

***Congress Report on
Survey of Childcare Practices***

**IDENTIFYING
MEMBERS'
CHILDCARE
NEEDS**



Published by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
31/32 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1, Ireland.
Tel: 353 1 889 7777 Fax: 353 1 887 2012
E-mail: congress@ictu.ie
Web site: www.ictu.ie

CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Policy Context	5
Research Aim and Methodology	5
Survey Distribution and Response	6
Survey Findings	7
Conclusions	30
Childcare Practice Questionnaire	31

FOREWORD

Employees are increasingly seeking a more balanced approach to reconciling their work and family lives. Furthermore, they are identifying the need for policy improvements to help them reconcile employment and caring for their children in a way that ensures quality of life for children, parents and families. Ensuring high standards of childcare is of concern to Congress and working parents, high quality childcare provision makes a real contribution to children developing their potential while poor quality provision can be damaging.

This Survey commissioned by Congress, clearly shows that access to childcare is far from satisfactory, and highlights the problems that working parents experience across a wide range of areas including having to leave the workforce, not applying for promotional opportunities and putting careers on hold.

Meeting the cost of childcare is the biggest problem facing working parents. The scale of the difficulty faced by workers in meeting their childcare costs is large and felt most by those workers where both parents work.

While childcare is not a 'women's issue' the research shows that in Ireland today women, as mothers, continue to be expected to be available for unpaid caring work. Therefore, childcare must be seen as vital to ensuring women's participation in the labour force and is critical in respect of eliminating the gender pay gap. This Survey demonstrates both the impact the lack of childcare has on workers and their families, and the need for a multi-faceted and interconnected response at workplace level.

Congress is calling for the development of a long-term strategy at National level aimed at meeting the needs of working parents. This strategy should reassess current taxation policies to assist working parents meet their childcare costs and should review the overall mix of the childcare supply support to be provided.

Congress believes that the provision of financial support for childcare should not be seen solely as a cost or burden on the exchequer but rather as an investment. The economic benefits of investing in quality childcare are evidenced in a number of ways, the social benefits to children leading to gains in Ireland's human capital, increased employability of parents, combating skill and labour shortages, improving the capacity; profitability and sustainability and job creation capacity of the childcare sector.

The findings from this Survey clearly demonstrate that affordable, accessible childcare is one of the key factors of equality in the workplace.



David Begg
General Secretary
March 2002



Report on Survey of Childcare Practices

1 POLICY CONTEXT

During the summer of 2001 Congress commissioned Nexus Research Co-operative to carry out a survey to find out how trade union members were meeting their childcare arrangements or childcare needs.

The context for this research is the limited provision of childcare services in Ireland (acknowledged by the Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare, 1999) and more specifically the very limited information available on how working parents manage childcare.

The definition of childcare accepted for this research is that used by the Expert Working Group referring to services providing care and education, which are viewed by the Expert Working Group as being complementary and inseparable. This is to distinguish the use of the term from its use within the wider health sector, where the term 'Child Care Services' refers to the variety of services for children up to the age of 18 years in need of the care and protection of the State. In lay parlance the focus is therefore upon children being minded by someone other than a parent or guardian while parents or guardian(s) are working in paid employment.

The survey does not cover those who may have left the workforce or who cannot enter the labour force due to childcare constraints.

The age-group of children in such childcare to be considered is 0-14 years to take account of children who may be in the 'unminded' category.

The research focuses primarily on childcare practices during school term.

2 RESEARCH AIM AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH AIM

The overall aim of the research is to establish, through a survey of Congress members, how childcare is managed by union members in both formal and informal ways.

There is essentially a trade off between the scope and depth of survey coverage. Given that there are 48 unions affiliated to Congress in the Republic, with varying gender balances, and that not all union members will be parents with children in the 0-14 years age-group, a sample survey of all member unions may not provide valid and reliable information on the target population.

Therefore a decision was taken to focus on six Congress member unions where it was felt that childcare practice issues would probably be manifest. The six unions were: SIPTU, PSEU, MANDATE, INO, MSF and CPSU.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was drawn up in collaboration with an advisory group comprising representatives from Congress and the participating unions. The questionnaire sought information on respondents on the following matters:

- Background information on age, gender, number of children in 0-14 years age-group;
- Working pattern of parents; working hours, share of working hours between partners, extent of family friendly working environment;
- Childcare practice e.g. type and extent of services used, costs, costs of lack of access to childcare, type of childcare e.g. crèche versus childminder;
- Income levels and expenditure on childcare e.g. additional costs of childminding in own home etc;
- Factors influencing childcare practices e.g. awareness of facilities, work and home locations, role of other family members etc.;
- Unmet needs - types and nature of services required.

A pilot survey was undertaken in July 2001 to help test and refine the questionnaire. Some 140 questionnaires were distributed with 76 being completed and returned, giving a response rate of 54%. This is a relatively high response rate for a survey in which the questionnaire is not completed by the respondent with an interviewer. The most significant change to the questionnaire as a result of the pilot survey was the introduction of a question asking whether the respondent's partner has left work to take care of childcare needs on a full-time basis.

The main survey was carried out in October 2001, questionnaires being distributed through industrial relations officers.

3 SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE

Some 825 questionnaires were completed and returned by union members within a four week period. This was deemed satisfactory as the research proposal had a target of 750 completed and returned questionnaires.

The table below gives details of the survey distribution between the six unions and the response to the survey. At 17% the overall response rate to the survey was good.

Survey Distribution and Response

Union	Membership	% of Membership	Number Distributed	% Distribution	Number Returned	% Total returned	% Response rate
SIPTU	192,149	64.1	3,000	62.6	341	41.3	11.4
INO	27,000	9.0	450	9.4	95	11.5	21.1
MANDATE	40,000	13.3	650	13.6	104	12.6	16.0
PSEU	7,000	2.3	120	2.5	37	4.5	30.8
CPSU	13,736	4.6	220	4.6	183	22.2	83.2
MSF	20,000	6.7	350	7.3	65	7.9	18.6
Total	299,885	100.0	4,790	100	825	100.0	17.2

The distribution of returned questionnaires among the participating unions does not exactly match the pattern of distribution among the unions. So, 41% of returned questions are from SIPTU though they accounted for 63% of those distributed. In contrast there are disproportionately high returns from the CPSU – they accounted for under 5% of those distributed but for more than one fifth of those returned. The same is true for the PSEU.

4 SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

As anticipated the majority of survey respondents were female, with most being in the 30s to early 40s age-group.

Crosstabulation of Respondents Gender by Age-Group

Age-Group	Male	Female	Total
20-24	3 8.6%	32 91.4%	35 100.0%
25-29	13 14.3%	78 85.7%	91 100.0%
30-34	30 14.6%	176 85.4%	206 100.0%
35-39	65 26.2%	183 73.8%	248 100.0%
40-44	44 27.8%	114 72.2%	158 100.0%
45-49	21 35.6%	38 64.4%	59 100.0%
50-54	6 42.9%	8 57.1%	14 100.0%
55-59	3 75.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
Total	185 22.7%	630 77.3%	815 100.0%

There were 1,534 children under 15 among the 825 respondents, an average of 1.9 per respondent. The following table shows the distribution of children (under 15) by age-group and gender.

Crosstabulation of Age-Group of Child by Gender^a

Age-Group of Child	Male	Female	Total
Under 2	77 10.8%	68 9.6%	145 10.2%
2 to 4	221 30.9%	200 28.2%	421 29.5%
5 to 9	239 33.4%	242 34.1%	481 33.8%
10 to 14	178 24.9%	200 28.2%	378 26.5%
Total	715 100.0%	710 100.0%	1,425 100.0%

^an =1,425 (92.9%) exact age information was not provided for all children

Just under 6% of respondents had children with special needs.

4.2 EMPLOYMENT SECTOR AND HOW CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES AND NEEDS ARE HANDLED

Almost two-thirds of the respondents were employed in the public sector.

