child to mix with other children	19	14	11	12	13
It had a good reputation	8	11	14	12	12
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	8	6	6	7	7
It is easy to get to	7	7	5	3	5
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	5	8	5	4	5
It was recommended to me	7	4	5	6	6
It fitted in with my / my husband / wife / partner's working hours	1	2	4	3	3
It was low cost	4	1	1	2	2
I knew they would bring up my child the same way I would	0	2	2	3	2
I wanted reliable arrangements	+	2	3	2	2
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	3	1	2	+	1
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	0	1	+	3	1
No other choices available to me	2	3	2	2	2
Other reason(s)	4	3	5	4	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>206</i>	<i>371</i>	<i>389</i>	<i>497</i>	<i>1463</i>

*Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

*Note: 'employer subsidies' and 'help through tax credits' are not included in this table due to low percentages.*



Table 7.7 shows that parents in working and non-working families gave different reasons for choosing their main provider. Again, this reflects the differential use of various providers (and the age of the children involved), depending on whether parents require childcare whilst they are working. For instance, maternal work (crudely measured as working lone parents and dual-earner families) was associated with citing trust as a reason for choosing a provider. 24 per cent of parents in dual-earner families and a similar number of working lone parents (23 per cent) gave this as the most important reason, compared to only 16 per cent of non-working lone parents and 11 per cent of parents in no-earner couple families.

For no-earner families or single-earner couple families, the most important reasons for choosing providers centred on social and educational aspects. Around one in four (23 per cent) non-working lone parents said 'mixing with others' was the most important reason, compared to one in twenty (5 per cent) of working lone parents.

**Table 7.7 Reasons for choosing a formal provider, by family working status**

	Column per cent				
	Couple – both working	Couple – one working	Couple – neither working	Lone parent – working	Lone parent – not working
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	1	2	0	0	3
It was low cost	1	2	0	3	2
I could trust this person/these people	24	17	11	23	16
I wanted someone who would show my child affection	2	+	0	3	0
I knew they would bring up my child the same way I would	3	1	1	2	0
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	2	1	0	1	0
It is easy to get to	5	4	13	5	5
I wanted my child to mix with other children	10	16	18	5	23
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	5	6	15	1	5
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	7	6	4	9	8
It fitted in with my/my husband/wife/partner's working hours	4	1	0	1	1
I wanted my child to be educated while being looked after	11	19	15	15	15
I wanted reliable arrangements	3	1	0	3	1
It had a good reputation	13	12	11	13	9
It was recommended to me	5	4	5	8	8
I could receive help through tax credits with this provider	+	0	0	2	0
No other choices available to me	2	2	4	0	1
Other reason(s)	3	5	2	5	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>749</i>	<i>447</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>157</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week.</i>					
<i>+ &lt;0.5 per cent</i>					
<i>Note: 'employer subsidies' is not included in this table due to low percentages.</i>					

**7.3.6 Do parents choose formal providers for different reasons, if they use them for economic or educational reasons?**

During the interview, parents were asked why they had used each of their providers in the last week, and given a list of reasons to choose from (see Chapter 3). These reasons have been grouped during analysis, to form three categories: economic reasons - associated with the parents' work or study, educational reasons - related to the child's educational development, and other reasons - which do not fall into either of these categories.

We have been able to look at the specific reasons for choosing the main formal provider, by the reasons that these providers were used by the parent - economic, educational or for other purposes. The results are shown in Table 7.8. The pattern is very similar to that found when we compared the reasons given by working and non-working families. Trust in the provider, reliable arrangements and fitting in with working hours were all more important to parents using providers for reasons which included economic factors. Conversely, those using them for reasons that included the child's education were more likely to cite the educational and social aspects (wanting child to be educated and to mix with other children).

**Table 7.8 Why parents chose providers by the reasons they were using the provider**  
**Column per cent**

	<b>Economic reasons</b>	<b>Educational reasons</b>	<b>Other reasons</b>
	%	%	%
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	11	20	15
I could trust this person/these people	25	16	21
I wanted my child to mix with other children	7	15	17
It had a good reputation	10	13	10
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	8	6	8
It is easy to get to	4	5	5
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	5	6	6
It was recommended to me	6	5	5
It was low cost	2	1	1
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	4	1	2
I wanted reliable arrangements	3	1	1
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	1	1	1
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	2	1	1
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	3	2	2
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	2	+	1
Could receive help from tax credits with this provider	+	+	+
My employer subsidises this childcare	1	0	0
No other choices available to me	2	2	1
Other reason(s)	4	4	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>711</i>	<i>1039</i>	<i>733</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week</i>			

+ <0.5 per cent

### 7.3.7 Reasons for choosing informal providers

A fifth (19 per cent) of parents using childcare or early years provision for their pre-school child said that their main provider was *informal* (see Table 7.2 for a breakdown of these providers). By far the main reason for choosing informal providers was that parents could trust them. Table 7.9 shows that two thirds (66 per cent) of parents who had main informal providers, chose them because they could trust them. This factor, which ‘pulls’ parents to using an informal provider, is much greater than any of the ‘push’ factors, which might force parents to use a friend or relative for childcare. For example, only 7 per cent of parents who used informal childcare said that they did so because they could not afford formal childcare.

**Table 7.9 Reasons for using main informal providers, by provider type**

	Column per cent	
	Grandparent(s) %	All informal providers %
I could trust this person/these people	69	66
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	7	7
I wanted someone who would show my child affection	6	6
I knew they would bring up my child the same way I would	4	4
It was low cost	2	2
I wanted reliable arrangements	2	2
No other choices available to me	2	2
So that my child and a relative could spend time together	1	2
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	1	1
It is easy to get to	1	1
I wanted my child to mix with other children	1	1
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	+	1
It fitted in with my/my husband/wife/partner s working hours	1	1
I wanted my child to be educated while being looked after	1	+
It had a good reputation	+	+
The person is family	+	1
No other choices available to me	2	2
Other reason(s)	2	3
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>414</i>

*Base: All families with a pre-school age ‘selected’ child, who only used an informal provider for this child in the last week, plus those parents who did have a formal provider but identified an informal provider as their main provider.*

+ <0.5 per cent

***Do parents' choices of informal providers vary according to income?***

Looking across families with different levels of income, there were some variations in the reasons given for choosing these informal providers. Parents with higher incomes were somewhat more likely to cite issues around the type of care that they could give (e.g. trust and affection). All in all, parents with lower and higher incomes were no more or less likely to say that they chose this informal provider because of a lack of other options.

**Table 7.10 Main reason for using main informal provider by family yearly income**

	Under £10,000	£10,000 -19,999	£20,000 -31,999	£32,000 or more	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
I could trust this person/these people	59	62	68	75	66
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	8	10	8	4	8
I wanted someone who would show my child affection	6	5	7	10	7
I knew they would bring up my child the same way I would	6	7	2	3	4
I wanted reliable arrangements	3	2	3	1	2
No other choices available to me	2	2	3	2	2
So that my child and a relative could spend time together	6	5	0	0	2
It was low cost	0	2	2	1	1
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	2	0	1	1	1
It is easy to get to	0	0	2	1	1
I wanted my child to mix with other children	0	0	+	2	1
It fitted in with my/my husband/wife/partner s working hours	1	2	1	0	1
The person is family	4	0	0	0	1
Other reason(s)	4	2	4	1	3
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>397</i>

*Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who only used an informal provider for this child in the last week, plus those parents who did have a formal provider but identified an informal provider as their main provider.*

+ <0.5 per cent

*Note: The following reasons have not been included in this table due to low percentages: the child's siblings went there, they would be educated while being looked after, or a good reputation.*

**7.3.8 Did parents choose informal providers for different reasons if they were using them for economic or non-economic reasons?**

Maybe not surprisingly, few parents said that they were using their main informal provider for educational reasons. Here, we therefore compare the reasons cited by parents using the provider for economic reasons and those using them for other reasons (e.g. social, leisure). The majority of parents, whatever reason they are using their provider, said that they chose their main informal provider because they could trust them. However, a significant difference can be seen between the choices made by parents who were using their providers while they work or study, and those who use the provider for other reasons (see Table 7.11). If parents were using their provider for economic reasons they were more likely say they chose their provider because they could not afford formal care, than parents who were using their provider for other reasons (12 per cent compared with 4 per cent).

**Table 7.11 Why parents chose their main informal providers by the reasons they were using the provider**

	<b>Column per cent</b>	
	<b>Economic reasons</b>	<b>Other activities</b>
	%	%
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	1	0
I could trust this person/these people	60	70
I wanted my child to mix with other children	1	1
It is easy to get to	2	1
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	1	1
It was low cost	2	1
I wanted reliable arrangements	1	3
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	12	4
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	9	6
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	5	4
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	1	1
The person is family	1	1
So that my child and relative could spend time together	0	3
No other choices available to me	2	2
Other reason(s)	3	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>240</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal provider (including nannies and babysitters) for this child in the last week</i>		

*Note: No figures for the choices made when using a provider for educational reasons have been included because the base size was too small.*

#### **7.4 How can formal providers be improved?**

Parents using a formal institutional provider or a childminder were asked what, in their view, could be improved about a range of services, from buildings and premises to staff qualifications. Using a showcard with a list of options they were asked –

*'Sometimes parents who are generally happy with the education or childcare their child is receiving still feel that various improvements could be made. Do you think [provider's name] could improve in any of the ways shown on this card?'*

Parents could choose as many as they wanted from the list or give an alternative improvement if they wished. As in the previous section, we have aggregated parents' views of institutional providers, in addition to focusing separately on different provider types. As before, we report on childminders separately. Table 7.12 shows the breakdown of parents' responses.

Overall, six in ten (58 per cent) parents using an institutional provider stated that none of the improvements were needed at their provider. This did not vary significantly across the different provider types. If we look more closely at the improvements that were suggested, certain issues were more commonly cited than others.

The most frequently cited aspects that needed improving at informal institutional providers were buildings and premises (15 per cent) and outdoor play and activities (14 per cent). However, what parents identified as in need of improvement to some extent depended on the type of provider they were using. Parents whose child was at a playgroup were the most likely to say that outdoor play opportunities could be improved: a fifth (21 per cent) cited this compared to, for example, only one in ten (13 per cent) of parents using a nursery school. This may be related to the funding arrangements of playgroups, which is often voluntary and in non-purpose-built premises, compared to statutory or paid-for childcare in nursery schools, reception classes and day nurseries. Perhaps this difference is also associated with the expectations of playgroups being places where children can play – inside and outside – in contrast to nursery classes where parents may not expect educational activities to have an outdoor-focus.

Parents with children in reception classes were most concerned with class or group sizes. More than twice as many parents with reception children worried about this compared to parents with any other main institutional providers (26 per cent compared to 12 per cent or fewer). Children of these parents were likely to have recently moved from a nursery to a school environment, where child:staff ratios are likely to increase<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> The ratio for a maintained nursery class is 2:26 where one adult is a qualified teacher and one a qualified nursery assistant. The ratios for maintained and private nursery schools are 2:20 where the head combines teaching with administration and 2:26 where the head does not teach. There is no specific ratio for a reception class but class sizes should be 'manageable'. Legislation limits the size to 30 or fewer.

With regard to the qualifications, training or experience of staff, parents with a child at day nursery were most critical. 12 per cent said that this could be improved compared to around and below 5 per cent of parents using other service providers.

Parents whose main formal provider was a childminder were far less likely than those using institutional providers to identify useful improvements. 84 per cent of these parents could suggest no improvements (compared to the 58 per cent of other parents). Where improvements for childminders were suggested, the main issue related to outdoor play and premises, cited by 9 per cent of parents using a childminder.

**Table 7.12 Improvements that parents would like to see of main formal providers, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	<b>Nursery School %</b>	<b>Nursery Class %</b>	<b>Reception Class %</b>	<b>Day Nursery %</b>	<b>Playgroup or Pre-school %</b>	<b>TOTAL institutional providers</b>	<b>Childminder %</b>
Building/premises	12	11	16	16	18	15	3
Outdoor play opportunities	13	11	8	13	21	14	9
Number of staff per group/class or group/class size	8	12	26	12	7	11	1
Staff s qualifications, training or experience	5	3	4	12	5	7	2
Equipment or toys	4	5	6	6	9	6	2
Hygiene, health or safety	5	6	6	6	3	5	2
Security	6	6	6	5	4	5	1
None of these	65	61	60	57	56	58	84
<i>Unweighted base</i>	163	286	88	456	385	1399	105
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal institutional provider or childminder for this child in the last week</i>							



## 7.5 The role of Ofsted

### 7.5.1 Inspections and parents' decisions to use a provider

Since April 2003, Ofsted expanded its inspections to include early years education and childcare services in England, including childminders and providers that offer free early years education. During this survey we asked some questions designed to help us understand parents' awareness of Ofsted's work and whether it influenced their choice of childcare provider. These questions were asked of all main formal providers used for the 'selected' child, apart from nannies or au pairs, babysitters, or sports and leisure activities.

This section looks firstly at whether parents were aware of their provider having been inspected, and goes on to explore whether knowledge of an inspection affected their decision to use their provider.

Parents were asked –

*Some reception classes, nursery education and childcare providers are inspected to ensure they meet certain standards. Has [provider's name] been inspected before or since [child's name] has been there?*

*Yes, before*

*Yes, since*

*Yes, both*

*No*

*Don't know*

The majority of parents (72 per cent of those using institutional providers and 83 per cent of parents using childminders) said an authority had inspected their main provider before or since their child had started using it. Table 7.13 shows parental levels of awareness across different provider types. Parents using day nurseries were most likely to know that an inspection had taken place (83 per cent), and those using nursery classes were least likely (60 per cent). This difference appears, in part, to be related to lack of knowledge about inspections by those parents using nursery classes – 35 per cent did not know whether or not an inspection had taken place - rather than because nursery classes had not actually been inspected.

**Table 7.13 Whether main formal provider was inspected or not, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	<b>Nursery School</b>	<b>Nursery Class</b>	<b>Reception Class</b>	<b>Day Nursery</b>	<b>Play Group</b>	<b>TOTAL Institutional providers</b>	<b>Child-minder</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Inspected (before or since child attended)	66	60	68	83	70	72	83
Don't know	32	35	27	15	27	25	6
Not inspected	3	5	5	2	3	3	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>387</i>	<i>1406</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal institutional provider or childminder for this child in the last week</i>							

***Did parents receive inspection results?***

Those parents who knew that their provider had been inspected (before and/or since their child was there) were asked whether they had received the inspection results. Six in ten (58 per cent) parents whose institutional provider had been inspected said that they had. Looking across different provider types (Table 7.14), parents using reception classes were most likely to say they had received information (70 per cent). This compares with around half of parents (46 per cent) using nursery schools, the parents least likely to say they had received any results from the inspection. This may be related to the high level of parental awareness of Ofsted’s role in inspecting schools or a greater perceived importance of Ofsted in school settings, compared to childcare and other early years education providers. Three-quarters (75 per cent) of parents using childminders who had been inspected had been given the results.

**Table 7.14 Whether parents received information about inspections at their main formal provider, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	<b>Nursery School</b>	<b>Nursery Class</b>	<b>Reception Class</b>	<b>Day Nursery</b>	<b>Play Group</b>	<b>TOTAL Institutional providers</b>	<b>Child-minder</b>
	%	%	%	%	%		%
Received information about inspection	46	61	70	57	59	58	75
Did not receive information about inspection	45	28	20	38	33	35	23
Don’t know or not sure	9	11	10	5	8	8	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age ‘selected’ child, who mainly only used a formal institutional provider or childminder for this child in the last week and who said that their provider had been inspected</i>							

***The impact of inspection reports on parents’ decisions***

If parents said that their main formal provider was inspected before their child started attending, and that they had received results of the inspection, they were asked if this had influenced their decision to use the provider. These parents’ views on this were split. 44 per cent said they had been influenced by the inspection results, while 54 per cent claimed not to be. No significant differences were identified across provider types (although the numbers of parents involved were quite small).

The fact that substantial numbers of parents were not influenced by inspection results even if they had received them, may point towards other practical and financial reasons for parents choosing their childcare and early years education when their children are of pre-school age. As shown above, the desire to have a provider that can educate as well as look after the child, and the need for a provider that the parent can trust were two such key factors that influenced the decision to use specific providers.

### 7.5.2 Parents' awareness of who carries out the Ofsted inspections

We also looked at parents' awareness of who carried out inspections. Parents who knew that an inspection took place (either before, after or since their child started attending the provider) were shown a list of organisations, and asked to chose which ones they thought were involved in the inspection of their main provider. They could give as many answers as they wished in response. The question was worded -

*Was the inspection at [provider's name] carried out by any of the organisations shown on this card?*

*Local Education Authority / Local Authority*

*Independent School's Council*

*Ofsted*

*Another organisation*

*Not sure*

The vast majority (83 per cent) of parents with a formal provider reported that Ofsted carried out the inspection (Table 7.15). This varied a little between parents who were using different providers, although 89 per cent of parents using day nurseries said that Ofsted carried out the inspection, which was significantly more than parents using nursery classes (71 per cent), the group with the lowest awareness.

Around one in ten (10 per cent) parents using formal institutional providers cited the Local Education Authority (LEA) as being involved in the inspection process. Parents who thought the LEA carried out inspections were more likely to be those who used a nursery class (19 per cent), than those who used day nurseries or playgroups (8 per cent or below).

**Table 7.15 Who parents think carried out the inspections, by provider type**

	Nursery school %	Nursery class %	Reception class %	Day nursery %	Play-group %	Column per cent	
						Total institutional providers %	Child-minder %
Ofsted	81	71	86	89	83	83	81
Local Education Authority / Local Authority	9	19	14	7	8	10	14
Not sure	13	12	8	7	10	10	6
Another organisation	1	0	0	1	1	1	4
Independent Schools Council	2	2	0	+	+	1	0
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child, who mainly only used a formal institutional provider or childminder for this child in the last week and whose main provider was inspected.</i>							

+ <0.5 per cent

## **7.6 How do parents feel about the role their provider has in teaching their children?**

The most commonly cited reason for parents choosing their main institutional provider was that they wanted their child to be educated while they were being looked after. It is a key issue for many parents and providers of pre-school children. Both educational and social development is considered crucial to children's development in the early years. This section reports parents' views on how well their providers deal with the educational and social development of their pre-school child.

Parents who used institutional childcare and early years education providers or childminders for their pre-school child were asked to identify what academic and what social skills they thought their child was being encouraged to develop while they were at the provider. Parents were asked first about the academic skills they believed their child was learning at their provider -

*Does [provider's name] encourage [child's name] to learn and develop skills in any of the areas shown on this card?*

- 1. Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes*
- 2. Enjoying books*
- 3. Finding out about animals or plants*
- 4. Finding out about people or places around the world*
- 5. Finding out about health or hygiene, e.g. washing hands.*
- 6. Not sure*
- 7. None of these*

They were then asked about more personal and social skills -

*And does [provider's name] encourage [child's name] to learn and develop skills in any of the areas shown on this card?*

- 1. Playing with other children and making friends*
- 2. Listening to other children and adults*
- 3. Expressing thoughts or feelings*
- 4. Good behaviour*
- 5. Being independent and making choices*
- 6. Tackling everyday tasks, e.g. putting on coat, clearing up*
- 7. Not sure*
- 8. None of these*

### **7.6.1 Academic and social skills - parents' views of different providers**

#### ***Institutional providers***

Looking firstly at academic skills, the vast majority of parents across all providers reported that their provider was teaching their children the skills we listed. Most commonly cited was that their child was encouraged to enjoy books (93 per cent), and least commonly cited was the development of knowledge about people and places around the world (72 per cent). 1 per cent said that their child was not learning any of the skills listed.

If we look at parents' responses according to which type of provider they were referring, we find some small differences. Notably, reception classes were more likely to be developing these skills than other providers (Table 7.16).

