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Childcare and early years survey of parents 2019

Technical Report
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Ipsos MORI

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1 Survey background and history

1.1 Aims of the study

This Technical Report describes the methodology of the 2019 survey in the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) series.

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

1.2 Time series of the Childcare and early years survey of parents

The current study is the 11th in the CEYSP series, which began in 2004. The time series in fact stretches back further than 2004, as the current series is the merger of two survey series that preceded it: i) the Survey of Parents of Three and Four Year Old Children and Their Use of Early Years Services, of which there were six waves between 1997 and 2004, and ii) the Parents' Demand For Childcare Survey, of which there were two waves, the first in 1999 and the second in 2001.

Previous waves of the CEYSP were conducted in 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2014-15, 2017, and 2018. For the 2004 to 2009 surveys, fieldwork took place within the survey calendar year. For the 2010-11 to 2014-15 surveys, fieldwork straddled two calendar years; for instance, fieldwork for the 2010-11 survey began in September 2010, and finished in April 2011. From 2017, the survey reverted to fieldwork taking place in the survey calendar year.

Changes to the questionnaire over time mean that in many instances it is not possible to provide direct comparisons that extend to the beginning of the time series. Questions for which trend data does extend to the beginning of the time series include the use of childcare by families and children, and parents' perceptions of local childcare (the level of information about local childcare, the availability of local childcare, the quality of local childcare, and the affordability of local childcare).

2 Overview of the study design

2.1 The sample

A total of 5,057 parents with children aged 0 to 4 in England were interviewed face-to-face between January and August 2019.

In previous waves, interviews have been conducted with parents of children aged 0 to 14 (rather than 0 to 4). For the 2019 wave, the focus shifted to pre-school children following a surveys user consultation in 2018¹. The next wave is due to be in field between January and August 2020, and will revert back to interviewing parents of children aged 0 to 14.

A probability sample of children aged 0 to 4 in England was drawn from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) maintained by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) which, given its high take-up, provides very high coverage of dependent children in England. Interviews were sought with parents of these children. If the sampled child was no longer living at the address, an interview was sought with the current occupiers if they had a child aged 0 to 4, otherwise the address was deemed ineligible².

A small additional sample of parents in England was drawn from respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions, who had consented to be re-contacted for future research³.

2.2 The interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in parents' homes and lasted a mean of 48 minutes, and a median of 46 minutes. The main respondent was a parent or guardian of the sampled child with main or shared responsibility for making childcare decisions, and in most cases (84%) was the child's mother.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/surveys-on-childcare-and-early-years-in-england>

² Prior to the 2019 survey, the sampling unit was the child (rather than the address), and in cases where the sampled child had moved from the sampled address, the child was still considered eligible, and the interviewer attempted to trace the child to his or her new address to conduct an interview there. The sampling unit was changed from the child, to the address, due to the increasing proportion of children that were found to have moved address during fieldwork (from 13% in 2010, to 22% in 2018).

³ This was necessary because the eligibility criteria for Child Benefit changed in 2013 so that higher-income households (those where one or both partners earn £60,000 or more per year) ceased to gain financially from Child Benefit, resulting in them becoming disproportionately likely to be missing from the CBR. To avoid bias to survey estimates, higher-income households missing from the CBR were sampled from the FRS. For further details see Department for Education (2017) *Childcare and early years survey of parents: Sampling frames investigation* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-sampling-frames>

In addition, in couple households an interview was sought with the respondent's partner, if he or she was at home. Partners were asked about their employment and other socio-economic and demographic characteristics. Where this was not possible, the main respondent was asked to provide this information by proxy. An interview was conducted with the respondent's partner at 21 per cent of couple households; the main respondent answered by proxy (on their partner's behalf) at 64 per cent of couple households; and at the remaining 15 per cent of couple households no detailed information was collected about the partner's circumstances (because the partner was unavailable or unwilling to be interviewed, and the main respondent refused to provide this information or was insufficiently knowledgeable to be able to answer on their partner's behalf).

The study used an inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. The respondent was asked to include any time their child was not with them (or their current or ex-spouse or partner), or at school. Ex-husbands/wives/partners were counted as a type of informal provider prior to the 2019 survey, but following the surveys user consultation in 2018 have been excluded from the definition of childcare from the 2019 survey wave for consistency with other national and international surveys about childcare.

The definition of childcare covered both informal childcare (for instance grandparents, an older sibling, or a friend or neighbour) and formal childcare (for instance nursery schools and classes, childminders, and before- and after-school clubs). Further detail about this definition is provided in section 2.3.

In families with two or more children, broad questions were asked about the childcare arrangements of all children, before more detailed questions were asked about the randomly sampled child (henceforth referred to as 'the selected child').

Because childcare arrangements vary between school term-time and school holidays, most of the questions focused on the most recent term-time week (the 'reference week'). Separate questions were asked about the use of childcare during times of the year when school children are on holiday.

The interview covered the following topic areas:

- **For all families:**
 - use of childcare and early years provision in the reference term-time week, school holidays periods (if applicable) and last year;
 - payments made for childcare and early years provision (for providers used in the last week), the use of free hours of childcare, the use of Tax-Free Childcare, and the use of tax credits and subsidies;
 - sources of information about, and attitudes towards, childcare and early years provision in the local area; and

- if applicable, reasons for not using childcare.
- **For one randomly selected child:**
 - a detailed record of child attendance in the reference week;
 - reasons for using and views of the main formal provider; and
 - the home learning environment.
- **Classification details:**
 - household composition;
 - parents' education and work details; and
 - provider details.

Across all addresses eligible for interview – that is, all addresses containing a child aged 0 to 4 – an interview was achieved at 62 per cent. For further details on response see Chapter 6.

2.3 Defining childcare

The study uses an inclusive definition of childcare and early years provision. Parents were asked to include any time that the child was not with a resident parent or a resident parent's current or ex-partner, or at school.

This definition deviated from that used in previous waves of the survey by excluding ex-partners. Prior to the 2019 wave, the definition of childcare and early years provision was "any time that the child was not with a resident parent or a resident parent's current partner, or at school". This change brought the definition of childcare in line with other research about childcare.

In order to remind parents to include all possible people or organisations that may have looked after their children, they were shown the following list:

Formal providers

- nursery school
- nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school
- reception class at a primary or infants' school
- special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs
- day nursery
- playgroup or pre-school
- childminder

- nanny or au pair
- baby-sitter who came to home
- breakfast club
- after-school clubs and activities
- holiday club/scheme

Informal providers⁴

- the child's grandparent(s)
- the child's older brother/sister
- another relative
- a friend or neighbour

Other

- other nursery education provider
- other childcare provider

Definitions of main formal providers for pre-school children

A short definition for each of the main formal providers for pre-school children is included below. The definitions were not provided to parents in the survey but these are included here to help the reader differentiate between the most common categories.