Whether private or public sector employee

Whether private or public sector employee	Frequency	Valid Percent
Public sector	516	64.4
Private sector	285	35.6
Total	801	100.0
no answer	24	
Total	825	

Regarding the distribution of respondents between different industrial sectors:

- ▲ For males, manufacturing, the civil service, the health boards and financial services were the top three categories accounting for almost two-thirds of male respondents.
- ▲ For females, the top three categories were the civil service, the health board and manufacturing which accounted for almost two-thirds of female respondents.

Crosstabulation of Gender of Respondent by Employment Sector

Employment sector ^a	Male	Female	Total
Civil Service	38 20.9%	170 27.3%	208 25.9%
Local Authorities	1 .5%	2 .3%	3 .4%
Health Board	15 8.2%	120 19.3%	135 16.8%
Teaching/ Education	2 1.1%	8 1.3%	10 1.2%
Commercial State Bodies	13 7.1%	6 1.0%	19 2.4%
Non-commercial State Bodies	2 1.1%	10 1.6%	12 1.5%
Manufacturing	59 32.4%	114 18.3%	173 21.5%
Wholesale and Retail Trades	8 4.4%	90 14.5%	98 12.2%
Transport and Distribution	-	2 .3%	2 .2%
Financial Services	22 12.1%	27 4.3%	49 6.1%
Distribution	3 1.6%	-	3 .4%
Construction	1 .5%	-	1 .1%
Other Services	18 9.9%	73 11.7%	91 11.3%
Total	182 100.0%	622 100.0%	804 100.0%

^an of valid cases = 804 (97.5%)

In addition to differences by gender in the distribution of respondents between sectors there are also differences in relation to their employment status. So while 96% of men are in full-time employment the corresponding figure for women is 61%.

Crosstabulation of Respondents Employment Status by Gender

Employment status	Male	Female	Total
Full-time permanent	172 93.0%	367 58.3%	539 66.1%
Part-time permanent	6 3.2%	227 36.0%	233 28.6%
Full-time temporary or contract worker	6 3.2%	19 3.0%	25 3.1%
Part-time temporary or contract worker	1 .5%	17 2.7%	18 2.2%
Total	185 100.0%	630 100.0%	815 100.0%

Childcare responsibilities are generally shared with spouse or partner, but it is notable that very few males handle childcare responsibilities on their own.

Crosstabulation of Gender of Respondent by How Childcare Responsibilities Are Handled

Gender	On your own	co-habiting Shared with spouse/partner	non-cohabiting Shared with spouse/partner	Total
Male	6 3.3%	167 91.8%	9 4.9%	182 100.0%
Female	101 16.1%	507 80.9%	19 3.0%	627 100.0%
Total	107 13.2%	674 83.3%	28 3.5%	809 100.0%

Combined income range (of households where partner is in paid employment)

Combined income range		Frequency	Valid Percent
(Under IR£7,000)	Under €8,888	5	.9
(IR£7,000 to IR£ 9,999)	€8,888 to €12,696	5	.9
(IR£10,000 to IR£ 12,999)	€12,697 to €16,505	11	1.9
(IR£13,000 to IR£ 14,999)	€16,507 to €19,045	18	3.1
(IR£15,000 to IR£ 17,999)	€19,046 to €22,854	24	4.1
(IR£18,000 to IR£ 19,999)	€22,855 to €25,393	28	4.8
(IR£20,000 to IR£ 24,999)	€25,395 to €31,742	75	12.8
(IR£25,000 to IR£ 29,999)	€31,743 to €38,091	81	13.9
(IR£30,000 to IR£ 34,999)	€38,092 to €44,440	94	16.1
(IR£35,000 to IR£ 39,999)	€44,441 to €50,788	70	12.0
(IR£40,000 to IR£44,999)	€50,790 to €57,137	61	10.4
(IR£45,000 to IR£49,999)	€57,138 to €63,486	47	8.0
(IR£50,000 or more)	€64,487 or more	65	11.1
Total		584	100.0
No answer		34	
Total		618	

4.3 IMPACT OF CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES ON WORK

Respondents were asked about access to and use of flexible work arrangements. In this context the most frequently cited item was job sharing or work sharing, with half of the respondents having access to this arrangement. However, when it comes to availing of different work arrangements, the highest proportion of those to whom they are available avail of flexitime and shiftwork.

Access to and use of different working arrangements

Working Arrangement	Have Access to	%	Availing of	%
Shiftwork	246	29.8	154	62.6
Job Sharing/Work Sharing	419	50.8	143	34.1
Flexitime	322	39.0	222	68.9
Part-time work	233	28.2	93	39.9
Annualised hours	42	5.1	15	35.7
Term-time working	188	22.8	12	6.4
Employment or career break	314	38.1	1	0.3
Tele-working/home working	16	1.9	2	12.5
Parental leave	na	na	75	9.1
Carer's Leave	na	na	0	0.0

The % availing of is expressed as the proportion of those respondents, in each case, who have access to the working arrangement.

na - both Parental Leave and Carers Leave is now a Statutory Entitlement.

Just over 60% of respondents felt that their childminding responsibilities had a bearing on their decision to avail of any of these working arrangements. However, as evident from the table below, this is twice as likely to be the case for women than men.

Did childminding responsibilities bear on decision to avail of any of these working arrangements

		Male	Female	Total
Did childminding responsibilities bear on decision to avail of any of these working arrangements?	Yes	64 36.6%	449 75.8%	513 66.9%
	No	111 63.4%	143 24.2%	254 33.1%
Total		175 100.0%	592 100.0%	767 100.0%

More specifically:

- ▲ One quarter of all women responding to the survey stated that they had not applied for promotional opportunities because of childminding responsibilities.
- ▲ Of those stating that they had not applied for promotional opportunities because of childminding responsibilities, 90% were female.
- ▲ Other impacts of childminding responsibilities included leaving the labour force altogether for a period or moving out of an urban area due to childcare costs.

Respondents were asked also whether their partner has left work in order to look after childcare needs on a full-time basis. This was the case for 8.5% of respondents. Some 30% of male respondents stated that their partner had left work in order to look after childcare needs on a full-time basis compared with less than 3% of female respondents. (In the questionnaire these respondents were instructed to skip the questions use of paid childcare services).

In what way did availability and affordability of childcare affect your work routine or that of your partner?

Way	No.	% Total	%Female	%Male
Availing of part-time work	152	23.5	98.0	2.0
Not availing of overtime	233	36.1	86.7	13.3
Not applying for promotion	143	22.1	90.2	9.8
Using work holidays to cover childcare	231	35.7	79.2	20.8
Availing of other flexible work practices	135	20.9	94.8	5.2
Impact on partner's work routine	93	14.4	32.2	67.8
No effect	16	2.5	50.0	50.0
Other impact	41	6.3	87.8	12.2
No choice but full-time work to cover costs	26	4.0	96.2	3.8
Availing of overtime if available to cover costs	7	1.1	57.2	43.3
Total Responses	647			

Childcare Practice and Shiftwork

Considering the 154 (23.8%) respondents who were availing of shiftwork, in 26% (40) of cases their partners had given up full-time work to look after their children full-time. This is three times the rate compared to that among remainder of respondents.

The mean total weekly hours childcare used by respondents availing of shiftwork is somewhat lower than that of other respondents, 22 hours per week compared to 26 hours per week. However the median cost per hour of childcare is slightly more at €5.43 (£4.28) compared to €4.77 (£3.76) for all respondents.¹

Over 75% of these respondents are working 35 hours a week or more.

Childcare arrangements were provided by the employer in the case of four respondents who were all employed in the public sector as nurses. One respondent in private sector manufacturing received a direct contribution of €25 (£19.69) per week from the employer towards childcare.

The proportion of childcare service usage accounted for by paid childcare is slightly higher for respondents availing of shiftwork, at 86% compared to 78% for all respondents.

Respondents who were working shifts stated specific problems related to organising childcare:

“Crèche does not cover shift work.”

“Very little child care facilities for shift workers.”

“No affordable childcare means that I have to work evening, my partner does days, so we are only together with the children at the weekend, I only see my school going children for one hour in the morning.”