**Table 7.16 Academic skills: parents views of different formal providers**

	Column per cent						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup/ pre-school	Total Institutional providers	Child-minder
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	92	93	99	92	91	92	81
Enjoying books	93	92	98	94	91	93	93
Finding out about animals and plants	86	85	91	90	81	85	74
Finding out about people or places around the world	76	69	85	74	69	72	51
Finding out about health and hygiene	89	88	86	92	87	88	86
Not sure	2	2	0	2	1	2	1
None of these	1	1	0	1	2	1	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>368</i>	<i>1277</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder</i>							

Amongst all providers, playgroups were less likely than others to be developing these more academic skills. Given the different age profile of children in reception (four plus) compared to playgroups (two plus) and the different expectation and ethos for each of these providers, these differences are not surprising. For example –

- 99 per cent of parents with children at reception class said their child was taught to recognise words and numbers - compared to 91 per cent of parents using playgroups.
- 91 per cent of parents using reception classes said their child was taught about animals and plants compared with parents who use playgroups (81 per cent).
- Parents who used reception classes were more aware of their child learning about people and places around the world (85 per cent) than at day nurseries (74 per cent), nursery classes (69 per cent) or playgroups (69 per cent).

However, we should note that across all providers, none of these areas at any of the provider types were cited by fewer than 69 per cent of parents who used formal institutional providers.

As with academic skills, the vast majority of parents thought that their main provider was encouraging all six of the social skills listed. Playing with other children (95 per cent) and good behaviour (94 per cent) were cited most commonly. Parents were least likely to mention that their child was learning about expressing thoughts and feelings. However, 76 per cent of parents said this. Less than 1 per cent of parents overall stated that their child was not learning any of the social skills listed at their main provider.

Parents who thought that their child was learning to express thoughts or feelings were most likely to be using reception classes (89 per cent) (Table 7.17).

**Table 7.17 Social Skills: Parents views of different formal providers**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	Nursery school %	Nursery class %	Reception class %	Day nursery %	Playgroup/ pre-school %	Total Institutional providers %	Child-minder %
Playing with other children and making friends	95	93	98	98	96	95	97
Good behaviour	95	92	98	95	94	94	100
Listening to other children and adults	88	85	91	92	89	89	93
Tackling everyday tasks, e.g. putting on coat, clearing up	88	89	97	92	86	89	87
Being independent and making choices	79	77	85	84	81	81	86
Expressing thoughts or feelings	75	73	89	79	74	76	82
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>368</i>	<i>1277</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder</i>							

73 per cent of parents using nursery classes said their children were being encouraged in this field, as did 74 per cent of those using playgroups. It is possible that reception classes are more likely to generate learning of emotions and expression because they are attached to the formal education system, and four and five year olds who attend reception class are starting the new phase of personal education amongst older children.

### **Childminders**

Like parents of children in formal institutional providers, parents who used childminders also said that their child was being encouraged to play with other children (97 per cent) and to learn about good behaviour (100 per cent), though the figures in this group are small and must be viewed with care. The majority of parents using childminders were likely to mention all five of the academic skills as well, although the proportion of parents saying that childminders taught children about people and places around the world was just over half (51 per cent). This compares significantly with 85 per cent of parents whose child mainly used reception classes, and 69 per cent of those who used both nursery class and playgroup (see Tables 7.16 and 7.17).

### 7.6.2 Different parents and their views of their child's learning

In some respects at least, what parents thought about their child's academic and social learning at the main provider differed according to their own education level (using the mother's highest academic qualifications) (see Tables 7.18 and 7.19). Parents in families where the mother had no academic qualifications were least likely to say that their child was taught to enjoy books, compared to those where the mother had a GCSE grade D-G or above (85 per cent compared to 93 per cent or above). Similarly, when mothers had no qualifications, parents were least likely to say that their child was taught about plants and animals or about people and places.

These differences may suggest that parents with higher qualifications tend to send their children to providers where certain academic skills are taught. Alternatively, it may be related to higher levels of awareness of the academic skills taught by their provider.

**Table 7.18 Academic skills: parents views by the mother's highest academic qualification<sup>75</sup>**

	Column per cent							
	Higher degree,	First degree	GCE A-level / SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	GCSE grade A-C / GCE O-level passes / CSE grade 1 / SCE O	GCSE grade D-G / CSE grade 2-5 / SCE O Grades (D-E) / SCE	Other academic qualifications	No, none of these	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enjoying books	95	96	96	93	95	93	85	93
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	89	92	95	94	95	89	84	92
Finding out about animals and plants	90	90	90	82	87	90	80	85
Finding out about people or places around the world	79	77	79	70	71	79	55	71
Finding out about health and hygiene	94	91	91	89	93	88	77	88
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1	0	5	1
None of these	1	0	2	1	0	4	2	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>186</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>535</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>1334</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder.</i>								

<sup>75</sup> This will include a small proportion of female carers who were not the mother of the children (e.g. grandmothers).

Families in which the mothers have no academic qualifications were also less likely to report that their provider was teaching some of the social skills about which we asked. For example, 79 per cent of parents where the mother has no qualifications said that their provider encouraged their children to listen to other adults. In contrast, between 89 and 95 per cent of families whose mothers had some qualifications listed cited this skill as one being encouraged by their provider.

Similarly, only around six in ten (63 per cent) parents in families where the mother had no academic qualifications stated that their child was encouraged by their provider to be independent and make choices. This compared to eight in ten or more (83 to 93 per cent) of other parents. Tackling everyday tasks such as clearing up was also a social skill cited less by parents with no qualifications (79 per cent), than those with some qualifications (88 per cent or more).

It seems, then, that a lack of parental academic qualifications might influence at least parents' perceptions of what their children's provider encouraged in terms of social skills. As with academic skills, this may be related to the general level of awareness of what is taught at their provider, rather than what actually happens.

**Table 7.19 Social skills: parents' views by the mother's highest academic qualification**

	<b>Column per cent</b>							
	<b>Higher degree,</b>	<b>First degree</b>	<b>GCE A-level / SCE Higher Grades (A-C)</b>	<b>GCSE grade A-C / GCE O-level passes / CSE grade 1 / SCE O</b>	<b>GCSE grade D-G / CSE grade 2-5 / SCE O Grades (D-E) / SCE</b>	<b>Other academic qualifications</b>	<b>No, none of these</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Playing with other children and making friends	97	96	97	96	97	100	92	96
Listening to other children and adults	92	92	93	90	89	95	79	89
Expressing thoughts or feelings	83	79	85	78	79	85	58	77
Good behaviour	98	95	96	94	98	99	90	95
Being independent and making choices	87	83	85	84	84	93	63	81
Tackling everyday tasks, e.g. putting on coat, clearing up	88	90	93	90	94	97	79	89
Not sure	1	1	0	1	0	0	4	1
None of these	0	0	1	+	0	0	1	+
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>186</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>535</i>	<i>113</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>1334</i>

*Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder.*

*+ <0.5 per cent*



Similarly, family income levels appear to have a relationship with the parents' identification of academic and social skills encouraged by the provider (Tables 7.20 and 7.21).

76 per cent of parents with a family income of more than £32,000 per annum said that learning about people and places around the world was an area developed for their children, while only 61 per cent of parents with a family income of under £10,000 cited this area. While 81 per cent of parents in families with an income of under £10,000 thought that their child learns how to listen to other children and adults, a much larger 94 per cent think this, in families where the income is over £32,000 per year.

86 per cent of parents in the highest family income group stated that their provider encouraged their children to express thoughts and feelings, while only 66 per cent of parents in families earning under £10,000 cited this. There were more parents in the highest family income group (90 per cent), than in the lowest family income group (74 per cent) who thought that their children were being encouraged to be independent and make choices.

To what extent these differences are due to parental awareness and to what extent they are linked to the types of providers used by different families is interesting. As was shown in Chapter 2, parents in the highest income groups are more likely to use day nurseries than other parents. As we saw in Table 7.16, many parents using day nurseries said that academic skills were taught at these providers. 'Enjoying books' and 'finding out about hygiene' were academic skills that were thought to be developed most at day nurseries.

**Table 7.20 Academic skills: parents views by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Under £10,000 %</b>	<b>£10,000 to £19,999 %</b>	<b>£20,000 to £31,999 %</b>	<b>£32,000+ %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Enjoying books	87	91	95	96	93
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	86	91	94	94	92
Finding out about health and hygiene	84	86	87	93	88
Finding out about animals and plants	76	85	84	91	85
Finding out about people or places around the world	61	66	74	76	70
Not sure	3	2	1	1	1
None of these	3	1	1	1	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>393</i>	<i>1267</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder.</i>					

**Table 7.21 Social skills: parents views by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>				
	<b>Under £10,000 %</b>	<b>£10,000 to £19,999 %</b>	<b>£20,000 to £31,999 %</b>	<b>£32,000+ %</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Playing with other children and making friends	96	94	95	96	95
Good behaviour	90	94	93	98	94
Tackling everyday tasks, e.g. putting on coat, clearing up	85	88	93	92	90
Listening to other children and adults	81	87	88	94	89
Being independent and making choices	74	72	84	90	81
Expressing thoughts or feelings	66	71	77	86	76
Not sure	2	2	+	1	1
None of these	1	0	0	1	+
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>188</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>393</i>	<i>1267</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder.</i>					

+ <0.5 per cent

The age of the child receiving care at the main providers clearly had an association with what the parent said in response to the questions about academic skills. Table 7.22 shows these academic and social skills by different aged groups. Parents whose child was aged four to five were more likely to cite all the academic skills (except 'enjoying books' and 'learning about health and hygiene', where the differences are not statistically significant) as ones encouraged by the provider. Perhaps the most significant of these differences between age groups is that seen in the responses to whether the provider aids learning about people and places around the world. 80 per cent of parents of four and five year olds said this was encouraged by their provider, while 68 per cent of parents of two to three year olds cited this as an area that they knew was being encouraged. To a certain extent, this reflects the different providers used for older pre-school children and the types of subjects that are thought suitable by their providers for their age group.

Four and five year olds are also thought to be more likely to learn some social skills at their main provider than others. 82 per cent of parents of four and five year olds at formal providers identified their provider as encouraging their child to express feelings and thoughts compared with only 75 per cent of parents of two to three year olds. However, most other social skills were identified equally amongst parents of the younger and older pre-school age groups.

**Table 7.22 Academic and social skills: parents views by the age of the ‘selected’ child**

Column per cent			Column per cent		
Academic skills	2-3 %	4-5 %	Social skills	2-3 %	4-5 %
Recognising letters, words, numbers or shapes	90	97	Playing with other children and making friends	95	97
Enjoying books	92	94	Listening to other children and adults	89	89
Finding out about animals and plants	83	90	Expressing thoughts or feelings	75	82
Finding out about people or places around the world	68	80	Good behaviour	94	95
Finding out about health and hygiene	88	89	Being independent and making choices	90	85
			Tackling everyday tasks, e.g. putting on coat, clearing up	89	92
Not sure	2	+	Not sure	2	+
None of these	1	1	None of these	+	0
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1058</i>	<i>294</i>		<i>1058</i>	<i>294</i>

*Base: All families where the ‘selected’ child is aged two to five and the main provider is a formal institutional provider or a childminder.*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

### **7.7 How do parents feel about the level of feedback they get from their provider about their children?**

As well as receiving information about inspections of the childcare and early years providers, many parents expected to be informed about their child’s progress for the months or years they were at the provider. We asked parents several questions about their views about this communication with their main formal provider (if this was an institutional provider or a childminder) for their pre-school child. This section looks at these questions in detail, beginning by asking whether parents feel satisfied with the amount of information they received about their child’s learning and play. We then explore the different ways that parents received feedback about their child’s progress, for example through written or oral reports, or through the child bringing home the tangible results of their childcare sessions. At each stage, we examine whether parents using different providers had different opinions, and whether the characteristics of the parents influenced their views.

**7.7.1 How satisfied are parents that they are able to get enough idea about their child's learning and play activities?**

Many providers give parents feedback about what their child does while they are at the childcare or early years provider. We asked parents –

*How satisfied are you that you are able to get enough of an idea about [child's name]'s learning and play activities at [provider's name]?*

They were given an option of five answers, from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction about the feedback parents get from their providers. 94 per cent were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied'. Parents using childminders were most likely to be 'very satisfied' (see Table 7.23).

**Table 7.23 How satisfied are parents with the feedback from their main formal provider, by provider type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup / pre-school	Total Institutional providers	Child-minder
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	70	69	68	66	67	68	85
Fairly satisfied	21	25	24	28	27	26	12
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	4	3	5	2	4	3	0
Fairly dissatisfied	4	3	1	3	1	2	1
Very dissatisfied	1	+	2	1	+	1	1
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>1274</i>	<i>75</i>

*Base. All families whose 'selected' child was aged two to five, not at school full or part-time, and who mainly used a formal institutional provider or childminder.*

+ <0.5 per cent

85 per cent of these parents said they were 'very satisfied' compared to 68 per cent of parents who mainly used an institutional provider. This may be related to the fact that parents often have personal contact with childminders, enabling ad hoc verbal feedback on a day-to-day basis. However, when we look at general levels of satisfaction, where parents said they were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied', we do not see such large differences between provider types. 98 per cent<sup>76</sup> of parents using childminders were generally satisfied compared with no less than 91 per cent of parents using other formal provider types. Very few parents (3 per cent) expressed any kind of dissatisfaction with their main institutional provider.

Given the high levels of satisfaction overall, we found no significant differences between families with different academic qualifications, working status or incomes.

<sup>76</sup> Although the percentages being added together are 85 per cent and 12 per cent, the proportion is 98 per cent rather than 97 per cent due to rounding.

### 7.7.2 How do parents receive feedback from their providers?

So, high proportions of parents were satisfied with the information they received about their child's progress from their main providers. Providers give this feedback to parents in many different ways. We therefore asked parents -

*In which, if any, of the ways shown on this card do you get an idea of how [child's name] is getting on at [provider's name]?*

1. *Talk with staff about how child is getting on*
2. *Written reports prepared by staff*
3. *Parents' evenings/meetings*
4. *Pictures, drawings and other things child brings home*
5. *Pictures, drawings and other things displayed on the premises*
6. *Other*
7. *None of these*

Parents could give as many responses as they wished. On the whole, parents received feedback mostly by talking to staff (89 per cent), and through pictures and drawings that their child brought home (82 per cent). Pictures and other things displayed at the premises were mentioned by 62 per cent of parents. When we look at these forms of feedback across provider types, we see some differences (Table 7.24).

**Table 7.24 Methods by which parents receive feedback, by provider type.**

	<b>Column per cent</b>						
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup/pre-school	Total Institutional providers	Child-minder
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Talk with staff about how child is getting on	87	87	88	94	87	89	87
Pictures, drawings and other things child brings home	85	80	78	85	79	82	69
Pictures, drawings and other things displayed on the premises	62	57	64	75	53	62	34
Written reports prepared by staff	49	33	51	59	34	44	15
Parents evenings/meetings	46	56	72	48	24	44	4
Other	1	2	1	1	6	3	4
None of these	1	1	1	1	3	2	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>458</i>	<i>387</i>	<i>1409</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Base. All families whose 'selected' child was aged two to five, not at school full or part-time, and who mainly used a formal institutional provider or childminder.</i>							

Parents using day nurseries received most feedback from all the different sources, with the exception of parents' evenings. For example, these parents were significantly more likely to say that they received feedback by talking to staff at the provider (94 per cent), than parents using the other formal institutional providers. Parents who used day nurseries received more written reports about their child than any other parents (59 per cent compared to 51 per cent of those using reception classes, and only 33 per cent of those using nursery classes). As Table 7.3 showed (above), most children attending day nurseries were very young, which may explain why both spoken and written reports from staff were an important form of feedback from these providers.

Three-quarters (75 per cent) of parents using day nurseries also said that they found out about their child's progress at the provider through seeing pictures and other things displayed on the walls at the provider's own site. Only half (53 per cent) of parents using playgroups, and nursery classes (57 per cent), and two thirds (62 per cent) of those using nursery schools gave this as a source of feedback. Day nursery premises may, because of the full-time nature of the places at these providers, be more permanent and less likely to share their premises with other groups or organisations, explaining this difference.

Parents using reception classes were significantly more likely to have had feedback via parents' evenings (72 per cent), than any other parents. There was a 16 percentage-point difference between this group of parents and those using nursery classes, who were the next most likely to have had parents' evenings. Users of reception classes were, like those using day nurseries, very likely to have received feedback through written reports. Over a half (51 per cent) cited this source, compared to around one third (34 per cent) of parents using playgroups, and a similar proportion (33 per cent) of those using nursery classes. This may be explained partly by the fact that children in reception classes can be seen as having joined the school system, where written reports are a standard practice.

Parents using playgroups received information from all the sources listed, but 79 per cent of them said they got it from seeing pictures and other materials that their child brought home. Only one in four of these parents (24 per cent) said that they got feedback from parents' evenings, the least frequently cited source of feedback for parents using playgroups. This could be related to the fact that all these providers varied in both educational focus and the ages of the children who used the services. Parents evenings may be considered a formal way of providers giving feedback once their child is at school, and, in most cases attending full-time. While children attend other providers often for fewer hours, in providers with a smaller number of children, there may be plenty opportunities to talk informally with parents rather than formal discussions about educational progress.

Where children mainly received childcare at a nursery school, parents received most feedback about their progress through talking to staff (87 per cent) and seeing pictures and other items that the child brought home (85 per cent). Both these sources were commonly mentioned by parents using other providers too.

Like other parents, those mainly using nursery classes gained most of their feedback from conversations with the staff (87 per cent) and through looking at the pictures that their children brought home from the provider (80 per cent). These parents were least likely to cite written reports as a source of feedback: a third of parents (33 per cent) gave this answer, compared to around two thirds (59 per cent) of parents using day nurseries, for example.

Childminders also provided parents with feedback on the children they cared for, though the patterns were substantially different. Most of these parents (87 per cent) said they received feedback by talking to the childminder. However, only 15 per cent stated that they got written reports from their childminder, compared with 44 per cent of all parents using institutional providers. Similarly, only 4 per cent said they went to parents' evenings, compared with 44 per cent of parents using all other providers. From this we can infer that the nature of communication with childminders was very different. Also as we saw in Table 7.4, above, no users of childcare chose them because they wanted their child to be 'educated while being looked after'. These differences in focus may be reflected in the type of feedback that parents like or expect from childminders.

### ***Is this feedback often enough for parents?***

All parents were also asked if they were happy with the frequency of feedback they received, whatever the method used. They were asked -

*And would you say you are able to get an idea of how [child's name] is getting on at [provider's name] often enough or not often enough?*

Around nine in ten parents (89 per cent) who used early years provision (not including childminders) said they received information about the child's progress 'often enough', while just under one in ten (9 per cent) were more critical, saying they did not receive feedback 'often enough'.

When we looked at these responses by groups of parents using different provider types, no substantial differences were noticed.

## **7.8 What services are there for parents at their childcare providers?**

Childcare and early years providers have begun increasingly to offer services - such as health or education - which aim to assist the parents as well as their children. This movement has been part of the government's drive to integrate services at single sites, enabling parents access to a 'one stop shop' for advice not only about childcare, but about ways they might find training, support or access to employment, for health services for their children, and so on.

We asked parents about the services that their main providers offered. The question was worded -

*Sometimes services for parents are also available at the same place that provides [childcare or nursery education / childcare]. At [provider's name], are any of the services on this card available for parents?*

We then went on to ask which, if any, of these they had used. Finally, we asked if parents would like to see particular services at their main providers, if they were not currently provided.

Table 7.25 summarises the services of which parents were aware at their main provider. Six in ten (61 per cent) parents said that none of these services were offered at their provider. The most commonly available service was that offering advice and support to parents (16 per cent), followed by parent and toddler groups (12 per cent) and courses or training (10 per cent).

