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NOVEMBER 2026

National Early Childhood Parenting Survey 2026

Demographic analysis tables available for viewing at https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-charts

Additionally, you can explore the data using our interactive data analysis tool here: https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-tool

01 Introduction

For six years, Kindred² has published the Annual School Readiness reports; a snapshot of the state of the nation's school starters. Based on focus groups and surveys of teachers and parents, the research presents a picture of the developmental readiness of children in England and Wales to embrace the joys and challenges of school-based learning as they embark on Reception year. This research report, however, focuses on the experience of their parents.

We are all learners from birth, and our parents are our first, and most important, educators. The years before formal education begin are the most impactful of our whole lives, laying the foundations for a lifetime of physical and mental health, social engagement, financial and emotional success and joy. It is in the nation's interests to ensure that every parent feels empowered with the knowledge, confidence and support networks they need to be the parents they want to be - the parents their children need.

As the school readiness research sets out the developmental progress of a Reception cohort, this first NECPS seeks to deepen our understanding of the experience of their parents. It presents a picture of what parents of children aged 0-5 across the UK say about themselves, what they believe is expected of them, and where they feel most able and confident as parents.

This report is based on parents' own accounts, collected between 8 July and 6 August 2026. Their feelings about parenting are findings in their own right, while their recollections of services and support may differ from official records. This allows us to understand how parents experience the early years, their confidence, worries, expectations and access to support.

The data presents a varied and complicated picture because 'parents' are not a homogenous group. For this reason, we have drawn on a large, weighted sample (over 3,500 respondents) to allow us to present contrasts, identifying specific groups of parents, in particular areas and aspects of their lives.

For each question we asked, there are two 'stories'. The first is one dimensional; a single number of the total respondents who respond in a particular way to a question. But behind this is another story, different for each question, of the particular kinds of parents and how a characteristic can influence our overall understanding of the data.

For this reason, in Sections Three and Four, we have presented more detailed findings and the responses to every question we asked with analysis by demographic grouping. The variance from the 'average' answer of individual groups of parents is, we believe, where the greatest insights lie.

For readers wishing to interrogate the data further, a search tool has been developed and is available at https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-tool.

Note: Throughout, the term *'parents'* is used to reference parents, carers and families.

We'd like to acknowledge the support of our colleagues at **Collective Futures** and **Home-Start UK** for their help in shaping this piece of research.

02 Summary of findings

400,000

families have nobody living nearby they could call in an emergency

12% OF PARENTS

650,000

families have never attended any parent or child group

19% OF PARENTS

450,000

families have not accessed a GP, nursery or health visitor in the past year

13% OF PARENTS

450,000

parents strongly suspect their child has SEND but has no diagnosis

13% OF PARENTS

400,000

families regularly struggle to understand information about services

12% OF PARENTS

1,050,000

families do not feel supported with the financial costs

29% OF PARENTS

* Shown as numbers of families for illustration, based on an estimated 3.5 million UK families with at least one child aged 0–5. Rounded to the nearest 50,000.

Headlines from all parents surveyed

Parenting is harder than most parents expected.

More than half of parents (54%) say the reality of parenting has been harder than they anticipated, rising to 60% among parents with two or more children. Yet parents are almost evenly divided on day-to-day life: 38% describe parenting as easy, compared with 36% who find it difficult.

Parents are confident – but still worry they are falling short.

Eight in ten parents (80%) say they feel confident in their role, but 68% still worry they are not doing enough. Even among parents who say that parenting is easy, 61% worry they could be doing more.

The pressure to be a 'perfect parent' is taking its toll.

Nearly six in ten parents (59%) say expectations, pressure to be perfect or feeling judged make parenting harder. Three quarters (76%) believe social media has increased anxiety around parenting, while 70% say parenting decisions are more complicated today than for previous generations.

Many parents are raising young children without a reliable local safety net.

One in eight parents (12%) have nobody outside their immediate household they could call on at an hour's notice in an emergency, while almost half (49%) have only one or two people nearby they could turn to. The risk of isolation is substantially higher for some groups, including social housing tenants and parents whose first language is not English.

AI is a source of advice for one in five parents, but far fewer trust it.

One in five parents (21%) are using tools such as ChatGPT for parenting advice, yet only 12% say they trust AI as a source. But trust is also an issue across other sources of information; parents are using a much wider range of information than they necessarily trust.

Parenting information is a problem.

Too much information, not knowing where to start and conflicting advice are the biggest barriers. Almost half (49%) say conflicting advice actively gets in the way of effective parenting and more than a third (36%) have struggled to understand parenting, childcare or information about local services.

Local groups work for parents who reach them, but too many don't feel welcome or can't get there.

Around nine in ten parents who attend baby, toddler or parenting groups find them helpful. Yet 54% have not attended a group that was available to them: half for practical reasons such as timing and transport, and almost a third (30%) because they worried it was 'not for people like me'.

Parents are questioning who they can trust.

Almost half (48%) think it is harder to trust professionals' advice than it was for previous generations. Parents are turning to their own instincts and their child's needs instead: these are the two strongest influences on parenting decisions.

Parents are worried about the world their children are growing up in.

Almost half (49%) are worried about their child's future. The cost of living is the most common concern, but concerns are also expressed about safety and crime, children's mental health and online safety – suggesting that parents' anxieties extend well beyond what happens inside the family home.

HEADLINES FROM THE DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF PARENTS SURVEYED

Alongside the whole-survey data, extensive demographic information was collected about respondents.

Reviewing the responses by individual demographic characteristics reveals further insights into how certain communities of parents of the under-5s are experiencing parenting in 2025-2026.

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Engagement with local services changes as the child grows

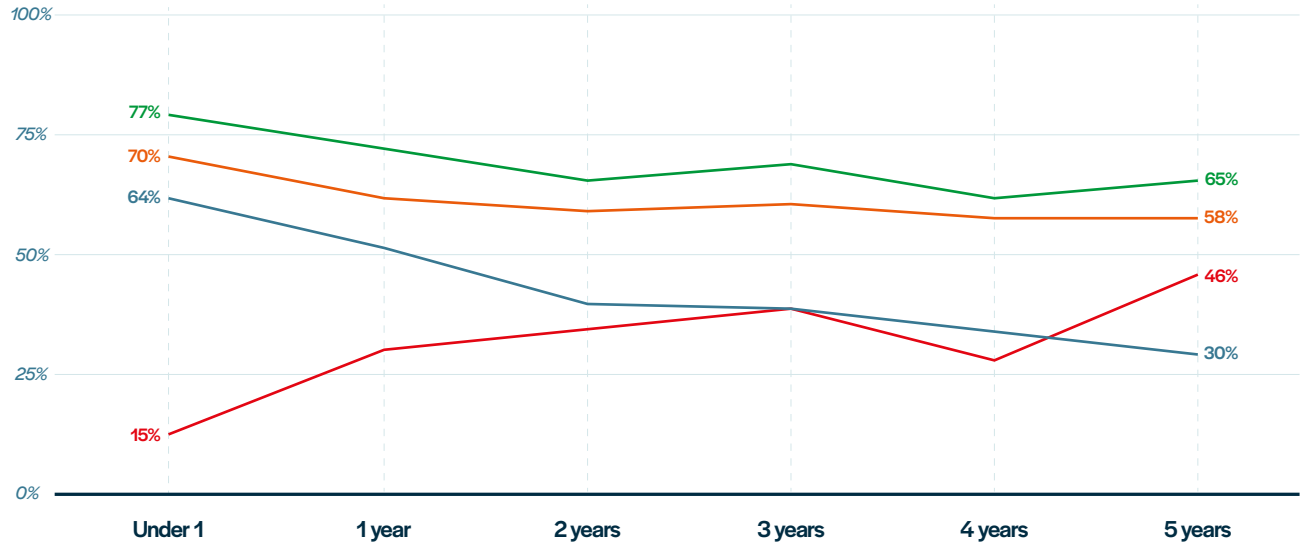
The first year is both peak pressure and peak contact: more than three quarters (**77%**) of parents of under-ones worry they are not doing enough, **70%** cite financial pressure and **64%** have seen a health visitor. By age five, health visitor contact has fallen to **30%** while nursery attendance has climbed from **18%** to **78%**.

The proportion of parents accessing no services at all is lowest in the first year (**11%**) and highest at age five (**19%**). The numbers who don't attend any kind of community group falls from **33%** to **15%** by age two before rising back to **20%** by 5.