¹ The median is an average (or measure of central tendency). If the values are arranged from highest to lowest then the middle value in the array is the median. (If there is no exact middle value because there is an even number of cases then the two central values are added and divided by two to calculate the median. Unlike the arithmetic mean the median is not influenced unduly by extreme (untypical) values.

4.4 TYPES OF CHILDCARE SERVICES USED

Childcare arrangements are generally decided and arranged with spouse or partner. But, as with the handling of childcare responsibilities it is notable that very few males make arrangements on their own.

How childminding is decided and arranged by Gender of Respondent

How is childminding decided and arranged?	Male	Female	Total
You solely	5 2.8%	194 30.9%	199 24.7%
By yourself and partner	153 86.0%	422 67.2%	575 71.3%
By your partner	19 10.7%	1 .2%	20 2.5%
Other	1 .6%	11 1.8%	12 1.5%
Total	178 100.0%	628 100.0%	806 100.0%

The survey asked respondents to detail:

- ▲ the type(s) of childcare being used for each child, if any;
- ▲ the number of hours per day each of their children was being minded for;
- ▲ the weekly cost per child for by each type of childminding being used;

In the questionnaire respondents could indicate whether certain types of childminding they were using were 'informally' paid.

Some 71% (576) of respondents were using at least one type of paid childcare. (Generalising from the survey sample to the target population for the survey, it is estimated, at the 95% confidence interval², that between 68% and 74% of union members in the six participating unions are using at least one type of paid childcare).

Of the children 50.1% were boys and 49.9% were girls. Some 956 (62%) children were being minded utilising some form of paid childcare. (Though this can be combined with unpaid care).

Excluding those cases where the respondent's partner had left work to look after the children on a full-time basis, the percentage of children being minded using some form of paid childcare rises to 68%.

As evident from the following table, minding in the respondents own home or the home of the minder or neighbour represent the most common forms of paid childcare.

² There is a 95% probability this statistic did not arise by chance.

(This table counts the use of each type of service. A child may be minded using two types of childcare services in the week. Therefore the total in the table does not refer to the total number of children being minded but rather to the total instances of use of childcare services in the reference week for the survey).

Types of Childminding Services Used	Number of uses	%
Informally paid relative, friend, neighbour minding in their home	349	24.4
Formally paid childminder in their home	251	17.5
Unpaid family member or partner in child's home	172	12.0
Informally paid relative, friend, neighbour minding in child's home	130	9.1
Informally paid childminder in their home	108	7.5
Private crèche or nursery	85	5.9
Unpaid relative, friend, neighbour minding in their home	72	5.0
Formally paid childminder in child's home	42	2.9
Unpaid relative, friend, neighbour minding in child's home	37	2.6
Unpaid family member - older child in child's home	32	2.2
Informally paid childminder in child's home	31	2.2
Kindergarten or Montessori	31	2.2
Playgroup	27	1.9
After-school private childcare facility	27	1.9
School based after school care	11	0.8
Workplace crèche	9	0.6
Community based crèche or nursery	7	0.5
Au pair	3	0.2
Special needs service	3	0.2
Special needs childminder in child's home	1	0.1
Special needs childminder in their home	1	0.1
Other	3	0.2
Total	1,432	100.0

- ▲ Some 78% of childcare service use concerns paid childcare;
- ▲ Considering non-establishment/institution based childcare, some 64% of childcare service uses takes place in the home of the childminder or neighbour; (see further analysis overleaf).
- ▲ Some 43.2% of all childcare service uses concern minding using "informally" paid childcare services;
- ▲ Some 34.9% of all childcare service uses concern minding using formally paid childcare services;
- ▲ Workplace crèches only represent a tiny proportion of childcare service uses;
- ▲ The remaining 21.9% of childcare service uses concern using non-paid childcare services (e.g. unpaid family member, unpaid relative friend or neighbour).

Types of Paid Childminding Services Used In the Childminder's Home

Type of childminding service	Number of uses	%
Informally paid relative, friend, neighbour minding in their home	349	24.4
Formally paid childminder in their home	251	17.5
Informally paid childminder in their home	108	7.5
Special needs childminder in their home	1	0.1
Total	709	49.5

Types of Paid Childminding Services Used In the Child's home

Type of childminding service	Number of uses	%
Informally paid relative, friend, neighbour minding in child's home	130	9.1
Formally paid childminder in child's home	42	2.9
Informally paid childminder in child's home	31	2.2
Special needs childminder in child's home	1	0.1
Total	204	14.3

The above tables indicate that the overwhelming majority of paid childminding services used "in the home" take place in the home of the childminder. Of all instances of childminding services used (paid and unpaid), paid childminding in the home of the childminder accounts for almost half (49.5%), while childminding in the home of the child accounts for 14.3%.

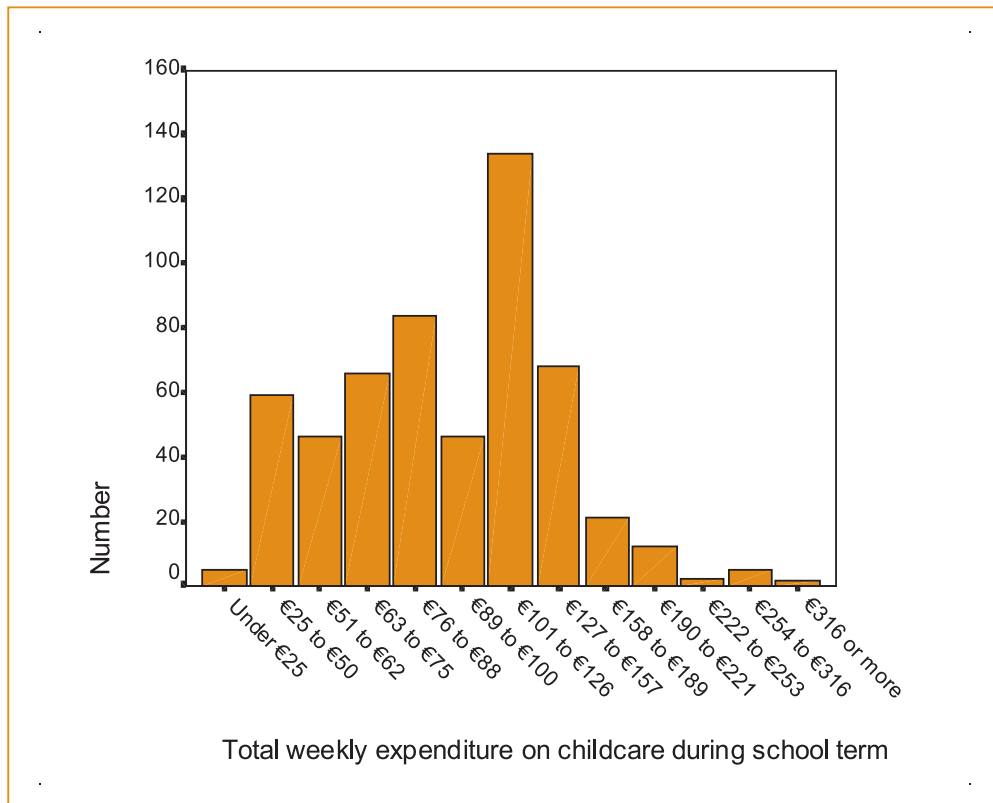
Of all "informally" paid childcare services, 74% concerns childminding in the home of the childminder. Of all formally paid childcare services "in the home", 16% concerns childminding in the home of the child.

The extent of use non-home (either the child or the minders) based childcare (such as services provided by crèches, nurseries, kindergartens/Montessori, school-based services) varies with the age-group of the child. For example among children aged up to 4 years 14% were being minded using these types of childcare whereas among children aged 5 years and over this falls to under 4%.

4.5 CHILDCARE SERVICE COSTS AND LEVELS OF USAGE

4.5.1 Childcare Costs: Average Weekly Expenditure

From the information provided by respondents it is possible to work out the average weekly expenditure on childcare, the average hourly cost of childcare and the average number of hours paid minding per respondent.