**Table 7.25 Services available to parents at their main formal provider, by provider type**

	Column per cent					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup or pre-school	Total Formal institutional providers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advice or support for parents	17	19	21	15	15	16
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	9	11	7	6	22	12
Courses or training	15	15	10	5	10	10
Health services for families	13	15	17	4	7	9
Parenting classes	9	11	6	3	6	6
Help in finding additional childcare	6	6	5	7	7	6
Job or career advice	2	1	0	2	3	2
Counselling services	3	2	1	2	3	2
Other services	2	0	1	2	1	1
None	58	49	54	73	58	61
Don't Know	4	9	2	2	3	4
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>386</i>	<i>1405</i>
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child was school age and mainly used an formal institutional provider</i>						

Playgroups were the most likely to offer parent and toddler groups – a fifth of parents using playgroups said this service was offered, in comparison with one in ten or fewer of most other parents. Most likely to say that no services were offered, were parents using day nurseries – 73 per cent of these parents said this, compared to 49 per cent using nursery classes.

When we asked about the services used by parents at their main provider, we can see a very similar picture (Table 7.26). 'Advice and support for parents' was the most commonly used service – 15 per cent of parents saying they had made use of this at their provider.



**Table 7.26 Services used by parents at their main formal provider, by provider type**

	Column per cent					
	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup or pre-school	Total Formal institutional providers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advice or support for parents	16	12	[16]	22	7	15
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	10	7	[4]	5	23	12
Courses or training	8	8	[3]	8	9	8
Health services for families	12	11	[13]	3	6	8
Parenting classes	9	6	[3]	1	3	4
Help in finding additional childcare	2	2	[0]	7	4	3
Other services	2	0	[3]	2	2	2
Counselling services	2	1	[0]	0	0	1
Job or career advice	0	0	[0]	0	1	+
None	53	58	[64]	60	57	57
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>507</i>
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child was pre-school age and mainly used an formal institutional provider and who identified at least one services as available at this provider</i>						
<i>[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents</i>						

Parents using day nurseries were most likely to use advice for parents (22 per cent) compared to those using nursery classes (12 per cent) or playgroups (7 per cent). The sample sizes for other parents were too small to make comparisons.

Playgroups offered many families parent and toddler groups. Not surprisingly, parents using playgroups were most likely to use parent and toddler groups (23 per cent compared to 10 per cent or less of parents using other providers).

But what services would parents use if their provider offered them? We asked them and the results are summarised in Table 7.27. We can see that a quarter (26 per cent) of all parents wished to see health services for their families.

**Table 7.27 Services wanted by parents at their main formal provider, by provider type**

	Nursery school	Nursery class	Reception class	Day nursery	Playgroup or pre-school	Total Formal institutional providers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Health services for families	23	26	17	30	22	26
Courses or training	14	23	23	10	18	16
Advice or support for parents	14	15	15	14	17	15
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	15	17	12	14	12	14
Parenting classes	11	11	10	13	9	11
Help in finding additional childcare	9	12	8	6	10	9
Job or career advice	9	9	7	5	9	7
Counselling services	2	5	3	4	2	3
Other services	1	+	1	1	+	1
None	46	35	52	47	45	45
Don't Know	3	5	2	1	1	2
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>456</i>	<i>386</i>	<i>1405</i>
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child was pre-school age and mainly used an formal institutional provider</i>						

While only 4 per cent of parents using day nurseries said that health services were offered at their provider, a much larger 30 per cent said they would use such services if they were offered. This was significantly more than parents using playgroups (22 per cent).

## 7.9 The transition to Reception Class

Parents whose children had recently started school full-time or part-time were asked how they felt about this transition from childcare to the more formal educational setting of school.

They were asked several questions relating to the arrangements made to ease the transition to reception class, such as meeting the teachers, or other children at the school, or visiting the school site to help develop a sense of familiarity. The questions followed this pattern -

*And before [child's name] started reception class, did [provider's name], or a nursery education or childcare provider [child's name] went to before, make arrangements for [him / her] to meet [his / her] new teacher / meet any other children in the school / to get to know the school building or premises?*

Tables 7.28 to 7.30 show that a substantial number (80 per cent) of children had met their primary school teacher before they started school and a similarly large proportion (72 per cent) of children had met other children at the school before they started there. Around the same number (78 per cent) had seen the school site prior to attending school.

**Table 7.28 Whether the ‘selected’ child met their new teacher before attending reception class**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Yes	80
No	18
Not sure/ Don’t know	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>615</i>
<i>Base: All families where the ‘selected’ child is at school full-time or part-time</i>	

**Table 7.29 Whether ‘selected’ child met other children at the school, before attending reception class**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Yes	72
No	26
Not sure/ Don’t know	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>615</i>
<i>Base: All families where the ‘selected’ child is at school full-time or part-time</i>	

**Table 7.30 Whether ‘selected’ child saw the school site before attending reception class**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Yes	78
No	20
Not sure/ Don’t know	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>615</i>
<i>Base: All families where the ‘selected’ child is at school full-time or part-time</i>	

***Information from childcare providers to reception classes***

Parents were also asked to look at a showcard and answer this question with as many answers as they wished -

*Before children start in reception class, schools sometimes get information about them from nursery education or childcare providers they went to before. Did a nursery education or childcare provider [child’s name] went to before starting at school tell you about or discuss with you any information they intended to pass on?*

Table 7.31 shows that over half (54 per cent) of parents thought that their childcare providers had passed on a report of their child’s progress to their new school. Around a fifth (23 per cent) also said that the new school, in the transitional process, had received details about the family. With the small sample sizes it has not been possible to look at this issue across different provider types.

**Table 7.31 What information did the school receive from previous provider about the 'selected' child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Written report on progress/assessment results	54
Family details, e.g. address and telephone number, brothers/sisters	23
Health information	16
Report or statement of Special Educational Need	7
Not sure	11
Did not attend nursery or childcare provider	3
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>612</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is at school full-time or part-time</i>	

### ***Difficulties starting school***

Finally, the survey gave parents the chance to explain any difficulties their child had had when they started reception class. This helps us to examine whether the transition from childcare and early years provision could be made easier if particular problems arise.

Parents were given a list of possible difficulties and asked to choose as many answers as they wished. The question was –

*All children need time to adjust when they first start reception class, but some have particular problems when they first begin school. Did [child's name] have any of these problems when [he / she] started reception class?*

The results are shown in Table 7.32. The majority of parents said that their children did not experience any difficulties (62 per cent). About one in ten (12 per cent) parents said their child found the day too long, and a similar proportion (11 per cent) mentioned that it was difficult for their child to be away from their parents.

Perhaps due to the large number of children who had apparently been made familiar with their teachers, the school building and their peers (see above), few parents cited difficulties related to making friends, school discipline, or practical issues such as lunch times or school uniform (for each of these issues, less than 8 per cent of parents cited them).

**Table 7.32 Any difficulties the 'selected' child had when they started school**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Child didn't experience any problems	62
Day too long	12
Difficult to be away from parents	11
Hyperactivity/ lack of concentration	7
Problems with lunch	7
Difficult to adjust to school rules and discipline	6
Problems with toilet routines/ training	5
Difficult to make new friends	4
Problems with school uniform	3
Not enough individual attention	2
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>615</i>
<i>Base: All families where the 'selected' child is at school full-time or part-time</i>	

## 7.10 Summing up

This chapter has investigated some key issues about parents' views of their childcare and early years providers for their pre-school children. Key points include –

- The majority of parents felt that they had a real choice of providers, with those using formal institutional providers citing reasons for choosing formal providers such as trust in the carer (15 per cent), and preferences to see their child educated as well as cared for (17 per cent).
- Parents' reasons for choosing their formal childcare providers differed according to the age of their children. Trust was key for parents of very young children (33 per cent), with concerns about educational development increasing as the children reached four and five (11 per cent).
- For those using informal providers, trust was cited even more often as a reason for choosing to use them (66 per cent of parents gave this as their main reason).
- Most parents were largely content with their formal providers, with the majority (58 per cent) unable to suggest any improvements.
- Large proportions of parents reported that their formal providers were encouraging the development of their children's academic and social skills. 72 per cent or more of parents said that each of the academic skills listed had been encouraged in their child at their main provider.
- Parents were generally satisfied with the level of feedback they received about their children's progress at their formal providers. 94 per cent said they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the feedback they got.
- Ofsted inspection results were an influencing factor for a significant minority of parents when deciding to use a formal provider. Nearly half (44 per cent) of parents who had received them said that inspection results had influenced their decision to use their main formal provider.
- Parents reported a generally smooth transition from pre-school childcare settings to primary school. 62 per cent of parents with children at reception class said they had not experienced any difficulties in the transition.
- Currently a minority of parents using childcare and early years provision said that their providers offered additional services (61 per cent of parents said that no services were offered). However, a substantial number of parents would like to see them available. Most commonly wanted were health services (26 per cent), courses or training (16 per cent), advice for parents (15 per cent) and parenting classes (11 per cent) and parent/childminder and toddler sessions (14 per cent).

## **8 WHAT DO PARENTS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN FEEL ABOUT THEIR CHILDCARE?**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The range of providers used by parents of school age children is different – and more limited – to that for parents of pre-school children<sup>77</sup>. In particular, the recent policy to expand provision of after school clubs and breakfast clubs has offered parents more childcare options to – at least partially – cover the time between the end of the school day and the end of their own working day. The other main childcare options for school age children are individual formal providers, such as childminders, or informal arrangements with family and friends. This chapter investigates some of the same issues discussed in Chapter 7 for pre-school children, focusing on the decision processes which parents undergo when thinking about the childcare they need.

The chapter begins by looking at the main providers that parents of school age children chose. Taking each of the main provider types in turn, we then examine if parents were using their providers because of factors that attracted them towards them, or whether they found themselves ‘pushed’ into using certain providers for practical reasons. For formal providers, we also look at parents’ uses of and views about them, asking what kinds of families used each provider type and how parents thought they could be improved. We assess the extent to which Ofsted inspections affected parents’ choices and views of their providers. Finally, we consider what other services parents used and required from out-of-school clubs.

This chapter focuses on childminders, reception classes, breakfast or after school clubs (both on and off school sites) and informal providers, particularly grandparents.

### **8.2 ‘Main’ providers**

#### ***8.2.1 ‘Main’ formal providers***

Throughout this chapter, we focus primarily on the *main formal* childcare provider used by the parents for the ‘selected’ child (as randomly chosen during the interview)<sup>78</sup>. In addition, a small number of questions were asked about informal providers as discussed below.

22 per cent of ‘selected’ school age children mainly received childcare from a formal provider<sup>79</sup>. Among these, Table 8.1 shows the breakdown of main formal providers, split into institutional, individual and other providers. Far more school age children were attending an institutional provider as their main provider than individual formal providers (75 per cent compared to the 19 per cent). The most commonly used of these institutional providers were breakfast and after school clubs, identified by four in ten (49 per cent) families whose school age child received formal childcare.

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<sup>77</sup> ‘School age’ children have been defined here as all children aged six to 14, plus any four or five year olds who attend school full time. Any four or five year olds not at school or only attending part-time have been included in Chapter 7, as pre-school age children.

<sup>78</sup> The computer program identified the formal provider used for the greatest number of hours in the last week. Respondents were asked whether this was their main formal provider and given the opportunity of identifying an alternative if appropriate.

<sup>79</sup> This figure excludes sport/leisure activity (this type of provider is not included in the rest of the chapter as most of the questions did not apply).

As we would expect with this age group, small numbers of school age children were receiving care at early years education services. One in ten (9 per cent) school age children attended leisure or sport activities as their main providers, where very few pre-school children had done so. Amongst the individual formal providers, childminders made up the vast majority, the main form of childcare for 9 per cent of school age children receiving formal childcare<sup>80</sup>. This is similar to the proportion of families with pre-school children who used childminders (8 per cent).

**Table 8.1 Main formal providers used for the ‘selected’ child**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
<i>Institutional provider</i>	75
<b>Breakfast club/After school club on-site</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Reception class attached to a primary or infants school</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Breakfast club/After school club off-site</b>	<b>13</b>
Special day school or nursery or unit	1
Nursery class attached to primary or infants school	1
<i>Individual providers</i>	19
<b>Childminder</b>	<b>9</b>
Babysitter	7
Nanny/au pair	3
<i>Other</i>	9
Sport/Leisure activity	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	1363
<i>Base: All families with a school age ‘selected’ child who mainly uses a formal provider</i>	

### **8.2.2 ‘Main’ informal providers**

In the latter part of the chapter, we focus on informal providers used as school age children’s main provider<sup>81</sup>. 26 per cent of ‘selected’ children of school age had an informal provider as their main provider. Table 8.2 shows the breakdown of these informal providers. By far the most common informal provider was the child’s grandparents, identified by half (52 per cent) of school age children with a main informal provider.

<sup>80</sup> Given the small numbers of formal individual and some institutional providers used by children at school full time (nursery schools, 5; nursery classes, 18; special day schools, 18; day nurseries, 2; playgroup or pre-school, 3; nannies, 34; babysitters, 79; holiday clubs, 3; other nursery education providers, 1), these have been excluded from analysis. Rather, we report on the main formal providers (individually) and on informal providers (as a group and individually).

<sup>81</sup> Parents using formal and informal providers were asked which was their main provider overall. Parents who identified an informal provider as their ‘main provider’ were asked about reasons for choosing that provider (as well as reasons for choosing their main formal provider). Parents using only informal providers were asked to identify their main informal provider and asked about reasons for choosing that provider.

**Table 8.2 Main informal providers used for the ‘selected’ child**

	Column per cent
	%
<i>Informal providers</i>	
Grandparents	52
Ex-husband / partner / child’s other parent	14
A friend or neighbour	14
Child’s older brother/sister	12
Another relative	8
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>1335</i>
<i>Base: All families with a school age ‘selected’ child who mainly uses an informal provider or who identified an informal provider as their main usual provider</i>	

### 8.3 Childminders

Childminders made up around a tenth (9 per cent) of all the main formal providers used by parents of school age children. This section examines some of the issues associated with using a childminder, looking at why parents chose to use childminders and what they were doing while their children were at the provider (largely looking at whether they were using childcare so that they could study or work). We then look at which kinds of families use childminders for their school age children, and explore parents’ opinions about any improvements that are needed to childminders’ services, as well as their views of the inspection process at these providers.

#### 8.3.1 Why parents chose to use a childminder

Parents were asked about their main reasons for choosing their main providers. Given a list of options, of which they could choose as many as they wished, they were asked –

*‘People have different reasons for choosing childcare or nursery education. From this card, why did you choose [provider’s name] to look after [child’s name]?’*

Trust, reliability and recommendation were key issues for parents choosing childminders, indicating that parents were often ‘pulled’ into using childminders, rather than ‘pushed’ into doing so. Table 8.3 shows that the fact that parents could trust their provider was the most important reason for nearly half (44 per cent) of parents using childminders. One in ten (10 per cent) parents chose their childminder because they were reliable, and a slightly smaller proportion (8 per cent) claimed to use their childminder because they were recommended to them. 6 per cent or less of all the parents using childminders cited all other reasons.



**Table 8.3 Main reason why parents chose childminders as their main provider**

	Column per cent
	%
I could trust this person/these people	44
I wanted reliable arrangements	10
It was recommended to me	8
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	6
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	5
It was low cost	4
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	4
It had a good reputation	4
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	3
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	3
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	3
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	2
No other choices available to me	2
It is easy to get to	1
Could receive help from tax credits with this provider	1
I wanted my child to mix with other children	0
My employer subsidises this childcare	0
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	0
Other reason(s)	1
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>106</i>
<i>Bases: all families with a pre-school age 'selected' child who mainly used a childminder.</i>	

During the interview, parents were asked why they had used each of their providers in the last week, and given a list of reasons to choose from (see Chapter 3). These reasons have been grouped during analysis, to form three categories: economic reasons - associated with the parents' work or study, educational reasons - related to the child's educational development, and other reasons - which do not fall into either of these categories.

Most (94 per cent) parents were using their childminder (if it was their main provider) in order that they could work or study during the periods when their child was at the provider. Very few (less than 1 per cent) parents said they were using their childminder so that their child could be educated. Around one in five (19 per cent) said they were doing other activities (e.g. appointments or social arrangements) when they were using their childminders.

### **8.3.2 Which types of families used childminders?**

The vast majority (86 per cent) of children mainly receiving care from childminders was at primary school (four to ten years old). This compares to 62 per cent of school age children in our whole sample who were this age.

The families who used childminders tended to have higher incomes (Table 8.4).

**Table 8.4 Use of childminders in the last week, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent	
	Families who mainly used childminders	All families with school age children
	%	%
Under £10,000	3	16
£10,000 - £19,999	20	32
£20,000 - £31,000	34	26
£32,000 or more	44	27
<i>Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child</i>		
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	103	4904

Just under half (44 per cent) of parents using childminders were in the highest income bracket of £32,000 or more. Given that around a quarter of the parents with school age children in our sample were in this income group, higher income parents were proportionately more common users of childminders than other parents. Only 3 per cent of those using childminders had an income of under £10,000 (although the lowest income group made up 16 per cent of our sample of school age children's families).

As we saw, most users of childminders were people who used them for the purposes of work or study, which explains the larger number of higher income families who used childminders.

The use of childminders is closely linked to maternal work (approximately measured as working lone parents and dual-earner families). If mothers work, the family is more likely to use a childminder. Seven in ten (70 per cent) school age children in dual-earner families were receiving care from childminders, compared to 4 per cent of children in families with only one partner working. Similarly, school age children of working lone parents were more likely to be mainly receiving care from childminders than those with non-working lone parents (26 per cent compared to 1 per cent).

### **8.3.3 Improvements to childminders**

Parents were asked if their main providers could be improved in any way, and they answered this question -

*'Sometimes parents who are generally happy with the education or childcare their child is receiving still feel that various improvements could be made. Do you think [provider's name] could improve in any of the ways shown on this card?'*

As we saw in Chapter 7, most parents of pre-school children were content with the quality of their providers. But does the same hold true for parents of school age children?

The majority (92 per cent) of parents using childminders for this age group did not wish to see their provider improved in any of the ways we suggested. Indeed, only five (out of seven) areas of improvement were suggested by any of these parents, and each one was mentioned by only 5 per cent or less (outdoor play, hygiene/health and safety, the building or premises, security, and equipment or toys). Across all parents of school age children receiving care from formal providers, 68 per cent had said that they thought none of the improvements listed were necessary, showing that those who used childminders were significantly more likely to be content with their providers than parents of school age children as a whole.

### **8.3.4 Inspection of childminders**

Since April 2003, Ofsted expanded its inspections to include childcare services in England, including childminders. During this survey we asked some questions designed to help us understand parents' awareness of Ofsted's work and whether it influenced their choice of childcare provider, whatever the reason they were using the provider.

This section looks firstly at whether parents were aware of their provider having been inspected, and goes on to explore whether knowledge of an inspection affected their decision to use their provider.

Parents were asked –

*Some reception classes, nursery education and childcare providers are inspected to ensure they meet certain standards. Has [provider's name] been inspected before or since [child's name] has been there?*

Chapter 7 showed a substantial number (83 per cent) of parents of pre-school children were aware of their childminder having undergone an inspection. Around two thirds (67 per cent) of parents using childminders for their school age children said that this provider had been inspected, a significantly lower proportion than those with pre-school children. This difference may be related to the fact that childminders only register with Ofsted for inspections if they look after children aged eight or under.

Parents were asked who they thought had carried out the inspection with this question –

*Was the inspection at [provider's name] carried out by any of the organisations shown on this card?*

*Local Education Authority / Local Authority*

*Independent School's Council*

*Ofsted*

*Another organisation*

*Not sure*

Around three-quarters (77 per cent) of parents of school age children receiving care from childminders reported that Ofsted had carried out the inspections, a similar proportion (81 per cent) to those parents of pre-school children who mainly received care from childminders (see Chapter 7).