15%

Only **15%** of parents of under-ones find unasked-for advice supportive, against **46%** of parents of five-year-olds. For these parents, the most advice comes at the point they find it least helpful.

Parenting experiences change as the child grows



Q5_2. I often worry that I am not doing enough as a parent: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET: Agree). Q6_7. Resource and financial pressures (NET: Agree). Q10 – Health visitor. Q23b. How does receiving this unasked-for advice typically make you feel? – It makes me feel supported and grateful for the input. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564, except Q23b, BASE: Those who receive unasked for advice about parenting their child, n=1,430.

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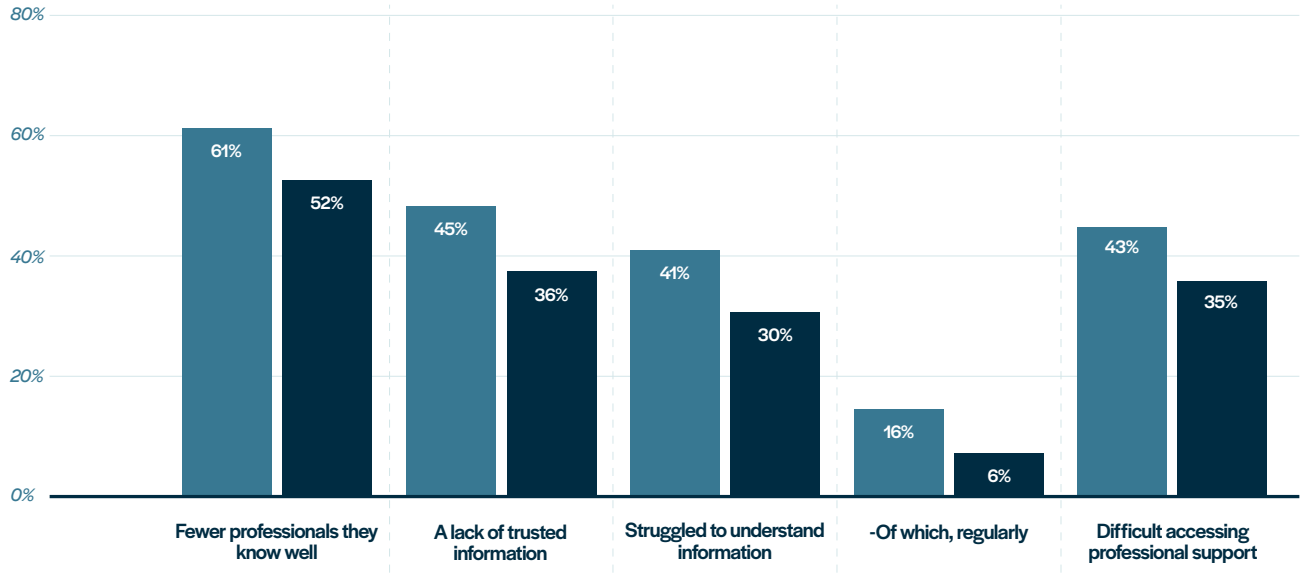
Postcode deprivation predicts what parents can navigate, not how parenting feels

In a number of areas, deprivation makes little difference to how parents are feeling. Across the four indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) quartiles, parent confidence is spread **79–81%**, worry **67–69%**, and finding parenting difficult **34–37%**. Pressure to be a 'perfect parent' is almost the same for all parents at the top and bottom of the indices (between **58%** and **59%** across four quartiles) and financial pressure barely moves (**62% / 63% / 61% / 59%**).

Where deprivation does separate parents is in their engagement with parenting information: difficulty understanding it falls from **41%** in the most deprived quartile to **30%** in the least, and from **16%** to **6%** among those experiencing it regularly. More deprived parents are more likely to lack trusted information (**45%**) compared to the better off (**36%**) and more agree that parents today are less likely to have professionals they know well (**61%** in the most deprived quartile compared to **52%** in the least).

Where deprivation separates parents



Parents in the most deprived quartile are less likely to feel unsupported financially (26% vs 33%), more likely to have the time and energy they'd like (61% vs 56%), and far more likely to have had Family Hub contact (26% vs 17–19%).

Q18 (NET: Yes, and 'Yes, regularly') / Q6_8 / Q6_3 (NET: Agree) / Q9_3. Parents today are less likely to have professionals they know well and can turn to: Thinking about parenting today compared to previous generations, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? (NET: Agree). BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,556.

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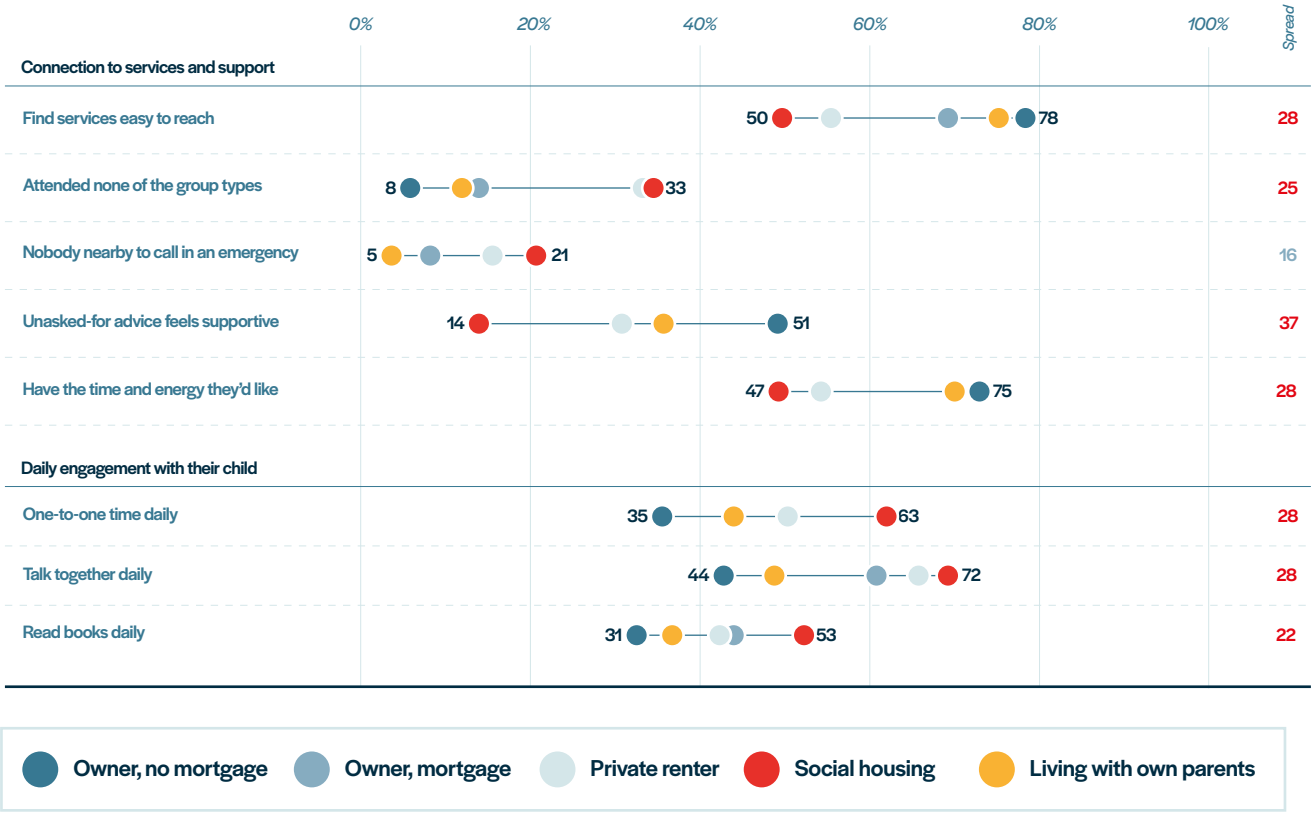
Housing tenure produces some of the widest differences in support, access and connection

Social housing tenants are the least likely to access local support services. A third (**33%**) have attended no groups at all, only half (**50%**) find services easy to reach against **78%** of outright homeowners.

As well as low engagement with support outside the home, **21%** have nobody to call in an emergency against a national average of **12%**. Advice parents didn't ask for lands as judgement more often than help, especially for parents with least support (social housing: **50%** judged, **14%** supportive.)