Considering respondents weekly expenditure on childcare:

- ▲ The most common range of weekly expenditure on childcare, is between €102 (£80) and €126 (£99).
- ▲ There is no significant difference in the average amount of expenditure on childcare between people working part-time and those working full-time.

The norm among respondents is to have two children (39%), with the most common form of childcare being minding by a friend or neighbour in their home (36%). In this case the typical weekly cost for two children is between €102 and €126 (£80 and £99). Average total weekly hours minding for the two children is 40 hours (20 hours per child).

4.5.2 Childcare Costs: Average Hourly Costs

The following table shows the distribution of costs per hour of childcare.

Average hourly cost category		Frequency	Valid Percent
(Under IR£2.00)	Under €2.54	169	20.5
(IR£2.00 to IR£3.99)	€2.54 to €5.07	186	22.5
(IR£4.00 to IR£4.99)	€5.08 to €6.34	67	8.1
(IR£5.00 to IR£5.99)	€6.35 to €7.61	41	5.0
(IR£6.00 to IR£7.99)	€7.62 to €10.15	34	4.1
(IR£8.00 to IR£9.99)	€10.16 to €12.68	19	2.3
(IR£10.00 to IR£11.99)	€12.70 to €15.22	13	1.6
(IR£12.00 or more)	€15.24 or more	15	1.8
Missing/Not applicable		281	34.1
Total		825	100.0

The average (mean) hourly cost of childminding is €4.77 (£3.76). However 22% of respondents were paying more than €6.35 (£5) per hour and 5% were paying €12.70 (£10) per hour or more.

But from the table it is evident that hourly costs are not normally distributed but are positively skewed (i.e. the distribution has a long right tail). Hence the median hourly cost of €3.81 (£3.00) is a better indicator of the norm than the arithmetic mean of €4.77 (£3.76).

Statistics on Hourly Childcare Costs

Statistic	Value	
Mean	(£3.76)	€4.77
Median	(£3.00)	€3.81
Mode	(£3.00)	€3.81

While the modal weekly cost of childcare is the same during school holidays, the proportion of respondents paying €127 (£100) per week or more rises to almost 18%.³

4.5.3 Childcare Costs: "Informally" and "Non-informally" Paid Services

Regarding total weekly expenditure on childcare by respondents:

- ▲ Non-informally paid childcare services account for 55.8% of the total;
- ▲ Informally paid childminding accounts for 44.2% of the total expenditure;
- ▲ Crèches or nurseries account for 14.1% of total expenditure;

Costs vary between "informally paid" and non-informally paid services. ("Informally paid" means that neither the employer and employee are registered for tax or social insurance purposes).

For those using formally paid services the average hourly cost per respondent per child is €5.21 (£4.10) with 26% paying €6.35 (£5) or more. This is compared to €4.50 (£3.61) for those using "informally paid" childcare services (i.e. informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in your home; informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in their home; informally paid childminder in your home; informally paid childminder in their home) with 20% paying €6.35 (£5) per hour or more.

³ The mode is the category (or value) which has the most cases. It is an appropriate descriptive statistic in this case as it is apparent from the graph that the distribution of number of hours minding per week is negatively skewed.

It is evident from the responses that for many people "informally paid" childcare is the only option available.

“Paying professional childminder would mean me giving up work”

“I chose a relative because we came to a cost that I could just about afford. To pay a qualified childminder wouldn't pay me to go to work.”

“My mother minds the children at a reduced cost. I couldn't afford to work otherwise.”

4.5.4 Childcare Costs: Relationship between Gross Income and Childcare Expenditure

The relationship between gross income and childcare expenditure is illustrated in the following table.

Relationship between combined income of partners and expenditure on childcare (for respondents in full-time employment with partner in paid employment using paid childcare services)

Combined Income Range	Combined Weekly Income	Mean Weekly Expenditure on Childcare	Weekly Childcare expenditure as a % of weekly gross income
Under €16,507	€244	€89	36.4
€16,507 to €19,045	€342	€94	27.5
€19,046 to €25,393	€428	€90	21.1
€25,395 to €38,091	€611	€86	14.1
€38,092 to €50,788	€855	€104	12.2
€50,790 to €63,486	€1,098	€98	8.9
€63,487 or more	€1,343	€121	9.0

For those respondents and their partners on a combined income of under €16,510 (£13,000) average weekly expenditure of €89 (£70) on childcare represents 36% of their weekly gross income. (The real cost is greater as this does not take into account the fact that to spend €89 (£70) they must earn more as some of their earnings will be deducted for tax and PRSI).

For those earning the Gross Average Industrial Earnings [i.e. between €19,050 - €24,130) (£15,000 - £19,999)], 21.1% of gross income also represents a very high level of childcare cost.

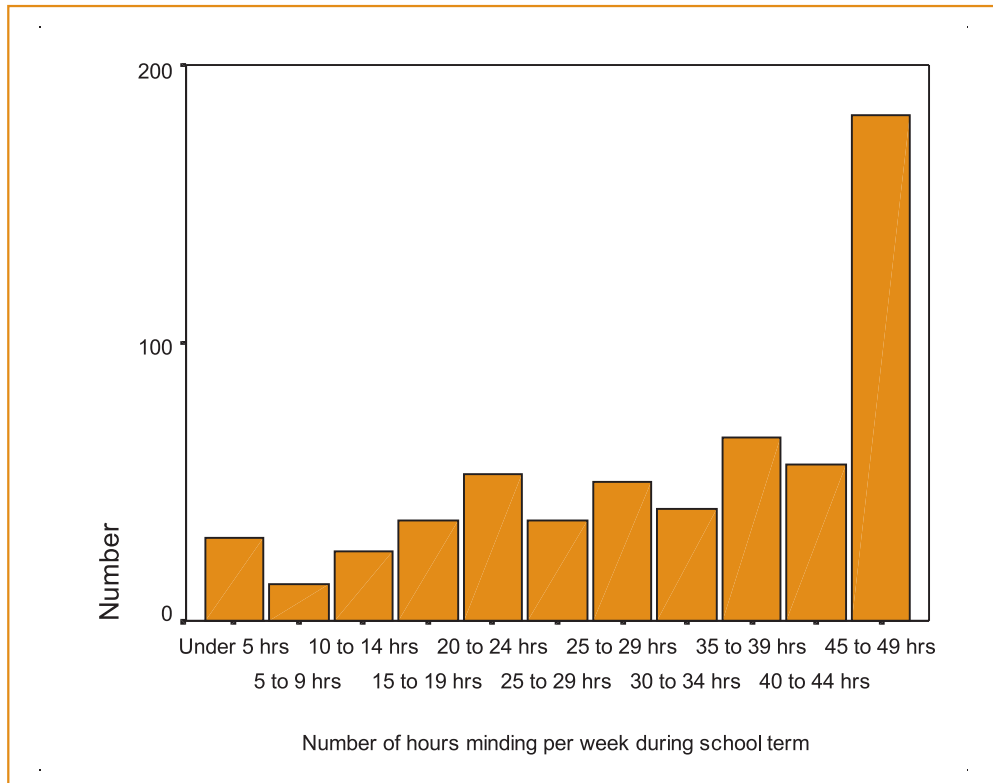
4.5.5 Childcare Costs: Changes since September 2000

The childcare costs per child for over half of all respondents (52.7%) had risen since September 2000. In 46% of these cases the margin of the rise per child in costs was over €12.70 (£10).

If yes, by what margin have costs risen?	Frequency	Valid Percent
(IR£1 to IR£10) €1 to €13	174	54.0
(IR£11 to IR£20) €14 to €25	96	29.8
(IR£21 to IR£30) €27 to €38	33	10.2
(IR£31 to IR£40) €39 to €51	4	1.2
(IR£41 to IR£49) €52 to €62	6	1.9
(Over IR£50) Over €63	9	2.8
Total	322	100.0
No answer	8	

4.5.6 Extent of Usage of Childcare Services

On average (median) each child was minded for 23 hours per week (mean 28 hours). The mode was 20 per week. However considering the total number of hours of childminding utilised by respondents during school term, as apparent from the following graph, the modal range for respondents is between 45 and 49 hours per week.