- nursery school – this is a school in its own right, with most children aged 3 to 5. Sessions normally run for 2 ½ to 3 hours in the morning and/or afternoon;
- nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school - often a separate unit within the school, with those in the nursery class aged 3 or 4. Sessions normally run for 2½ to 3 hours in the morning and/or afternoon;
- reception class at a primary or infants' school - this usually provides full-time education during normal school hours, and most children in the reception class are aged 4 or 5;
- special day school/nursery or unit for children with special educational needs - a nursery, school or unit for children with special educational needs;
- day nursery - this runs for the whole working day and may be closed for a few weeks in summer, if at all. This may be run by employers, private companies,

⁴ Prior to the 2019 wave, the list of informal providers included "my ex-husband/wife/partner/the child's other parent who does not live in this household".

community/voluntary group or the Local Authority, and can take children who are a few months to 5-years-old; and

- playgroup or pre-school - the term 'pre-school' is commonly used to describe many types of nursery education. For the purposes of this survey, pre-school is used to describe a type of playgroup. This service is often run by a community/voluntary group, parents themselves, or privately. Sessions last up to 4 hours.

Providers were classified according to the service for which they were being used by parents, for example daycare or early years education. Thus, providers were classified and referred to in analysis according to terminology such as 'nursery schools' and 'day nurseries', rather than as forms of integrated provision such as Children's Centres. Reception classes were only included as childcare if it was not compulsory schooling, that is the child was aged under 5 (or had turned 5 during the current school term).

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

Deciding on the correct classification of the 'type' of provider can be complicated for parents. The classifications given by parents were therefore checked with the providers themselves in a separate telephone survey, and edited where necessary. Detail about the provider edits can be found in section 7.3.

2.4 Interpreting the data in the Official Statistics Report and Tables

The majority of findings in the Official Statistics Report and Tables relate to one of two levels of analysis:

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

However, for most of the analyses carried out for the data tables in Chapter 9 the data was restructured so that 'all children' in the household were the base of analysis. This was done to increase the sample size and enable the exploration of packages of childcare received by children in more detail. This approach is not used for other analyses because much more data was collected on the selected child compared with all children in the household.

Weights

A 'family-level' weight is applied to family-level analyses. This ensures the findings are representative of families in England with a child aged 0 to 4 in receipt of Child Benefit.

A 'child-level' weight is applied to analyses carried out at the (selected) child-level. This weight combines the family-level weight with an adjustment for the probability of the child being randomly selected for the more detailed questions.

Bases

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

Unweighted bases are presented throughout. This is the actual number of parents that responded to a given question for family-level questions, and the actual number of children about whom a response was provided by parents for child-level questions.

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

Where a base size contains fewer than 50 respondents, particular care must be taken, as confidence intervals around these estimates will be very wide, and hence the results should be treated with some caution. In tables with bases sizes below 50, these figures are denoted by squared brackets [].

Percentages

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

Continuous data

Some Official Statistics Tables summarise parents' responses to questions eliciting continuous data; for instance, the number of hours of childcare used per week (see Table 1.10 in the Official Statistics Tables) and the amount paid for childcare per week (see Table 4.5 in the Official Statistics Tables). For these data, both median and mean values are included in the data tables, but median values are reported in the Official Statistics Report as they are less influenced by extreme values and are therefore considered a more appropriate measure of central tendency. It should be noted that 'outlier' values, those identified as being either impossible or suspect responses, were removed from the

dataset prior to data analysis. As such, the extreme values which remain can be considered as valid responses which lie at the far ends of their respective distributions.

Where significance testing has been conducted on continuous data, this has been carried out using mean values rather than medians. This is because the continuous data is subject to 'rounding' by respondents, for instance where payments are rounded to the nearest ten pounds, or where times are rounded to the nearest half hour; this rounding can result in similar median values where the underlying distributions are quite different, and testing for differences between means is more appropriate in these instances as it takes the entire distribution into account. It should be noted however that although mean values are more influenced than median values by extreme values, significance testing on mean values accounts for extreme values by widening the standard error of the mean, which is used in the calculation of the test statistic, thereby reducing the likelihood of finding a significant result. As such, it is not the case that a significant change will be reported between years or between sub-groups simply due to a small number of respondents reporting an extreme value on a continuous variable.

Statistical significance

Where reported survey results have differed by sub-group, or by survey year, the difference has been tested for significance using the complex samples module in SPSS 24.0, and found to be statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level or above. This means that the chance that the difference is due to sampling error, rather than reflecting a real difference between the sub-groups or survey years, is 1 in 20 or less. The complex samples module allows us to take into account sample stratification, clustering, and weighting to correct for non-response bias when conducting significance testing. This means that 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpreting a difference as real when it is not) is far less likely than if the standard formulae were used.

Symbols in tables

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

- n/a this category does not apply (given the base of the table)
- [] percentage based on fewer than 50 respondents (unweighted)
- * percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero⁵
- 0 percentage value of zero

⁵ Where a cell in a table contains only an asterisk, this denotes a percentage value of less than 0.5 but greater than zero. Asterisks are also shown immediately to the left of certain figures in tables that present the results of logistic regression models. In these cases, asterisks denote the level of significance of the odds ratios in the table as follows: *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Questionnaire development

2.5 Changes to the questionnaire

A number of changes were made to the 2019 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) questionnaire (from the 2018 survey wave) to reflect changes in policy, and to improve the quality of data captured.

Many of the questionnaire changes reflected the fact that the survey population changed from children aged 0 to 14 in prior survey years, to children aged 0 to 4 in 2019.

Overall, 46 new questions were added, 10 existing questions were amended, and 31 existing questions were deleted. The amended and deleted questions applied to 13 per cent of the 2018 questionnaire (41 questions out of a total of 317 questions). The questionnaire changes are described in the bullet points that follow, in which question names are provided in brackets.

New questions

Questions about the role of digital technology in the home learning environment

A split-sample approach was implemented, such that a random half of parents were asked questions about the selected child's use of digital technology at home, and the remaining half were asked questions about the frequency with which someone at home engaged in home learning activities with the child. The questions about the child's use of digital technology were retained from the 2018 survey wave, with two new questions added.

- (HLDApps, HLDAppPay) These questions asked parents whose child used apps on a digital electronic device at home: how the parent (or partner) chose which apps the child should use; and whether they (or their partner) had ever paid any money for an app for the child, whether by paying to download an app, or making an 'in-app purchase' to buy extra features of an app already owned.

Questions about the frequency of home learning environment activities

A series of questions focusing on the frequency with which someone at home engages in home learning activities with the selected child were added to the questionnaire. These questions were last asked in the 2017 survey wave, but were rotated out of the 2018 survey wave. In 2019, these questions were asked of a random half of parents, with the other half asked questions about the role of digital technology in the home learning environment.

- (HLRead, HLReadOf, HLabc, HLabcOf, HLNum, HLNumOf, HLPoem, HLPoemOf, HLPaint, HLPaintO) These questions measured how often anyone at home did the following home learning activities with the selected child:

looking at books or reading, learning the alphabet or recognising words, learning numbers or to count, learning songs, poems or nursery rhymes; and painting or drawing.

- (HLBooks) This question asked parents how many books they had in their home aimed at children aged 5 or under.
- (Flearn, Whatlearn) These questions asked parents how they felt about the amount of learning and play activities they did with their child, and what would help them do more such activities with their child.
- (Learninfo) This question asked from where parents got information and ideas about learning and play activities they could do with their child.

Questions about the government funded entitlement to early education (free hours)

- (F30Aplnt, F30ApEg, F30ApEgWy) These questions asked parents who had not applied to the 30 hours scheme whether they intended to apply to it. Those who did not intend to apply to the scheme were asked whether they thought they were eligible for the scheme, and those who did not think they were eligible were asked why they did not think they were eligible.