Their daily engagement with their children is higher than mortgaged homeowners on every activity measured — one-to-one time **63%** (compared to **44%** of mortgaged homeowners), talking together **72%** compared to **61%** mortgaged homeowners, reading **53%** against **45%**.

Another clear point of difference is evident in the housing data. Parents living in their own parents' home, who are typically younger, have the strongest emergency networks of any group. However, in spite of the higher level of support and connection, they struggle more than most in other ways: **61%** have difficulty understanding information, **34%** seek advice daily, and **41%** have stayed away from a service because they felt they wouldn't fit in or feared being judged.



Q16. How easy or difficult is it to physically access baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups in your area? (NET: Easy). Q15. Since your youngest child was born, have you ever attended any of the following baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups? – None of these. Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice? – None. Q23b – supported and grateful. Q5_3. I feel I have enough time and energy to parent in the way I would ideally like to (NET: Agree). Q8_9. Spend one-to-one time focused just on them / Q8_3. Talk together during everyday activities / Q8_1. Read books or look at books together: In a typical week, how often, if at all, do you do the following activities with your youngest child? – Every day or almost every day. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564, except Q23b n=1,430.

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Some parents are far more likely to be raising children without a local safety net

One in eight parents (**12%**) have nobody living nearby they could call on to look after their child at an hour's notice in an emergency. Almost half (**49%**) have only one or two people they could turn to.

But that risk of isolation is not evenly spread; parents whose first language is not English are more than twice as likely as the national average to have nobody nearby to call on (**26%**), followed by social housing tenants (**21%**) and private renters (**16%**).

Family structure makes relatively little difference to this measure. **13%** of single parents have no local emergency support, compared with **12%** of parents in two-parent households.

There is also a gap in engagement with community support. A third (**33%**) of both social housing tenants and parents whose first language is not English have never attended any of the baby, toddler or parenting group types surveyed, compared with **19%** of parents nationally.

However, around nine in ten parents who have attended these groups find them helpful. Some of the communities with the weakest local support networks are also among the least likely to access these opportunities to connect with others.

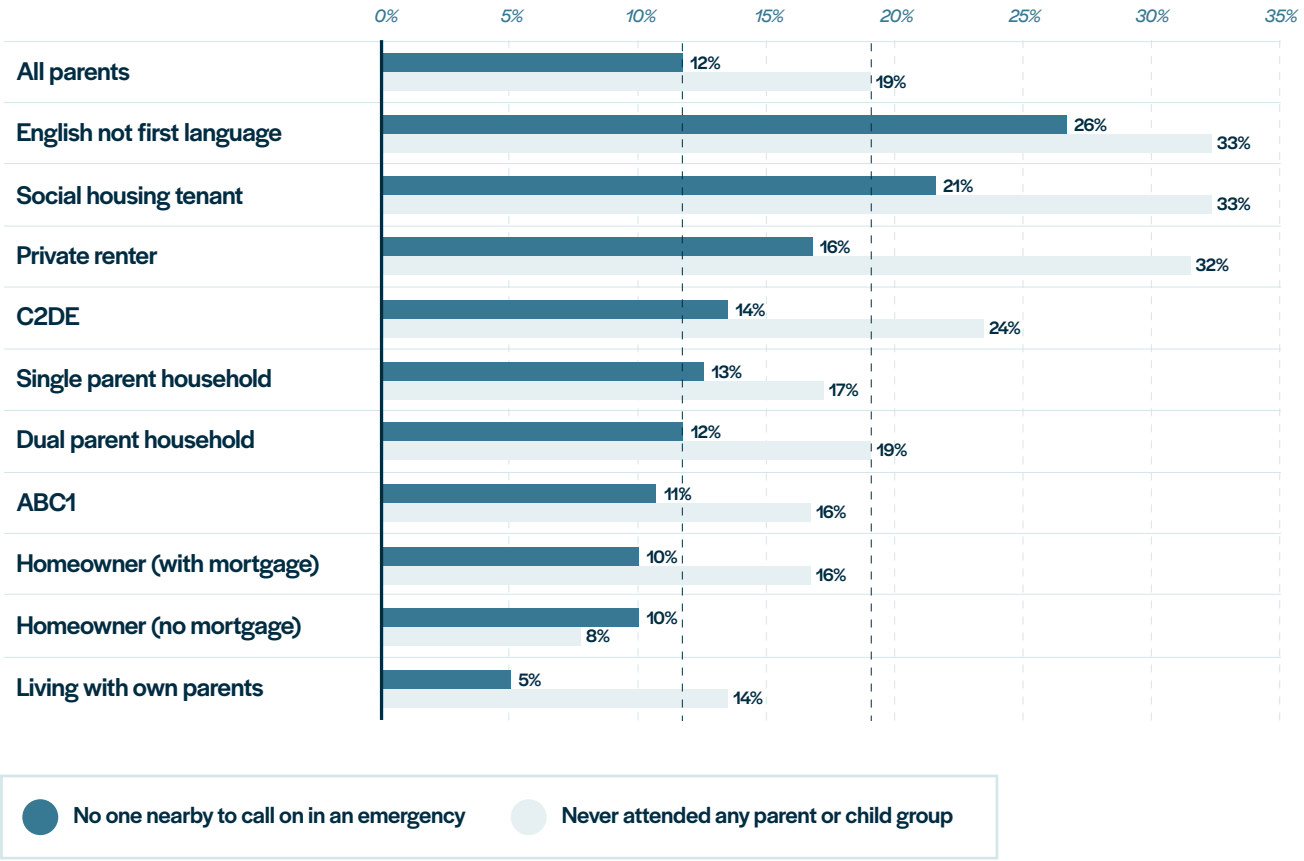

Table 116 Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby could you realistically call on? Table 95 Q15. Since your youngest child was born, have you ever attended any of the following baby groups, workshops, parenting classes or support groups? Selected: None of these. BASE: All parents of children aged 0-5, July-August 2026, n=3,564. ABC1 and C2DE refer to social grade.

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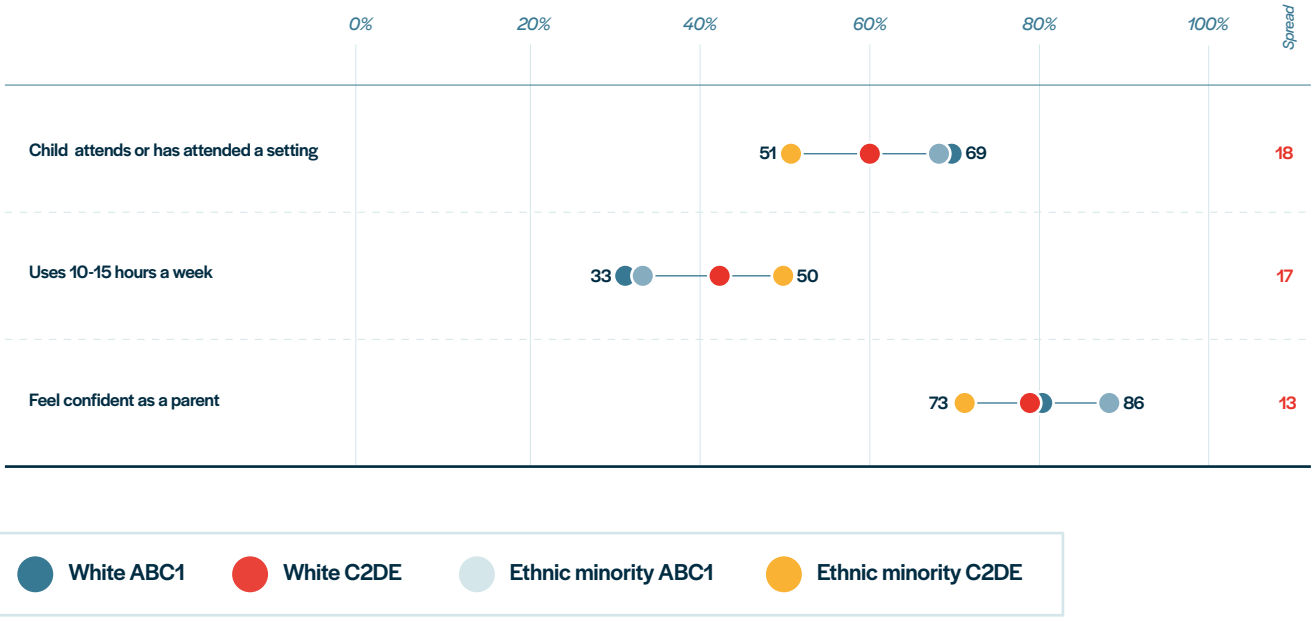
Social grade within ethnicity matters more than ethnicity alone

Lower-income ethnic minority parents are the least well served by early education and childcare *(n=184, indicative)*: **51%** have used early education and childcare settings vs **69%** of White ABC1 and they cluster in funded-hours-only provision (**50%** at 10-15hrs vs **33%**). Conversely, ethnic minority ABC1 parents are often the most confident of the four groups at **86%**, compared to **73%** for ethnic minority C2DE.