As with parents of pre-school children receiving care from childminders, most (71 per cent) parents whose provider had been inspected received results of the process. When asked about whether the results affected their decision to use their childminder or not, parents views were split. Around a third (35 per cent) said that it had, while just over half (56 per cent) claimed that it had not. The base for this question was too small to make any judgements as to why this was.

## **8.4 Reception Classes**

Reception classes were attended by 13 per cent of 'selected' school age children with a main formal provider. Reception classes were included in the study as an early education provider. As our definition of pre-school and school age is based on whether a child is at part-time or full-time school (as explained in Section 8.2), we had parents of school age children identifying reception classes as their main formal provider. This section looks at parents' uses of and views about the reception classes attended by their children, exploring opinions about any improvements that were needed, as well as views of the inspection process.

Three-quarters (75 per cent) of the children receiving early years education at reception classes full-time were aged four, and a fifth (21 per cent) aged five. The remaining 4 per cent are aged six<sup>82</sup>.

#### 8.4.1 Why parents chose to use Reception Classes

Using the same questions as outline above (see Section 8.3.1), the most important reasons given by parents for using reception classes for their school age children focused mainly on educational reasons (Table 8.5). Overall, parents were choosing reception classes because they wanted to see their child educated.

**Table 8.5 Main reason why parents chose reception classes as their main provider**

	Column per cent		
	Used Reception classes  %	Used a reception class for educational reasons  %	Used reception class for economic reasons  %
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	26	28	28
It had a good reputation	22	23	18
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	12	11	11
It is easy to get to	10	10	9
No other choices available to me	5	5	6
It was recommended to me	4	4	7
I could trust this person/these people	3	3	3
I wanted my child to mix with other children	3	3	1
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	3	3	5
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	2	2	3
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	1	+	3
I wanted reliable arrangements	1	1	0
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	+	0	2
Other reason(s)	8	7	5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>401</i>	<i>354</i>	<i>98</i>

*Base: All families with a pre-school age 'selected' child who mainly used a reception class.*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

*Note: parents could say they had used their providers for more than one reason, so these subgroups are not mutually exclusive and families may have been represented twice.*

Education was clearly the key issue for users of reception classes. Around a quarter (26 per cent) of parents said that the main reason for choosing to use a reception class was that their child could be 'educated while being looked after'. A fifth (22 per cent) said they chose reception class because it had a good reputation. Practical issues such as the children's siblings attending the provider (12 per cent) and the school being easy to get to (10 per cent) were also popular reasons for choosing reception classes.

<sup>82</sup> There are several reasons why a minority of children at reception class are six years old, including learning difficulties, the fact that English may not be their first language, or health problems. It is also possible a very small number of providers were classified as reception classes incorrectly, and, despite thorough checks on provider classifications, some have remained classified in this way due to insufficient information from either the provider or the administrative databases.

Looking at the reasons why parents had used reception classes as a childcare provider in the last week, nine in ten (88 per cent) parents were using reception classes for their child's education, and only a quarter (23 per cent) were using it while they worked or studied. These figures can be compared to the parents of all school age children in our sample who were using childcare – only half (52 per cent) were using reception classes for educational reasons, while a much larger four in ten (38 per cent) were using their main providers for reasons that included economic reasons.

As before, we also analysed why parents chose reception classes by the reasons they were using the provider. The results are shown on Table 8.5. Most of the crucial factors for parents choosing their reception classes were similar whether or not they were using it to work or study. However, as we might expect, 3 per cent of parents who sent their child to reception class for reasons which included their own work or study said they chose this provider because the hours fitted their family's working patterns. This compares to less than 1 per cent of parents who used reception classes for reasons that included the child's education.

#### **8.4.2 Kinds of families using reception classes**

As we would expect, the income levels of parents using reception classes did not vary greatly (Table 8.6). The number of families with a low income who used reception classes was proportionately larger than the number of families with school age children who were in this income group overall. It is possible that families with lower incomes took advantage of the fact that state reception classes were free, whereas higher earning parents have chosen other forms of early years education or childcare such as day nurseries.

**Table 8.6 Use of reception classes in the last week, by family yearly income**

	<b>Families who mainly used reception class %</b>	<b>Column per cent All families with school age children %</b>
Under £10,000	21	16
£10,000 - £19,999	31	32
£20,000 - £31,000	22	26
£32,000 or more	26	27
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>375</i>	<i>4904</i>
<i>Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly uses a reception class</i>		

Whether or not parents were working while their child was at reception class, most of them said that they were using it for the child's educational development.

When we looked at the reasons why parents chose their reception class by the family income level, there were some significant differences (Table 8.7). While 20 per cent of families in the lowest income group (under £10,000) chose a reception class because the child's brother or sister was there, only 2 per cent of families in the highest income group (over £32,000) gave this as their main reason.

**Table 8.7 Main reason why parents chose reception classes as their main provider, by family yearly income**

	<b>Column per cent</b>			
	<b>Under £10,000</b>	<b>£10,000 to £19,999</b>	<b>£20,000 to £31,000</b>	<b>£32,000 +</b>
	%	%	%	%
I could trust this person/these people	0	1	8	4
Knew they would bring up child the same way I	2	2	2	3
It is easy to get to	7	13	14	8
I wanted my child to mix with other children	2	1	8	1
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	20	9	15	2
I wanted someone properly trained to look after	3	5	3	2
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	0	1	0	2
Wanted child to be educated while being looked	26	27	24	28
I wanted reliable arrangements	1	2	0	0
It had a good reputation	16	24	19	29
It was recommended to me	4	5	1	6
No other choices available to me	9	3	5	5
Other reason(s)	10	7	2	10
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>101</i>
<i>Base : all families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly used a reception class.</i>				

In addition, parents in the lowest income groups were less likely to say they chose to use a reception class because of its reputation, than those in the highest income bracket (16 per cent compared to 29 per cent). This may reflect a greater likelihood for lower income families to use schools within their catchment area than higher income families. It may also be an indication their families with higher incomes could afford to live in areas with more reputable schools. The fact that reputation is something on which some families can base their choice of provider, reveals that they had more options than other families. For the middle income groups, there was a less pronounced difference between the proportions of parents giving both these reasons, suggesting that very high or very low incomes affect these reasons for choosing to use reception classes.

### **8.4.3 Improvements to reception classes**

When we asked parents about their perception of the quality of the service from their reception class, six in ten (58 per cent) did not think that any of the items we listed were areas that needed improvement. The remainder did cite areas that they thought could be enhanced. These issues mainly centred on the staff:child ratio. A fifth (21 per cent) of parents thought that class sizes were rather large. (Only a tenth (11 per cent) of all parents of school age children who used formal providers cited this reason, showing that users of reception classes were more likely to be critical of this area.) In comparison, a quarter of parents with pre-school children (26 per cent) using reception classes were concerned about class sizes.

Issues associated with the premises were the other main areas cited by these parents as in need of improvement. Outdoor play facilities were seen as needing improvements by one in ten (12 per cent) parents, and the security of the school building was a concern for the same number (11 per cent). In addition, one in ten (10 per cent) parents also cited the overall building or school site as in need of improvement. That this area was a focus of parents' criticisms, may link to the higher expectations that parents have of formal school contexts, in comparison with the sometimes more part-time and ad hoc childcare arrangements they had previously used.

#### ***8.4.4 Inspection of reception classes***

This section looks at whether parents were aware of their reception class having been inspected, and goes on to explore whether knowledge of an inspection affected their decision to use the reception class.

Around two thirds (61 per cent) of reception classes had been inspected at some point (before, during or after the child attended). The remainder of parents were mostly (34 per cent) not sure whether an inspection had taken place or not, with only a small proportion telling us that their reception class had not been inspected.

The majority (86 per cent) of parents whose reception classes had been inspected reported that Ofsted had carried out the inspection. Seven in ten (68 per cent) parents of school age children had received information about the inspection. However, six in ten (60 per cent) of these parents did not use this information in making their choice to use the reception class.

### **8.5 Breakfast and After school clubs**

Since 1998 the government has encouraged the development of childcare provision before and after normal school hours. Part of the extended schools programme is designed to enable parents to have access to childcare places between 8am and 6pm on weekdays, at after school clubs and breakfast clubs. The clubs can include specific activities, learning support, and assistance to targeted groups or wider ranges of children. As the services operate in the hours before and after school when parents are often travelling to or finishing work, the services have proved a useful form of childcare. Although not a universal service yet, many out-of-school clubs have developed with funding from the Big Lottery Fund (previously the New Opportunities Fund).

This section outlines parents' reasons for using breakfast and after school clubs, as well as their decision making processes when choosing this provider. We include clubs both on school sites ('on-site') and outside of school premises ('off-site'). We asked for parents' opinions about any improvements that were needed, as well as their views of the inspection process.

#### ***8.5.1 Why parents chose to use breakfast and after school clubs***

Using the question outlined in Section 8.3.1, the most commonly cited reason given by parents for using breakfast and after school clubs was related to the parents' trust in the provider to take care of their children (14 per cent) (Table 8.8). Other important reasons were that this was the child's choice (11 per cent) and the social aspects of the child mixing with other children (10 per cent). Thus, parents, again, appeared to be making choices based on factors which "pulled" them towards using out-of-school clubs, rather than issues which mean they have been forced into using them.

**Table 8.8 Main reason why parents chose out-of-school clubs as their main provider**

	Column per cent		
	Out-of-school clubs on-site %	Out-of-school clubs off-site %	Total out-of-school clubs %
I could trust this person/these people	12	19	14
Child's choice	10	11	11
I wanted my child to mix with other children	9	12	10
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	10	4	9
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	9	9	9
I wanted reliable arrangements	9	10	9
It is easy to get to	8	3	7
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	6	6	6
It had a good reputation	6	4	6
It was recommended to me	2	10	4
No other choices available to me	3	1	3
It was low cost	2	1	2
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	1	2	1
Other reason(s)	10	7	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>425</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>579</i>
<i>Base: All families with school age 'selected' child who mainly used out-of-school clubs.</i>			

There were some differences in the choices for out-of-school clubs depending on whether they were on or off a school site. While only 4 per cent of parents said that *off-site* clubs were chosen because they fitted the family working hours, around 10 per cent of those using *on-site* clubs said this. On-site clubs were also more likely to be chosen because they were easy to get to, than off-site clubs (8 per cent compared to 3 per cent). This indicates the added convenience to parents of having childcare at a school site.

Of all parents who had used an out-of-school club for their school age children, 43 per cent had done so (in the last week) for at least one economic reason, and 29 per cent had done so for reasons that included the child's educational development. 63 per cent were using them for other reasons. We looked at the most important factors involved in parents' choices of main provider, by why they were using them. The results are shown on Table 8.9. Trust in the provider, remains a key factor whatever the reasons why parents are using them with no less than 16 per cent of parents saying this was the most important factor influencing their choice, whatever their reason for using the provider.



**Table 8.9 Why parents chose their out-of-school clubs, by the reasons they were using them**

	Column per cent		
	Used out-of-school clubs for economic reasons %	Used out-of-school clubs for educational reasons %	Used out-of-school clubs for other reasons %
I could trust this person/these people	14	13	16
Fitted in with my/my partner's working hours	19	6	5
I wanted reliable arrangements	16	3	7
It is easy to get to	10	3	4
I wanted someone properly trained to look after child	9	7	5
It had a good reputation	5	8	5
No other choices available to me	5	1	2
It was recommended to me	4	3	5
It was low cost	2	1	2
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	1	0	0
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	1	1	+
I wanted my child to mix with other children	1	13	14
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	1	1	2
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	1	22	11
Other reason(s)	9	8	9
Child's choice	2	11	15
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>167</i>	<i>363</i>

*Base: All families with school age 'selected' child who mainly used out-of-school clubs.*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

*Note: parents could say they had used their providers for more than one reason, so these subgroups are not mutually exclusive and families may have been represented twice.*

However, some interesting differences emerge when we look at reasons for choosing the out-of-school clubs, according to whether the childcare was being used for educational purposes or because of the parents working or studying. Parents who used out-of-school clubs (at least in part) so they could work or study, made choices centred on reliability and practicalities. They were more likely to say they chose the club because it was easy to get to than parents who were using the provider for purposes that included educational reasons (10 per cent compared to 3 per cent).

If parents were using their provider for reasons which included their own work or study, they were also more likely to choose the out-of-school club for its reliable arrangements, than those who were using the provider for reasons which included the child's education (16 per cent compared to 3 per cent). In addition, a fifth (19 per cent) of parents who were working or studying while their child was at the out-of-school club, said that they used this provider because it was convenient for their family work patterns. This compares to less than a tenth (6 per cent) of parents who were using the out-of-school club for the child's education.

When parents had chosen their out-of-school club for reasons including the child's educational development, other concerns were more apparent. One in five (22 per cent) of these parents said they chose their provider because they wanted their child to be 'educated while being looked after'. The child's choice in the out-of-school club also become a more important factor for these parents – one in ten (11 per cent) gave this as their most important reason, compared to only 2 per cent of parents who were using the club while they were working or studying themselves.

When we looked at the reasons parents chose out-of-school clubs (on and off site) by the age of their children, we found few significant differences. However, parents of younger children were more likely to say they chose their provider because it fitted the family's working hours, than parents of older children. 11 per cent of those with four to seven year olds said this, compared to 5 per cent of parents of 11 to 14 year olds. This may be because parents are increasingly content to let older children look after themselves, while younger children's childcare patterns need more to fit the working patterns of their parents.

Out of the parents who used out-of-school clubs (on and off site) as their main provider, lone parents had some different reasons for choosing them, than couple families. Lone parents were more concerned with ease of access to their providers, with one in ten (10 per cent) citing this as their most important reason. Only one in twenty (5 per cent) couple families had chosen their out-of-school club for this reason, suggesting that lone parents face more difficulties in juggling taking their children to the provider with other commitments, which influenced their choice of childcare.

### 8.5.2 Types of families using out-of-school clubs

Here we look at the profile of families who used out-of-school clubs, both on and off site.

As a proportion of all school age children in our sample, there were more eight to ten year olds receiving childcare at out-of-school clubs than any other age group (43 per cent, compared to 29 per cent in the whole sample) (Table 8.10).

**Table 8.10** Use of out-of-school clubs in the last week, by the age of the 'selected' child

	Column per cent			
	Out-of-school club on-site	Out-of-school club off-site	Total – out-of-school clubs	Total – Families with a school age 'selected' child
	%	%	%	%
4-7	37	29	35	33
8-10	46	35	43	29
11-14	16	36	21	39
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>584</i>	<i>5287</i>
<i>Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly uses an out-of-school club</i>				

Nearly a half (46 per cent) of children receiving childcare at *on-site* clubs were between eight to ten years old, while around a third (35 per cent) of those receiving care at *off-site* clubs were in this age group. However, older children (aged 11 to 14) made up larger proportions of children at *off-site* clubs than they did at *on-site* clubs (36 per cent compared to 16 per cent), perhaps due to children's expanding interests as they grew older.

There is a clear relationship between the working status of families and their use of out-of-school clubs, as Table 8.11 shows, with working families more likely to be users of out-of-school clubs for their school age children.

**Table 8.11 Use of out-of-school clubs in the last week, by family working status**

	Column per cent			
	Out-of-school club on-site	Out-of-school club off-site	Total - out-of-school clubs	Total - all families with a school age 'selected' child
	%	%	%	%
Couple – both working	49	57	51	45
Couple – one working	23	23	23	24
Couple – neither working	3	3	3	5
Lone parent working	16	13	15	12
Lone parent not working	11	4	9	14
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>584</i>	<i>5287</i>
<i>Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly uses an out-of-school club</i>				

Half of those families using out-of-school clubs as their main provider were dual-earner families (51 per cent). This was larger – proportionately – than the number of dual-earner families in our whole sample of school age children. It was also significantly more than any other type of family using out-of-school clubs, suggesting that the demand for childcare after and before school hours was greatest for families where both parents worked. However, couple families where neither parents work made up only 3 per cent of users of out-of-school clubs.

Can all families afford childcare at after school or breakfast clubs? Table 8.12 shows that the users of out-of-school clubs were more likely to have higher incomes. This may be related to affordability of the care or to the longer hours of working often associated with higher incomes.

**Table 8.12 Use of out-of-school clubs in the last week, by family yearly income**

	Column per cent			
	Out-of-school club on-site	Out-of-school club off-site	Total - out-of-school clubs	Total - all families with a school age 'selected' child
	%	%	%	%
Under £10,000	12	10	12	16
£10,000 - £19,999	26	27	26	32
£20,000 - £31,000	26	25	25	26
£32,000 or more	36	39	37	27
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>406</i>	<i>143</i>	<i>549</i>	<i>4904</i>
<i>Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly uses an out-of-school club</i>				

Families earning under £10,000 per year made up one in ten users of out-of-school clubs on and off school sites (12 and 10 per cent respectively). Given that 16 per cent of families with school age children in our sample were in this income group, there are proportionately fewer parents in this income bracket able or wanting to use out-of school clubs. This compares to 36 per cent of users of on-site clubs, and 39 per cent of users of off-site clubs, who were in the highest income bracket (over £32,000). Of the parents who used out-of-school clubs, around the same proportions were in the middle income groups, suggesting that families at extreme ends of the income scale were most likely to have had their choice of out-of-school clubs affected by their income levels.

### ***8.5.3 Improvements to out-of-school clubs***

As for parents' views of the services they saw at their out-of-school clubs, we found that most (69 per cent) parents did not see the need for most of the suggested improvements on the list we showed them. Of the improvements suggested, those linked to the building or premises were most commonly cited (by 11 per cent of parents using the services) alongside the staff:child ratio during the sessions (10 per cent). There were no substantial differences in the types of improvements suggested by parents, when we looked at out-of-school clubs on and off school sites.

### ***8.5.4 Inspection of out-of-school clubs***

So far, we have found that most parents were aware of inspections carried out at their main provider – both for pre-school and school age children. But does the same hold true when we look at the inspection of out-of-school clubs (a more recent policy development)?

Five in ten (53 per cent) of parents who used out-of-school clubs *on* school sites, and four in ten (42 per cent) of parents who used out-of-school clubs *off* school sites said their provider had been inspected. Most parents who did not say their provider had been inspected, were, in each case, unsure of whether or not an inspection had taken place.

When we asked parents who had carried out the inspection eight in ten (80 per cent) of parents using out-of-school clubs *on* school sites said Ofsted, while only six in ten (61 per cent) of parents using *off-site* clubs did. This difference may be because clubs *on* school sites were easily associated with the school. Because the level of awareness about school inspections is so high, parents may have assumed the after school club was part of the same institution and therefore believed it had been inspected by Ofsted. For this reason as well, a much higher proportion (22 per cent) of parents using *off-site* clubs, were unsure of who carried out the inspection.

Overall, nearly two thirds (61 per cent) of parents using out-of-school clubs (on and off school sites) who knew it had been inspected said they had received information about it. A substantial number (34 per cent) of the parents who received this information before they started using the provider, said that the results had influenced their decision to use it, showing the impact of such inspections on parents choices of out-of-school clubs if they have school age children.

### 8.5.5 What services are available for parents at out-of-school clubs?

As discussed in Chapter 7, many formal childcare providers have also started to offer services to parents, as part of the move towards 'integrated' provision for families. For pre-school children, many services are offered to parents (such as advice for parents or parents and toddlers groups). But what services were offered to or used by parents of school age children? For parents who used out-of-school clubs, we asked them. Tables 8.13 and 8.14 show the answers to both of these questions.

Around three-quarters of parents using both types of out-of-school clubs (72 and 75 per cent) said that their provider did not offer any of the services we suggested to them. However, most commonly cited were services involving training for parents (11 and 9 per cent), or advice and support (8 and 7 per cent).

