

issue 16
Summer 2003

childwise

CHECK OUT CHILDCARE: NEWS AND VIEWS FOR PARENTS FROM DAYCARE TRUST

Summer holiday survival

The real views on
men and childcare

Meeting the
childcare challenge

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CHILDREN centred

Welcome to the latest edition of *Childwise*, Daycare Trust's newsletter for parents.

welcome to Childwise

We've just heard where the first children's centres will be. They promise to make a real difference for children and families - bringing together childcare and early education with health and family support. They will show why supporting families when their children are young is so important.

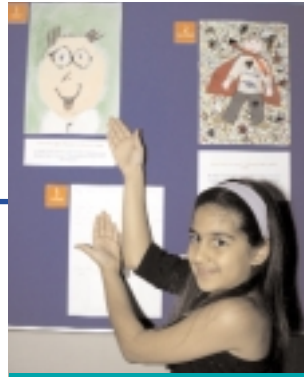
MPs recently backed our call for a children's centre in every community. Now is the time to make the case for all children and families to benefit from the range of services that children's centres will offer.

Parents also need more help with the cost of childcare. We hope that the Government will improve the help available through the tax credits as well as introduce new incentives for employers to support working parents.

Please let us know what you think. This autumn Daycare Trust will be publishing the first findings of our *Childcare Challenge* project with parents from across the country having their say about childcare in 2003. Make sure you are heard too.



Stephen Burke
Director, Daycare Trust



Sonia Sethi, winner age 5-10 category

Dad is No1 MALE HERO

Dad came out on top in the "Draw your male hero" art competition for National Childcare Week. 38% of the 678 entries in the competition were of fathers, leaving celebrities such as David Beckham trailing behind, with just 5% choosing him as their hero.

As well as drawings of Dad, winning entries included pictures of childcarers, Gareth Gates, a doctor and a brother. The winning children and their childcarers were awarded prizes at a ceremony at the IMAX cinema in central London during National Childcare Week in June. The competition was organised by Daycare Trust in conjunction with Nursery World and Bright Horizons Family Solutions.

Public backs men working in childcare

Almost eight in ten British adults (77%) are in favour of men working in childcare according to a MORI survey published during National Childcare Week (9-15 June). 84% of parents surveyed said they would be willing to place their children in a childcare setting which employed a male childcare worker.

The survey identified many benefits of more men working in childcare, including:

- children being cared for in a mixed gender environment (57%)
- providing positive male role models for children (53%)
- helping to ensure the childcare profession reflects society as a whole (38%)
- increasing the number of people working in childcare (23%)

Despite this support, men currently represent only 3% of the childcare workforce; yet 27% of the men surveyed say they would consider working in a nursery or out of school club. Barriers such as the perception of childcare as women's work, the low status/pay of childcare workers and fears of paedophilia need to be tackled to encourage more men into a career in childcare. A national recruitment advertising campaign on TV this month, aims to attract more men into childcare.

You can find more details on the Men and Childcare MORI survey on the news pages of Daycare Trust's website www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Minister for Children announced

Margaret Hodge has been appointed as the Minister for Children, a new post within the Department for Education and Skills. She will take the lead on several areas of children and family policy including children's social services, child protection, family and parenting law and family learning as well as involvement with childcare, early years and Sure Start.

Of her appointment, Margaret Hodge said: "I am convinced we can achieve an approach to children's services that provides the best support they need for a happy and secure childhood and the foundations for a successful adult life."



NEW GUIDE TO TAX CREDITS

A new guide to financial help available to working parents through Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit is available from Daycare Trust, supported by the Sure Start Unit and the Inland Revenue. The Ready Reckoner explains who can claim the tax credits and includes a 'credit calculator' that estimates how much help families could receive towards childcare costs. To order your copy contact Daycare Trust on 020 7840 3350 or info@daycaretrust.org.uk



CLOSING THE CHILDCARE GAP

New statistics published by Ofsted show that the childcare gap is closing - there is now one registered childcare place for every five children under the age of eight in England. In 2001 there was one childcare place for every seven children under the age of eight.

There are 4,753,900 children under the age of eight in England and Ofsted's figures show there are 985,400 childcare places, as shown below.

	Number of providers	Number of places
Childminders	68,200	300,600
Full day care	9,600	383,200
Out of school clubs	8,000	301,600

In addition to the services shown above, there are also 11,600 sessional day care services, such as pre-schools and playgroups, which provide 285,600 sessional places of learning and play for children under five. This is great news for children and parents and a huge step towards quality and affordable childcare options for all families.

Summer holiday survival

The summer holidays are here. They can be a real childcare challenge for many of you. Here are some top tips to help the break run as smoothly as possible

- Call your local Children's Information Service (CIS) for information on holiday clubs, playschemes and childminders who provide childcare during the holidays. Call Childcare Link on 0800 096 02 96 or visit their website www.childcarelink.gov.uk for details of your local CIS.
- Check availability and book as early as possible; many holiday clubs and childminders get booked up quite far in advance.
- Keeping children busy – even if you don't need full time care, your local CIS may also be able to advise you of fun days or activities that might help keep children busy during the break. Also look out for information in local newspapers, on noticeboards or at your library.
- Check and confirm details on the hours of care you need and the costs involved. Do any day trips or activities cost extra?
- If you are receiving help with your childcare costs through Working Tax Credit, be sure to let the Inland Revenue know of changes in your childcare payments. If your childcare costs increase by £10 or more, for more than four weeks in a row you could receive extra help. Contact the Inland Revenue on 0845 300 3900
- Speak to your employer and book any annual leave. Check if it's possible to change the time you start or finish work or swap any shifts.
- Don't be afraid to ask – are there friends or family that you could share the care with? You will be doing them as big a favour as they are doing you.



