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childwise

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



SPECIAL ISSUE

Listening to Families

**What do you think?
What do you need?**

Visit Daycare Trust's website at www.daycaretrust.org.uk
Call our helpline on 020 7840 3350

Childwise is part-supported by the Department for Education and Skills – Child, Young People and Families Grant Programme

 **DAYCARE
TRUST**
THE NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN



Welcome

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

This is a special edition of our newsletter, dedicated to our Listening to Families Project questionnaire.

Please take some time to read about the project, and more importantly, give us your views by completing the questionnaire.

In *Childwise* Issue 24, we told you about the increase in hours for early years education places for three- and four-year-olds.

To clarify the situation for our readers, from April 2007 the hours will increase from 12.5 to 15 hours per week only in a small number of pathfinder pilot local authority areas in England. The roll-out of increased hours will continue and will be achieved in other local authority areas by 2010.

Thom Crabbe
Director of Services

LISTENING TO FAMILIES PROJECT

As we mentioned in the last issue of *Childwise*, we are starting a new project called Listening to Families. We want to find out more about families' experience of, views on and needs for childcare and set up working links between Daycare Trust and parents, in order to involve parents more in our policy and campaign work.

Included in this issue of *Childwise* is a questionnaire for families – we'd appreciate it if you could take the time to complete it. There will be other opportunities to get involved in the project further – so please let us have your contact details if you are interested, or if you want to find out about the results of the questionnaire.

Email your contact details to listeningtofamilies@daycaretrust.org.uk or contact our Research Officer Aoife on 020 7840 3350.

Get your voice heard! Much of this work is being paid for by the Department for Education and Skills – the Government wants to hear from families too.

What do you think? What do you need?

Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality, accessible, affordable childcare for all who need it. We need to hear the voices of children, parents and carers on this subject. And so does the Government.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out more about what childcare services families want and what issues are the most important to you. So if you are a parent or a carer please take the time to complete this questionnaire and let us know what could be done to improve childcare services. We will make sure it is well used and any findings reported to the Government.

All replies to the questionnaire received by Wednesday 31 January 2007 will be entered into a prize draw for £50 worth of vouchers.

This questionnaire asks about childcare. By childcare we mean any arrangements you make for other people to look after your children, apart from your family and friends, for example paying for a nursery place or childminder or using your local children's centre or nursery school for a few hours a week.

We would like you to give us information about the childcare you use, or have used in the past, for your children up to the age of 14, or 18 if they have a disability.

Questionnaire

1) How many children do you have in each of the following age bands?

0-2	3-4	5-11	12-14	15-18 (for disabled children)

2) Do any of your children have a disability or special educational need?

Yes No

If yes, please specify

Use of childcare

3) What type(s) of childcare, if any, have you used in the last three months?

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| -Day nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> | -Specialist day nursery/pre-school or unit for children with disabilities/SEN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Nursery school or nursery class | <input type="checkbox"/> | -Childminder | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Breakfast/after-school club | <input type="checkbox"/> | -Playgroup or pre-school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Holiday club/scheme | <input type="checkbox"/> | -Nanny/au pair | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | -None | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4) In an average week in term-time, how many hours per week do you use childcare?

5) [a] If you have not used any childcare in the last three months, please give your reasons for this? (please tick all that apply)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1) I don't need any childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8) I prefer to use family/friends because they are free | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2) I'd rather look after my children myself | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9) Childcare is too expensive | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3) I don't want my children to use childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10) Childcare is not available when I need it | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) I can't find childcare in a convenient place | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11) Childcare does not reflect my culture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5) I do not know how to find good childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12) I cannot find childcare to meet my child's needs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6) There are no childcare providers I could trust | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13) Childcare providers do not speak my language | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7) I prefer to use family/friends because I know them | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

5) [b] From the reasons you have ticked above, please indicate the most important reason by writing the option number below

Views on provision

6) What is the main form of childcare you use? (please specify) Considering this, from the options below, please circle a number between 1 and 7, where 1 = agree strongly and 7 = disagree strongly

- | | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| -The childcare provision I use is safe and secure | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -There are a range of activities for my child | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Staff are well qualified | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -The provision is of a high quality | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Staff care for my child well | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -I am involved in making decisions about my child's care | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Provision is reliable | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Staff do not have appropriate skills/experience | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Provision meets my child's needs | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -There are things about it that I would like changed | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ | don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments:

7) Again, considering the main form of childcare you use, when did you first start using this childcare (including for any older children)?