White C2DE parents report the most worry — "not doing enough" **74%** vs **53%** for EM C2DE, and the most likely of the four groups to have avoided a service for fear of being judged (**29%**). And **34%** of worried ethnic minority parents cite racism as a top concern vs **10%** of White parents.



Q13 · Table 88 (all parents) · Q13b · Table 90 (BASE: parents whose child attends or attended, n=2,300) · Q5_1 · Table 35. Unweighted bases: White ABC1 n=1,746 · White C2DE n=1,107 · Ethnic minority ABC1 n=524 · Ethnic minority C2DE n=184.Ethnic minority C2DE is under 400 and indicative. Ethnicity was a monitoring quota, not a weighting variable.

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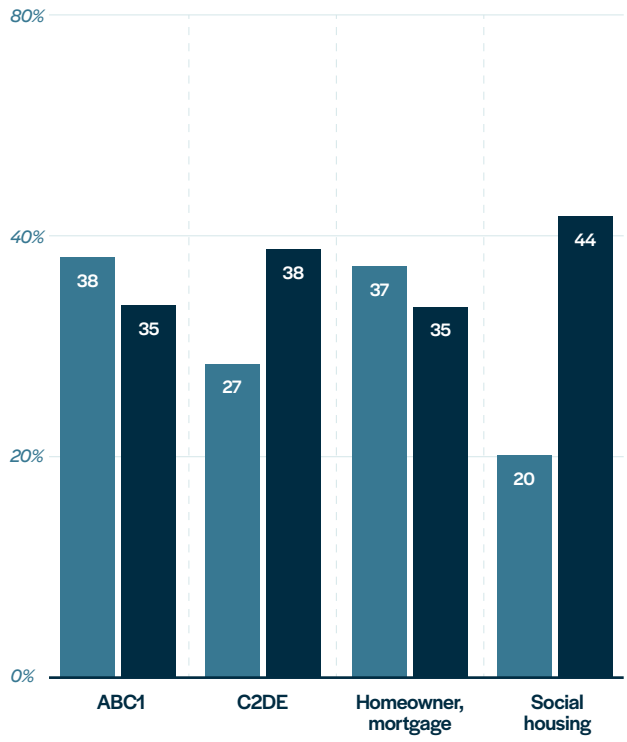
Take up of early education and childcare settings varies

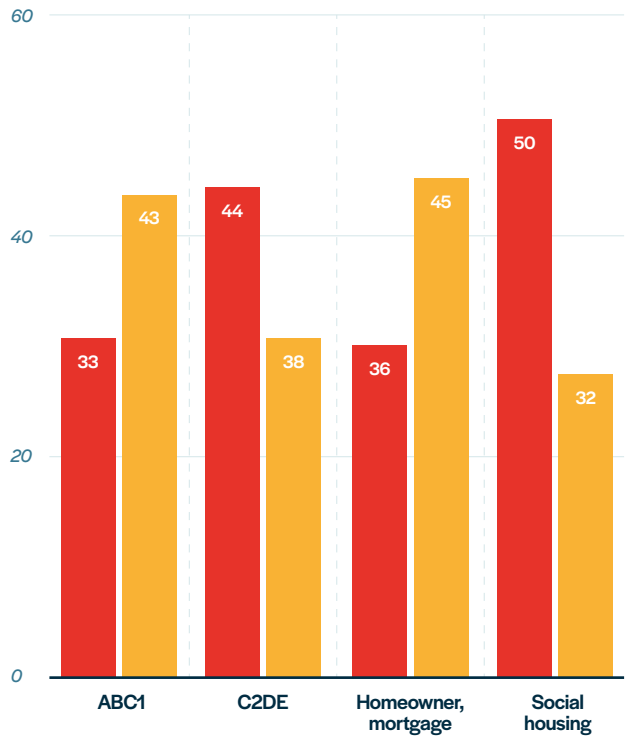
Better-off parents are more likely to use private nurseries. **38%** of ABC1 parents and **37%** of mortgaged homeowners send their child to a private day nursery, compared with **27%** of C2DE parents and **20%** of social housing tenants, who are more likely to have a child attending a school-based nursery instead.

Half of social housing tenants and **44%** of C2DE parents use 10 to 15 hours a week, close to the universal 15-hour funded entitlement, compared to a third of ABC1 parents. Above 15 hours the pattern flips: **45%** of mortgaged homeowners and **43%** of ABC1 parents use 16 to 30 hours, against **32%** of social housing tenants.

Early education and childcare settings takeup varies more across certain demographic characteristics than others: **74%** of parents aged 45 to 54 have used a setting, compared with **50%** of parents aged 18 to 24. Parents with English as an additional language are less likely to use early education and childcare settings (**44%**), than those with English as a first language (**66%**).



Q13a. You said that your youngest child has or is expected to attend an early years provider before starting Reception/school. What type of early years provision is this? – Private day nursery / School-based nursery. BASE: Those whose youngest child has/is/will attend early years childcare: July-August 2026, n=3,273.



Q13b. How many hours a week does/did your youngest child usually attend nursery or another early years provider? – 10-15 hours / 16-30 hours. BASE: Those whose youngest child attended/is enrolled at early years childcare: July-August 2026, n=2,300.

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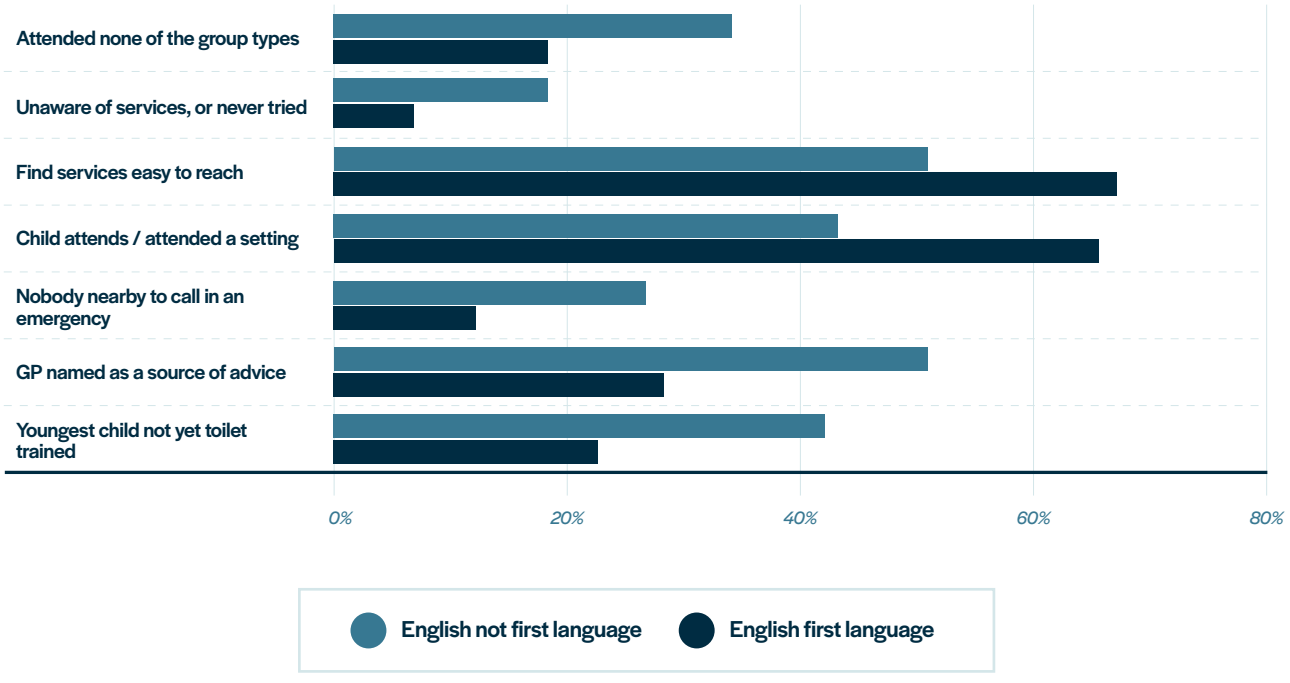
Who services aren't reaching, and who doesn't feel welcome

Parents whose first language isn't English are not accessing support in line with their peers. **33%** attended no groups, **18%** are unaware of local services or have never tried to access them.