MPs SEEK BETTER CHILDCARE FOR WORKING PARENTS

A new report by the Work and Pensions Select Committee calls on the Government to invest long term in childcare and provide more support for working parents with childcare costs. The Committee's report, 'Childcare for Working Parents', made several recommendations for improvements including:

- Children's centres, providing childcare, early education, health and family support in all communities
- Reforming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit by increasing the percentage of help available (it currently covers up to 70% of costs) and increasing the maximum that can be claimed by families with two or more children (currently a maximum of £200 per week)
- Encouraging informal childcarers to become registered and extending the home childcarers scheme
- Extending paid parental leave, particularly in the first year of a child's life
- Exploring in detail the childcare needs of families with disabled children
- Improving the pay of childcare workers

Expanding the number of childcare places through children's centres and more help with childcare costs are essential for most working parents. The lack of affordable childcare means parents are either unable to work or are forced to make huge sacrifices and children miss out on the benefits of quality childcare. Investing in childcare is an investment in all our futures.

dear childwise...

I am interested in becoming a childminder. What do I need to do?

There is a shortage of good quality childminders, so it's great that you are considering this excellent career option. Childminders are self-employed childcare workers based in their own home, offering care and learning for children of all ages. They are registered with Ofsted and have to meet a set of national quality standards.

Your local Children's Information Service (CIS) can provide advice and an introductory information pack. Contact ChildcareLink on 0800 096 0296 or www.childcarelink.gov.uk to find out how to get in touch with your local CIS. You can order a copy of the National Standards for Under Eights Daycare and Childminding from the DfES publications line – 0845 602 2260 or view them online at www.dfes.gov.uk/daycare. Ofsted also produces guidance notes on registering as a childminder and you can order these by calling 07002 637833 or visit their website at www.ofsted.gov.uk/childminders

The National Childminding Association (0800 169 4486/www.ncma.org.uk) provides a range of information and support to existing and potential childminders. They are also developing a childminding 'buddying' system, whereby existing childminders support prospective childminders through the registration process. This scheme will be piloted in a few areas later this year, but should be available in all local authorities from April 2004.

Childminding is a challenging and rewarding career and we wish you every success.

Yours, Childwise

Meeting the Childcare Challenge-reaching all children and families



There's nothing more important to Daycare Trust than listening to what parents and children have to say. The Childcare Challenge team has been travelling around Cornwall, Sefton, Greenwich and Middlesbrough doing just this.

Were you one of the many parents who took part in the Childcare Challenge, either attending a discussion group or completing a questionnaire? If so, a huge thank you for your time and for the ideas you gave us on how childcare could be better.

We have already fed some of your ideas to the Inland Revenue on how getting tax credits could be made easier, and for Greenwich Childcare Challengers, your views have been sent in response to the Mayor's Childcare Strategy consultation document. Small steps, but that's how things work, and it proves that YOU can make a difference.

Look out for the Childcare Challenge video and the first mini-report due out in October. (You might even spot one of your quotes!)

Check out Childwise

Thank you to all readers who completed and returned their Childwise survey. The results will feature in our next issue. If you'd still like the opportunity to let us know your views on Childwise, what you like and what you'd like to see more of, you can request a copy of our readers survey by calling 020 7840 3350, or e-mailing info@daycaretrust.org.uk

CHOOSING CHILDCARE

'Choosing Childcare - Your Sure Start guide to childcare and early education' is now available from Daycare Trust. Supported by the Sure Start Unit, this handy guide contains everything you need to know about your options, how to choose, help with the costs of childcare and the advice and support available. To request a copy contact Daycare Trust on 020 7840 3350 or info@daycaretrust.org.uk

Parents Week 2003

Organised by the National Family and Parenting Institute (NFPI), Parents Week 2003 will take place on 20-26 October. This year's theme is 'Making life easier for families' and the NFPI are seeking views from as many people as possible on what's good and bad in family friendly practice. If you'd like to express your views or find out more, call the NFPI on 020 7424 3460 or visit www.nfpi.org.uk

GET CHILDWISE

For your free subscription to Childwise please fill in the form and post it to Daycare Trust at 21 St George's Road, London SE1 6ES, or fax 020 7840 3355, e-mail info@daycaretrust.org.uk or phone our helpline on 020 7840 3350.

We may occasionally contact you about other publications and services offered by us. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick

Name _____

Address _____

Contact number _____

How did you hear about Daycare Trust? _____



Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality affordable childcare for all children aged 0-14 and raising the voices of children, parents and carers. We advise parents and carers, provide employers trade unions and policymakers on childcare issues.

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