8) [a] Have you seen any changes or differences in the provision over this time?

Yes No

8) [b] If yes, have these changes been positive or negative?

Positive Negative

8) [c] Please can you tell us briefly what these changes are?

Paying for childcare

9) Do you know about and/or receive any of the following (please tick all that apply)

	Know about	Receive
-Child Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Disability element of Child Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Severe Disability element of Child Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Working Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Childcare element of Working Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Child Benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Childcare vouchers from your employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Childcare Assist, through New Deal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Care to Learn, for teen parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Funding from your college or university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Funding from your local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-Disability Living Allowance (for your child)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Information about childcare

10) How easy is/was it to find information about: (where 1 = very easy and 5 = very difficult)

-Childcare in your area	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
-Entitlement to free nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds	① ② ③ ④ ⑤
-Help with paying for childcare	① ② ③ ④ ⑤

11) Please state whether you have heard about the following initiatives

-Sure Start	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
-National Childcare Strategy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
-Ten Year Strategy for Childcare	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
-Extended Schools	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
-Early Support Programme (for disabled children)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Priorities for childcare

12) If you could change one thing about your childcare provision, what would it be?

13) Please tick three things that you think the Government and childcare providers should prioritise

	Government	Childcare provider
1) Better qualification of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Better pay for staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Better indoor premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Better outdoor space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Better range of activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Better education for my child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

continued on
the next page...

	Government	Childcare provider
7) More places at the existing provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) More choice of provision near my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Cheaper childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Provision available at times when I need it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) More free childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) Better information about childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Staff who speak my language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Staff who understand and promote my culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15) More provision for children with disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16) Longer paid maternity leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17) Financial support for parents who want to stay at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18) Financial support for parents who want to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) Financial support for parents who want to study and/or re-train	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20) Family-friendly employment practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21) Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) If you do not currently use childcare, which, if any, of these options would encourage you to use it? (please give the numbers of the options below)

15) If you do use childcare, would any of the options above encourage you to increase your child's hours?

Keeping in touch with parents

16) Daycare Trust would like to consult with parents more – what do you think is the best way to do this? (please tick all that apply)

- Email
- Insert in a magazine (please specify which magazine)
- Through *Childwise* (Daycare Trust's newsletter for parents)
- Parents Parliament (this is a large meeting where parents debate issues and raise their concerns)
- Phone interview
- Face-to-face interview
- Through my childcare provider
- Through a Sure Start Children's Centre
- Through local groups or organisations (please specify which group(s)
- Other (please specify)

17) Where did you get this questionnaire from?

- Sent to me in the post
- From the Daycare Trust conference
- A friend gave it to me
- From my childcare provider
- From my local nursery/children's centre
- Other (please specify).....

About you

We would be grateful if you would answer the following questions, so we know if our survey is representative.

18) Are you:

Male Female

19) How old are you?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50+

20) [a] Are you a member of a parents' group, for example at your local nursery or children's centre?

Yes No

20) [b] If 'Yes', please give details

21) Please describe your ethnic background

White

- British
- Irish
- Any other White background, please specify:

Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background, please specify:

Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese
- Any other background, please specify:

Asian

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background, please specify:

Black

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background, please specify:

22) [a] Do your children live with you?

- Yes No Some of them do Some of the time

22) [b] Which of the following best describes your situation (please tick one)?

- I have sole responsibility for my child/ren
- I share responsibility with someone I live with
- I share responsibility with someone who does not live with me

23) Please tick your own and any partner's employment status

- | | You | Your partner |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| -Employed full time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Employed part time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Self employed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Voluntary work | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Studying | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Not in employment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

24) What is the highest educational qualification that you and your partner (if applicable) have?

- | | You | Your partner |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| -Degree or above | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -A Level or equivalent | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -GCSE, O Level or equivalent | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -Other qualifications | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -No qualifications | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

25) Would you be willing for us to contact you as part of our Listening to Families project and be involved further in giving your views (give details below)?

- Yes No

If you would like to be further involved in the project or you would like to become a member (this is free for parents in 2007) of Daycare Trust and receive future issues of *Childwise*, please give us your contact details:

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

We will report back on our findings in future editions of Childwise. As a parent member of Daycare Trust you can receive this quarterly newsletter for free.

Please send your completed questionnaire (no stamp needed) to:

**Daycare Trust
FREEPOST WC5209
London SE1 6YR**

All questionnaires received by Wednesday 31 January 2007 will be entered in a prize draw to win £50 worth of vouchers.