This lack of group engagement compounds isolation; one in four (**26%**) have nobody for emergency childcare. They are more reliant on GPs as a primary source of parenting advice (**52%** vs **31%** national), and **42%** of their over-1s are not toilet trained (vs **24%** national). By contrast young parents (18-24) and SEND parents are not attending, driven by fear of judgement (18-24s: **30%** feared being judged vs **10%** of 45-54s; SEND diagnosed **36%** vs **19%**).

Differences of English as a first language



Q15 – None of these. Q16 (NET: Unaware/never tried; NET: Easy). Q13. Still thinking about your youngest child, have they attended, or do you expect them to attend, nursery or another early years provider before starting Reception/school? (NET: Yes). Q24 – None. Q21 – GP. PARENT3a. Is your youngest child toilet trained? – Not yet. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564, except PARENT3a, BASE: Those who have children over 1 year old, n=3,325.

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SEND is a clear divider of strain and additional support need

Parents of children with diagnosed SEND run higher on almost every strain measure:

78% vs 27%
"My child has high support needs"

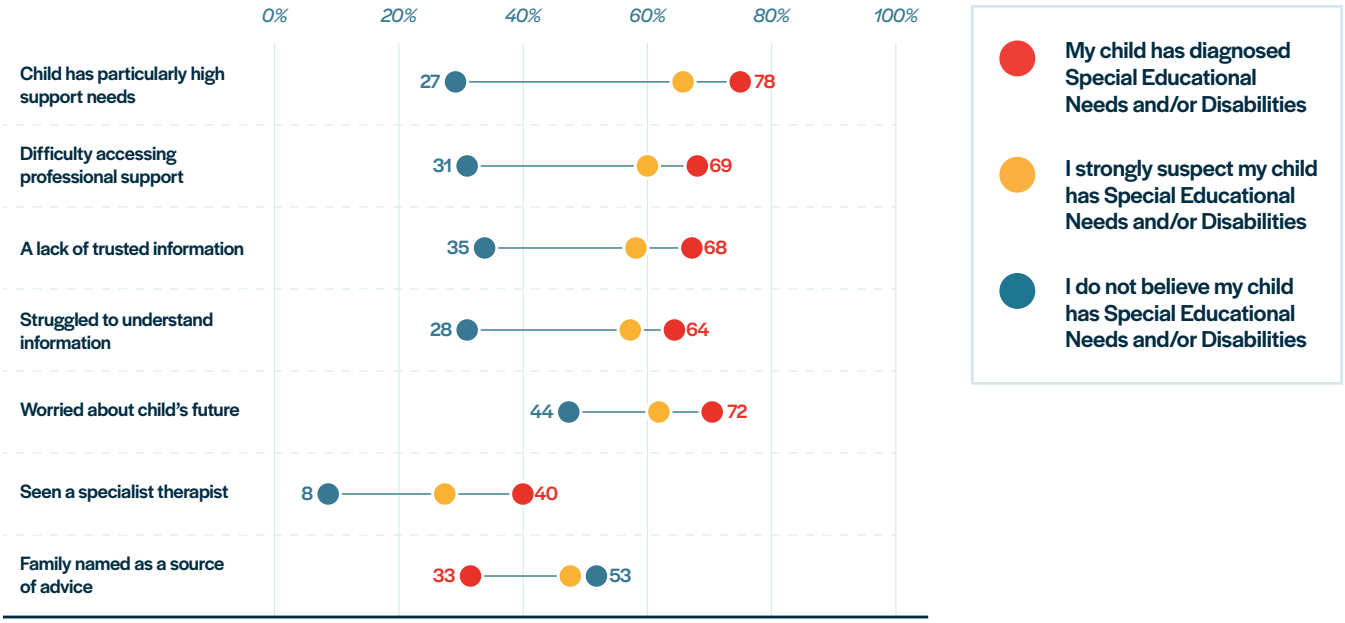
69% vs 31%
Difficulty accessing professional support

64% vs 28%
Difficulty understanding information

72% vs 44%
Worried about child's future

They are also far less reliant on family for advice (**33%** vs **53%**), leaning more on professional support (specialist therapist **40%** vs **8%**, early intervention or social worker **26%** vs **9%**).

Parents of children with suspected, but undiagnosed SEND report strain close to diagnosed families (**61%** have difficulty accessing professional support and **59%** lack trusted information), but far less professional contact: **26%** have seen a specialist therapist, against **40%** of diagnosed families.



Q6_10. My child having particularly high support needs / Q6_8. Difficulty accessing professional support / Q6_3. A lack of trusted information about how best to support my child: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 'I sometimes worry that I am not able to respond effectively to my child's needs because of...' (NET: Agree). Q18. Have you ever had difficulty understanding written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services? (NET: Yes). Q25. How worried, if at all, are you about your child's future overall? (NET: Worried). Q10. In relation to your youngest child, have you accessed support from any of the following in the last year? – Specialist therapist. Q21. Which, if any, of the following sources do you use for parenting advice? – Family members. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

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Single parents lose the sounding board

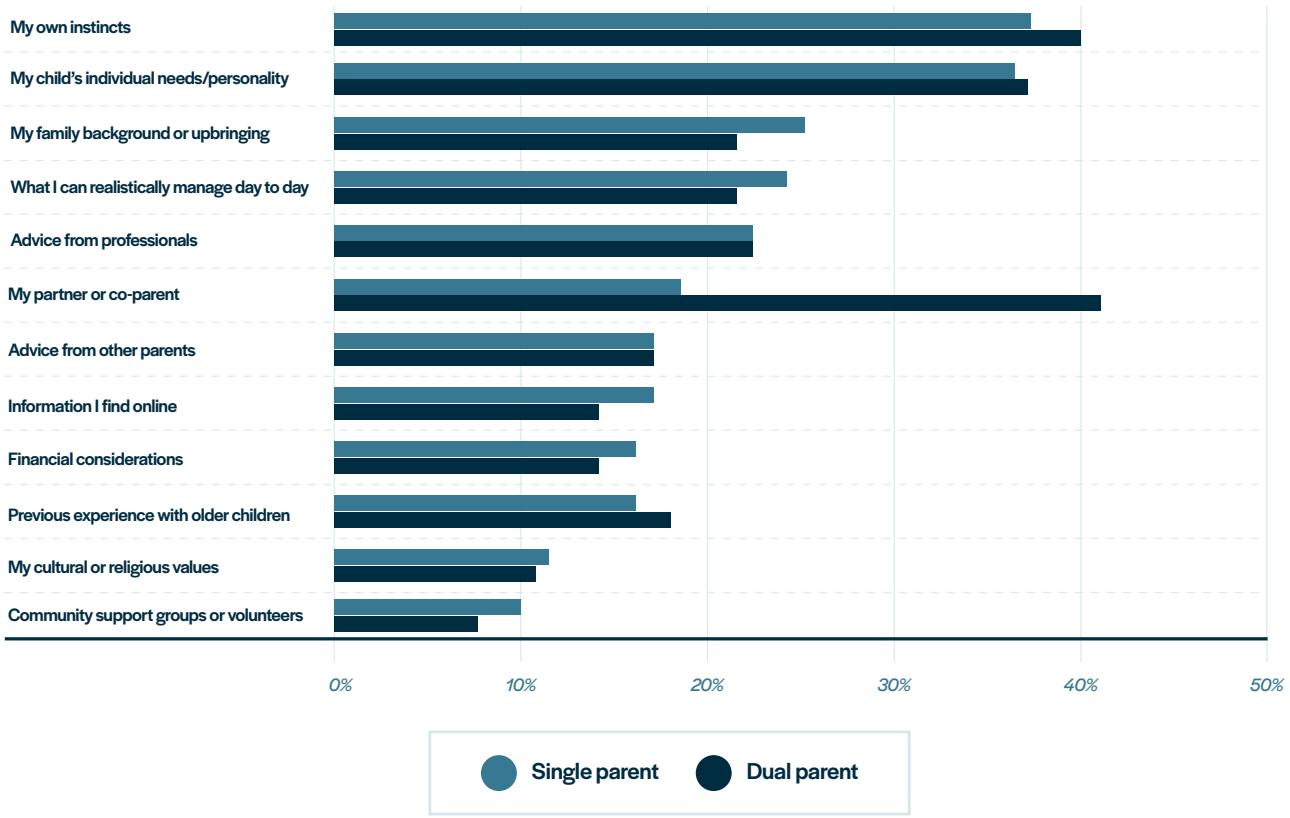
Parents were asked what tends to influence them most when making parenting decisions, choosing up to three from a list of twelve including their own instincts, their child's needs, a partner or co-parent, advice from professionals, and so on. Unsurprisingly, only **18%** of single parents name a partner or co-parent, against **41%** in dual-parent households.