Turning to the levels of usage of the different types of childcare as determined from the total number of hours of childminding during the week in school-term time:

- ▲ Non-informally paid childcare services account for 40.8% of the total;
- ▲ “Informally paid” childminding accounts for 46.6% of the total; (46.3% of paid total);
- ▲ Unpaid childminding accounts for 12.8% of the total;
- ▲ Crèches or Nurseries account for 10.4% of the total.

4.5.7 Extent of Usage of Childcare Services: Provision by Employers

In just 3.5% (30) of all cases were childcare arrangements provided by the employer. Of these 26 were in the public sector, 4 in the private sector.

Among these 30 respondents, 25 reported that childcare arrangements were actually available to them. Only 5 respondents availed of childcare arrangements provided by their employer. Reasons given for not availing of the employer's childcare facilities included:

- "The facilities are fully booked out."
- "The children are too old and besides the crèche is too far from their school."
- "It is just too awkward, the crèche is not anywhere near our home."

All 5 respondents who were availing of childcare arrangements provided by their employer were working in the public sector.

4.6 IMPACT OF COST AND AVAILABILITY OF CHILDCARE ON DECISION-MAKING

A large majority (82%) of those responding indicated that the availability of childcare services had an impact on their decision which childcare arrangement to choose. Three quarters of those responding indicated that the cost of childcare services affected their decision on which childcare arrangement to choose.

However, a significant number of those for whom cost and availability was felt to have no impact on their choice of childcare arrangement indicated that they had no choice at all in relation to availability or cost - they had only one option available to them or cost was not a factor because they had changed their working arrangements to suit the cost and type of childcare.

The following table gives an overview of the manner in which availability of childcare affected the choice of childcare arrangements made by respondents.

How has the availability of childcare facilities impacted on your choice of childcare arrangement?

	Number	Percentage
Have to rely on friend/ family/ neighbour	55	16.2%
Would like to stay at home or at least have a family environment in which child is minded	12	3.6%
No choice in relation to availability	39	11.5%
Unsatisfactory arrangement, e.g. excessive travel, problems with shift work, very long days, forced to change working arrangement	34	10.0%
No availability of childcare facilities in workplace	40	11.7%
No availability of crèche facilities in local area	67	19.7%
No availability of childminder in local area	45	13.2%
No availability of other childcare arrangement in local area	46	13.5%
Little availability of crèche facilities in local area	46	13.5%
Little availability of childminder in local area	39	11.5%
Little availability of other childcare arrangement in local area	25	7.4%
Crèche is available but too expensive	43	12.6%
Other childcare arrangements are available but too expensive	29	8.5%
Total	340	

For a considerable number of respondents, there is little or no availability of childcare options in their local area. For these respondents, choice of childcare arrangement is therefore very limited. Many are reliant on informal family arrangements. Many are forced to work long hours or travel long distances or indeed change their working life due to the constraints of not having a choice in the type of childcare arrangement.

The following comments illustrate the range of problems facing the respondents in their decision-making.

Quotations by Issue

Problem of transport

"The childminder does not provide school collection"

"I have no car and my partner is on shift work, so I have to get someone within walking distance of my home"

Part-time-Full-time problems

"Relatives look after children most of the time as I initially could not get part-time childcare without paying full-time rates."

"My spouse started 3 day/2 day job sharing after the birth of our second child. The full time crèche we had the children in would not cater for part time arrangements (even if we had got another family on the opposite days to our own)."

"I couldn't get full time employment because I couldn't get childminding facilities and couldn't afford to do it that way"

Availability problems

"Affordable and accessible childcare is very hard to find. They are either full with waiting lists or if available, it's way out of my route to work or expensive."

"Next year when he starts in school, I'll have to rethink things because the crèche does not do an after-school service"

"As I live in a rural area, there are no formal facilities. I brought my 2 children to a crèche 22 miles from my home. With one child now in primary school at home, my husband has halved his work hours to facilitate same and we are left with no care for summer holidays"

"There is no local crèche in my local area. Few childminders will work part-time hours."

"We live in a rural area and therefore are faced with a lack of facilities: no crèche and very few childminders available and willing to care for child irregular hours and late shifts."

"Lack of childcare facilities for post-primary and primary children"

"Lack of access to childcare services of our choice but as they say any port in a storm"

"I explored crèche facilities - appalled at them 1. Lack of hygiene 2 Lack of suitable sleeping arrangements 3. Poor health and safety standards 4. Poor child/minder ratios 5. Lack of stimulation 6. No outdoors. 7. Child expected to fit into adult environment."

"I have had to opt to working mornings only in order that I can collect my child from school as it is very difficult to get proper childcare for older children after school hours"

"There are no facilities for second level. Too big for crèche, too young to be home alone."

"I would like to be able to drop my daughter to school in the mornings and I think there should be before school staffed minding service on the premises with focus on social skills and social interaction."

"There isn't any choice for under 4 years old in the local area, only to be minded by somebody in their own home."

“We had no other choice but for my parents to take care of them given our working arrangements.”

“School based after school care would be very beneficial to me. One week I need a minder for two hours, another week I need them for 4 hours. I had to choose a childminder who could collect from school.”

Workplace crèche problems

“If there was a crèche in work, I would give it a chance, and it would make things easier, at least I would not have to try and find childminding facilities for Fridays”

“I couldn't get a place in a crèche locally - I get home from work at 7.15. Most crèches close at 6.30.”

“Childcare provided by employers has not always accommodated part time employees; also expensive where employee expected to pay for childcare on week off (e.g. job sharing).”

“If there was a crèche at work I would use it, but as there isn't I have to leave them with relatives as anything else wouldn't pay me to work.”

“If a crèche was available in the workplace, I would probably use it. As one child is school-going, a childminder is required to collect child or drop off in the morning and therefore live near school.”

Negative overall impact

“There isn't a lot of child care that I can afford so I can't be choosy.”

“My husband had to stay at home for the children's early years because we could not afford childcare.”

“Very restricting with 7.30 am drop and 17.30 pick up. Days very long. Unable to avail of term-time so my minder does not have holiday relief.”

“If I couldn't get a family member to look after my child I would have had to give up work altogether”

“Children in crèche until 2 years ago. Crèche only for children under 7. Nearly had to give up work due to childcare needs. My neighbour has helped me a lot ever since”

“The experience of arranging childcare is soul destroying, constantly worrying, uneasy at work, constantly arranging pressures.”

The following table gives an overview of the manner in which the cost of childcare affected the choice of childcare arrangements made by respondents.

Has the cost of childcare facilities impacted on your choice of childcare arrangement

	Total	Percentage
Have to rely on friend/ family/ neighbour	46	14.0%
Would like to stay at home or at least have a family environment in which child is minded	12	3.7%
No choice in relation to choice of childcare, have to pay the going rate	45	13.7%
Unsatisfactory arrangement, e.g. excessive travel, problems with shift work, very long days, forced to change working arrangement	45	13.7%
Satisfactory arrangement	18	5.5%
No availability of childcare facilities, therefore the cost is irrelevant	17	5.2%
Have chosen the only affordable option, uneconomic otherwise- no point in working	62	18.9%
Creche facilities are too expensive	158	48.0%
Childminding facilities are too expensive	58	17.6%
Other childcare facilities are too expensive	30	9.1%
Total	329	

For a considerable number of respondents, the cost of childcare arrangements is prohibitive. Respondents are either working in order to pay for the costs or have chosen to alter their working arrangements in order to reduce the costs. Again, a considerable number are dependent on the informal support and lower costs of using a relative, friend or neighbour. Almost half of the responses to this question indicate that the cost of using crèche facilities is too high.

Choice again seems to be irrelevant. People are not in a position to choose between a range of childcare options - they are forced either to adapt their working life to the needs of those for whom they have childminding responsibility or to "choose" the only affordable option. The comments below again give a unique flavour of the issues facing union members throughout the country.