Questions about Tax-Free Childcare

- (TaxFCSAdd, TaxFCSPay) These questions asked parents who had opened a Tax-Free Childcare account whether they had paid any money into their account, and if so, whether they had used their account to make a payment to a childcare provider.

Questions about holiday childcare for pre-school children

A section was added to the questionnaire about the receipt of childcare by pre-school children during school holiday periods, to reflect the shift in focus of the survey from children aged 0 to 14, to children aged 0 to 4.

- (HoIPSOOpen, HoIPSWrk, HoIPSCare, HoIPSWHLst, HoIPSProv, HoIPSNew, HoIPSNewTyp, HoIPSMore, HoIPSPay, HoIPSPayMore, HoIPSMuch, HoIPSDays, HoIPSHrs, HoIPSWHyr). Parents whose child used a formal provider were asked whether the formal provider remained open during times of the year when school children are on holiday, including half terms, or whether it closed for the school holidays. Parents whose child's formal provider closed throughout the school holidays were asked: whether their job meant that they only worked during school term times, and whether their child received any childcare during the most recent school holiday period. Where the child did receive childcare, parents were asked: which was the most recent holiday period in which this childcare was received; which provider or providers provided this childcare; how much, if anything, they paid each provider and how many days and hours per day this payment covered; how their payments

compared to payments made in term-time; and whether the child had received any childcare in any other school holiday periods over the last year.

Questions about parents' choice of main formal provider

- (MPrChoice, MPrCoiceN, MPrEase) These questions asked parents whose child received free hours from his or her main formal provider whether this provider was their first choice of provider, and how easy or difficult it was to get a place at this provider. Parents who did not get their first choice of provider were asked what stopped them from using their preferred provider.

Questions about males in the early years workforce

- (CCMales1, CCMales2) Males are significantly under-represented in the early years workforce, with evidence from the Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2018⁶ showing that three per cent of the workforce are male. To help DfE understand parental attitudes towards men in the workforce, these questions asked parents the extent to which they supported or opposed male staff caring for children at formal childcare providers. Parents who did not oppose male staff caring for children were asked whether they thought that male staff should have the same duties and responsibilities as female staff, or only some of these duties and responsibilities.

Questions about parents' perceptions of childcare provision for children with an illness or disability

The questions that gauged parents' perceptions about childcare provision for children with a long-term illness or disability were revised for the 2019 wave. The previous set of questions were deleted (as described below), and the following questions were added.

- (DisFind, DisTrav, DisHours, DisStaff, DisPrep) These questions asked how easy parents found it to find a local childcare provider that could cater for their child's health condition or impairment; how easy it was to travel to the nearest childcare provider who could accommodate their child's health condition or impairment; whether the hours available at childcare providers that could cater for their child's health condition or impairment fitted in with their other daily commitments; whether staff at the childcare providers used for their child with a health condition or impairment were trained in how to deal with this condition; and whether their child's health condition or impairment had made it harder for the child's childcare providers to prepare the child for school.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provider-finances-evidence-from-early-years-providers>

Deleted questions

Questions about holiday childcare for school-age children

The section of the questionnaire about the use of holiday childcare for school-age children was removed from the questionnaire, to reflect to shift in focus of the survey from children aged 0 to 14, to children aged 0 to 4.

- (Carehol, HolWrk, WhHol, HolIntro, HolProv, HolNew, ProvHol, HolMore, HChld, HolPay, PayMore, HolMuch, HolWen, HolDays, HolHrs) These questions asked those parents with a school-age child or children whether they had used childcare during the school holidays. If so, parents were asked: whether their job meant that they only worked during school term times; during which school holiday periods had they used childcare over the past year; which child or children were looked after by each provider; whether they paid more than, less than, or the same as during term-time for each provider; how much they paid each provider they used in the most recent holiday period, how many days this covered, and how many hours per day this covered.

Questions about the government funded entitlement to early education

- (F30AwHw) This question asked parents who were aware of the 30 hours scheme from where they had heard that 3- and 4-year-olds with working parents can get up to 30 hours of free childcare a week.
- (F30SplAw, F30HolAw, F30CmAw, F30TopAw, F30ExAw, F30ExNAw) These questions asked parents who were aware of the 30 hours scheme whether, before the interview, they were aware that: children can receive their free hours of childcare from two or more childcare providers; some childcare providers allow the free hours to be taken at any time of the year, not just in term-time; free hours of childcare can be used at Ofsted registered childminders; childcare providers cannot charge parents any top-up fees for the free hours children receive; childcare providers offering the free hours can charge for certain extras, such as meals, other consumables such as nappies and sunscreen, outings, and special lessons or activities; but that parents can choose not to receive or pay for these extras.
- (F30ImpSP, F30SpHw) These questions asked those parents whose child was receiving free hours under the 30 hours scheme: what impact they thought the free hours their child was receiving under the 30 hours scheme was having on their child's preparedness for school. Parents who thought the free hours were making their child better prepared for school were asked in which ways they thought the free hours were making their child better prepared for school.

Questions about parents' perceptions of childcare provision for children with an illness or disability

The questions that gauged parents' perceptions about childcare provision for children with a long-term illness or disability were revised for the 2019 wave. The following questions were deleted, to make way for a new set of questions, as described above.

- (Chea4, Chea5, Chea6, Chea7, Chea8, Chea9) These questions asked parents with a child with a long-term illness or disability: how easy it was to travel to the nearest childcare provider who could accommodate their child's health condition or impairment; whether there were local childcare providers that could cater for their child's health condition or impairment; how easy it was to find out information about local childcare providers that could cater for their child's health condition or impairment; whether staff at childcare providers in their area had the awareness and training to be able to deal with their child's health condition or impairment; and whether staff at the childcare providers the parent used for their child were trained in how to deal with the child's condition.

2.6 Questionnaire content

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Household composition, and identification of the selected child.
- Household's use of childcare in the reference week, and the past year.
- Household's awareness and use of the 15 and 30 hours offers.
- Household's childcare costs, for providers used in the reference week.
- Household's receipt of Tax Credits, awareness of Universal Credit, and awareness and use of Tax-Free Childcare.
- The impact of support received on employment and family finances.
- Selected child's attendance record (the day-by-day 'diary' of childcare use in the reference week).
- Selected child's experiences at their main provider, reasons for choosing the main provider, and reasons for the patterns of provision used.
- Selected child's use of childcare during school holiday periods.
- Selected child's home learning environment (split-sample approach, with parents randomly allocated one of the following groups of questions):
 - The selected child's use of digital electronic devices in the context of the home learning environment.

- Frequency with which the selected child engages in home learning activities with someone at home.
- Respondent's attitudes towards childcare in the local area.
- Respondent's and child(ren)'s demographic characteristics.
- Respondent's employment history.
- Consent to data linkage; consent for follow-up research; contact details for pre-school providers.
- Partner's employment status and details (partner interviewed directly).

3 Sampling

3.1 Survey population

The survey population was children aged 0 to 4 living in private residential accommodation⁷ in England.

In previous waves, the survey population has been children aged 0 to 14 (rather than 0 to 4). For the 2019 wave, the focus shifted to pre-school children. The next wave is due to be in field between January and August 2020, and will revert back to interviewing parents of children aged 0 to 14.

Although the sampling units were children, the interview for each selected child was conducted with an appropriate adult (defined as an adult within the child's household with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about the child's childcare').