What is more striking is that nothing else moves to fill the gap. Family background, information found online and community groups each rise by three points, and every other influence sits within three points of dual-parent households. Across the other eleven options, the biggest difference between single and dual parent households is three points.

64%

of single parents are the sole or primary caregiver, against **31%** in dual households. A third (**34%**) do not feel supported by a partner or co-parent (**10%**). And **51%** report difficulty accessing professional support (**36%** in dual households). But the gap in emergency external support is small: **13%** have nobody nearby to call, compared to **12%** of dual-parent households. What's missing is the person inside the house to share the responsibility.

Influences on parenting decisions



Q12. When making parenting decisions, what tends to influence you most? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

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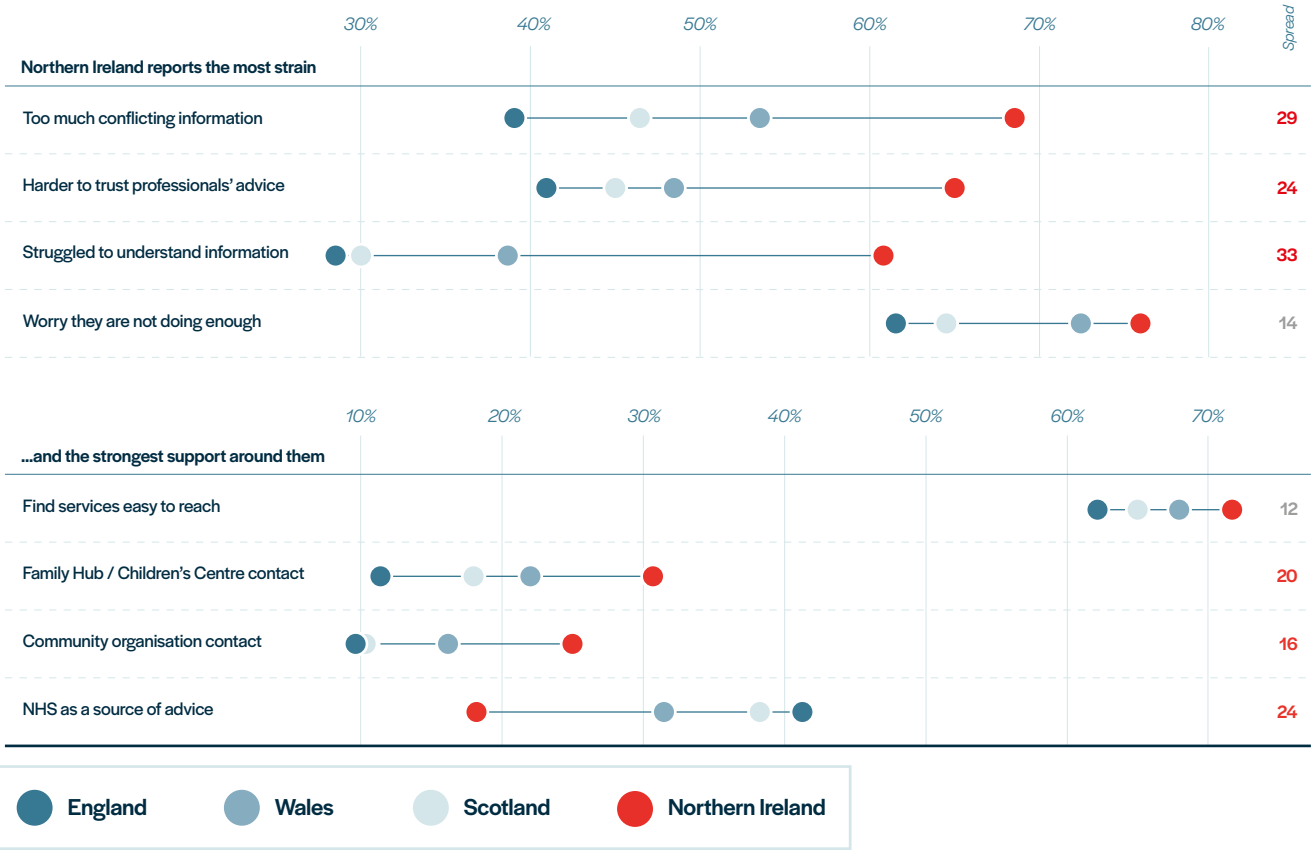
The different countries have their own stories

Northern Ireland combines high confidence, capacity and service engagement with high levels of worry and information difficulty (most receiving conflicting advice **68%**, most lack of trusted information **65%**, most difficulty with information **61%**, most worried they are not doing enough **77%**). The worry is high, but they also report the strongest support networks, easiest access to support, and highest use of local community services.

Scotland is close to the mirror image. Asked which sources they use for parenting advice, **42%** of Scottish parents name the NHS, the highest of the four nations and more than double Northern Ireland's **18%**. But only **9%** have had support from a community organisation in the past year and **11%** from a family hub or children's centre, both the lowest of the four. Their children spend longer in early years settings: among those attending, **52%** attend 16 to 30 hours a week, against **41%** in Northern Ireland and **35%** in Wales. And Scottish parents are the least likely of the four nations to worry they are not doing enough (**63%** against **77%** in Northern Ireland).



Each half of the chart has its own scale, fitted to the figures on it. Unweighted bases: England n=2,016 · Wales n=504 · Scotland n=528 · Northern Ireland n=516. Each nation was boosted to around 500 so it could be reported separately.

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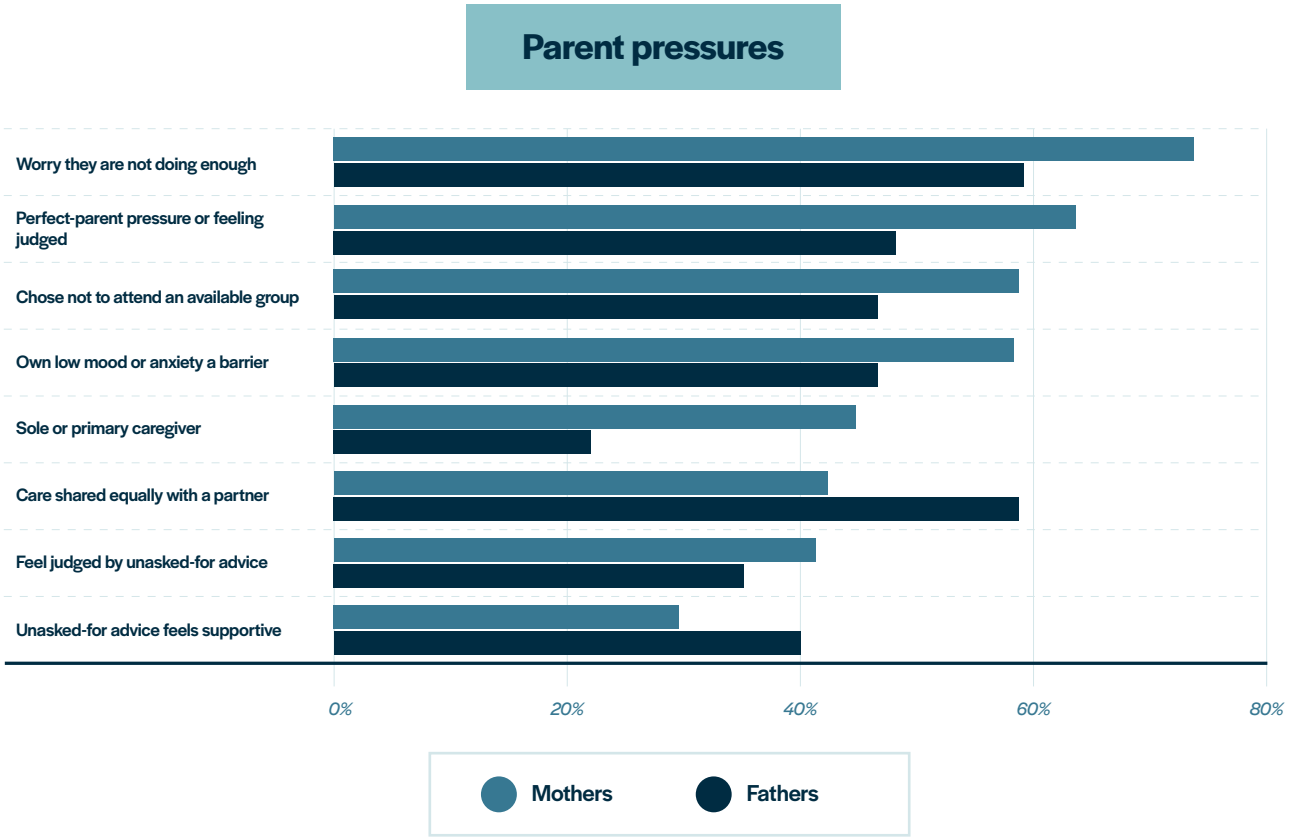
Mothers and fathers' parenting loads are different