Around a quarter of parents using out-of-school clubs on school sites used some of these, the most commonly used being advice and support services for parents, used by 14 per cent of those whose providers offered some of these services (Table 8.14).

**Table 8.13 Services available to parents at out-of-school clubs, on and off school sites**

	Column per cent	
	Out-of-school clubs on-site %	Out-of-school clubs off-site %
Courses or training	11	9
Job or career advice	1	2
Health services for families	5	2
Counselling services	1	1
Parenting classes	4	3
Advice or support for parents	8	7
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	5	6
Help in finding additional childcare	2	2
Other services	2	4
None	72	75
Don't Know	5	2
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>429</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Base: All families whose 'selected' child was school age and mainly used an out-of-school club</i>		

**Table 8.14 Services used by parents at out-of-school clubs, on and off school sites**

	Column per cent	
	Out-of-school clubs on-site	Out-of-school clubs off-site
	%	%
Courses or training	9	[6]
Health services for families	9	[0]
Counselling services	2	[0]
Parenting classes	4	[0]
Advice or support for parents	14	[15]
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	2	[3]
Help in finding additional childcare	1	[3]
Other services	1	[6]
None	68	[70]
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>34</i>

*Base: All families whose 'selected' child was pre-school age and used an out-of-school club and who identified at least one services as available at this provider*

[ ] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents

We asked parents using out-of-school clubs what services they would use if they were offered to them. Courses and training were popular amongst users of clubs both on and off school sites (14 and 13 per cent), although 14 per cent of parents said they would also use family health services at out-of-school clubs on school sites, if they were offered (Table 8.15). Overall, more parents (77 per cent) using out-of-school clubs *off* school sites said that they would not use any extra services if they were offered, than parents using clubs *on* school sites (64 per cent). This may be related to the expectations of parents that their schools could provide further services, whereas out-of-school clubs outside off school sites, may cover a diverse range of activities, not necessarily connected to a school institution.

**Table 8.15 Services wanted by parents at out-of-school clubs, on and off school sites**

	Column per cent	
	Out-of-school clubs on-site	Out-of-school clubs off-site
	%	%
Courses or training	14	13
Job or career advice	5	4
Health services for families	14	6
Counselling services	3	1
Parenting classes	5	4
Advice or support for parents	8	8
Parent or childminder and toddler sessions	6	2
Help in finding additional childcare	8	4
Other services	+	0
None	64	77
Don't know	1	1
<i>Unweighted base:</i>	<i>429</i>	<i>149</i>

*Base: All families whose 'selected' child was school age and mainly used an out-of-school club*

+<0.5 per cent

## 8.6 'Main' informal providers

A quarter (26 per cent) of parents in our sample with a school age 'selected' child identified an informal provider as their main usual provider. This section looks at the main reasons why families chose to use these informal providers and looks at the types of families that used different kinds of informal providers.

### 8.6.1 Why parents chose informal providers

We asked parents why they chose their providers. As with the formal providers, we gave parents a list of reasons and asked them to choose the most important reason overall. Table 8.16 shows the results of this question. Trust in the provider was the main factor affecting most (60 per cent) parents' choices of informal providers. The proportion of parents giving other reasons is very small in comparison. However, it is worth noting that the desire for the child to spend time with the informal carer was cited by 6 per cent of parents, and 5 per cent said they used their informal provider because they could not afford a formal one.

**Table 8.16 Why parents chose their main informal provider, by provider type**

	Column per cent					
	Ex-husband/ Partner	Grand-parents	Sibling	Another relative	Friend or neighbour	TOTAL all informal providers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I could trust this person/these people	32	66	54	61	68	60
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	2	6	3	2	5	5
So that my child and a relative could spend time together	32	2	1	3	0	6
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	1	6	2	4	1	4
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	3	5	2	5	1	4
I wanted reliable arrangements	3	2	3	4	4	3
No other choices available to me	3	2	7	3	2	3
The person is family	11	1	8	2	1	3
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	1	1	13	1	1	3
It was low cost	1	1	1	3	1	1
Fitted in with my/my partner's working hours	3	2	3	3	0	2
I wanted my child to mix with other children	1	+	0	3	5	1
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	2	0	2	2	0	1
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	0	+	0	2	0	+
Child's choice	2	1	1	0	5	2
Other reason(s)	6	3	1	2	7	4
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>686</i>	<i>171</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>201</i>	<i>1320</i>

*Base: All families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly uses an informal provider or who identified an informal provider as their main usual provider*

*+ <0.5 per cent*

When we look at the differences in these reasons across different kinds of informal provider, we found that parents chose different types of providers for slightly different reasons. Trust – the main issue overall – was a more important factor in influencing parents using grandparents or friends (66 per cent and 68 per cent).

Very few parents said they chose grandparents for reasons other than trust, although the fact the grandparent would show their child affection was also an important reason given by users of these providers more than most others (6 per cent compared to 1 or 2 per cent of those using ex-partners, siblings or friends).

The ex-partner of the parent being interviewed (usually the child's other parent) was used by 14 per cent of parents who had a main informal provider. The most important reasons for parents using them for childcare were split between an issue of trust, and the need for the child to spend time with their other parent – around a third (32 per cent) of parents gave each reason. These families were by far the most likely to say that they used this person because the child needed to spend time with them.

Many parents used the child's older siblings as informal childcare. Over half (54 per cent) of parents using the child's siblings said that it was because they could trust them. The next most common reason for using this type of care was that the child could carry on being looked after at home. One in ten (13 per cent) of parents using the child's siblings said this, compared to only one in a hundred (1 per cent) of parents using other providers. In addition, 7 per cent of parents using siblings as a form of childcare were doing so because they had no other choice. Significantly fewer parents using grandparents (2 per cent) said they were using them because they had no other choice, suggesting that siblings were used more as a 'last resort' than grandparents.

Other relatives were used, like grandparents, mainly because the parents felt they could trust them (61 per cent gave this as their main reason). Friends or neighbours were also used because they could be trusted (68 per cent), although the child was more likely to have made the decision for this kind of care than for the use of grandparents or their siblings. 5 per cent of parents using friends, compared to 1 per cent of those using grandparents or siblings, said this was the main reason for their choice.

We saw above that parents of school age children were using their formal childcare for different reasons depending on the specific reasons for which they were using the childcare at the time. Does the same hold true when we look at parents who mainly used informal providers? Table 8.17 shows the differences between parents who were using their informal provider for an economic reason, and those were using it for other reasons. Overall, two thirds (61 per cent) of parents who used their carers for both reasons (economic and for other reasons), said that they chose their providers because they could trust them.



Table 8.17

**Why parents chose their informal provider, by the reasons they were using their provider**

	Column per cent	
	Used Informal childcare for economic reasons %	Used Informal childcare for other reasons %
I could not afford to pay for formal childcare	8	3
It was low cost	2	1
I could trust this person/these people	61	61
Wanted someone who would show my child affection	6	4
Knew they would bring up child the same way I would	4	3
I wanted my child to be looked after at home	2	2
I wanted my child to mix with other children	1	2
His/her brother(s)/sister(s) went there	+	1
Fitted in with my/my partner s working hours	3	1
Wanted child to be educated while being looked after	+	+
I wanted reliable arrangements	3	3
No other choices available to me	3	3
Other reason(s)	2	5
The person is family	2	4
So that my child and a relative could spend time	2	6
Child's choice	1	2
<i>Unweighted bases</i>	<i>712</i>	<i>783</i>
<i>Bases: all families with a school age 'selected' child who mainly used an informal provider, or who identified an informal provider as their main usual provider.</i>		

+ <0.5 per cent

*Note: parents could say they had used their providers for more than one reason, so these subgroups are not mutually exclusive and families may have been represented twice.*

If parents were using their main informal provider for economic reasons (while they went to work or studied) they were more likely to say they chose their provider for reasons that suggested they were 'pushed' into using them. For example, nearly one in ten (8 per cent) parents using their informal provider for these reasons, said they chose their provider because they could not afford formal childcare. This compared to less than one in twenty (3 per cent) parents using their provider for other reasons saying that this was the most important factor in their choice.

Similarly, 3 per cent of parents who used their main informal provider for economic reasons said they chose their carer because their availability fitted the family's working hours. This was significantly more than the 1 per cent of parents using their main provider for other reasons.

Parents who were using their provider for work or study were less likely choose their child's informal childcare because of they wanted to develop their child's relationship with the person looking after them. Parents who were using their main informal provider for other reasons which included those other than economic were more likely to say that they chose their provider because they wanted their child to spend time with their carer (6 per cent compared to the 2 per cent of parents who were using their informal provider for reasons that included economic activities).

## **8.7 Summing up**

This chapter has investigated some key issues about parents' views of the formal and informal childcare received by their school age children. Key points include –

- The majority of parents felt that they had a real choice of providers.
- Parents' reasons for choosing their formal childcare providers differed according to the type of provider:
  - Trust and reliability were key issues for choosing childminders (44 per cent of these parents cited this reason).
  - For users of out-of-school clubs, issues around how the care fitted in with their working hours and the choice of the children themselves were important for choosing out-of-school care (9 per cent and 11 per cent cited these reasons, respectively).
  - Educational reasons and the reputation of the provider were most often cited regarding reception classes, cited by a quarter of parents using them as their main provider (26 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).
- Most parents were largely content with their providers, with the majority unable to suggest any improvements. 92 per cent of parents using childminders, 58 per cent of those using reception classes, and 69 per cent of those using out-of-school clubs were content with their providers.
- Awareness of Ofsted inspection results was high, particularly for reception classes, but also for out of school provision. 68 per cent of parents whose reception class had been inspected, had received results of the process.
- Whilst currently a small minority of parents using out-of-school clubs said that their providers offered additional services, substantial numbers of parents would like to see them available. Most commonly wanted were health services (6 per cent), careers and job advice (4 per cent), and courses or training (13 per cent). However, demand was much lower than from parents with pre-school children.

## 9 CONCLUSIONS

### 9.1 Background

In the preceding chapters, we have provided a picture of the childcare and early years provision market in England in 2004, from the perspective of parents of children under 15. The profile of families using various forms of childcare and early years provision can be compared to that of three and five years previously (2001 and 1999). We have reported on the reasons why parents use various forms of childcare (in order to work, for the educational development of the child, etc.), and the proportions of families involved in each. Selecting one child from the family, we have taken a detailed look at the pattern of use across a particular week, to investigate the number of hours and the actual times of day when various types of childcare and early years provision are being used. Both actual and perceived costs of childcare and early years provision were reported, again across different types of providers and different types of families. Parental views on current providers – why they were chosen, room for improvement, the importance of inspections and services provided – were discussed. And we reported on the size of potential barriers to using childcare and early years provision, such as affordability, quality and accessibility.

Whilst each chapter provides information that is critical in its own right, it is useful to look at the main emergent themes, particularly how they relate to current – or proposed – policies on childcare and early years provision. In this final concluding chapter, we comment on the following, drawing on what we know about parents' use of, need for and views of childcare and early years provision –

- Whether or not more families are using childcare and early years provision with the continued development of the National Childcare Strategy;
- Formal and informal care;
- Whether the profile of families using childcare and early years provision has changed during this period;
- Cost and affordability;
- Availability;
- Quality;
- Information needs;
- Integrated services.

### 9.2 Are more families using childcare and early years provision, with the continued development of the National Childcare Strategy?

More families are using childcare and early years provision in 2004 than in 1999 and 2001. In 2004, two thirds (64 per cent) of families used childcare in the last week, a rise of eight percentage points since 2001. The rise was largely explained by an increase in the numbers of parents using formal childcare and early years provision (from 31 per cent in 2001 to 41 per cent in 2004). These findings are an indication of the success of the policies which focus on formal childcare and early years provision arising from the National Childcare Strategy.

Reflecting government encouragement of out-of-school provision, the proportions of families using breakfast and after school clubs doubled between 2001 and 2004, from six to 12 per cent of all families.

The consequences of the universal provision of free part-time early years education for three and four year olds are less clear. We found an increase in the use of nursery and reception classes (which both specialise in provision for three and four year olds), but not in nursery schools or day nurseries (and the data is less comparable), nor in childminders or playgroups.

### **9.3 Formal and informal care**

Most government policies have focused on issues surrounding the use of and demand for formal childcare and early years provision. Little has been done with regard to informal care, despite the fact that it makes up a large proportion of all childcare used – particularly among lower income families. There are debates about the extent to which the government should involve itself in issues about informal care. These include the extent to which informal childcare should be encouraged as a choice against formal childcare, in terms of children’s educational and social development, and the extent to which government could or should oversee the quality of informal childcare provided.

However, our study clearly shows that informal childcare plays a key role among families in England. It is not only used as a cheaper option than formal care. It is often chosen because of the home environment, the trust which parents place in its providers and the flexibility in the arrangements which can be made. The extent to which these are particular issues for lone parents (who do not have the same opportunities as couple parents to shift-parent) are highlighted.

### **9.4 Profile of families using childcare and early years provision**

Traditionally, better-off families are more likely to use – particularly formal - childcare and early years education, largely due to a greater ability to afford such provision and a greater need, with one or both parents engaging in paid work. In 2004, this was certainly still the case. However, many of the childcare and early years initiatives have concentrated on improving the accessibility and affordability of childcare and early years provision to families that are less well-off. The recognised link between parental work and the reduction of child poverty, combined with the need for good quality, affordable childcare provision to enable parents to enter work, has led the government to concentrate its efforts on providing this childcare for those who most need it. There have been a series of initiatives (e.g. Sure Start, Children’s Centres, Neighbourhood Nurseries) that have focused solely (to date) on the more deprived areas of England. Changes in the tax credit system have aimed to provide financial help towards the costs of childcare. In addition, the benefits of early years education – again particularly for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds – has led to the introduction of universal free part-time places in early years education.

We would therefore expect to see some changes over the past few years in the profile of families using childcare and early years provision, with less of a concentration on the higher income families. In this study, we have found that lower income families have indeed increased their use of childcare, but increases in use are larger among higher income families. (Although, of course, as the study is cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal, we will not pick up whether families’ incomes have increased over the period. The National Childcare Strategy may well have helped to lift some families’ incomes, enabling them to take paid work.) Otherwise use of childcare by family type and family working status is very similar to 2001.

## 9.5 Cost and affordability

An integral part of government pledges on childcare and early years provision is a commitment to making it 'affordable'. Our study suggests that currently, childcare is affordable (though by no means usually easily affordable) to some, but less affordable – and sometimes a barrier to its use – for others. The need for more information about the costs of childcare services – upon which parents can make informed decisions – is also apparent.

Currently, parental views are mixed regarding the affordability of childcare and early years provision. Among those currently paying for childcare or early years provision, twice as many parents said that it was easy to afford than parents who said it was difficult. However, lower income families and lone parents found it harder, on average, to pay for their childcare and early years provision. When asked about affordability of local childcare in general, parents tend neither to rate it as 'very good' nor as 'very poor'. Rather, parents' views are more moderate, perceiving it as 'fairly good' or 'fairly poor'. Again, those on lower incomes, or not working and lone parents perceived their local childcare as less affordable. Thus, as far as most parents are concerned, whilst the cost of childcare and early years provision is not seen as prohibitive, neither is it seen as highly affordable.

Moreover, for particular – more disadvantaged – families, perceptions and experiences are of less affordable provision. For significant minorities, lack of affordable childcare is cited as a reason for not using it and for not working. Similarly, there are families with young children who do not send them to any or much early years education because of its cost (where not all the cost is covered by the free part-time provision).

The affordability of childcare is a particular issue in London, where the hourly cost of childcare is higher than in other regions. This highlights the importance of the planned pilot work to address issues around the cost of childcare in London.

Of course, whilst parents who pay for childcare can provide us with a grounded assessment of the cost of their childcare, we do not know the basis on which parents (particularly those who do not use paid childcare) rate the cost of local childcare. We have some indications of the potential usefulness of providing more – or better – information for parents regarding the costs of childcare. When asked to estimate the cost of day nurseries and childminders, parents tend to *overestimate* the cost. We also know that the cost of available childcare is cited as one of the main issues on which parents would like to have access to more information.

There also appears to be room to improve parents' awareness of the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit (bearing in mind that, in its current form, it is relatively new). Only two thirds of parents not in receipt of the childcare element and who usually paid for childcare were aware (even when prompted) that the government offers extra help with the costs of childcare through the tax credit system. It is difficult however to quantify awareness amongst eligible families, as some of these families would not be eligible for the childcare element (such as the majority of single earner couple families). Moreover, there is quite a degree of confusion around the types of providers for which parents can claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. By no means had all parents correctly identified the providers that were in general eligible and significant minorities of parents thought that providers which were currently in general ineligible (particularly nannies, au pairs and grandparents) were in fact eligible.

## **9.6 Availability**

Since 1997, the government reports a 90 per cent growth in the registered stock of childcare in England. It has also introduced universal free part-time early years education places for three and four year old children. As mentioned above, in our study, we have seen a significant rise in the numbers of families using childcare and early years provision. However, we also found evidence of a perceived shortfall among many parents in the number of childcare places in their local area. Four in ten parents said they thought there were too few places in their local area. In terms of the extent to which a lack of available places was a barrier to parents using childcare or early years provision or to working, evidence is mixed. It was not often cited unprompted as a reason for not using childcare or not working (although those who did were more likely to come from lower income and lone parent families). However, when asked whether they would work if they could arrange 'good quality childcare which was convenient, reliable and affordable', half of non-working parents said that they would.

Problems with availability may be greater at particular times. With greatest policy focus placed on formal childcare and early years provision at traditional times (part-time early years places and childcare places to cover the 'normal' working day), there will be potential gaps in availability at other times, such as atypical hours and school holidays. Indeed, there appears to be significant unmet demand for childcare during these periods.

## **9.7 Quality**

Government has clearly stated the importance of providing childcare and early years provision of high *quality*. Parents – particularly those who use childcare and early years provision – are largely positive about the quality of their own provision and of that available in their local area. However, the quality of provision is an area where a significant number of parents would like more information.

## **9.8 Information needs**

A lack of information – or knowledge about where to seek it – is an important theme emerging from our study. There appears to be at least some level of discrepancy between parents' perceptions of the local childcare and early years providers market and what is actually reported by parents who use childcare. We have some indications that parents – particularly parents who have not used childcare recently – are not always aware of the cost of childcare and about the types of government help available (e.g. help towards childcare costs via tax credits). When asked directly, four in ten parents felt that they would like more information about the childcare in their local area.

Specific areas about which parents ask for more information include school holiday provision, early years provision and the cost and quality of childcare. What is particularly interesting is the reliance on 'word of mouth' for obtaining information about childcare and early years provision, coupled with a relative lack of awareness of two of the key government-led information sources, namely CIS and ChildcareLink. Of the more formal sources of information, schools and television adverts (the latter for tax credits) seem to be key ways for parents to access information. This is clearly an issue for further investigation, as better or more information may enable parents to make informed decisions about their use of childcare and early years provision. In turn, this will enable some to find childcare and early years provision that suits their needs (e.g. times available, cost, quality) and lead some to take up paid work.

## **9.9 Integrated services**

Whilst our study did not focus heavily on identifying and exploring integrated provision such as Children's Centres (it is a little too early to do so in such a generalised survey), we did ask parents about any services provided at the site of their childcare and early years providers. In addition – and maybe more importantly at this stage - we asked about what they might like to have available to them. Whilst currently a minority of parents using childcare and early years provision said that their providers offered such services (the main ones being advice to parents and parent/childminder and toddler sessions), substantial numbers of parents would like to see them available. Most commonly wanted are health services, careers and job advice, advice for parents and parenting classes, and parent/childminder and toddler sessions. Current provision and parental demand is significantly higher for parents using pre-school provision. This will be an area for close monitoring in future waves of this study.