3.2 Sample frames

Up until the 2014-15 wave of the Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents, children were sampled exclusively from the Child Benefit Register (CBR). This was a highly efficient approach given the near universal take-up of Child Benefit among parents of children aged 0 to 14 in England, and hence the near total coverage of the sample population by the sample frame. In 2013 this coverage was damaged by the introduction of the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC), the effect of which has been to decrease the likelihood that children born since 2013 to higher income parents (those where one or both partners earn £60,000 or more per year) are listed on the CBR.

⁷ Children living in communal establishments such as children's homes are excluded.

DfE commissioned Ipsos MORI to write a report investigating the potential impact of this change, and to explore potential solutions.⁸ The report found that persisting with the CBR as the sole sampling frame would introduce non-coverage bias that would reduce both the accuracy of survey estimates, and the ability to compare changes in estimates over time. The report recommended that a sample of children should be drawn from the CBR, as per previous survey waves, but should be supplemented with a sample of respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) who had agreed to be recontacted for the purposes of future research. The FRS respondents were those with a child (or children) who had not made a claim for Child Benefit, or who had made a claim for Child Benefit but had subsequently opted-out of receiving Child Benefit due to having a high income. These families would have little or no chance of being selected in the CBR sample.

Since the 2017 wave, the survey has used a dual-frame approach, sampling from both the CBR and the FRS.

Selection of the CBR sample

The sample of children from the CBR was selected by HMRC from all children in England that would be aged 0 to 4 on the first day of fieldwork (16 January 2019) for whom a Child Benefit claim had been made.

A small number of children were excluded from the sampling frame before selection took place. The exclusions were made according to HMRC procedures and reasons included: death of a child, cases where the child has been taken into care or put up for adoption, cases where the child does not live at the same address as the claimant and cases where there has been any correspondence by the recipient with the Child Benefit Centre (because the reason for correspondence cannot be ascertained and may be sensitive).

The sample of children was selected in two stages: selection of Primary Sample Units (PSUs) and selection of individual children within each PSU. Ipsos MORI randomly selected 393 PSUs, plus an additional 393 PSUs that could be used as a reserve sample if needed. The PSUs were based on postcode sectors. HMRC provided a full list of postcode sectors in England with counts for each of the number of children on Child Benefit records aged 0 to 4 to the nearest five. In order to reduce clustering, postcode sectors containing fewer than 250 children were grouped with neighbouring postcode sectors. The list of grouped postcode sectors was stratified by Region, population density, proportion of households in managerial professional and intermediate occupations, and, proportion of the population that were unemployed. A size measure

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-and-early-years-survey-of-parents-sampling-frames>

was calculated for each PSU based on the population of children, and sample points were selected with probability proportionate to this size measure.

At the second stage, prior to the start of fieldwork 26 children per PSU were selected by HMRC from the selected PSUs (both the 393 main PSUs and 393 reserve PSUs). A list of all eligible children aged 0 to 4 in the PSU was created and was sorted by postcode and child benefit number to help to avoid children from the same household being selected.

The mainstage sample was drawn from the August 2018 extract of Child Benefit data.

Each sampled child was the 'selected child' about whom detailed child-specific questions in the Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) interview was asked. In certain instances, the CAPI programme re-selected this child, from among all children in the household, at the start of the interview. This occurred in the following instances:

- i. Where the selected child was no longer living at the sampled address (for instance, where the family had moved address without informing HMRC, meaning that their address listed on the CBR was out of date). In these instances, as long as there was a child aged 0 to 4 living at the address at the point that the interviewer made contact, the interviewer sought an interview with one of the parents of this child (or children), with the CAPI script randomly choosing one child aged 0 to 4 in the household to become the selected child (where there was more than one). This occurred at 206 households. Prior to the 2019 wave, the interviewer was instead required to attempt to trace the selected child to his or her new address, and conduct the interview there.
- ii. Where the selected child was living at the address, and a child had been born into the household between the date that the sample was drawn and the date of the interview. As there was approximately a gap of five months between the sample being drawn and the start of fieldwork, children that were born during this time were not represented in the sample of children drawn from Child Benefit records. To account for this, in households where a child had been born since the sample was drawn, the CAPI programme re-selected the child that was to be the focus of the child-specific questions from all children (including the newborn child) in the household. This re-selection occurred at 325 households.
- iii. Where the selected child was living at the address, and where the number of children in the household (excluding children born since the sample was drawn) was found to be greater than the number of children living in the household according to Child Benefit records, and where Child Benefit was received by some but not all children in the household. In these instances, there was a (non-newborn) child in the household that did not have a chance of selection at the sampling stage, as said child was not on the Child Benefit database. Such instances may reflect a child in the household for whom the parents had decided not to claim, an error on the Child Benefit database, or a family event such as

adoption. In these households, the CAPI programme re-selected the child that was to be the focus of the child-specific questions from all children in the household. This re-selection occurred at 26 households.

Selection of the FRS sample

The sample of FRS respondents (n = 111) was selected by DWP from households who had taken part in the 2017/18 FRS survey, who had consented to be re-contacted for the purposes of further research at the time of their FRS interview, and who had a child (or children) born since 16th January 2014 (that is, children aged 0 to 4 at the start of the fieldwork period, and born since the HICBC was introduced) for whom they either:

- had not made a claim for Child Benefit, or
- had opted out of receiving Child Benefit payments due to having a high income.

Those opting out were included to ensure that all children in FRS households that could not be covered via the CBR were captured. Specifically, while families opting out of receiving Child Benefit remain listed on the CBR and are therefore available to be sampled, their contact details are more likely to be out of date as these families have little reason to inform HMRC of a change of address if they move, and as a result, they are likely to be under-represented in the CBR achieved sample. The FRS sample therefore boosts the sample of households that have opted-out of Child Benefit as they would otherwise be under-represented in a sample selected from the CBR alone.

4 Fieldwork

4.1 Briefings

Prior to the start of fieldwork, all interviewers who had not worked on the 2018 Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents (CEYSP) attended a half day briefing led by the Ipsos MORI research team.

The briefings covered an introduction to the study and its aims (including a section from DfE that explained the importance of the survey, along with examples of how the survey data has been used to develop and understand the impact of childcare and early years policies), an explanation of the samples and procedures for contacting respondents, full definitions of formal and informal childcare, and a section on securing participation. All briefing sessions covered discussion on conducting research with parents, issues of sensitivities and practical information, and gave interviewers the opportunity to ask any questions.

Ipsos MORI interviewers who had worked on the 2018 CEYSP participated in a refresher telephone briefing, which lasted approximately one hour. This briefing served as a

reminder of the key aspects of the survey, explained changes to survey procedures, and gave interviewers the opportunity to ask questions.

4.2 Contact procedures

Letters and leaflet

A letter introducing the survey was mailed prior to the start of fieldwork, in January 2019, addressed to (for the CBR sample) the named benefit recipient of the child sampled from the CBR, and (for the FRS sample) the adult who had taken part in the FRS survey and had consented to be recontacted for further research.

The letter provided details about how the household could opt-out of the survey, should they not wish to participate. Those households that did not opt-out were issued for interview.

Interviewers sent a separate 'advance letter' to each household in their assignment shortly prior to making their calls. Enclosed with the advance letter was a 'survey leaflet', which provided further details about the study.

Interviewer visits

For the CBR sample, interviewers were provided with the selected child's name, address, and the name of the person in the household listed as the recipient of Child Benefit for that child. An interview could be conducted with an adult with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for the selected child'. This adult did not have to be the Child Benefit recipient.

