

# childwise

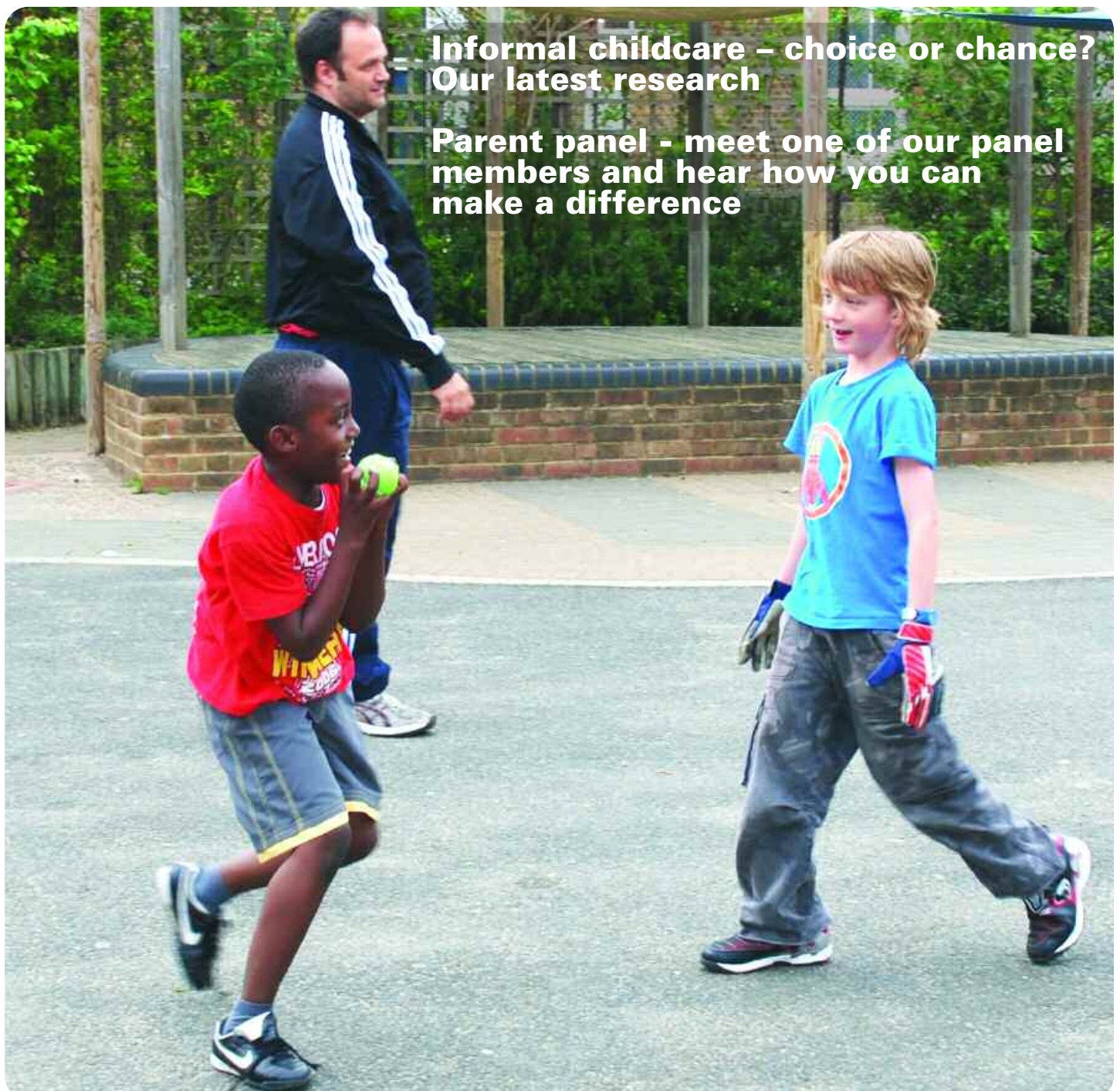
Childcare news for parents

Childwise Issue 39 Summer 2010  
Daycare Trust National Childcare Campaign

NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN

daycare  
trust

## Help with holiday childcare



**Informal childcare – choice or chance?  
Our latest research**

**Parent panel - meet one of our panel  
members and hear how you can  
make a difference**

# Welcome

Welcome to the Summer 2010 edition of *childwise*.