Part of the rationale for integrated provision is the usefulness of 'wraparound' childcare and/or education. For working parents, having part-time early years education (usually only a morning or an afternoon session) and the 9 'til 3 school day can cause problems. Either they are organising for someone else to pick up their children and provide childcare during their remaining working hours or their working hours have to be arranged around taking and collecting their children. For some parents, we found that these issues were barriers to taking up paid work at all. During our study, we asked parents about how they dealt with such issues and the extent to which it caused them difficulties. We found widespread use of providers for taking and collecting children, across all ages, and particularly among lone parents and working families.

## **9.10 Summing up**

The data from the 2004 Study of Childcare and Early Years Provision includes a wealth of data on how parents use and view childcare and early years provision in England. This report provides an initial look across a range of dimensions and highlights many issues of key interest to policy makers and academics working in this area. However, on each of these dimensions – and on many more – there is much more in the datasets to quarry. We would hope that these data will be used to explore each of these issues in more depth in the coming years.

## APPENDIX A. SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS

### *Family structures and composition*

Almost all (93 per cent) of the parents who answered the questionnaire for this survey were women. The majority (73 per cent) of respondents were part of a couple, while the remainder were lone parents.

The mean size of household was four people – the largest household had 13 people, and the smallest, two.

### *Adult age*

The mean age of the respondents was 37, and of their partners, 39. Table A1 shows the proportions of respondents who were lone parents or part of a couple by different age bands.

**Table A.1** Age of respondents, by family type

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple</b>	<b>Lone parent</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%
20 and under	1	3	1
21 to 30	17	24	19
31 to 40	53	47	51
41 to 50	27	24	26
51 and over	3	3	3
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5903</i>	<i>1890</i>	<i>7793</i>

### *Marital status*

Lone parents fell into several categories with regards to their marital status. Half (50 per cent) were 'single, that is never married', a third (29 per cent) were divorced, a fifth (17 per cent) were married but separated, and 4 per cent were widowed. Less than 0.5 per cent said they were married and living with their husband or wife<sup>83</sup>.

Of the couple families, respondents were most likely to be married (83 per cent), with a substantial proportion (13 per cent) saying they were never married and therefore were, we assume, co-habiting with their partner. 3 per cent of respondents in couples said they were divorced and 1 per cent told us they were married and separated from their husband or wife. Less than 0.5 per cent were widowed.

<sup>83</sup> This situation is feasible if parents were in a transitional stage or if their relationship was not stable.



### **Adult Ethnicity**

At the end of the interview, we asked parents to identify which ethnic group they felt 'best described' themselves. The majority (87 per cent) of respondents identified themselves as White. Of the remainder, 3 per cent said they were Indian, and 2 per cent, in each case, described themselves as Black-African and Pakistani, and 2 per cent also said they were part of another ethnic group not listed.

**Table A.2 Ethnicity of respondents**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
White	87
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Black – African	2
Black – Caribbean	1
Bangladeshi	1
Mixed race	1
Black – other	+
Chinese	+
Other	2
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7780</i>
<i>+&lt;0.5 per cent</i>	

### **Number of children in the household**

The mean number of children in the households we surveyed was two, with a maximum of eight in some households. To give the study context, it is useful to note that of all the families that had only one child, a third (33 per cent) were lone parents, and two thirds (67 per cent) were couple families. Of all the families that had three or more children, a quarter (23 per cent) were lone parents, and two thirds (77 per cent) were couple families. When looking at the number of families who had at least one child aged five or under, we saw that a fifth (22 per cent) were lone parents, and four fifths (78 per cent) were couple families.

Table A3 shows that most families (69 per cent) did not have any children aged two to four, while a third (27 per cent) of families had one child of that age.

**Table A.3 Number of children aged two to four, by family type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple</b>	<b>Lone parent</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%
0	67	75	69
1	29	23	27
2	4	3	4
3	+	+	+
4	0	+	+
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5909</i>	<i>1893</i>	<i>7802</i>
<i>+&lt;0.5 per cent</i>			

83 per cent of families had at least one school age child present in the family, and 37 per cent of families had at least one pre-school age child present in the family. Table A4 shows a breakdown of the number of couple and lone parent families who fell into these groups.

**Table A.4 Presence of preschool and school age children, by family type**

	<b>Column per cent</b>		
	<b>Couple</b>	<b>Lone parent</b>	<b>All</b>
	%	%	%
Pre-school age children present	40	30	37
Pre-school age children not present	60	70	63
School age children present	82	86	83
School age children not present	18	14	17
<i>Base: All families</i>			
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>5909</i>	<i>1893</i>	<i>7802</i>

### ***Children's Characteristics***

The gender of the 'selected' child chosen at random in each family was split evenly between boys and girls (49 per cent were boys, and 51 per cent were girls). 9 per cent of the 'selected children' had a special educational need.

### ***Income***

Table A5 shows family income levels.

**Table A.5 Family yearly incomes**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Under £10,000	18
£10,000 – 19,999	30
£20,000 – 31,999	25
£32,000 or more	27
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7249</i>

### ***Qualifications***

We asked parents about their highest qualifications. Table A6 shows the proportion of respondents who had at least one GCSE grade D-G and Table A7 shows those who had at least one A-Level.

**Table A.6** Whether or not respondents received Grades D-G at GCSE

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>
Achieved at least grade D-G at GCSE or higher	77
Did not achieve grade D-G at GCSE or higher	23
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7772

**Table A.7** Whether or not respondent received at least one A-Level

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>
Achieved at least one A-Level	28
Did not achieve at least one A-level	71
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7772

As well as these qualifications, we asked respondents about their vocational qualifications. 47 per cent had at least one vocational qualification.

### ***Other Characteristics***

Over half (58 per cent) of the respondents said they were buying their house with the help of a loan or mortgage. A third (32 per cent) were renting their home, and the remainder were mainly split between owning it outright (6 per cent), living rent-free (2 per cent) or paying part rent and part mortgage (1 per cent).

**Table A.8** Tenure status of respondents

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	<b>%</b>
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	58
Rent it	32
Own it outright	6
Live rent-free (including rent-free in relative's/friend's property)	2
Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)	1
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7782

Three quarters (73 per cent) of respondents had a driving licence, and 27 per cent did not. Of those who had a licence, the vast majority had access to a car (95 per cent).

### ***Family working status***

As for family working status, Table A9 shows that nearly half (46 per cent) were from couple families where both parents worked, and a fifth (23 per cent) were from couple families with only one earner. Lone parents, working and non working, each made up 13 and 14 per cent, respectively, of our respondents.

**Table A.9**      **Family working status**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Both working	46
Couple – one working	23
Couple – neither working	5
Lone parent working	13
Lone parent not working	14
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

Table A10 provides more detail of working status, taking into account the hours worked by those in employment. Working lone parents were evenly split between full-time and part-time employment, while the predominant working arrangement among couple families was one parent being in full-time work and the other in part-time work.

**Table A.10**      **Family working hours**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Lone parent in FT employment	6
Lone parent in PT employment	7
Lone parent not in paid employment	14
Couple - both in FT employment	17
Couple - one in FT and one in PT employment	28
Couple - one FT one not working	20
Couple - one or both in PT employment	4
Couple – neither in paid employment	5
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

### ***Atypical hours***

We asked respondents whether they ever worked hours considered ‘atypical’. The definition of working atypical hours is whether they worked usually or sometimes before 8am, after 6pm, or at the weekend.

**Table A11 Atypical working hours**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
Both working parents doing atypical hours	26
1 parent doing atypical hours	37
At least 1 working but neither parent doing atypical hours	6
Neither parent working	5
Lone parent doing atypical hours	8
Lone parent not doing atypical hours	5
Lone parent not working	14
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

***Geographical spread***

Table A12 shows the geographical spread of the families.

**Table A.12 Government Office Region**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
North East	5
North West	14
Yorkshire & the Humber	10
East Midlands	9
West Midlands	11
East of England	11
London	15
South East	16
South West	10
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

The sample was also spread across areas differing according to affluence. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the Government's own measurement tool, we can see the spread of respondents as shown in Table A13. Parents living in the most deprived areas made up 24 per cent of the sample, and those in the least deprived made up 19 per cent of the sample.

**Table A.13 Area of Index of Multiple Deprivation**

	<b>Column per cent</b>
	%
1 <sup>st</sup> (Least deprived)	19
2 <sup>nd</sup>	19
3 <sup>rd</sup>	18
4 <sup>th</sup>	21
5 <sup>th</sup> (Most deprived)	24
<hr/>	
<i>Base: All families</i>	
<i>Unweighted base</i>	7802

## **APPENDIX B. TECHNICAL REPORT**

### **B.1 Questionnaire Development and the interview**

The questionnaire was developed by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), and through liaison with the Steering Group at the Department for Education and Skills. The interviews lasted on average 43 minutes and consisted of questions on the family's use of childcare in the last week and the last year, details of the cost of this childcare, and a complete attendance diary for one child in the family, randomly selected by the computer programme. This was followed by questions about the main provider used for the 'selected' child, and sections designed to gauge the attitudes of parents to general local childcare issues. The final sections gathered information about the respondent's economic activity, as well as their partner if applicable, and questions to classify the respondent and their family according to income, ethnicity and so on (see Table B.1 for a summary of the questionnaire structure).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face on a laptop computer, using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), programmed using Blaise. Aids to interviewing consisted of a set of showcards, a weekly calendar, and a three-year calendar to aid work history.

The survey was a combination of two previous studies – the *Parents' Demand for Childcare* studies (baseline in 1999, repeated in 2001) and the *Survey of parents of three and four year old children and their use of early years services* series (1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004). Therefore, a significant part of the survey's development was involved in how to effectively combine the two, to adequately reflect the key policy issues of interest to both and to provide the best compromise between the two previous studies in the space available.

After a Feasibility Study by NatCen, the questionnaire was developed by researchers with expertise in the areas covered by the previous two studies. The resulting new draft questionnaire was tested cognitively with 17 parents through a combination of doorstep recruiting and interviewing parents from a particular nursery. Recommendations were followed through to the pilot stage questionnaire's development.

In part, this combination of surveys resulted in a slightly different questionnaire for those parents whose 'selected' child was aged two to five and who used a formal institutional provider or childminder. Topics such as how far the main provider encourages social and academic skills in the child, and how much feedback parents get about their child's progress, were covered only for parents with a selected child in this age group. Table B.1 indicates the sections of the questionnaire which were only asked of this group of parents.

At the cognitive pilot and pilot stages, interviewers were briefed and de-briefed in person by the research team, and interviewers completed an evaluation form, where they were asked to summarise their experiences or raise any particular problems during fieldwork. These forms were used as the basis for discussion at the de-briefings.

Feedback from the pilot stage was very positive. Interviewers found that they were able to ‘sell’ the survey easily, and that respondents were keen to take part. The interviewers had several minor, but very helpful comments to make about how we could improve the interview computer program, and the accompanying documents. In particular the definition of childcare, which covered both formal and informal types of care, was refined and techniques were developed to ensure parents were fully aware that we were interested in *all* kinds of childcare. In addition, the section which collected an ‘attendance diary’ for the selected child was a challenging feature of the questionnaire, and the pilot revealed ways that extra tools, such as calendars, could be introduced to enable parents to accurately recall childcare they used in the last week.

**Table B. 1 Questionnaire content**

Module A	Household composition
Module B	Household use of childcare in the last year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of providers used for all children</li> </ul>
Module C	Household use of childcare in the last week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of providers used for all children</li> </ul>
Module D	Household childcare costs (for providers used in the last week) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments to providers including payments in kind</li> <li>• Awareness of Tax Credits</li> <li>• Details of benefits</li> </ul>
Module E	Detailed record of attendance in the last week for selected child <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakdown of childcare use for randomly selected child, hour by hour</li> <li>• Details of how child was taken to and picked up from each provider</li> </ul>
Module F	Details of main provider for selected child in the last week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why parents chose their main provider</li> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: awareness of skills encouraged at the provider</li> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: parental involvement with the child at home</li> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: information received by parents about their child’s progress at the main provider</li> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: the transition to reception class</li> <li>• Integrated services offered at the main provider</li> <li>• Travel arrangements to the main provider</li> </ul>
Module G	Attitudes towards childcare in the local area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on the affordability, quality and availability of childcare in the local area</li> <li>• Sources of information about local childcare</li> </ul>

Module H	Reasons for patterns of provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: why parents used more than one provider for the selected child</li> <li>• <i>Parents of two to five year olds only</i>: why parents did not use nursery education every day</li> </ul>
Module I	Respondent's work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work history in last two years</li> <li>• Any atypical hours worked and whether this caused any childcare problems</li> <li>• Whether childcare was a barrier to working</li> </ul>
Module J	Household and child classification questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classification of family members according to special educational needs, disability, ethnicity, qualifications and housing tenure</li> </ul>
Module K	Provider details, data linkage consent and admin questions
Module L	Partner's economic activity and classification questions Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work history in last two years</li> <li>• Classification of partner according to ethnicity and qualifications</li> </ul>

A minor error in the Blaise program early on in the fieldwork period meant that a small proportion of parents had been interviewed but not asked the questions about their own involvement at home, in the child's development. However, this was rectified quickly and all parents were telephoned by interviewers at the NatCen Telephone Unit, to ask these missing questions. The response rate from parents to this follow-up interview was good.

## B.2 Sample Management

The selection of the sample and the opt-out was undertaken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), on behalf of the Inland Revenue who hold Child Benefit records. The sample was drawn from the Inland Revenue's records of recipients of Child Benefit. As explained in Chapter 1 the sample consisted of parents of children under 15, with a boost sample of parents of two to four year olds. Child Benefit records are a highly comprehensive form of sampling method, because take-up amongst parents is nearly 100 per cent. A small number of parents are excluded from the sampling frame, according to Inland Revenue procedures, and these exclusions were weighted for later (see Section B.8).

As Child Benefit records are recorded on a child level, rather than family level, the following strategy was used:

1. sectors sampled with probability proportional to the weighted number of children aged 0-14 in them;
2. within the selected sectors, Child Benefit recipients were sampled with a probability proportional to the weighted number of children aged 0-14 years for whom they are receiving benefits;
3. select a single child at random from the selected Child Benefit recipient.



This sampling method meant that each child was weighted – those aged two to four given a higher weight to increase the chance of selection.

As explained in stage 3 of the sampling method, during the interview the CAPI program selected a child, at random, for which the attendance diary questions were asked. This method also took account of the fact that babies will have been born between the date of sampling and the fieldwork, allowing for babies to be randomly selected as much as older children (as long as they were not the first born). First born children born after June 2004 were still excluded from the sample, so that the sample of children under six months will not be representative of all children under six months. Children aged 14½ were not included in the sampling process as they had a high probability of being 15 by the time the interviewer called to do the interview.

### **B.3 Contacting Respondents**

All interviews were conducted by NatCen interviewers. Since the sample was drawn from Child Benefit records, interviewers had contact details for named individuals. Each sample member received an opt-out letter in July 2004. The opt-out letter introduced NatCen and explained that an interviewer would be sending them another letter in the autumn before calling on them. Cases where the respondent did not opt out at this stage were issued for interview.

The opt-out rates are provided in Section B.5. DWP continued to provide NatCen with the details of late opt-outs, changes of address and newly 'sensitive' cases. All late opt-outs were removed from the sample and interviewers were informed of any changes of address. Newly sensitive cases were removed from the sample up to the beginning of fieldwork; after this point, it was agreed that we would contact these individuals, given that they had not chosen to opt out of the study.

Because there could have been several months between respondents receiving the opt-out letter from DWP, and the time when the interviewer approached them, interviewers were asked to send a second letter to respondents, in order to remind people about the study. After sending this 'advance letter', interviewers then called at the respondent's home. Where possible, interviews were conducted in private, and all respondents read the advance letter and frequently asked questions before the interview commenced.

The named person from the sample was the person listed as the recipient of Child Benefit in that household, and in most cases this was the mother. However, it was not necessarily the same person who was interviewed. To be eligible for interview, the respondent must have had *main or shared responsibility for making decisions about any childcare that the child(ren) in the household may receive*. Interviewers were briefed on the possibility that some parents may be under 18, and were issued the standard Guidelines on Interviewing Children and Young Adults for advice.

During fieldwork, interviewers followed a procedure for tracing those who had moved away. When interviewers were able to establish their new address, they were instructed to follow up at the new address as long as it was local to them. Where respondents had moved out of the area the case was allocated to another interviewer where possible.

If the nominated respondent did not speak English well enough to complete the interview, then interviewers were instructed that they could use another household member to assist as an interpreter. If using a family member as an interpreter was not possible, there was an unsuccessful outcome code for the interview.

Where a respondent had a partner living in their household, and the partner was available, a short interview with the partner was also conducted. However, if the partner was not there or was unwilling to take part then the respondent could answer as their proxy.

#### **B.4 Briefing**

All interviewers attended a full day briefing on the project before starting fieldwork, led by the NatCen research team. Interviewers also had comprehensive project instructions covering all aspects of the briefing.

Briefing sessions provided an introduction to the study and its aims, an explanation of the sample and contact procedures, full definitions of formal and informal childcare, and a dummy interview exercise, designed to familiarise interviewers with the questions and flow of the questionnaire. The day also included a session on conducting research with parents, focusing on issues of sensitivity, practicalities and dealing with requests for information.

#### **B.5 Fieldwork and response rates**

The survey was in the field from early September 2004 to early January 2005. Table B.2 provides detailed response rates. Overall, 17 per cent of the addresses were identified as 'out of scope' either by the interviewer (for example those who had moved away without successful tracing, or who had no children in the relevant age group) or because they had opted out before the interview (around 9 per cent of the full sample chose to opt out before the interview). Based on the 'in scope' sample, the field response rate was high at 78 per cent. 15 per cent (of the in scope sample) were refusals in the field, and 4 per cent could not be contacted or were unable to take part for other reasons.

**Table B. 2 Response rates**

Outcome	Main Sample			Boost Sample			Total Sample		
	Count	In scope	All	Count	In scope	All	Count	In scope	All
		%	%		%	%		%	%
<b>Full sample pre opt out</b>	<b>10531</b>	-	-	<b>1565</b>	-	-	<b>12096</b>	-	-
<b>Addresses ‘in scope’</b>	<b>8813</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>10020</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>
Interview	6853	78	65	949	79	61	7802	78	65
- full, no partner	1678			210			1888		
- full, partner interview	1611			236			1847		
- full, partner interview in proxy	3406			467			3873		
- full, partner interview refused	147			34			181		
- partial successful	11			2			13		
Refusal	1547	18	15	194	16	12	1741	17	14
- by household	35			4			39		
- about eligibility	182			23			205		
- by respondent	955			110			1065		
- by proxy	58			11			69		
- broken appointment	317			46			363		
No contact	413	5	4	64	5	4	477	5	4
- with household	153			27			180		
- with respondent	89			11			100		
- away/ill during fieldwork	54			8			62		
- language difficulties	61			7			68		
- other in scope unproductive	56			11			67		
<b>Addresses ‘out of scope’</b>	<b>1718</b>	-	<b>16</b>	<b>358</b>	-	<b>23</b>	<b>2076</b>	-	<b>17</b>
Opt outs and office refusals	970	-	9	147	-	9	1117	-	9
- opt out to DWP	590			97			687		
- excluded by DWP during fieldwork	79			19			98		
- office refusal to NatCen	301			31			332		
Problems with address	667	-	6	150	-	10	817	-	7
- mover outside England/Wales	6			0			6		
- mover, no follow up address	627			136			763		
- unable to find address	10			3			13		
- vacant/no resident household	18			10			28		
- inaccessible	6			1			7		
Ineligible household	81	-	1	61	-	3	142	-	1
- no children in age range	73			57			130		
- other ineligible	8			4			12		

An increasing rate of inaccurate addresses from the Child Benefit records led to a higher than usual number of ‘out of scope’ addresses. This is mainly due to the fact that Child Benefit records are now paid directly into the recipient’s bank account, giving them little incentive to inform the Inland Revenue when they have changed address. A slightly higher proportion of ineligible cases in the boost sample, due to problems with the boost sample’s details, also led to a higher than expected proportion of ‘out of scope’ addresses for this section of the sample.