In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, interviewers sought to determine whether a child aged 0 to 4 currently lived at the address. If so, the address was deemed to be eligible, and the interviewer introduced the survey to the current residents (who would not have received any advance communications about the survey), and sought to conduct an interview with a parent of the child (or children) aged 0 to 4 at the address. If the interviewer was unable to identify whether a child aged 0 to 4 lived at the address (for instance, where the current residents refused to provide this information), the address was deemed to be of unknown eligibility, and no interview was sought. If the interviewer determined that no child aged 0 to 4 lived at the address, the address was deemed to be ineligible, and no interview was sought.

These procedures mark a deviation from those followed in previous waves of the CEYSP. Prior to 2019, where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, the interviewer attempted to trace the child's new address and conduct an interview there. Due to the rising proportion of children found to have moved from the address listed on the CBR (from 13% of addresses issued to interviewers in the 2010 survey wave, to 22% in the 2018 survey wave), combined with the difficulties of tracing new

addresses in the field, for the 2019 survey the sampling unit was the address, rather than the child.

For the FRS sample, interviewers were provided with the FRS respondent's name, address, telephone number (if available), and the name of a second adult in the household who carried out the FRS interview (if available). An interview could be conducted with an adult with 'main or shared responsibility for making decisions about childcare for the child or children aged 0 to 4 in the household'.

Interviewers were provided with an 'Impact Card' to use, at their discretion, to maximise co-operation across all issued addresses. This Impact Card laid out some of the ways in which the data from the survey series has been used to improve the services the Government provides to parents.

For both the CBR and FRS samples, an interview only took place where the responsible adult consented to be interviewed.

4.3 Interviewing

Interviews were conducted face-to-face using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The CAPI script was programmed using SPSS Dimensions software. A set of showcards were provided as an aid to interviewing.

In situations where respondents could not speak English well enough to complete the interview, interviewers were able to use another household member to assist as an interpreter, or another interviewer in the area who was able to speak their language was asked to conduct the interview. If translation was not possible, the interview was not carried out.

The interviews lasted for a mean of 48 minutes, and a median of 46 minutes.

5 Response

5.1 Outcomes and response for CBR sample

10,218 children were sampled from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) – 26 for each of 393 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). Opt-out letters were sent to these addresses, leading 397 respondents to opt out. These addresses were removed from the sample, and a total of 9,821 addresses were issued to interviewers, who sent advance letters before starting their calls.

The overall response rate for the CBR sample was 62 per cent. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews across all eligible addresses. The full fieldwork

outcomes are shown in Table A.1. Table A.2 then presents various response metrics for the CBR sample, showing trend data since the 2009 survey.

Table A.1 Survey response figures, Child Benefit Register sample

		Outcome category	Of sampled	Of issued
Detailed outcomes	N		%	%
PSUs sampled	393			
Addresses sampled per PSU	26			
Total addresses sampled, of which...	10,218	TS	100%	
Opting out	397	R	4%	
Addresses issued, of which...	9,821		96%	100%
Contact with responsible adult, of which...	8,445		83%	86%
Child at address, of which...	6,833		67%	70%
Refusal	1,605	R	16%	16%
Other unproductive	226	O	2%	2%
Interview – lone parent	1,102	I	11%	11%
Interview – partner interview in person	811	I	8%	8%
Interview – partner interview by proxy	2,487	I	24%	25%
Interview – unproductive partner	602	I	6%	6%
No child at address	1,531	NE	15%	16%
Unknown if child at address	81	UE	1%	1%
No contact with responsible adult, of which...	931		9%	10%
Child at address	81	NC	1%	1%
Unknown if child at address	850	UE	8%	9%
Deadwood (address vacant, demolished, derelict, non-residential, or holiday home)	438	NE	4%	5%
		Calculation	Of sampled	Of issued
Summary of outcomes	N		%	%
Total sample (TS)	10,218	TS	100%	
Eligible sample (ES)	8,249	TS-NE	81%	84%
Interview (I)	5,002	I	49%	51%
Non-contact (NC)	81	NC	1%	1%
Refusal (R)	2,002	R	20%	16%
Other non-response (O)	226	O	2%	2%
Unknown eligibility (UE)	931	UE	9%	10%
Not eligible (NE)	1,969	NE	19%	20%

Note: For the 2019 survey, the sampling unit for the CBR sample was the address. In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, interviewers determined whether a child aged 0 to 4 currently lived at the address. If so, the address was considered eligible, and an interview was sought with a parent of the child (or children) aged 0 to 4 at the address; if not, the addresses was deemed ineligible. Prior to the 2019 survey, the sampling unit was the child. In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, the child was still considered eligible, and the interviewer attempted to trace the child to his or her new address and conduct an interview there.

Table A.2 Survey response metrics, Child Benefit Register sample

		Survey year							
		2009	2010 -11	2011 -12	2012 -13	2014 -15	2017	2018	2019
Response metric	Calculation	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Overall response rate	$I / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	52	57	58	59	57	52	51	62
Eligibility rate (eu)	$I+NC+R+O / I+NC+R+O+NE$	98	97	98	97	97	97	97	79
Unadj. response rate	I / TS	51	55	57	57	55	50	49	49
Co-operation rate	$I / (I+R+O)$	67	76	72	73	70	68	71	73
Contact rate	$I+R+O / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	77	77	80	80	80	75	72	90
Refusal rate	$R / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	24	18	22	21	23	24	22	23

Notes:

The response categories used in the calculations of the response metrics are as follows: Total sample (TS); Interview (I); Non-contact (NC); Refusal (R); Other non-response (O); Unknown eligibility (UE); Not eligible (NE); Eligibility rate (eu). Details of the specific fieldwork outcomes contained within these response categories can be found in Table A.1.

For the 2019 survey, the sampling unit for the CBR sample was the address. In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, interviewers determined whether a child aged 0 to 4 currently lived at the address. If so, the address was considered eligible, and an interview was sought with a parent of the child (or children) aged 0 to 4 at the address; if not, the addresses was deemed ineligible. Prior to the 2019 survey, the sampling unit was the child. In cases where the selected child had moved from the sampled address, the child was still considered eligible, and the interviewer attempted to trace the child to his or her new address and conduct an interview there.

5.2 Outcomes and response for FRS sample

111 valid addresses were sampled from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). Opt-out letters were sent to these addresses, leading two respondents to opt out. These addresses were removed from the sample, and a total of 109 addresses were issued to interviewers, who sent advance letters before starting their calls.

The overall response rate for the FRS sample was 52 per cent. This figure reflects the proportion of productive interviews across all eligible addresses. The full fieldwork outcomes are shown in Table A.3. Table A.4 then presents various response metrics for the FRS sample, showing trend data since the 2017 survey.