Since our last edition, we have welcomed a new coalition government and are in an exciting time of political change. Daycare Trust looks forward to working with the new government to ensure childcare remains at the top of the political agenda. It is not too late to join our campaign for quality, affordable and accessible childcare for all by adding your name to our Childcare Charter.

As the summer break is just a few weeks away, many families are likely to be thinking about holiday childcare. Some of you may be struggling to understand what options your family has, while others are concerned about how to pay for this additional expense. In this edition, we explain a variety of childcare solutions for the summer and other holidays, and offer some tips about how you may be able to get help for holiday childcare costs.

In this edition, we also give you an update on some new research we are starting on informal care which many families use during holiday breaks and school terms alike. This research will consider to what extent informal care offered by family and friends is a choice and to what extent it is the only option available. If you would like to share your experiences of using informal childcare, or would like to make any other comments, we always welcome your feedback.

Plus we catch up with one of our Parent panel members to find out why she chose to speak out about childcare and the opportunities that are available through being a member of the panel.

Keep in touch!



Alison Garnham  
Chief Executive



Daycare Trust is a member of the  
Campaign to End Child Poverty

## end child poverty

For more information about the campaign  
visit [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

## National childcare week

12-19 July 2010

National childcare week, organised by Daycare Trust, will take place from 12–19 July. This year's theme, 'Raising quality: reducing inequality' will focus on how investment in early years has the biggest impact on children's lives and helps every child fulfil their potential.

We very much hope that you will join Daycare Trust to celebrate National childcare week through the various events and activities that are being planned by parents, companies and by childcare and out-of-school settings. It's not too late to organise something; why not check out the helpful events pack on our website. To receive your promotional pack of balloons, posters and stickers, contact: [nationalchildcareweek@daycaretrust.org.uk](mailto:nationalchildcareweek@daycaretrust.org.uk) and don't forget to let us know what you are planning.

To find out what is happening near you visit our website for a list of events and activities: [www.daycaretrust.org.uk](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk).

### "What I want to be" children's art competition



Kindly supported by  
The Children's Mutual

Entries have been flooding in for our art competition. The judges include: Keith Chapman, creator of Bob the Builder, Fifi and the Flowertots and co-creator of Roary the Racing Car; Sonali Shah from CBBC Newsround and Naomi Wilkinson from Five's Milkshake! The winners will attend an awards ceremony held during National childcare week and one lucky winner will receive a fantastic short break at one of Haven's holiday parks. To view the shortlisted entries visit our website.

National childcare week is kindly supported by:





# Holiday childcare

You may find you need additional childcare during school holidays, such as the long summer break, especially if you have school-aged children. Here we explain how you may be able to access help with costs and what holiday childcare options you may have.

## Finding holiday childcare

Daycare Trust's *Holiday childcare costs survey* found that holiday childcare provided through a local authority is almost always cheaper than private or voluntary provision. However, some local authorities are struggling to provide adequate levels of holiday childcare for families, particularly for disabled children over the age of 12. You should check early with your local Family Information Service for information about the availability of holiday care in your area as spaces fill up quickly.

## Paying for holiday childcare

According to our *Holiday childcare costs survey 2010*, average holiday childcare costs range from between £58.89 a week and £119.32 a week. While some schools and local authorities may offer free clubs and activities, many families will have to pay for childcare, so it is important to check that you are claiming any help you are entitled to.