The survey adhered to NatCen's standard field quality control measures. As part of the routine procedures every interviewer is accompanied in the field by a supervisor for a full day's work twice a year. This system ensures that in general at least 10 per cent of interviewers will have been supervised on this particular survey. In addition, one in ten interviews are routinely back-checked by NatCen's Quality Control Unit. Back-checking is carried out by telephone where possible, or by post. Back-checks thank the respondent for taking part, ask whether the right person was interviewed, whether various procedures were carried out correctly, and whether the interviewer left a good impression. No significant problems were revealed by the back-checking of this survey, and the feedback on interviewers was overwhelmingly positive.

## **B.6 Coding and editing of data**

The CAPI program ensures that the correct routing is followed throughout the questionnaire, and applies range and consistency error checks. These checks allow interviewers to clarify and query any data discrepancies directly with the respondent, and were used extensively in both questionnaires. A separate 'in-house' editing process was also used, which covered some of the more complex data checking, combined with the coding process for open answers.

Following briefings by the NatCen research team, the data was coded by a team of coders under the management of the NatCen Operations team, using a second version of the CAPI program which included additional checks and codes for open answers. 'Other specify' questions are used when respondents volunteer an alternative response to the pre-coded choice offered them. These questions were back-coded to the original list of pre-coded responses where possible (using a new set of variables rather than overwriting interviewer coding). Notes made by interviewers during interviews were also examined and the data amended if appropriate, ensuring high quality data. Queries and difficulties that could not be resolved by the coder or the team were referred to researchers for resolution.

In the course of each interview, where a respondent gave details of current or recent spells of employment, this information was coded to be consistent with Standard Industrial and Occupational classifications – SIC (1992) and SOC (2000). Industry was classified to a 2-digit level and Occupation to a major group.

Once the data set was clean, the analysis file of question-based and derived variables was set up in SPSS, and all questions and answer codes labelled.

94 per cent of respondents agreed for their interview data to be linked to administrative records held at the DfES. This will allow future research to be undertaken into the use and views of childcare in relation to the results of the National Pupils Database.

## **B.7 Provider checks**

In both the Parental Demand and Early Years surveys, checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the providers they used, in order to improve the accuracy of the classifications. Slightly different methods were used in each survey series, and this survey used an adapted version of these to verify the provider classifications of parents in this study.

Checks were carried out for all 'institutional' formal childcare/nursery education providers, i.e. all formal providers except individuals such as childminders, nannies/au pairs and babysitters. The provider types checked were:

- Nursery school
- Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school
- Reception class attached to a primary or infants' school
- Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs
- Day nursery
- Playgroup or pre-school
- Breakfast club or After school club, on school/nursery school site
- Breakfast club or After school club, not on school/nursery school site
- Holiday club/scheme

Other 'formal' providers such as nannies and au pairs, babysitters and childminders were not included in these checks because experience in previous surveys has shown a reluctance by these providers to take part in checks.

Providers checked were those used in the past week by all children in the family, not just the 'selected' child. However, we only contacted the providers of those families who had agreed, when asked in the parent interview, that this could be done and had provided sufficient contact details. During this process we also checked for duplicate providers; this meant that if a provider was used by more than one family we ensured they would not be contacted more than once.

#### ***B.7.1 Provider check procedures***

At the end of the interview, parents were asked if they would be willing to let us contact their providers, explaining that we wished to check their classification of provider type with the providers themselves. If parents agreed, interviewers recorded the addresses and telephone numbers of the providers in the CAPI program during the interview.

The next steps of the provider checks were divided into three stages: a 'logical check' based on the provider interviews, a 'logical check' based on checking provider classifications against administrative databases from DfES, and finally, a manual check to make decisions by looking at all three classifications.

#### ***Provider checks: part one***

Firstly, we contacted those providers who we had full details for, and conducted a six minute telephone interview with them to check the classifications given by parents. The interview was designed to obtain the following information:

- Provider classification
- Information about what type of organisation provides the service (Local Authority; private business etc)
- Whether the provider is part of, or linked to an integrated care setting (Children's Centre; local Sure Start etc)
- What age groups for which the whole provider caters, and the age groups covered by individual services, if different

With this information the programmer ran an automated check to verify, change or query parents' original classifications. A number of cases were 'thrown out' during these checks, and were passed on to the next stage. These included cases where:

- There was no provider classification available because they had not been contacted, or they had refused the provider interview
- Parents' and providers' classifications did not match at all

### ***Provider checks: part two***

After part one of the checks, all remaining providers which still needed a final classification outcome were looked up against the administrative databases or 'census' files provided by the DfES, which listed childcare providers across England, and substantial information on their services.

A Blaise look-up file was used in order to match providers in the survey data file with providers in the relevant census data file. Our operations department used the look-up file to check the identity of the provider and locate its unique reference number (URN) in the census data files.

The data sources used were:

- The Early Years and Schools Censuses
- OFSTED database
- EduBase

After this process, we had another set of classifications, which could be compared to the parents' classifications and (where available) the providers' classifications.

In most cases, an automated program of 'logical' checks was then run to check all three sources against each other, using logical rules to determine what the final classification of the provider should be.

### ***Provider checks: part three***

Where cases could not be matched with the census data (usually because of lack of information about providers on which to match) and the census data was not conclusive, manual checks were implemented, using the same rules as used in the automated checks, as far as possible. Either the parental or provider classification was determined as the final classification, according to pre-specified rules.

Table B.3 shows the classifications of the providers we checked, comparing the parents' classification to the final classifications after all checks. After the checks, there was a 3 per cent decrease in the classification of nursery schools, and of off-site out-of-school clubs, a 3 per cent increase in the classification of day nurseries, and a 2 per cent increase in the classification of on-site out-of-school clubs. The classification of playgroups or pre-schools went up by just 1 per cent, and a small number of other providers were reclassified into other categories, such as 'Other Nursery Education Provider' or 'Sport/Leisure Activity'. As these were not checked in the original provider checks process, these have only appeared as a resulting classification, not as an original classification (the latter are indicated in bold).

**Table B. 3 Classifications of providers before and after provider checks**

<b>Provider type</b>	<b>Classification According to parents</b>	<b>Column per cent</b>
		<b>Final classification after all checks</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Nursery school</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nursery class</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Reception class</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Special day nursery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Day nursery</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Playgroup or pre-school</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
Childminder	n/a	+
<b>Breakfast or after school club on-site</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Breakfast of after school club off-site</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Holiday club</b>	+	+
Other nursery education provider	n/a	+
Other childcare provider	n/a	+
Leisure/Sport activity	n/a	+
<i>Base</i>	<i>4640</i>	<i>4640</i>
<i>Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents</i>		

**B.8 Weighting**

The sample for this study was weighted to take account of any under-sampling of certain groups undertaken at the sample selection stage, and to balance the effect of a larger 'boost' sample of two, three and four year olds. The weighting procedure for this study consisted of two stages. The first stage was to remove the biases which arose from the sample design, the second was to match the profile of the (weighted) sample to the population for a set of key characteristics.

***Sample design weights***

The childcare sample was designed to be representative of the population of children on the Child Benefit records, rather than the population of Child Benefit recipients. This means the sample was biased towards larger households and needed to be weighted before any analyses could be carried out on household level data. The design also included a boost sample of children aged two to four and living in England. These children needed to be down-weighted if they were to be included in the core sample analysis. The selection weights also corrected the selection probabilities for cases where the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the household at interview.

### ***Second stage of sampling (calibration weighting)***

The final stage of the weighting procedure was to adjust the weights using calibration weighting in CALMAR<sup>84</sup> (Deville & Sarndal, 1992)<sup>85</sup>. The aim of the calibration weighting was to correct for differences between the (weighted) achieved sample and the population profile caused by excluding cases from the sample frame before sampling, random chance in the selection process, and the effects of differential non-response.

Calibration weighting requires a set of population estimates to which the sample will be weighted, these estimates are known as control totals. The DWP provided NatCen with a breakdown of the sampling frame (before exclusions) for different variables at recipient and child level.

Calibration weighting works by adjusting the original sampling design weights to make the weighted survey estimates of the control totals exactly match those of the population. The adjustments are made under the restriction that the initial selection weights must be altered as little as possible, so their original properties are retained.

### ***Using the weights***

A single child was selected for interview at each responding household. The sample was analysed at both household and child level, depending on the issues involved and the questions asked. There were therefore two final weights; a household weight for the household level analyses and a child weight for analyses of data collected about the selected child.

## **B.9 Fieldwork Materials**

The following materials were used during the study, including the opt-out letter, the advance letters sent by interviewers, and the address record form for both the main and boost sample. Some of the tools used during the interview are also shown, but the questionnaire is not included for reasons of available space in this report:

- Opt out letter
- Advance letter
- ARF (address record form) – main sample
- ARF (address record form) – boost sample
- Calendar – three year
- Calendar – weekly
- Example showcard

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<sup>84</sup> CALMAR, an acronym for CALibration on MARGins, is a macro program run in SAS which adjusts the margins of a contingency table of survey estimates to match the known population margins.

<sup>85</sup> Deville J-C & Sarndal C-E (1992) *Calibration estimators in survey sampling*. Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol 87, 376-382.





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## APPENDIX A APPENDICES

### APPENDIX B

«TITLE\_1» «FORENAME» «SURNAME\_»  
«ADDRESS\_»  
«ADDRESS0»  
«ADDRESS1» «ADDRESS2»  
«ORIGPCD»

**P2412 Serial No:**  
«REFNO»

Date: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July

2004

Dear «TITLE\_1» «SURNAME\_»,

## 10 CHILDCARE RESEARCH STUDY

### 11

I am writing to ask for your help. **The Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** is funding a research study amongst 9,000 parents with children under 15 years old. The aims of the study are to find out which types of childcare, if any, parents choose and what they think about the services available. The Department is interested in the views of all parents, whether or not they use any childcare. This is an important study which will help shape government policy on childcare services.

I am asking you to take part in this study because our records show that you have a child or children under 15 years old. Participation in the survey is voluntary but we very much hope that you will be able to take part. It is important that the study includes as many of those families selected as possible so that we can get an accurate picture of what parents think about childcare.

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) has been asked to carry out the interviews on behalf of the DfES. NatCen is Britain's largest independent, not-for-profit social research organisation and carries out many important studies for government departments. They will be interviewing people between September and December and they will write to you nearer the time. A NatCen interviewer will then visit you at home to

arrange a convenient time for the interview. You can choose for the interview to take place during the daytime, in the evening or at the weekend. The interview, which the interviewer will conduct in your own home, should take no longer than 50 minutes. The interviewer will carry a NatCen photographic identification card.

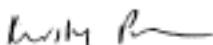
Whether or not you take part will not affect your entitlement to any benefits or tax credits, or any other dealings with the Inland Revenue or other Government departments, now or in the future. Anything you tell the interviewer will be treated in the **strictest confidence**. No report will ever identify you or your family.

I do hope that you will be able to help with this important study. However, if you do not wish an interviewer to contact you, or if you have any queries about the study, please contact the Department for Work and Pensions Project Team, who are acting on behalf of the Inland Revenue and DfES in sending out these letters and receiving responses.

The Project Team can be contacted before Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2004 on **FREephone: 0800 015 0524** 9am - 4:30pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4pm on Friday. Alternatively, you can write to the **FREEPOST** address at the top of this letter or **e-mail** on the following e-mail address: **ChildCareStudy@dp.gsi.gov.uk**. Please remember to give your name and the serial number at the top of this letter, as we cannot guarantee that you will be excluded from the study unless we receive these details.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Best wishes,



Kirsty Pearson  
Analysis and Research  
Inland Revenue

Your interviewer on this study will be:

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## 12 CHILDCARE RESEARCH STUDY

In July, you should have received a letter from Kirsty Pearson at the Inland Revenue, asking for your help in a study of parents with children under 15 years old. The **National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)** is the independent research organisation carrying out the study.

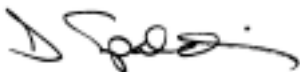
The study aims to find out which types of childcare, if any, parents choose and what they think about the services available. We are equally interested in the views and experiences of parents who do and do **not** use childcare. The information we collect will be used by the **Department for Education and Skills (DfES)** to help shape policy on childcare services. Most people who take part find it interesting and are pleased to have their views and experience taken into account by the Government.

It is important to hear the views of as many of the families we approach as possible, so that we can get an accurate picture of what parents across the country think. We do hope that you will be willing to take part.

The interviewer, named at the top of this letter, will visit you at home in the next week or so to arrange a convenient time for the interview. You can ask for the interview to be done during the day or in the evening, including at weekends. He or she will show you an official identification card that includes his or her photograph and the NatCen logo shown at the top of this letter.

Your answers will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and the information will only be used for statistical purposes. No report will identify either you or your family.

For more information, please see the 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the back of this letter, or call Janet Spalding at NatCen on 0800 652 4574. We thank you in advance for your help.



Yours sincerely,

Janet Spalding



Caroline Bryson

12.1 Operations Department

Research Director

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who is carrying out the study?**

The Childcare Research Study has been commissioned by the Department *for* Education and Skills (DfES). It is being carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), which is an independent research institute established in 1969, specialising in social policy research, covering topics such as health, education, housing and employment.

### **How was I selected for the study?**

We selected a random sample of parents with children aged 14 and under from Child Benefit records. This ensures that the people who are invited to take part in the survey are representative of parents of children in this age group across the whole country.

### **What will I have to do?**

The main part of the interview asks about the kinds of childcare that you use for your child/children, and about your views of the childcare available in your area. We also ask for some general information about you and your family. The interview will take about 50 minutes, although it may be slightly shorter or longer, depending on your circumstances. The interviewer will record your answers on a laptop computer.

### **How will the information I provide be used?**

Your answers will be used to inform research on parents' experiences and views of childcare services. The aim of this research is to help the government understand the needs and wishes of parents and to improve the services they provide. Your answers to our questions will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If your children have attended or go on to attend a state school, we would like to link your answers with data held on the DfES National Pupil Database, for example their examination results. The main purpose of this is to avoid having to contact you again to ask for this information, so we will ask for your permission to do this at the end of the interview. Linking the data in this way would not involve telling your child's school or anyone else, any of the answers you have given.

### **Can someone else in my family do the interview instead?**

Yes. If it is not convenient for us to interview you, then another parent or guardian of your children who has responsibility for making decisions about childcare or nursery education can take part instead.

### **I don't use any childcare; do you still want to interview me?**

Yes. We need to get a picture of all the different kinds of arrangements that parents make for looking after their children, including where parents provide all the care themselves. We are interested to know how and why parents make choices about childcare, and what they think about the options available to them in their local area.



**Head Office**  
 35 Northampton Square  
 London EC1V 0AX  
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 England No. 4392418, Charity No. 1091768

**Operations Department**  
 100 Kings Road, Brentwood  
 Essex CM14 4LX  
 Telephone 01277 200 600  
 Fax 01277 214 117

<b>CHILDCARE SURVEY 2004</b> <b>MAIN SAMPLE</b> <b>ADDRESS RECORD FORM (ARF)</b>  <b>P.2412</b>	A	ASSIGNMENT/SLOT NAME:
		TRIP/RETURN NO:
<b>PINK TEAM</b>		OUTCOME CODE:

<b>NAME &amp; ADDRESS DETAILS</b>	<b>NAME &amp; ADDRESS CHANGES</b>

Respondent name (if not as above): <input style="width:90%;" type="text"/>	Interviewer name: <input style="width:90%;" type="text"/>
Telephone number: <input style="width:90%;" type="text"/>	Interviewer number: <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/> <input style="width:15%;" type="text"/>
No Tel: <input style="width:20px;" type="text" value="2"/> No. refused / ex-directory <input style="width:20px;" type="text" value="3"/>	Total No. of calls: <input style="width:30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width:30px;" type="text"/>

Call No.	Date DD/MM	Day of week	Call Start Time (24hr Clock)	CALLS RECORD <i>(Note all calls, including telephone calls)</i>	*Call Status (Enter codes only)	Call End Time (24hr Clock)
1	/		:			
2	/		:			
3	/		:			
4	/		:			
5	/		:			
6	/		:			
7	/		:			
8	/		:			
9	/		:			
10	/		:			

**Call Status Codes:** 1=No Reply, 2=Contact Made, 3=Appointment Made, 4=Any Interviewing done, 5=Any Other Outcome (describe in calls record)

<b>RE-ALLOCATED ADDRESS/HOUSEHOLD : If this address/household is being reallocated to another interviewer before you have completed it, code here</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>END</b>
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## Establish whether address is eligible

<b>1</b>	IS THIS ADDRESS TRACEABLE, RESIDENTIAL AND OCCUPIED AS A MAIN RESIDENCE?	Yes  No/Unsure	<b>01</b> <b>02</b> <b>410</b>	<b>GO TO Q4</b> <b>GO TO Q2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>13 CODE OUTCOME : UNKNOWN ELIGIBILITY OR INELIGIBLE</b>		ENTER AS OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END	
	<b>OFFICE USE ONLY:</b> Lost productive		<b>550</b>	ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND GO TO Q3
	<b>OFFICE USE ONLY:</b> Not issued to interviewer		<b>611</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY:</b> Issued but not attempted		<b>612</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY:</b> Inaccessible		<b>620</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY:</b> Unable to locate address		<b>630</b>	
	Not yet built/under construction		<b>710</b>	
	Demolished/derelict		<b>720</b>	
	Vacant/empty housing unit		<b>730</b>	
	<b>Non-residential address (e.g. business, school, office, factory etc)</b>		<b>740</b>	
	<b>Address occupied, no resident household (e.g. occupied holiday/weekend home)</b>		<b>750</b>	
	Communal establishment/institution - no private dwellings		<b>760</b>	
	Other Ineligible ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )		<b>780</b>	
<b>3</b>	IF RELEVANT, RECORD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUTCOME CODES <b>612 - 630</b> AND <b>710 - 780</b>			

**END**

4	DOES THE PERSON NAMED ON THE ARF LABEL LIVE AT THIS ADDRESS?	
	Yes	01 GO TO Q6
	No/unsure	02 GO TO Q5
5	CODE OUTCOME OF ATTEMPT TO CONTACT NAMED INDIVIDUAL.	
	Mover in area - <b>address known</b>	01 RETURN TO FRONT PAGE OF ARF, ENTER NEW ADDRESS AND ATTEMPT CONTACT
	Mover outside area – <b>address known</b>	682 ENTER NEW ADDRESS AND OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND RETURN TO OFFICE ASAP
	Mover – Follow-up address not known or not given	683 ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END
	No contact with anyone after 4+ calls	310
Complete refusal of information about occupants	420	
6	ARE THERE ANY CHILDREN <b>AGED 14 AND UNDER</b> LIVING AT THIS ADDRESS?	
	Yes	01 GO TO Q7
	No	770 ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END
	Information refused	421 ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END

## INTERVIEW WITH MAIN RESPONDENT

<b>7</b>	Does person named on ARF label have main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 14 and under</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q8</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q11</b>
		Information refused	<b>03</b>	<b>GO TO Q9</b>
<b>8</b>	Did you interview the person named on the ARF label?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q9</b>
<b>9</b>	Is there someone else in the household who has (main or) shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 14 and under</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q10</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
		Information refused	<b>03</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>10</b>	Did you interview this other person who has (main or) shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>ENTER NEW NAME ON FRONT OF ARF AND GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>11</b>	Is there someone else in the household who has main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 14 and under</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q12</b>
		No	<b>771</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
		Information refused	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>12</b>	Did you interview this other person who has main or shared responsibility for childcare?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>ENTER NEW NAME ON FRONT OF ARF AND GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>