Table A.3 Survey response figures, Family Resources Survey sample

		Outcome category	Of sampled	Of issued
Detailed outcomes	N		%	%
Total addresses sampled, of which...	111	TS	100%	
Opting out	2	R	2%	
Total addresses issued, of which...	109		98%	100%
No child at address	5	NE	5%	5%
Respondent moved	19	NC	17%	17%
Refusal	13	R	12%	12%
Other unproductive	3	O	3%	3%
Unknown eligibility	14	UE	13%	13%
Interview – lone parent	1	I	1%	1%
Interview – partner interview in person	11	I	10%	10%
Interview – partner interview by proxy	37	I	33%	34%
Interview – unproductive partner	6	I	5%	6%
		Calculation	Of sampled	Of issued
Summary of outcomes	N		%	%
Total sample (TS)	111	TS	100%	
Eligible sample (ES)	106	TS-NE	95%	97%
Interview (I)	55	I	50%	50%
Non-contact (NC)	19	NC	17%	17%
Refusal (R)	15	R	14%	12%
Other non-response (O)	3	O	3%	3%
Unknown eligibility (UE)	14	UE	13%	13%
Not eligible (NE)	5	NE	5%	5%

Table A.4 Survey response metrics, Family Resources Survey sample

		Survey year		
		2017	2018	2019
Response metric	Calculation	%	%	%
Overall response rate	$I / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	39	52	52
Eligibility rate (eu)	$I+NC+R+O / I+NC+R+O+NE$	100	100	95
Unadjusted response rate	I / TS	39	52	50
Co-operation rate	$I / (I+R+O)$	55	66	75
Contact rate	$I+R+O / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	69	78	69
Refusal rate	$R / (I+R+NC+O+(eu*UE))$	31	23	14

Notes:

The response categories used in the calculations of the response metrics are as follows: Total sample (TS); Interview (I); Non-contact (NC); Refusal (R); Other non-response (O); Unknown eligibility (UE); Not eligible (NE); Eligibility rate (eu). Details of the specific fieldwork outcomes contained within these response categories can be found in Table A.1.

6 Data processing

6.1 Coding and editing of the data

The CAPI script ensured that the correct routing was followed throughout the questionnaire and applied range checks, which prevented invalid values from being entered. It also included consistency checks, which prompted interviewers to check answers that were inconsistent with information provided earlier in the interview. These checks allowed interviewers to clarify and query any data discrepancies directly with the respondent and were used extensively throughout the questionnaire.

The data collected during interviews was coded and edited. The main task was the back-coding of 'other' answers. This was carried out when over 10 per cent of respondents at a particular question provided an alternative answer to those that were pre-coded; this answer was recorded verbatim during the interview and was coded during the coding stage using the original list of pre-coded responses and sometimes additional codes available to coders only.

Coding was completed by a team of Ipsos MORI coders who were briefed on the survey. If the coder could not resolve a query, this was referred to the research team.

After the dataset was cleaned, the analysis file of question-based and derived variables was set up in SPSS and all questions and answer codes labelled.

6.2 Analysis and significance testing

Data tables showing survey results were created. These were generated in SPSS, and significance testing was undertaken using SPSS version 24. The complex samples module in SPSS was used to take into account the impact of stratification, clustering and non-response on the survey estimates. This means that 'false positive' results to significance tests (in other words interpreting a difference as real when it is not) is far less likely than if the standard formulae were used.

6.3 Provider edits

Checks were carried out on respondents' classifications of the pre-school childcare providers they used in order to improve the accuracy of the classifications. During the main survey, parents were asked to classify the childcare providers they used for their children into types (for example nursery school, playgroup and so on). Given that some parents may have misclassified the pre-school providers they used, Ipsos MORI contacted providers by telephone, where possible, and asked them to classify the type of provision they offered to children of different ages. Telephone interviews with providers

were carried out in three separate batches, the first two during the face-to-face fieldwork period, and the third and final batch immediately after face-to-face fieldwork had finished.

The following provider types (as classified by parents) were contacted:

- Nursery school
- Nursery class
- Reception class
- Special day school or nursery unit
- Day nursery
- Playgroup or pre-school

The process of checking providers started by extracting data from the CAPI interview regarding the providers used and the parents' classification of them. This was only done in cases where parents had agreed to Ipsos MORI contacting their providers. Each provider remained linked to the parent interview so that they could be compared and later merged to the parent interview data.

Ipsos MORI received information on 3,245 providers from the interview data. Because different parents may have used the same provider, the contact information for that provider was potentially repeated. As such, Ipsos MORI de-duplicated the list of providers, which was done both manually and automatically. 936 providers were duplicates and were therefore removed from the checks.

A full list of 2,309 providers was generated, and telephone interviewers were briefed. Interviews with providers were approximately three minutes long, and covered the services provided and the age range of the children who attended each service. Interviews were achieved with 2,580 providers, which constitutes a response rate of 80 per cent.

The classification of pre-school providers was compared between the parent face-to-face interviews and the provider checks telephone interviews, and final classifications were derived by following pre-agreed editing rules. Table A.5 compares parents' classification of providers with the final classification of providers after the edits had been carried out.

Table A.5 Summary classification of providers before and after provider checks

	Parents' classification	Final classification after all checks
	%	%
<i>Base: All formal institutional providers identified by parents for whom contact details were provided by parents</i>	3,245	3,245
Nursery school	24	17
Nursery class attached to a primary or infants' school	17	16
Reception class	21	20
Special day school or nursery or unit for children with SEN	*	1
Day nursery	26	34
Playgroup or pre-school	12	12

While these data illustrate the gross change in provider classifications before and after the provider edits, they do not show the net changes; that is, how exactly each provider as classified by parents is ultimately reclassified after the provider edits are complete. This is shown for those provider mentions which were subjected to the provider edits (i.e. where provider contact details were provided and an interview with the provider was sought) in Table A.6.

This table shows that where parent(s) classified providers as either reception classes or day nurseries, in the great majority of cases (92%) they were correct. Parents were least accurate where they classified a provider as a nursery school – this proved accurate in 53 per cent of cases, with 38 per cent of these classifications ultimately proving to be a day nursery, and five per cent a nursery class.

Table A.6 Detailed classification of providers before and after provider checks. Parents' classifications (bold) and final classifications (not bold)

		Per provider	Of total
	N	%	%
Nursery school	765	100	24
Nursery school	403	53	12
Nursery Class	39	5	1
Reception Class	3	*	*
Special day school/nursery	0	0	0
Day Nursery	287	38	9
Playgroup or pre-school	33	4	1
Nursery Class	534	100	16
Nursery school	47	9	1
Nursery Class	436	82	13
Reception Class	17	3	1
Special day school/nursery	3	1	*
Day Nursery	14	3	*
Playgroup or pre-school	17	3	1
Reception Class	690	100	21
Nursery school	17	2	1
Nursery Class	16	2	*
Reception Class	636	92	20
Special day school/nursery	6	1	*
Day Nursery	5	1	*
Playgroup or pre-school	10	1	*
Special day school/nursery	14	100	*
Nursery school	0	0	0
Nursery Class	0	0	0
Reception Class	1	7	*
Special day school/nursery	13	93	*
Day Nursery	0	0	0
Playgroup or pre-school	0	0	0
Day Nursery	854	100	26
Nursery school	41	5	1
Nursery Class	7	1	*
Reception Class	0	0	0
Special day school/nursery	6	1	*
Day Nursery	785	92	24
Playgroup or pre-school	15	2	*
Playgroup or pre-school	388	100	12
Nursery school	36	9	1
Nursery Class	4	1	*
Reception Class	2	1	*
Special day school/nursery	2	1	*
Day Nursery	22	6	1
Playgroup or pre-school	322	83	10
GRAND TOTAL	3,245		100%

6.4 Weighting

Summary of the weighting

The sample was selected from two sources: the main component was sampled from the Child Benefit Register (CBR) as per previous years of the survey, with an additional sample from respondents to the Family Resources Survey (FRS) that were identified as not receiving Child Benefit because of the introduction of the High Income Benefit Charge. These two components of the survey were weighted separately.