As with childcare during term-time, you can only receive help with your holiday childcare costs if you use registered childcare. Out-of-school clubs, holiday playschemes, extended schools and some nannies may be registered providers. If they care for children under the age of eight they will have to be registered but if they only care for children aged eight and over, they can opt to join the Ofsted voluntary register. Check with

Typical weekly cost of full-time holiday childcare  
*Holiday childcare costs survey 2010*

Region	Local authority typical weekly cost	Private and voluntary provision typical weekly cost
England – regional average	£82.60	£104.55
Wales	£58.89	£101.60
Scotland	£104.28	£96.47

your provider to find out. However, care provided by a family member or friend does not qualify for financial help with childcare costs unless:

- your family member/ friend is a registered childcare provider;
- the care is not provided in your home; and,
- the care is provided to non-related children in addition to your child.

If you use registered childcare during the school holidays, you may be eligible for help with your childcare costs through the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. When you start paying childcare costs or up to one week before you start paying, you need to contact the Tax Credit helpline on 0845 300 3900. Inform them of what your average weekly childcare costs will

be and for what period. If you are eligible for help you will also need to contact the office when you stop paying for your childcare. You must do this to avoid an overpayment.

If you use childcare throughout the year as well as during the holidays, your tax credit award will be based on your average weekly costs. When you put in your application for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, you need to include any holiday costs that you estimate you will be incurring. This will be included in your weekly tax credit payment.

If your employer offers childcare vouchers, these too can be used to pay for any registered holiday childcare that you use. And you can save these up so the cost of holiday childcare is spread throughout the year.

For full eligibility criteria for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit visit our website: [www.payingforchildcare.org.uk](http://www.payingforchildcare.org.uk) and to see if you are better off with the Working Tax Credit or childcare vouchers, visit: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

If you have parental responsibility for a child with a disability, you may be able to receive money to pay for services and equipment, instead of having them arranged by the local authority. Direct payments can be provided by social services after an assessment process and may be used to cover the costs of holiday childcare. Contact the social services department at your local authority for information.

For further information on our *Holiday costs survey* results or paying for childcare, visit our website: [www.daycaretrust.org.uk](http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk).



## Holiday childcare options

**Quality holiday childcare provides a stimulating, fun environment for your children. Many offer sports, creative activities, trips out and may provide opportunities to try things your children might not otherwise experience. You may wish to consider the following options:**

- **Out-of-school services and kids' clubs normally run during term-time but some operate during school holidays. They generally provide care for children aged between 4- and 14-years old, but you should check with each individual setting to see if they have their own age limits.**
- **Holiday playschemes/clubs are a common type of holiday childcare, often run by the local authority. Many provide a full-day place, but some only operate on a part-time basis.**
- **Extended Schools sometimes offer holiday activities, occasionally in partnership with voluntary organisations.**
- **Childminders and nannies may be available on a temporary basis to cover the holidays. For local childminders, speak to your Family Information Service. Or visit [www.nannyshare.co.uk](http://www.nannyshare.co.uk) for information on cutting costs by sharing a nanny with another family.**
- **Family/friends may be able to provide care during holidays, but you will not be able to receive financial support for any costs incurred by informal arrangements.**

Your Family Information Service (FIS) can provide you with more information and details of local registered childcare during holiday periods.

You can contact your FIS on 0800 234 6346 or use the 'Find a FIS' function at [www.familyinformationservices.org.uk](http://www.familyinformationservices.org.uk).

## Informal care: choice or chance?

Daycare Trust has recently begun a two-year project looking at the use of informal childcare. By this we mean childcare provided by family members or friends, rather than by a formal provider such as a nursery or childminder.

In 2008 there were 3.7 million families in England using childcare and early years education in term-time, of which 2.9 million used formal provision and 2.1 million used informal providers. A significant proportion used both, with informal arrangements used to 'wraparound' formal provision.

In our study we will look at why parents use informal care, the sort of arrangements they make, and how it varies between different groups in society. One of the key aims of our research project is to discover the extent to which parents' choices about childcare are genuine choices. For example, very little formal childcare is available outside of traditional working hours, despite the fact that many parents work during the evenings and weekends.