46% of mothers describe themselves as the sole or primary caregiver against **23%** of fathers. Mothers report doing more of every activity measured, by between eight and eighteen points on all nine activities surveyed.

Mothers feel the pressure more. **73%** of mothers are worrying they are not doing 'enough' (**59%** of fathers). **64%** feel the pressure to be a 'perfect parent' or fear being judged (**50%** of fathers). **57%** cite their own low mood or anxiety as an issue, compared to less than half of fathers (**48%**). **41%** of mothers feel judged by unsolicited advice compared to **34%** of fathers; only **30%** find it supportive against **40%**.

Parents were asked how supported they feel across eleven aspects of raising a young child, from emotional support and help with behaviour to accessing a nursery place. Mothers report less support than fathers on every one of the eleven, without exception. The wider gaps are on 'practical childcare help in the home', where **28%** of mothers do not feel supported against **17%** of fathers, and on 'managing the financial costs of raising a young child', at **33%** (fathers **24%**).

As well as a difference in activity level, there is a difference in perception between mothers and fathers. **58%** of fathers say care is shared equally with a partner; only **43%** of mothers agree.

Q6_9. Impossible expectations, pressure to be a 'perfect parent' or feeling judged by others / Q6_1. My own low mood or feelings of anxiety (NET: Agree). Q5_2 (NET: Agree). Q17. Have there been any times when baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups were available to you but you chose not to attend these services? – Yes. Q4. Which of the following best describes how looking after children is primarily managed in your household? – I am the sole/primary caregiver / It is shared equally with a partner. Q23b – feel judged or criticised / supported and grateful. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564, except Q23b n=1,430. Mothers n=2,088, fathers n=1,474

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Early education and childcare settings are seen as much more than somewhere for children to go while parents work

More than nine in ten parents have used, currently use or expect to use an early childhood setting before Reception. Parents most commonly value early education and childcare settings for teaching children the skills and behaviours they need for school (**52%**) and supporting their wider development (**47%**), alongside enabling parents to work and manage other responsibilities.

Not all national averages contain big demographic splits

The **90%+** weekly home-learning activities (reading, singing, play) show almost no demographic variation. Parenting behaviour is broadly universal, and so is how parenting feels; deprivation shifts confidence and worry by two or three points at most.

For deprivation, the clearest inequalities are in professional contact, service access and information rather than parents' underlying confidence or worry.

03

THE EXPERIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENTING IN 2026 - SURVEY IN FULL

This section presents the survey in full, question by question, under the topics highlighted in Section Two: the experience of parenting, childcare, trust and influence, information, and community.

Each sets out what parents said overall, how that answer shifts across demographic groups, and what parents said about it in the focus groups held alongside the survey.

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Experiences of parenting

51%

of parents in Northern Ireland find parenting easy compared to 36% in England. Parents with English as their first language find parenting easier (39%) than those with English as a second language (27%).

38% of parents say they find parenting easy, or somewhat easy compared to 36% who find it difficult.

44% of parents of children with diagnosed SEND find parenting difficult compared to 34% of parents of children with no suspected SEND.

Overall, **18%** of parents find the reality of parenting easier than they expected. Within the total sample, the characteristic showing the greatest variance is those with a child diagnosed with SEND (**30%** with SEND compared to **16%** with no suspicion of SEND) and living in Northern Ireland compared to England (**29%** to **16%**).

(Note: This 'finding the reality of parenting easier' metric measures initial baseline expectations against reality in isolation of other strain factors.)

54% say parenting has been harder than expected, with the greatest variance shown between Northern Ireland (**39%**) and England (**57%**). There are further differences seen between **49%** first time parents and **60%** parents of two children or more.

Those that say that parenting is easy may still feel like they are falling short. Among those who describe parenting as easy, their confidence in their role as parents rises to **90%**, yet **61%** still worry they are not doing enough.

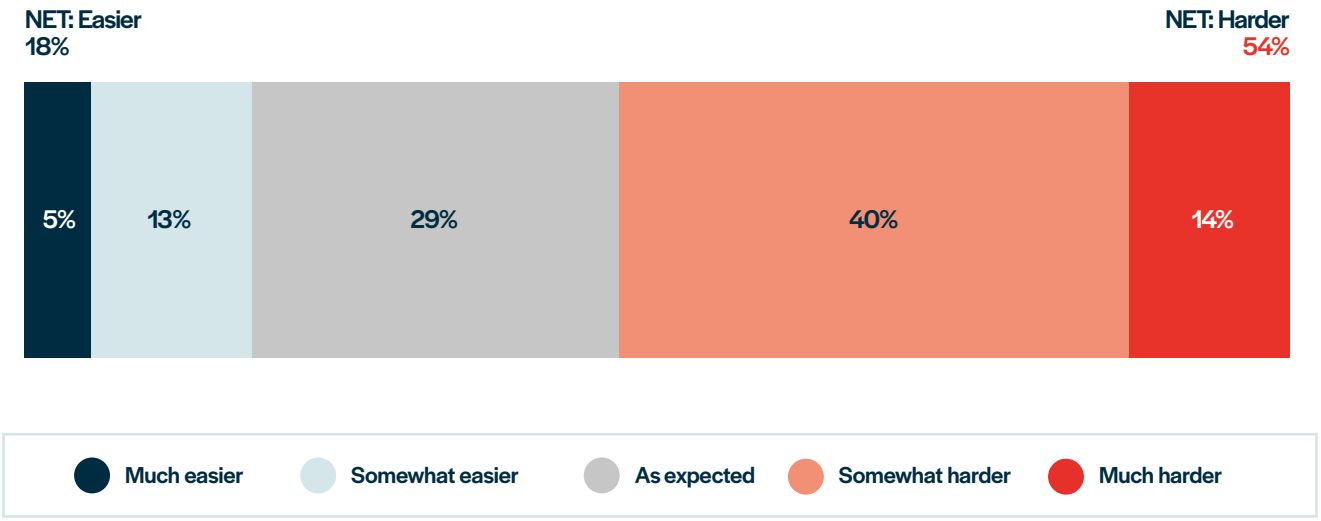
"Both myself and my wife underestimated just the amount that you would need to do to look after a child... there is literally always something that needs doing."

Parent, Wales

"The isolation really hits, especially when the other parent goes to work and you're just spending days and days just with that one little person who you cannot have any grown-up conversations with."

Parent, South West

How does the reality of parenting compare to expectations?



Parents were asked what feels most important to them about how they parent their child. Top of the list of options were:

'Keeping them safe and healthy' (**48%**). Characteristics displaying significant variance included country (Northern Ireland **33%** vs England **51%**) and SEND status (Diagnosed **35%**, None suspected **51%**).