**ELIGIBLE ADDRESS – UNPRODUCTIVE OUTCOME**

<b>13</b>	<b>UNPRODUCTIVE OUTCOME – CODE <u>ONE</u> ONLY:</b>		
	No contact with eligible respondent(s)	<b>340</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Information about eligibility of respondent(s) refused	<b>422</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND GO TO Q14</b>
	Refusal by eligible respondent(s) before interview	<b>431</b>	
	Proxy refusal	<b>432</b>	
	Refusal during interview ( <u>un</u> productive partial)	<b>440</b>	
	Broken Appointment – No recontact	<b>450</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Ill at home during survey period	<b>510</b>	
	Away or in hospital all survey period	<b>520</b>	
	Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	<b>530</b>	
	Language Difficulties	<b>540</b>	
Other Unproductive ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )	<b>560</b>		

<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>REASONS FOR REFUSAL - CODE ALL THAT APPLY</b></p> <p>Bad timing (e.g. sick children), otherwise engaged (e.g. visitors)</p> <p>Too busy, no time</p> <p>Don't know enough/anything about the subject/too difficult for me</p> <p>Waste of time</p> <p>Waste of money</p> <p>Interferes with my privacy/I give no personal information</p> <p>Can't be bothered</p> <p>Never do surveys</p> <p>Do not believe in surveys</p> <p>Just not interested</p> <p>Co-operated too often</p> <p>Previous bad experience</p> <p>Object to subject</p> <p>R refused because partner/ family/ HH did not give approval to co-operate</p> <p>Other (WRITE IN)</p> <hr/> <p>None of these</p> <p>Don't know</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td><b>01</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>02</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>03</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>04</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>05</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>06</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>07</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>08</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>09</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>10</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>11</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>12</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>13</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>14</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>15</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>97</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>98</b></td></tr> </table>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	<p><b>GO TO Q15</b></p>
<b>01</b>																				
<b>02</b>																				
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<b>15</b>																				
<b>97</b>																				
<b>98</b>																				
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>IF RELEVANT, RECORD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT REASON FOR REFUSAL AT Q14, OR ABOUT OUTCOME CODES</b></p> <p><b>340, 431, 432, 440, 450, 510, 520, 530, 540, 560</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>END</b></p>																			

**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR FINAL OUTCOME CODES**

## FINAL OUTCOMES

<b>16</b>	PLEASE ENTER THE <b>FINAL OUTCOME</b> OF INTERVIEWING (NB: this is derived by the computer)		
	Full interview with <b>no partner in household</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Full interview with partner section completed in <b>person by partner</b>	<b>112</b>	
	Full interview with partner section completed by <b>proxy with respondent</b>	<b>113</b>	
	Full interview with <b>no partner section</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>GO TO Q17</b>
Partial interview	<b>211</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>	

## PARTNER SECTION

<b>17</b>	WHY WERE YOU NOT ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PARTNER SECTION?		
	Partner refused to allow interview in person or by proxy	<b>01</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODED AT Q16 ONTO FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Partner absent and respondent refused to carry out proxy	<b>02</b>	
	Other Unproductive ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )	<b>03</b>	



<p><b>CHILDCARE SURVEY 2004</b></p> <p><b>P.2412</b></p> <p><b>BOOSTER SAMPLE</b></p> <p><b>ADDRESS RECORD FORM (ARF)</b></p>	<b>B</b>	ASSIGNMENT/SLOT NAME:	
		TRIP/RETURN NO:	
		OUTCOME CODE:	
<b>PINK TEAM</b>			

**NAME & ADDRESS DETAILS**

**NAME & ADDRESS CHANGES**

Respondent name	<input style="width: 300px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Interviewer	<input style="width: 340px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>			
Telephone	<input style="width: 300px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	Interviewer	<input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
No Tel:	<input style="width: 40px; text-align: center;" type="text" value="2"/>	No. refused / ex-directory	<input style="width: 40px; text-align: center;" type="text" value="3"/>	Total No.	<input style="width: 40px; text-align: center;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 40px; text-align: center;" type="text"/>

Call No.	Date DD/MM	Day of week	Call Start Time (24hr Clock)	<b>CALLS RECORD</b> (Note all calls, including telephone calls)	*Call Status (Enter codes only)	Call End Time (24hr Clock)
1	/		:			.
2	/		:			.
3	/		:			.
4	/		:			.
5	/		:			.
6	/		:			.
7	/		:			.
8	/		:			.
9	/		:			.
10	/		:			.

**Call Status Codes: 1=No Reply, 2=Contact Made, 3=Appointment Made, 4=Any Interviewing done,**

<b>RE-ALLOCATED ADDRESS/HOUSEHOLD : If this address/household is being reallocated to another interviewer before you have completed it, code here</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>END</b>
---	------------	------------

## Establish whether address is eligible

<b>1</b>	IS THIS ADDRESS TRACEABLE, RESIDENTIAL AND OCCUPIED AS A MAIN RESIDENCE?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q4</b>
		No/Unsure	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q2</b>
		<i>Office Refusal</i>	<b>410</b>	<i>ENTER AS OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</i>

<b>2</b>	<b>CODE OUTCOME : UNKNOWN ELIGIBILITY OR INELIGIBLE</b>		
	<b>OFFICE USE ONLY: Lost productive</b>	<b>550</b>	<i>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND GO TO Q3</i>
	<b>OFFICE USE ONLY: Not issued to interviewer</b>	<b>611</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY: Issued but not attempted</b>	<b>612</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY: Inaccessible</b>	<b>620</b>	
	<b>OFFICE APPROVAL ONLY: Unable to locate address</b>	<b>630</b>	
	Not yet built/under construction	<b>710</b>	
	13.2 Demolished/derelict	<b>720</b>	
	Vacant/empty housing unit	<b>730</b>	
	<b><i>Non-residential address (e.g. business, school, office, factory etc)</i></b>	<b>740</b>	
	<b><i>Address occupied, no resident household (e.g. occupied holiday/weekend home)</i></b>	<b>750</b>	
	Communal establishment/institution - no private dwellings	<b>760</b>	
	Other Ineligible ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )	<b>780</b>	

<b>3</b>	<b>IF RELEVANT, RECORD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT OUTCOME CODES 612 - 630 AND 710 - 780</b>	
		<b>END</b>

<b>4</b>	<b>DOES THE PERSON NAMED ON THE ARF LABEL LIVE AT THIS ADDRESS?</b>	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q6</b>
		No/unsure	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>CODE OUTCOME OF ATTEMPT TO CONTACT NAMED INDIVIDUAL.</b>	Mover in area - <b>address known</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>RETURN TO FRONT PAGE OF ARF, ENTER NEW ADDRESS AND ATTEMPT CONTACT</b>
		Mover outside area - <b>address known</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>ENTER NEW ADDRESS AND OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND RETURN TO OFFICE ASAP</b>
		Mover - Follow-up address not known or not given	<b>683</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
		No contact with anyone after 4+ calls	<b>310</b>	
		Complete refusal of information about occupants	<b>420</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>ARE THERE ANY CHILDREN AGED 2-4 LIVING AT THIS ADDRESS?</b>	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q7</b>
		No	<b>770</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
		Information refused	<b>421</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>

## INTERVIEW WITH MAIN RESPONDENT

<b>7</b>	Does person named on ARF label have main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 2-4</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q8</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q11</b>
		Information refused	<b>03</b>	<b>GO TO Q9</b>
<b>8</b>	Did you interview the person named on the ARF label?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q9</b>
<b>9</b>	Is there someone else in the household who has (main or) shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 2-4</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q10</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
		Information refused	<b>03</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>10</b>	Did you interview this other person who has (main or) shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>ENTER NEW NAME ON FRONT OF ARF AND GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>11</b>	Is there someone else in the household who has main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for any of the children <b>aged 2-4</b> in the household?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>GO TO Q12</b>
		No	<b>771</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
		Information refused	<b>02</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>
<b>12</b>	Did you interview this other person who has main or shared responsibility for childcare?	Yes	<b>01</b>	<b>ENTER NEW NAME ON FRONT OF ARF AND GO TO Q16</b>
		No	<b>2</b>	<b>GO TO Q13</b>



**ELIGIBLE ADDRESS – UNPRODUCTIVE OUTCOME**

<b>13</b>	<b>UNPRODUCTIVE OUTCOME – CODE ONE ONLY:</b>		
	No contact with eligible respondent(s)	<b>340</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Information about eligibility of respondent(s) refused	<b>422</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME CODE ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND GO TO Q14</b>
	Refusal by eligible respondent(s) before interview	<b>431</b>	
	Proxy refusal	<b>432</b>	
	Refusal during interview ( <u>un</u> productive partial)	<b>440</b>	
	Broken Appointment – No recontact	<b>450</b>	<b>ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END</b>
	Ill at home during survey period	<b>510</b>	
	Away or in hospital all survey period	<b>520</b>	
	Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	<b>530</b>	
	Language Difficulties	<b>540</b>	
	Other Unproductive ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )	<b>560</b>	

<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>REASONS FOR REFUSAL - CODE ALL THAT APPLY</b></p> <p>Bad timing (e.g. sick children), otherwise engaged (e.g. visitors)</p> <p>Too busy, no time</p> <p>Don't know enough/anything about the subject/too difficult for me</p> <p>Waste of time</p> <p>Waste of money</p> <p>Interferes with my privacy/I give no personal information</p> <p>Can't be bothered</p> <p>Never do surveys</p> <p>Do not believe in surveys</p> <p>Just not interested</p> <p>Co-operated too often</p> <p>Previous bad experience</p> <p>Object to subject</p> <p>R refused because partner/ family/ HH did not give approval to co-operate</p> <p>Other (WRITE IN)</p> <hr/> <p>None of these</p> <p>Don't know</p>	<table border="1"> <tr><td><b>01</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>02</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>03</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>04</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>05</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>06</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>07</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>08</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>09</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>10</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>11</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>12</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>13</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>14</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>15</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>97</b></td></tr> <tr><td><b>98</b></td></tr> </table>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>98</b>	<p><b>GO TO Q15</b></p>
<b>01</b>																				
<b>02</b>																				
<b>03</b>																				
<b>04</b>																				
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<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>IF RELEVANT, RECORD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT REASON FOR REFUSAL AT Q14, OR ABOUT OUTCOME CODES 340, 431, 432, 440, 450, 510, 520, 530, 540, 560</b></p>																			

**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR FINAL OUTCOME CODES**

## FINAL OUTCOMES

<b>16</b>	PLEASE ENTER THE <b>FINAL OUTCOME</b> OF INTERVIEWING (NB: this is derived by the computer)		
	Full interview with <b>no partner in household</b>	<b>111</b>	ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END
	Full interview with partner section completed in <b>person by partner</b>	<b>112</b>	
	Full interview with partner section completed by <b>proxy with respondent</b>	<b>113</b>	
	Full interview with <b>no partner section</b>	<b>114</b>	GO TO Q17
Partial interview	<b>211</b>	ENTER OUTCOME ON FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END	

## PARTNER SECTION

<b>17</b>	WHY WERE YOU NOT ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PARTNER SECTION?		
	Partner refused to allow interview in person or by proxy	<b>01</b>	ENTER OUTCOME CODED AT Q16 ONTO FRONT PAGE OF ARF AND END
	Partner absent and respondent refused to carry out proxy	<b>02</b>	
	Other Unproductive ( <b>verbatim reason to be keyed in Admin block</b> )	<b>03</b>	

**14 P2412 WORK HISTORY CALENDAR**

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>2002</b>												
<b>2003</b>												
<b>2004</b>												



**P2412 WEEKLY CALENDAR**

**WEEK BEGINNING** \_\_\_\_\_

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
AM							
PM							



## CARD – I1

Nursery School

Nursery class attached to primary school

Reception class attached to a primary or infants' school

Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs

Day nursery

Playgroup or pre-school

Other nursery education provider (PLEASE SAY WHAT)

## CARD – I1

Nursery School

Nursery class attached to primary school

Reception class attached to a primary or infants' school

Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs

Day nursery

Playgroup or pre-school

Other nursery education provider (PLEASE SAY WHAT)



## CARD – J1

Working full-time (30 or more hours per week),  
including self-employed

Working part-time (16-29 hours per week),  
including self-employed

Working part-time (1-15 hours per week),  
including self-employed

On a Government training scheme (e.g. New Deal)

Unemployed and looking for work

Unemployed and *not* looking for work

Looking after the home or family

Retired

Student

Long term sick or disabled

Other (PLEASE SAY WHAT)

## CARD – J1

Working full-time (30 or more hours per week),  
including self-employed

Working part-time (16-29 hours per week),  
including self-employed

Working part-time (1-15 hours per week),  
including self-employed

On a Government training scheme (e.g. New Deal)

Unemployed and looking for work

Unemployed and *not* looking for work

Looking after the home or family

Retired

Student

Long term sick or disabled

Other (PLEASE SAY WHAT)

## APPENDIX C. LOGISTIC MODELS

For all of the logistic models below, the stepwise method was used to introduce characteristics associated with these views. The method ensures that only those variables that are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  are added to the model. In the logistic regression model one category of each variable has been designated the reference category and given the value 1.00. The other categories of the variable are contrasted with this.

### C.1 Chapter 2 logistic model

A binary logistic regression was used to explore the characteristics associated with the selected child *not* using childcare in the last week, the results of which are explored in Section 2.4. Values greater than 1.00 indicate that this category had a greater likelihood of not receiving childcare; values below 1.00 indicate a lesser likelihood of not receiving childcare.

**Table C. 1 Use of childcare logistic regression model**

<b>Variables in the model</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>
<b>North East Region</b>	
North West	1.31
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.02
East Midlands	1.29
West Midlands	1.27
East of England	1.06
London	1.57**
South East	1.23
South West	1.34*
<b>Family Yearly Income Under £10,000</b>	
£10,000-19,999	0.90
£20,000-31,999	0.74**
£32,000+	0.51***
<b>White ethnic group</b>	
Black – Caribbean	0.67
Black – African	1.22
Indian	1.67**
Pakistani	2.37***
Bangladeshi	2.31**
Mixed Race	1.12
Other	1.76***
<b>Selected child age 0-2</b>	
Age 3-4	0.18***
Age 5-7	1.62***
Age 8-11	1.76***
Age 12-14	4.29***
<b>Lone parent working after 6pm</b>	
Lone parent not working after 6pm	1.59
<b>Families with 1 child 0-14</b>	
2 children 0-14	1.06
3 children 0-14	1.42***
4 children 0-14	1.44**
5 children 0-14	2.01***
<b>Lone parent in FT employment</b>	
Lone parent in PT (16-29) employment	1.13
Lone parent in PT (1-15) employment	1.49
Lone parent not in paid employment	4.37***
Couple – both in FT employment	2.46**
Couple – one in FT and one in PT (16-29) employment	3.09***
Couple – one in FT and one in PT (1-15) employment	3.76***
Couple – one FT one not working	6.11***
Couple – both in PT employment	4.08**
Couple – one PT, one not working	4.38***
Couple – neither in paid employment	7.96***
<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.11</b>

Note: characteristics in bold are the reference categories

Key: \*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

Unweighted base (all children) = 7,247

## **C.2 Chapter 5 logistic models**

### ***C.2.1 Weekly cost***

A binary logistic regression was used to explore the characteristics associated with the level of weekly cost, the results of which are explored in Section 5.4. Values greater than 1.00 indicate that this category had a higher weekly cost; values below 1.00 indicate a lower weekly cost.

**Table C. 2 Weekly cost logistic regression model**

<b>Variables in the model</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>
<b>Couple - Both parents working</b>	
Couple – one working	0.35***
Couple – neither working	0.31**
Lone parent working	1.71**
Lone parent not working	0.34***
<b>Families with 1 child 0-14</b>	
2 children 0-14	0.71**
3+ children 0-14	0.50***
<b>Used up to 5 hours of childcare in last week</b>	
6-10 hours	3.93***
11-15 hours	7.64***
16-25 hours	16.47***
26-35 hours	16.55***
36+	31.43***
<b>1<sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived according to Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	0.71*
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	0.77
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	0.53***
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile	0.45***
<b>North East Region</b>	
North West	1.25
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.69
East Midlands	0.77
West Midlands	0.99
East of England	0.78
London	2.47**
South East	0.80
South West	0.78
<b>Family Yearly Income Under £10,000</b>	
£10,000-19,999	1.31
£20,000-31,999	2.03**
£32,000+	3.73***
<b>School age children present in family</b>	
No school age children	1.45*
<b>Pre-school age children present in family</b>	
No pre-school age children	0.59***
<b>Used informal care in the last week</b>	
Used only formal care in the last week	3.08***
<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.08</b>

Note: characteristics in bold are the reference categories

Key: \*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

Unweighted base (Families who had paid for childcare) = 2,501

### ***C.2.2 Hourly cost***

A binary logistic regression was used to explore the characteristics associated with the level of hourly cost, the results of which are explored in Section 5.5. Values greater than 1.00 indicate that this category had a higher hourly cost; values below 1.00 indicate a lower hourly cost.

**Table C. 3 Hourly cost logistic regression model**

<b>Variables in the model</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>
<b>Couple - Both parents working</b>	
Couple – one working	0.42***
Couple – neither working	0.30***
Lone parent working	1.63**
Lone parent not working	0.22***
<b>Families with 1 child 0-14</b>	
2 children 0-14	0.86
3+ children 0-14	0.50***
<b>Used up to 5 hours of childcare in last week</b>	
6-10 hours	0.83
11-15 hours	0.38***
16-25 hours	0.41***
26-35 hours	0.29***
36+	0.25***
<b>1<sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived according to Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	0.89
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	0.98
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	0.68
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile	0.59**
<b>North East Region</b>	
North West	1.33
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.84
East Midlands	0.99
West Midlands	0.94
East of England	1.03
London	2.51***
South East	0.98
South West	0.87
<b>Family Yearly Income Under £10,000</b>	
£10,000-19,999	1.10
£20,000-31,999	1.42
£32,000+	2.97***
<b>School age children present in family</b>	
No school age children	1.46*
<b>Pre-school age children present in family</b>	
No pre-school age children	0.56***
<b>Used informal care in the last week</b>	
Used only formal care in the last week	0.59**
<b>Used formal care in the last week</b>	
Used only informal care in the last week	3.28***
<b>Constant</b>	1.60

Note: characteristics in bold are the reference categories

Key: \*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

Unweighted base (Families who had paid for childcare) = 2,494

### C. 3 Chapter 6 logistic model

A binary logistic regression was used to explore the characteristics associated with views of affordability of local childcare, the results of which are explored in Section 6.2.1. Values greater than 1.00 indicate that this category had a greater likelihood of rating the affordability of local childcare as 'very' or 'fairly' good; values below 1.00 indicate a lesser likelihood of rating the affordability of local childcare favourably.

**Table C. 4 Views of affordability of childcare logistic regression model**

<b>Variables in the model</b>	<b>Odds ratio</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> quintile – least deprived according to Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	0.788
3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	0.769
4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	0.882
5 <sup>th</sup> quintile	1.183
<b>Family Yearly Income Under £10,000</b>	
£10,000-19,999	1.490*
£20,000-31,999	1.579***
£32,000+	1.320*
<b>North East Region</b>	
North West	0.606
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.716
East Midlands	0.750
West Midlands	0.772
East of England	0.914
London	1.072
South East	1.477*
South West	0.962
<b>Used formal care in the last week</b>	
Used only informal care in the last week	0.446***
<b>Weekly cost less than £20</b>	
£20 to less than £40	0.595***
£40 to less than £50	0.700*
£50 to less than £100	0.735
£100 to less than £150	0.717*
<b>Constant</b>	2.403

Note: characteristics in bold are the reference categories

Key: \*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01 \*\*\*p<0.001

Unweighted base (Families who had paid for childcare) = 2,205





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