



TELLING

THEIR

STORY



Parents' words from the
'What's childcare really
costing you?' survey

Over 4,000 parents from across the UK took part in the Save the Children and Daycare Trust survey, **What's childcare really costing you?** The findings are analysed in **Making Work Pay – The Childcare Trap**, available at www.savethechildren.org.uk/childcare

Many parents told us how they found childcare costs a major concern.

- Childcare is too expensive. Eight out of ten parents living in severe poverty who took this survey said that cost was a barrier to accessing childcare.
- A large number of respondents (41%) said childcare costs are similar to their mortgage or rent and nearly half of parents in severe poverty have cut back on household essentials such as food.
- A quarter of the parents in severe poverty who responded to the survey have given up work, a third turned down a job and a quarter have not been able to take up education or training because of difficulties in accessing childcare.

This booklet steps aside from the statistics and presents parents' views, concerns and worries for their future working lives and the impact this will have on their children's well-being. It should lead all of us to act if we're to provide the best possible future for children in poverty.

"I feel that **the government is making it extremely difficult for ordinary people with children to earn an honest living.** The current situation is encouraging people to give up work and go onto benefits as many people are better off this way. This is surely not the correct way to go about things. I enjoy working and would not be happy on benefits; however this is becoming increasingly difficult to manage."

"Childcare is the single **BIGGEST COST** we have on a monthly basis. I have had to turn down opportunities for work because of lack of childcare. Childcare availability for anything outside office hours is **VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND.**"

CHILDCARE IS TOO EXPENSIVE

"I feel that **childcare costs have gone up considerably** but my salary has stayed the same. The area we live in has low salaries/no jobs. It is very difficult as I want to further my career but find it **almost impossible to find the money for childcare costs.**"

"I have had no choice but to get 2 x part-time cleaning jobs around my husband's hours which means I start at 5am – 7am - look after my son all day, then when my husband gets home I go out for another couple of hours getting home for 8.15ish. This is hard and can some days leave me exhausted....but it means time with my son and more money to live on due to no childcare costs... **there is little to no help for people trying to work and pay their way.**"



Photo: Anna Kari

"We would like more help with childcare and general family benefits as **we do really struggle**. It would be nice to be able to afford to have shoes for my little boy. It would be nice to do the supermarket shop without feeling guilty about how much it will take us into the overdraft."

"Working between 16 hours or 24 hours doesn't give the parent any more money i.e. working tax credits. My personal better off calculation after paying private rent, council tax, school meals, food, electric, TV licence, phone bill, contents insurance, clothing cost and school uniforms, water rates and personal debts from when I was studying for my degree leaves me with £22 a week to live on. **DEPRESSING.**"

"I feel that as the government is so keen to get people working, **THEY SHOULD BE HELPING OUT THOSE WHO ACTUALLY WANT TO WORK.** People who go out to work should be better off than those that don't, and that is simply not the case."

"The government need to focus on supporting those in work and trying to pay for childcare. I am a single parent who receives no financial support from my children's father; I am not entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and the only financial support I do receive are Tax Credits. With this now being reduced **I am being forced into a more difficult financial situation.**"

PARENTS ARE GOING INTO DEBT AND CUTTING BACK ON ESSENTIALS LIKE FOOD TO PAY FOR CHILDCARE

"With everything going up in cost **it is now a struggle to keep her in childcare**. I have to cut down on food or other bits to pay for this. Why I work is now the question and **all I want is a decent life for my child without a struggle.**"

"I CONSTANTLY WORRY especially as the childcare costs have just gone up by £30 per month and wonder how I will make ends meet. I constantly pay bank charges, the most recent being £85 as things keep bouncing from my account as I don't have enough money to cover them after childcare costs which puts me in the same situation the next month. I have always been a worker and will go back to work after my maternity leave is over. Why oh why is this government not helping us workers?!? **I'M SOOO SAD RIGHT NOW ABOUT ALL OF THIS.**"



"The government states that their aim is to get parents into work. People believe that parents who don't work are lazy. The plain truth is people in our situation **simply cannot afford to.**"

THE POOREST ARE BEING PRICED OUT OF WORK

"I FEEL TRAPPED BY THE GOVERNMENT. I am a student nurse and my husband works, as such I'm not entitled to any help with childcare costs. We are struggling to pay our mortgage and for me to continue with my studies because of the cost of childcare. I might end up ending my studies and going on the dole, it being more financially viable."



THE CUT TO THE CHILDCARE ELEMENT OF WORKING TAX CREDIT HAS MADE IT HARDER FOR THE POOREST WORKING PARENTS



Photo: Anna Kari

"We are **CRIPPLED BY THE CHANGE IN TAX CREDITS** as we miss out on my husband's salary by £500. We have had to sell our home and move to rented accommodation. At the moment I'm unhappy with my daughter's childminder but cannot afford to put her into nursery.

It is all **VERY UPSETTING AND REALLY AFFECTING US ALL.**"

"The Government should be rewarding those of us who want to stand on our own two feet, earn our own money and pay our taxes. Instead, things are made harder by cutting back on tax credits and raising the cost of living! **Where is the justice in this country???**"

"I FIND IT QUITE INCREDIBLE that the government are cutting the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. On the one hand they want parents to work but then make it less financially beneficial."

The message from parents who took our survey is clear – their future looks bleak. This is even more the case for families on the lowest incomes who say that their quality of life is being severely affected. Parents have made clear how they want the government to support them so that they can work to earn enough to raise their families.

Save the Children and Daycare Trust are calling on the government to

- ensure a minimum of 80% of childcare costs are covered under Universal Credit up to current weekly limits
- increase this support so that it covers 100% of costs, as the economic situation improves
- increase the maximum limits in line with inflation and introduce an additional higher band for families with three or more children.

Save the Children and Daycare Trust thank all of the parents who took part in our survey.

For more information go to www.savethechildren.org.uk/childcare

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WE SAVE CHILDREN'S **LIVES.**
WE FIGHT FOR THEIR **RIGHTS.**
WE HELP THEM FULFIL THEIR **POTENTIAL.**

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