A very striking feature of the responses to the open-ended questions used in this survey relates to the lack of satisfaction by the overwhelming majority of the respondents in relation to availability and affordability of childcare facilities and in relation to the response from both the respondents' employers and the Government.

Problem of transport

"Crèche facilities that provide school collection are fully booked and out of price range."

Cost problems

"To have my children looked after on a full time basis would be too expensive so it wouldn't pay to go to work full time. Plus it isn't easy to look after 3 children on a full time basis"

"I have twin boys and could not afford a crèche for the two of them. If my parents did not mind them I would have to give up work."

"I chose a relative because we came to a cost that I could just about afford. To pay a qualified childminder wouldn't pay me to go to work."

"Due to severe lack of facilities the childminders can name their own price."

"As there is a small pool of child carers available be they qualified or not they can charge high prices and there is no means for me to get a reduction ie tax deductions or expenses."

"It wouldn't pay me to put two in the crèche, I would be working to pay for the crèche"

"Average cost- €127-€178 (IR£100-IR£140) per week, earnings- €152 (IR£120) per week. As you can see I would be working for nothing, petrol costs €25.39 (IR£20) per week for transport"

"if childcare other than a family member was cheaper I could return to full time work that would be worth my while"

"Private crèches cost so much more than a childminding set-up. If I had my child in private crèche I would have to stop working."

"The crèche I used raised its fees so I could no longer afford it."

"It costs a lot relative to my income, but I had to get a childminder and it was the cheapest I could get."

"Minimum of €89 (IR£70) per week for one child would not be worth it for me to work and pay for three on that basis."

"My mother minds the children at a reduced cost. I couldn't afford to work otherwise."

"It is too expensive for a lone parent to even consider getting out of family childcare. You would purely work to pay a childminder - defeating the purpose."

"Paying professional childminder would mean me giving up work"

"Family means that it is a lot cheaper and they only take a small token because they insist on it. If I had to pay properly for it, it would not pay me to work."

"Qualified nannies are too expensive being a part-time worker I'd be handing over all my wages. I'm on maternity leave at present so by the time I pay for two children I'll be working for €63.49 (£50)."

"The nearest crèche would have cost €203 (£160) per week, and I only earn €254 (£200) per week."

"I simply cannot afford to pay the price of some crèches. At the end of the week, it would not be worth your time going to work at all, as you lose money."

"I decided after second baby was born - I was going to job-share as financially it wasn't worth working full-time tax wise."

Part-time-Full-time problems

"It is as cheap to look after own children and work share. There is no extra gain financially to work full-time and use childcare"

"The cost will impact on future children as half my job-sharing salary will go on childcare costs."

"Crèche facilities are very expensive and again they do not cater for part-time working people. They charge full rates for part-time care."

"I had difficulty getting part-time childcare without paying full-time rates."

"I was paying €889 (£700) for 10 days per month in a crèche initially which was more than my job-share salary per month."

Negative overall impact

"I couldn't afford a childminder. I'd be working to pay my childminder, hence defeating the purpose of working, so that we can have some from of normal life (family life). Because I'm married and have a mortgage, I've no choice but to work."

"I don't have a choice. I need to work full time as I am a single parent."

"Even though myself and husband have good/average earnings without my mother looking after the children at a subsidised cost I would not be able to work/pay mortgage, car loan etc. I might add we do not have foreign holidays or expensive tastes!"

"We can afford to live in Dublin but not the cost of childminding on top so we have to live outside Dublin, commute long hours and distances with poor childminding service."

"Selected a play school whose fees were reasonable. We don't think it would be financially worth our while to both work full-time long term with the current cost of childcare."

4.7 CASE STORIES

From the information provided by respondents it is possible to establish representative case stories in relation to the impact of childcare responsibilities on the respondents. These stories are not based on the specific responses of any one person, but they are representative stories intended to illuminate many of the issues that have been scrutinised in the above sections. In certain respects, they can be described as the human side of the statistical and tabular analysis.

"Mary" is a lone parent with gross income in the range €19,000 to €22,855 (£15,000 to £17,999). She is aged 30 – 34 living in an urban area, with one child aged 7 in primary school. She works in the Civil Service and she avails of flexitime. She has chosen not to apply for promotion and does not work overtime due to her current childminding needs. She receives no childcare provision or subsidy from her employer. She pays between €103 and €114 (£81 and £90) in childcare costs during school-term and between €127 and €154 (£100 and £121) outside school term. This cost goes on a private crèche for 25 hours per week. She believes that employers should subsidise childcare and that the Government should provide tax relief on childcare expenses.

"Nuala" is also a lone parent with gross income in the range €19,000 to €22,855 (£15,000 to £17,999). She is aged 35 – 39 and based in a provincial town. She has two children - aged 7 and 9 years who are both in primary school. She works in the public sector as a Health Board Nurse. She undertakes shiftwork, although her childminding responsibilities do not have a bearing on this working arrangement. She generally works 40-44 hours per week. She does not work overtime and uses her work holidays to cover periods when childcare is not available. She again receives no childcare provision or subsidy from her employer. She uses 4 hours per child of childcare for five days per week i.e. a total of 40 hours childminding or 20 hrs per child. She uses an informally paid relative (€ 51 (£40) per week) and a formally paid childminder (€127 (£100) per week). She uses an informally paid relative for childminding during school holidays at €178 (£140) per week. Her childcare costs have risen by between €1.3 and €13 (£1 and £10) since September 2000. The availability of childcare has had an influence on her choice of childcare. She states "I don't have a choice. I need to work full time as I am a single parent." She believes that the Government should provide tax relief on childcare expenses.

"Deborah" and her partner are both working and have a combined gross income in the range €31,743 to €38,091 (£25,000 to £29,999). She is aged 35-39, working in the private sector and is based in a rural area. The couple have two children aged 1 and 6. The older one is in primary school. She has access to shift-work, job-sharing and part-time work, but is not currently availing of any of these options. The availability and affordability of childcare affects her work routine in that she does not work overtime. She receives no childcare provision or subsidy from employer. She pays between €114 (£90) per week for childcare during school term and €140 (£110) per week during school holidays. Her childcare costs have risen by between €27 and €38 (£21 and £30) since September 2000. Both children are minded on weekdays, "there are no crèches in the area". Regarding the impact of the cost of childcare on their choice of childcare, she states "Because it would not be worth my while working, I would be working only to pay a childminder." She believes that employers should subsidise childcare and that the Government should increase child benefit.

"Sheila" and her partner are both working and have a combined gross income in the range €31,743 to €38,091 (£25,000 to £29,999). She is based in a city, aged 35-39, and is working in the private sector in services. She has two children aged 4 and 2, the older being in pre-school. She states that "childcare is very costly, but I find if you don't work full-time then there is a lot of things that you would just not be able to afford or give to your children." She receives no childcare provision or subsidy from employer. Her childcare costs have risen by between €52 and €63 (£41 and £50) since Sept. 2000. Both children are minded each weekday. The older child is minded for 5 hours per day, the baby for 8 hours per day. This amounts to a total of 65 hours paid childcare per week for the family. They are looked after by a formally paid childminder in the childminder's home. Its costs €95 (£75) per child – €190 (£150) per week for the two during school term and the same outside school term. Regarding how availability of childcare affects choice of childcare arrangement: "if your place of work supplies no care facilities and if there is no community based crèche in your area, then you have to go into the private sector." On the cost of childcare facilities impacting on choice of childcare Sheila says "it basically means you can't afford to have many kids if you are working because you are paying for a minder." Childcare is not available to her on a part-time basis. She thinks that employers should subsidise the cost of employees' childcare and that the Government should provide tax relief on childcare expenses.

4.8 UNMET NEEDS

Respondents were asked to indicate what should be prioritised by employers in order to respond to current childcare needs – 53% of respondents felt that employers should subsidise the cost of employees childcare. (The survey found that under 2% of respondents were in positions where childcare facilities were provided by the employer).