The sample is analysed at both the family and child-level, and hence there are two final weights; a family weight for family-level analyses, and a child weight for analyses of data collected about the selected child.

Child Benefit sample: Family weights

Family selection weight

The Child Benefit sample was designed to be representative of the population of children (aged four or younger) of parents receiving Child Benefit, rather than the population of parents or families themselves. This design feature means that larger families are over-represented in the sample⁹. The first stage of the weighting for the family weights corrects for these design features by calculating the appropriate selection weights; these selection weights corrected for families for which the number of children on the sample frame differed from the number of children found in the family at interview.

The family selection weight is the inverse of the family's selection probability, so larger households are weighted down:

$W1 = 1/Pr(F)$; where

$Pr(F) = \# \text{ children aged 0 to 4}$

The counts of the children were based on the sampling frame information, but were adjusted up (or down) if more (or fewer) children were found in the family at interview – this adjustment was trimmed to reduce the variance of the final child weights.

Family calibration weight

The next stage of the weighting adjusted the sample using calibration weighting, so that the weighted distribution for region and the number of children in the household at the family level matched the family-level Child Benefit counts, and the weighted distribution for age groups at the child level matched child-level Child Benefit counts (Table A.7).

⁹ This follows from children in England having an equal chance of selection, meaning that a family with two children has twice the chance of having a child selected as a family with one child, a family with four children has four times the chance of having a child selected as a family with one child, and so on.

HMRC provided Ipsos MORI with a breakdown of the sampling frame (before exclusions) for different variables at family and child level (see Tables A.7 and A.8).

The family selection weights (W1) were used as the starting weights for the calibration weighting stage.

Table A.7 Control totals for the family calibration weights

	Population	Population	Selection weight (W1)	Final weight (W2)
	N	%	%	%
Region (families)				
North East	102,267	4.7	4.7	4.7
North West	298,594	13.7	14.4	13.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	225,029	10.3	12.1	10.3
East Midlands	188,904	8.7	8.6	8.7
West Midlands	244,789	11.2	12.7	11.2
East of England	238,558	11.0	11.9	11.0
London	350,805	16.1	14.1	16.1
South East	327,321	15.0	12.9	15.0
South West	200,933	9.2	8.5	9.2
TOTAL	2,177,200			
Children's age (children)				
0	236,824	9.2	11.5	9.2
1	546,302	21.3	21.7	21.3
2	582,655	22.7	23.0	22.7
3	596,806	23.2	21.4	23.2
4	606,985	23.6	22.4	23.6
TOTAL	2,569,572			
Number of children aged 0 to 4 in household (families)				
1	1,805,493	82.9	74.1	82.9
2	350,829	16.1	24.1	16.1
3+	20,878	1.0	1.9	1.0
TOTAL	2,177,200			

The weights after the calibration stage were the Child Benefit family weights (W2).

Child Benefit sample: Child weights

Child selection weight

At each sampled address from the Child Benefit sample, a single child aged 0 to 4 was selected at random to be the focus of the detailed childcare section of the questionnaire.

The child selection weight (W3) is the inverse of the child selection probabilities applied within each household:

$W3 = 1/Pr(C)$; where

$Pr(C) = 1 / (\# \text{ children aged 0 to 4})$

Child calibration weight

The next stage was to produce calibration weights that adjusted the sample of selected children so that the weighted distributions for age/sex groups, region and number of children in the household matched child-level Child Benefit counts (Table A.8). The starting weights for the calibration stage (W4) were obtained by combining the family weight (W2) with the child selection weights (W3): $W4 = W2 \times W3$.

Table A.8 Control totals for the child calibration weights

	Population	Population	Pre-calibration weight (W4)	Final weight (W4)
	N	%	%	%
Region (children)				
North East	120,250	4.7	4.6	4.7
North West	352,230	13.7	13.5	13.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	266,167	10.4	10.2	10.4
East Midlands	222,704	8.7	8.7	8.7
West Midlands	291,426	11.3	11.4	11.3
East of England	281,381	11.0	10.8	11.0
London	411,739	16.0	16.2	16.0
South East	385,948	15.0	15.4	15.0
South West	237,727	9.3	9.2	9.3
TOTAL	2,569,572			
Selected child's gender / age (children)				
Males: 0	121,412	4.7	4.7	4.7
Males: 1	279,729	10.9	10.3	10.9
Males: 2	298,279	11.6	11.7	11.6
Males: 3	306,122	11.9	12.3	11.9
Males: 4	310,754	12.1	12.2	12.1
Females: 0	115,412	4.5	4.5	4.5
Females: 1	266,573	10.4	10.9	10.4
Females: 2	284,376	11.1	11.0	11.1
Females: 3	290,684	11.3	11.1	11.3
Females: 4	296,231	11.5	11.4	11.5
TOTAL	2,569,572			
Number of children in household (children)				
1	1804653	70.2	70.2	70.2
2	701332	27.3	27.3	27.3
3+	63587	2.5	2.5	2.5
TOTAL	2,569,572			

FRS Sample: Family and child weights

Because the number of interviews carried out with the sample selected from the Family Resources Survey was relatively small (55), a complex weighting strategy was not appropriate. Instead, the child and family weights for the FRS sample were both set to be three times the corresponding mean value for the Child Benefit sample weights.

The weights for the two sample components were combined and re-scaled to have mean of 1, so the weights sum to the sample size.

Effective sample size

Disproportionate sampling and sample clustering usually result in a loss of precision for survey estimates. All else being equal, the more variable the weights, the greater the loss in precision.

The effect of the sample design on the precision of survey estimates is indicated by the effective sample size. The effective sample size measures the size of an (unweighted) simple random sample that would have provided the same precision as the design being implemented. The efficiency of a sample is given by the ratio of the effective sample size to the actual sample size.

The estimated 'average' effective sample size and sample efficiency were calculated for both weights (Table A.9). Note that this calculation includes only effects of the weighting; it does not include clustering effects, which will be question-specific. In addition, this is an 'average' effect for the weighting – the true effect will vary from question to question. These figures provide a guide to the average level of precision of child-level and family-level survey estimates.

Table A.9 Effective sample size and weighting efficiency

	All
<i>Base: All cases</i>	5,057
Child weight	
Effective sample size	4,542
Sample efficiency	89.8%
Family weight	
Effective sample size	4,077
Sample efficiency	80.6%

Confidence intervals

Confidence intervals (at the 95% level) for key estimates in the survey are shown in Table A.10. The confidence intervals have been generated using standard errors calculated using complex samples formulae.

Table A.10 Confidence intervals (95%) for key estimates

	Estimate	Standard error	Lower	Upper	Unweighted base
Use of any childcare by family	86.57%	0.01	85.45%	87.69%	5,057
Use of formal childcare by family	76.09%	0.01	74.77%	77.41%	5,057
Use of informal childcare by family	38.38%	0.01	36.47%	40.30%	5,057
Hours of childcare used per week by children (mean)	25.03	0.27	24.50	25.56	3,617
Weekly amount (£) paid for childcare (mean)	78.89	2.47	74.03	83.75	2,344
Use of holiday childcare (when main provider closed)	26.32%	0.01	23.69%	28.95%	1,347

Appendix: Socio-demographic profile

Respondent characteristics

Gender

As in previous surveys in the series, the majority of parents who responded to the survey were female (85%).