We know that families make a multitude of different arrangements, depending on who is providing care, whether they are paid, whether they do it regularly according to a fixed pattern or on a more ad hoc basis. Making policy recommendations based on these complex and sensitive family decisions will be a difficult task. Our research will

include focus groups, interviews and a large scale survey, in order to capture the widest range of views.

As well as parents' own views, we know that social and economic factors are also important. Lower income families are less likely to use both formal and informal childcare and parents' choices are conditioned by what is expected of them among their family, friends and community. The ability to afford childcare also remains a major barrier for many families. The high take-up of the free entitlement of 12.5 hours of childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds suggests that when cost considerations are removed, the choices parents make might be different.

It is also essential that the voices of the grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends and neighbours who provide childcare are heard. No doubt some would like to formalise the arrangement, undertake training and get paid, but may feel that the registration requirements are too tough. On the other hand, some appreciate the informal nature of the care they provide and wouldn't want or expect to get paid.

We hope that our research will shed light on these considerations, and lead to greater understanding and future policy change in this important area.



### How you can help?

**We would be very grateful for your views and stories on informal care.**

- **If you are a parent, why did you choose informal care for your child? How does it work for you?**
- **If you are a provider or local authority, how do you support families using informal care? Do you know of any networks for grandparents or other informal carers?**
- **If you are someone providing care for a friend or family member, how does it work for you? Do you get paid, and would you prefer to formalise the arrangement?**

**Please email: [policy@daycaretrust.org.uk](mailto:policy@daycaretrust.org.uk) with your stories!**

# Being a Parent panel member

**Daycare Trust's Parent panel allows parents to act as childcare spokespeople, through speaking out in the media and at conferences. We caught up with panel member Lisa Whitehead who explains why you should sign up today.**

Lisa Whitehead from Huddersfield is mother to two-and-a-half-year old Thea Isabel. She first heard about Daycare Trust's Parent panel when she picked up a copy of *childwise* in the nursery. Lisa said she joined the Parent panel because of her interest in childcare and lack of affordable provision. 'My comparison is with Scandinavian countries as I lived in Norway for six years prior to having Thea and also having a Norwegian partner. There, things are very different, making this country look like we're living in the dark ages.'

Since joining the panel Lisa supported Daycare Trust's *Childcare costs* report launch by being available to answer questions from journalists. This resulted in Lisa, 'having my say on childcare costs' on GMTV. She also participated in Daycare Trust's 2009 Annual Conference. At the conference she sat on a panel answering questions from Polly Toynbee and conference delegates regarding parental experiences of childcare provision. In fact, the highlight of Lisa's experience on the Parent panel so far was taking part in this conference. She enjoyed, 'hearing from conference delegates how energised they were by what I had to say about childcare in the UK. It was really positive to receive such supportive comments.'

Lisa thinks it is important that parents speak out about their childcare experiences since childcare is an issue that affects working families and also society in general. 'Most families choose to accept the status quo in the UK of good quality childcare provision but priced at a premium that often excludes families from choosing a nursery setting for their children.'

She continues: 'The problem is that as long as we just keep quiet about it and accept the outdated childcare policy that currently exists, nothing will change as the government will always downgrade childcare to a low priority area of educational policy and place the burden of expense onto parents' shoulders. If we parents remain apathetic in the current economic climate, then the burden of expense will grow and working couples will continue to have no choice but to choose not to have further children.'

**For more information or to join the Parent panel, email Veronica King on: [vking@daycaretrust.org.uk](mailto:vking@daycaretrust.org.uk) or call 020 7940 7525.**

## Join our Parent network

For your free subscription to *childwise*, please fill in the form below and join Daycare Trust's Parent network. Return completed forms to: Daycare Trust, 2nd Floor, Novas Contemporary Urban Centre, 73-81 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 0NQ

I am a parent and would like to join Daycare Trust's Parent network and receive my free copy of *childwise*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

We may occasionally contact you about other publications and services we offer. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick this box.

NATIONAL CHILD CARE CAMPAIGN

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