Which responses to the current childcare needs of employees should employers prioritise

Aspect	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
Increase the level of family friendly practices available to employees	34.5%	24.7%	29.1%
Provide childcare facilities in the workplace	25.9%	26.7%	32.2%
Subsidise the cost of employee's childcare	53.0%	32.9%	14.0%
Other response	1.5%	1.7%	2.7%

No of valid cases = 656 (79.5%)

Respondents were asked how the Government should respond to current childcare needs, 76% felt the Government should provide tax relief on employees expenditure on childcare.

Which responses to the current childcare needs of employees should Government prioritise

Aspect	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
Provide tax relief on employee's childcare expenditure	76.4%	13.6%	9.7%
Provide tax relief on employer's expenditure on childcare	8.3%	27.4%	17.1%
Provide greater support for constructing/developing company crèches	18.5%	31.6%	19.8%
Provide an expert advice service	0.8%	5.7%	8.2%
Provide staffing grants for all company crèches	7.4%	15.1%	30.4%
Other response	4.1%	0.8%	2.3%

N of valid cases = 661 (80.1%)

5 CONCLUSIONS

Almost three-quarters of those surveyed were using some form of paid childcare.

The response to the survey strongly suggests that employees organise their childcare to meet with the needs of their employment and the labour market.

Childminding responsibilities have a bearing on respondents' decisions to avail of working arrangements such as part-time working, job-sharing and flexitime, and this is especially the case for women. For women also, childcare responsibilities constrain their capacity to develop their career opportunities, insofar as they do not apply for promotional opportunities, or avoid overtime.

Institutionally based childcare services, which are often the focus of policy makers and interest groups, only provide a small proportion of childcare service use. Child minding in the home of a neighbour or childminder is the most significant type of childcare service used by respondents.

Employer provided childcare services, subsidies or other supports are only available to very few and mainly to those in public sector employment.

While average weekly expenditure on childcare for those on incomes under €19,050 (£15,000) represents a very significant cost (an average of 31.2% of gross income), it is important to note that it is not only those on very low incomes that have serious problems meeting childcare expenses in Ireland. Cases with two people working with a joint income of up to €50,790 (£40,000) are paying 12.2% of their gross income on childcare costs.

A significant number of respondents do not have a choice in relation to their decisions concerning childcare. The lack of availability and the prohibitive cost combine to leave a considerable number of respondents in a position where they are forced to:

1. Adapt their working life in one of three directions:
 - ▲ Give up full-time positions for part-time, not apply for promotion, not work overtime, all in an attempt to limit the cost and amount of hours of childcare necessary;
 - ▲ Work overtime, or anti-social shifts, resulting in long working days and little contact with the children, all in order to be able to cover the cost of the hours of childcare necessary;
 - ▲ Leave the labour force altogether, as it makes little sense to be earning a wage that is simply covering childcare costs.
2. Become dependent on informal childcare arrangements with relatives, friends or neighbours
3. Forego their preferred childcare arrangements (e.g. workplace crèche, community-based crèche, professional childminder in the child's home, after-school care for post-primary students, a childminder who will collect from school, etc).

Childcare Practice Questionnaire

CHILDCARE PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please note that all information will be treated as confidential.

This questionnaire should be completed by people who have caring responsibilities for children under 16 years of age only

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q. 1 Are you: (Tick box that applies)

- (1) Male
 (2) Female

Q. 2 Into which of the following age-groups do you fall? (Tick the box that applies)

- (1) 15-19
 (2) 20-24
 (3) 25-29
 (4) 30-34
 (5) 35-39
 (6) 40-44
 (7) 45-49
 (8) 50-54
 (9) 55-59
 (10) 60-64
 (11) 65 or over

Q. 3 Do you currently handle child caring responsibilities (Tick the box that applies)

- (1) On your own
 (2) Shared with co-habiting spouse/ partner
 (3) Shared with non-co-habiting spouse/ partner

Q. 4 Does any one of your children require special needs care? (Tick the box that applies)

- (1) Yes
 (2) No

Q. 5 Please give details of your children's ages and gender, educational status (under 16s only):

	Age	Gender		At home	In Pre-school	In Primary School?	In 2 nd level school	Special needs	
		M ✓	F					At home ✓	Special Needs School ✓
Child 1									
Child 2									
Child 3									
Child 4									
Child 5									

SECTION 2: OCCUPATION INFORMATION

- Q. 6 Are you employed in the public or private sector?
(Tick the box that applies)
- (1) Public Sector
(2) Private Sector
- Q. 7 In which of the following sectors are you employed?
(Tick the box that applies)
- (1) Civil Service
(2) Local Authorities
(3) Health Board
(4) Teaching/ Education
(5) Commercial State Bodies
(6) Non-commercial State Bodies
(7) Manufacturing
(8) Wholesale and Retail Trades
(9) Hotels & Restaurants
(10) Transport & Distribution
(11) Financial Services
(12) Distribution
(13) Construction
(14) IT, Electronics, Telecommunications
(14) Other
- Q. 8 Into which of the following gross income ranges do you fall
(Tick the box that applies)
- (1) Under €17,000
(2) IR€7,000 – €19,999
(3) IR€10,000 – €12,499
(4) IR€13,000 – €14,999
(5) IR€16,000 – €17,999
(6) IR€18,000 – €19,999
(7) IR€20,000 – €24,999
(8) IR€25,000 – €29,999
(9) IR€30,000 – €34,999
(10) IR€35,000 – €39,999
(11) IR€40,000 or more
- Q. 9 If you are currently sharing your child caring responsibilities with a spouse/
partner, is he/she in paid employment?
(Tick the box that applies)
- (1) Yes
(2) No
(3) Not applicable
- Q. 10 Into which of the following gross income ranges does the combined income fall of
those sharing caring responsibility for children under 16
(Tick the box that applies)
- (1) Under €17,000
(2) IR€7,000 – €19,999
(3) IR€10,000 – €12,499
(4) IR€13,000 – €14,999
(5) IR€15,000 – €17,999
(6) IR€18,000 – €19,999
(7) IR€20,000 – €24,999
(8) IR€25,000 – €29,999
(9) IR€30,000 – €34,999
(10) IR€35,000 – €39,999
(11) IR€40,000 – €44,999
(12) IR€45,000 – €49,999
(13) IR€50,000 or more

SECTION 3: WORKING HOURS

Q. 11 What is your employment status? *(Tick the box that applies)*

- (1) Full-time permanent
- (2) Part-time permanent
- (3) Full-time temporary/ contract worker
- (4) Part-time temporary/ contract worker

Q. 12 How long have you worked in your present job? *(Tick the box that applies)*

- (1) Under 12 months
- (2) 1-5 years
- (3) Over 5 years

Q. 13 Do you have access to any of the following working arrangements? *(Tick all boxes that apply)*

	Yes	No
(1) Shift work		
(2) Job-sharing/ Work sharing		
(3) Flexitime		
(4) Part-time work		
(5) Annualised hours		
(6) Term-time working		
(7) Employment or career break		
(8) Tele-Working/ Home-working		

Q. 14 Are you currently availing of any of the following working arrangements? *(Tick all boxes that apply)*

	Yes	No
(1) Shift work		
(2) Job-sharing/ Work sharing		
(3) Flexitime		
(4) Part-time work		
(5) Annualised hours		
(6) Term-time working		
(7) Employment or career break		
(8) Tele-Working/ Home-working		
(9) Parental leave		
(10) Carer's leave		

Q. 15 Has your childminding responsibilities had a bearing on your decision to avail of any of these working arrangements? *(Tick the box that applies)*

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

Q. 16 How many hours do you normally work in the week? *(Tick the box that applies)*

- (1) 0-4
- (2) 5-9
- (3) 10-14
- (4) 15-18
- (5) 20-24
- (6) 25-29
- (7) 30-34
- (8) 35-39
- (9) 40-44
- (10) 45-48
- (11) 50-54
- (12) 55-58
- (13) 60 or more