Age

The mean age of respondents was 34, and of their partners, 36. Table B.1 shows the age bands of respondents by family type. It shows that respondents in couple families tended to be slightly older than lone parent respondents.

Table B.1 Age of respondent, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of respondent	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,954	1,103	5,057
20 and under	*	3	1
21 to 30	24	46	29
31 to 40	61	42	57
41 to 50	13	8	12
51+	1	1	1
Mean	34.7	31.4	34.0

Marital status

The majority of respondents (71%) were married and living with their husband/wife. Just over one in five (23%) were single and never married (including persons who were cohabiting) (Table B.2).

Table B.2 Marital status

	All
Marital status	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	5,057
Married and living with husband/wife	71
Single (never married)	23
Divorced	3
Married and separated from husband/wife	3
Widowed	*

Qualifications

Respondents in lone parent families tended to have lower qualifications than respondents in couple families (Table B.3). Lone parents were less likely to hold Honours and Masters degrees as their highest qualification than were respondents in couple families, and were more likely not to hold any academic qualifications.

Table B.3 Highest qualification, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Qualifications	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,933	1,098	5,031
GCSE grade D-G/CSE grade 2-5/SCE O Grades (D-E)/SCE	6	12	7
GCSE grade A-C/GCE O-level passes/CSE grade 1/SCE O	16	24	18
GCE A-level/SCE Higher Grades (A-C)	15	16	15
Certificate of Higher Education	7	7	7
Foundation degree	4	4	4
Honours degree (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd)	25	10	22
Masters degree (e.g. MA, PGDip)	13	3	11
Doctorate (e.g. PhD)	1	*	1
Other academic qualifications	4	3	4
None	9	19	12

Family characteristics

Size of the family

The median family size was four people. The smallest families comprised two people (i.e. one parent and one child), and the largest comprised 12 people.

Number of children aged 0 to 14 in the family

Just under two in five (38%) families had one child aged 0 to 14, 41 per cent had two children, and 20 per cent had three or more children (Table B.4). Lone parents tended to have fewer children than couple families.

Table B.4 Number of children in the family, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Number of children	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,954	1,103	5,057
1	37	44	38
2	44	34	41
3+	20	22	20

Half (50%) of families had only school-age children, and half had both pre-school and school-age children (Table B.5).

Table B.5 Number of pre-school and school-age children in the family, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of children in family	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,954	1,103	5,057
Only pre-school children (0 to 4 years)	50	51	50
Both pre-school and school-age children	50	49	50

Family annual income

Table B.6 shows the family annual income (before tax). Lone parents tended to have lower family annual incomes than did couple families.

Table B.6 Annual family income, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Family annual income	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,618	1,004	4,622
Up to £9,999	2	20	6
£10,000 - £19,999	11	49	19
£20,000 - £29,999	17	20	18
£30,000 - £44,999	24	7	20
£45,000 or more	45	4	36

Family type and work status

Table B.7 shows family type and work status. Half of respondents were from couple families where both parents worked (50%), and a further 24 per cent were in couple families where one parent worked. In 15 per cent of families no-one was working (12% were non-working lone parent families and 3% were couple families where neither parent was in work).

Table B.7 Family work status

	All
Family work status	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	5,057
Couple – both working	50
Couple – one working	24
Couple – neither working	3
Lone parent working	10
Lone parent not working	12

Tenure

The tenure of respondents' families is shown in Table B.8. Families were most likely to be renting the property (46%) or buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan (49%). Most couple families were in the process of buying their home with the help of a mortgage or loan (55%), while most lone parents were renting (80%).

Table B.8 Tenure status, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Tenure status	%	%	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>3,914</i>	<i>1,094</i>	<i>5,008</i>
Buying it with the help of a mortgage or loan	55	11	45
Rent it	37	80	46
Own it outright	6	3	5
Live rent-free (in relative's/friend's property)	1	4	2
Pay part rent and part mortgage (shared ownership)	1	1	1

Selected child characteristics

Gender

There was a roughly even split of selected boys and girls (51% boys and 49% girls).

Age

The age of the selected child was spread across all age categories (Table B.9).

Table B.9 Age of selected child, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Age of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>3,954</i>	<i>1,103</i>	<i>5,057</i>
0	10	7	9
1	21	19	21
2	23	22	23
3	24	23	24
4	23	28	24

Ethnic group

The majority of selected children in the survey were White British (66%) (Table B.10).

Table B.10 Ethnicity of selected child, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Ethnicity of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>3,944</i>	<i>1,098</i>	<i>5,042</i>
White			
White British	67	66	66
White Irish	*	*	*
Other White	9	6	8
Mixed			
White and Caribbean	1	3	1
White and Black African	1	2	1
White and Asian	2	2	2
Other mixed	2	2	2
Asian or Asian British			
Indian	3	1	3
Pakistani	6	3	5
Bangladeshi	2	1	2
Other Asian	2	1	2
Black or Black British			
Caribbean	*	3	1
African	3	9	4
Other Black	*	*	*
Chinese	*	*	*
Arab	1	1	1
Other	1	1	1

Special education needs and disabilities

Four per cent of selected children had a special educational need¹⁰, and four per cent had a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability (Table B.11).

Table B.11 Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Special educational needs or disabilities of selected child	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	3,954	1,103	5,057
Child has SEN	3	7	4
Child has long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability	3	6	4

Among children with a special educational need, 31 per cent had an Education, Health and Care plan or a Statement of special educational needs, and 16 per cent received SEN support (Table B.12). A further 13 per cent received one of these (an Education, Health and Care plan/Statement of special educational needs, or SEN support) but the parent did not know which.

Table B.12 Support received by selected child with special educational needs, by family type

	Family type		
	Couples	Lone parents	All
Special educational needs	%	%	%
<i>Base: All child(ren) with a special educational need or other special needs</i>	126	73	199
Child has Education, Health and Care plan or Statement of special educational needs	28	35	31
Child receives SEN support	14	20	16
Child receives one of the above but parent does not know which	17	6	13
Child does not receive any of these	40	36	39

¹⁰ The selected child was categorised as having a special educational need (or not) during the interview via the parent's response to the question "Does [child's name] have any special educational needs or other special needs? [yes/no/don't know/refused]"

Region, area deprivation and rurality

Table B.13 shows the geographical spread of the surveyed families according to region.

Table B.13 Region

	All
Region	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>5,057</i>
North East	5
North West	14
Yorkshire and the Humber	10
East Midlands	9
West Midlands	11
East of England	11
London	16
South East	15
South West	9

Interviewed families lived in a broad range of areas in terms of deprivation levels, as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England (Table B.14).

Table B.14 Area deprivation according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation

	All
Area deprivation	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>5,057</i>
1 st quintile – least deprived	15
2 nd quintile	15
3 rd quintile	19
4 th quintile	25
5 th quintile – most deprived	26

Table B.15 shows that 86 per cent of families lived in urban areas, with the remaining 14 per cent living in rural areas.

Table B.15 Rurality

	All
Rurality	%
<i>Base: All families with child(ren) aged 0 to 4</i>	<i>5,075</i>
Rural	86
Urban	14
Urban - major conurbation	35
Urban - minor conurbation	4
Urban - city and town	47
Rural - town and fringe	7
Rural - village and dispersed	6
Rural - village and dispersed in a sparse setting	*



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