Q. 17 What is the average total time you spend commuting to and from work each day? *(Tick the box that applies)*

- (1) Under 30 minutes
- (2) 31-60 minutes
- (3) 61-90 minutes
- (4) 91-120 minutes
- (5) 121-150 minutes
- (6) Over 150 minutes

Q. 18 In what way did availability and affordability of childcare affect your work routine, or that of your partner? e.g. Did you opt for part-time work, not apply for promotional opportunities, not work over-time, use work holidays to cover childcare, left work altogether to take care of childcare

SECTION 4: CHILDCARE

Q. 19 Are childminding arrangements decided and arranged by? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) You solely	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) By yourself and your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) By your partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Other (please describe below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 20 Are childcare facilities provided by your employer (or your partner's employer)? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) No

If no, go to Q. 24 ←

Q. 21 Are they available to you (or your partner)? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) No

Q. 22 Do you (or your partner) avail of them? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) No

Q. 23 Please explain the reasons as to why or why not you avail of them?

Q. 24 Is the childcare facility that you use subsidised in any way by your employer? (This includes free provision of the premises, free provision of the equipment, partial subsidy of the childcare fees) *(Tick the box that applies, or add amount)*

(1) Yes (2) If yes, how much IRE (3) No (4) Don't know

Q. 25 Are you in receipt of any direct contribution from your employer towards childcare? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) If yes, how much IRE (3) No

Q. 26 Has your partner left work in order to take care of childcare needs on a full time basis? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Not applicable

If yes, go to Q. 48 ←

Q. 27 How much do your childminding arrangements cost you each week in total for all children? *(Tick the box that applies)*

	During School year ✓	During School Holidays ✓		During School year ✓	During School Holidays ✓
(1) No cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(12) IRE111- IRE130	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) IRE1- IRE20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(13) IRE131- IRE160	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) IRE21- IRE30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(14) IRE151- IRE170	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) IRE31- IRE40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(15) IRE171- IRE200	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) IRE41- IRE50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(16) IRE201- IRE230	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) IRE51- IRE60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(17) IRE231- IRE260	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) IRE61- IRE70	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(18) IRE261- IRE290	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) IRE71- IRE80	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(19) IRE291- IRE320	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(9) IRE81- IRE90	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(20) IRE321- IRE350	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(10) IRE91- IRE100	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(21) IRE351- IRE380	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(11) IRE101- IRE110	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(22) Over IRE380	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q. 28 Have your childcare costs per-child risen since Sept 2000? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) Yes (2) No

Q. 29 If yes, by what margin have the costs per-child risen? *(Tick the box that applies)*

(1) IRE1- IRE10 (3) IRE21- IRE30 (5) IRE41- IRE50
 (2) IRE11- IRE20 (4) IRE31- IRE40 (6) Over IRE50

SECTION 5: CHILDCARE DETAILS

Q. 30 Please indicate in the table below the age of each child and how many hours per day in total do you normally require childcare for each child

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Child 1							
Child 2							
Child 3							
Child 4							
Child 5							
Child 6							

Types of Childcare

Q. 31 Please indicate in the table below the types of childminding services you avail of for each child (Tick each box that applies)

Type of Childcare Arrangement	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
1. Unpaid family member – partner					
2. Unpaid family member – older child					
3. Unpaid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in your home					
4. Unpaid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in their home					
5. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in your home					
6. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in their home					
7. Formally paid childminder in your home					
8. Informally paid childminder in your home					
9. Formally paid childminder in their home					
10. Informally paid childminder in their home					
11. Au pair					
12. Private crèche/nursery					
13. Workplace crèche					
14. Community based crèche/ nursery					
15. Kindergarten/Montessori					
16. Playgroup					
17. School based after school care					
18. After-school private childcare facility					
19. Special needs childminder in your home					
20. Special needs childminder in their home					
21. Special needs service					
22. Other, please indicate _____					

Costs of Childcare

Q. 32 Please indicate your weekly childcare costs for each type of childcare used during the school year

Type of Childcare Arrangement	Cost IR£				
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
1. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in your home					
2. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in their home					
3. Formally paid childminder in your home					
4. Informally paid childminder in your home					
5. Formally paid childminder in their home					
6. Informally paid childminder in their home					
7. Au pair					
8. Private crèche/nursery					
9. Workplace crèche					
10. Community based crèche/ nursery					
11. Kindergarten/Montessori					
12. Playgroup					
13. School based after school care					
14. After-school private childcare facility					
15. Special needs childminder in your home					
16. Special needs childminder in their home					
17. Special needs service					
18. Other, please indicate _____					

Q. 33 Please indicate your weekly childcare costs for each type of childcare used during the school holidays

Type of Childcare Arrangement	Cost IR£				
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
1. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in your home					
2. Informally paid relative/friend or neighbour minding the child in their home					
3. Formally paid childminder in your home					
4. Informally paid childminder in your home					
5. Formally paid childminder in their home					
6. Informally paid childminder in their home					
7. Au pair					
8. Private crèche/nursery					
9. Workplace crèche					
10. Community based crèche/ nursery					
11. Kindergarten/Montessori					
12. Playgroup					

Childcare Practice Survey

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

ACTU

Type of Childcare Arrangement (continued)	Count (No)				
	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
13. School based after school care					
14. After-school private childcare facility					
15. Special needs childminder in your home					
16. Special needs childminder in their home					
17. Special needs service					
18. Other, please indicate _____					

Q. 34 What is the location of your childcare arrangement? (Tick the box that applies)

Location of Childcare Arrangement	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4	Child 5
(1) A rural area					
(2) A provincial town					
(3) Urban area					
Please indicate the city					

Q. 35 If you use more than one type of childminding arrangement, please describe how do you organise it (for example, how do you manage collection- picking up and dropping off of children, etc.)

Q. 36 Has the availability of childcare facilities impacted on your choice of childcare arrangement? (Tick the box that applies)
 (1) Yes (2) No

Q. 37 Please explain:

Q. 38 Has the cost of childcare facilities impacted on your choice of childcare arrangement? (Tick the box that applies)
 (1) Yes (2) No

Q. 39 Please explain:

Q. 40 If you are using paid childminding facilities, is childcare available to you on a part-time basis? (Tick the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Not applicable

If no or not applicable, go to Q. 43 ←

Q. 41 If yes, does the part-time childcare cost the same as full-time childcare?

(Tick the box that applies)

(1) Yes (2) No

If yes, go to Q. 43 ←

Q. 42 If no, roughly what is the difference in cost? (Tick the box that applies)

- (1) Part-time costs are over 90% of the cost of full-time childcare
 (2) Part-time costs are 71%-90% of the cost of full-time childcare
 (3) Part-time costs are 51%-70% of the cost of full-time childcare
 (4) Part-time costs are half of the cost of full-time childcare

Q. 43 Does your childcare provider charge a lower rate for each subsequent child? (Tick the box that applies)

(1) Yes
 (2) No
 (3) Not applicable

Q. 44 Does your childcare provider charge you for picking up your child late? (Tick the box that applies)

(1) Yes
 (2) No

Q. 45 If yes, in what way?

Q. 46 In your opinion, which of the following responses to the current childcare needs of employees should employers prioritise?

(please rank the 3 most significant aspects- in box opposite item, list in order of preference 1-3)

- (1) Increase the level of family friendly practices available to employees
 (2) Provide childcare facilities in the workplace
 (3) Subsidise the cost of employee's childcare
 (4) Other (please describe below)

Q. 47 In your opinion, which of the following responses to the current childcare needs of employees should the Government prioritise?

(please rank the 3 most significant aspects- in box opposite item, list in order of preference 1-3)

- (1) Provide tax relief on employees' childcare expenditure
 (2) Provide tax relief on employers' expenditure on childcare
 (3) Provide greater support for constructing/ developing company crèches
 (4) Provide an expert advice service
 (5) Provide staffing grants for all company crèches
 (6) Other (please describe below)

 Thank you for your co-operation



31/32 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1, Ireland
Tel: 353 1 889 7777. Fax: 353 1 887 2012
E-mail: congress@ictu.ie
Web site: www.ictu.ie