'Helping my child feel loved and secure' (**45%**). Significant variances here included SEND (Diagnosed **29%**, None suspected **48%**)

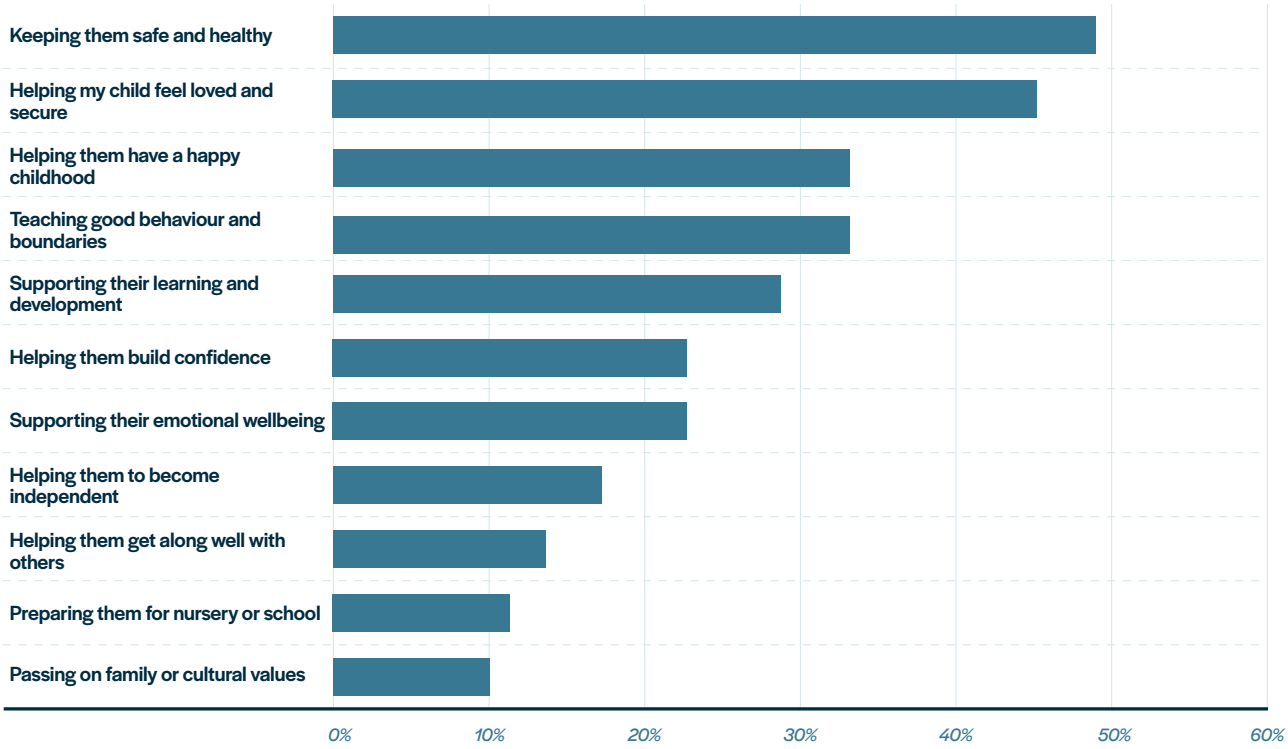
> **"It was like a bomb going off in our lives, in a good way, obviously, but also just a huge adjustment."**
>
> *Parent, London*

> **"There's been a lot of challenges, a lot of difficult things, but the moments, day-to-day, are just so beautiful... Don't get me wrong, a lot of trouble too, but it's so worth it."**
>
> *Parent, East of England*

Q2. Thinking back to before you became a parent, how does the reality of parenting compare to the expectations you had? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Which of the following, if any, feels most important to you in regard to how you parent your youngest child?



> **"Just knowing that the child is loved, being there for them no matter what, just teaching them right from wrong, so that they're... ready for the wider world."**
>
> *Parent, North West*

The parenting load was examined. **49%** describe the management of looking after children as being shared equally with a partner. Living circumstances were the characteristics at most variance. **34%** of parents in social housing compared to **53%** of mortgage-holders in their own homes described the workload as being equally shared.

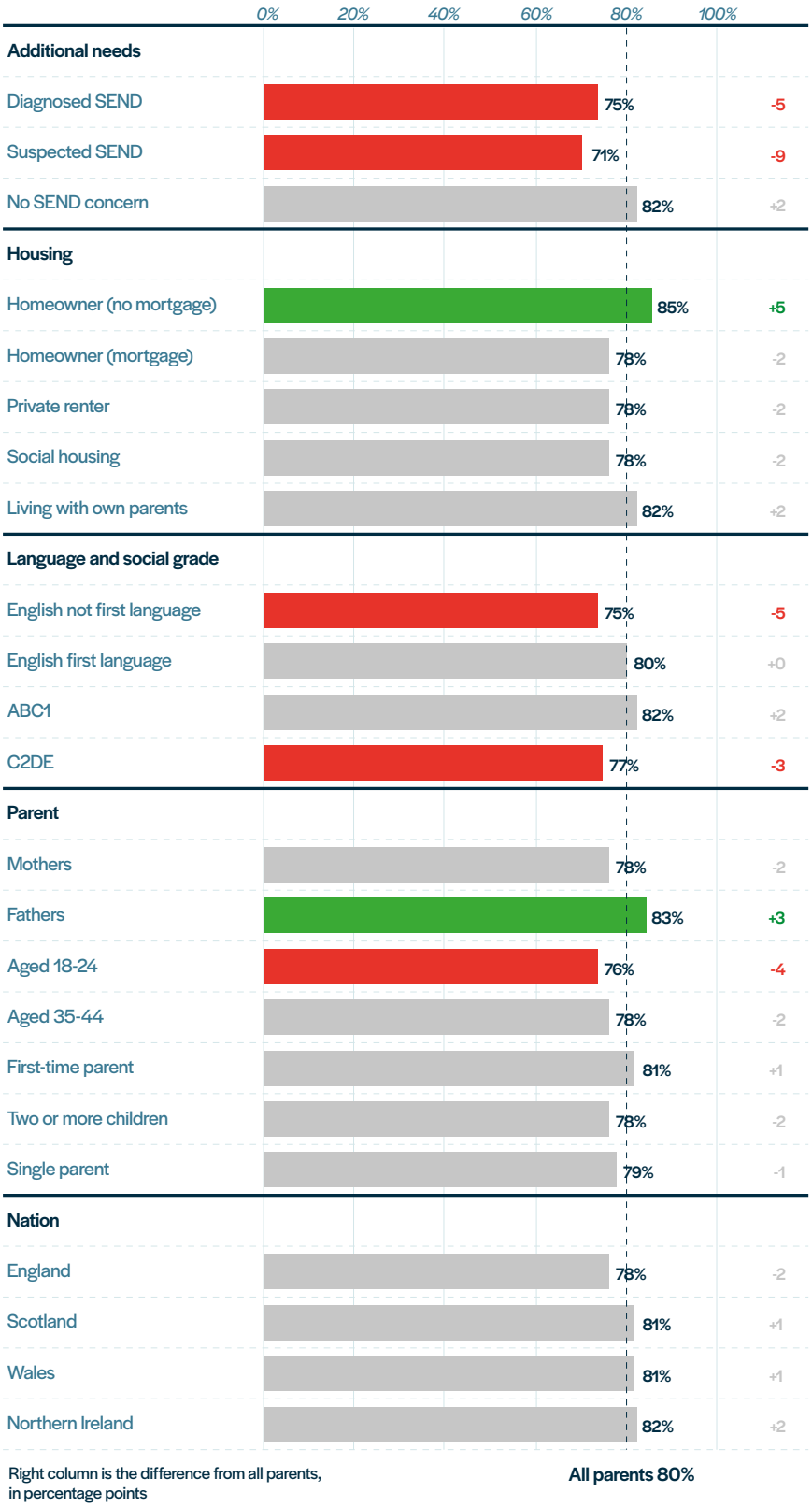
37% identified themselves as a sole or primary caregiver; this rose to **64%** of single parents compared to **31%** of two parent families. A 23 point variance was shown between female (**46%**) and male (**23%**) parents.

Parents' self-perception is complex. Eight out of ten parents (**80%**) agree they feel confident in their role as a parent (**8%** disagree). This confidence is spread across the demographic groups, with the parents of children with suspected SEND (**71%**) reporting the widest variance from those parents of children with no suspected SEND (**82%**).

Q3. Which of the following, if any, feels most important to you in regard to how you parent your youngest child? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564. Multi-choice, up to three.

Kindred²

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? NET: I feel confident in my role as a parent



Right column is the difference from all parents, in percentage points

All parents 80%

> **"As long as you do what you think is right and it normally works out okay, that's normally alright"**
>
> *Parent, West Midlands*

> **"Something that I feel a lot more confident in now, is realising that you are going to have bad days and not let it become defining."**
>
> *Parent, West Midlands*

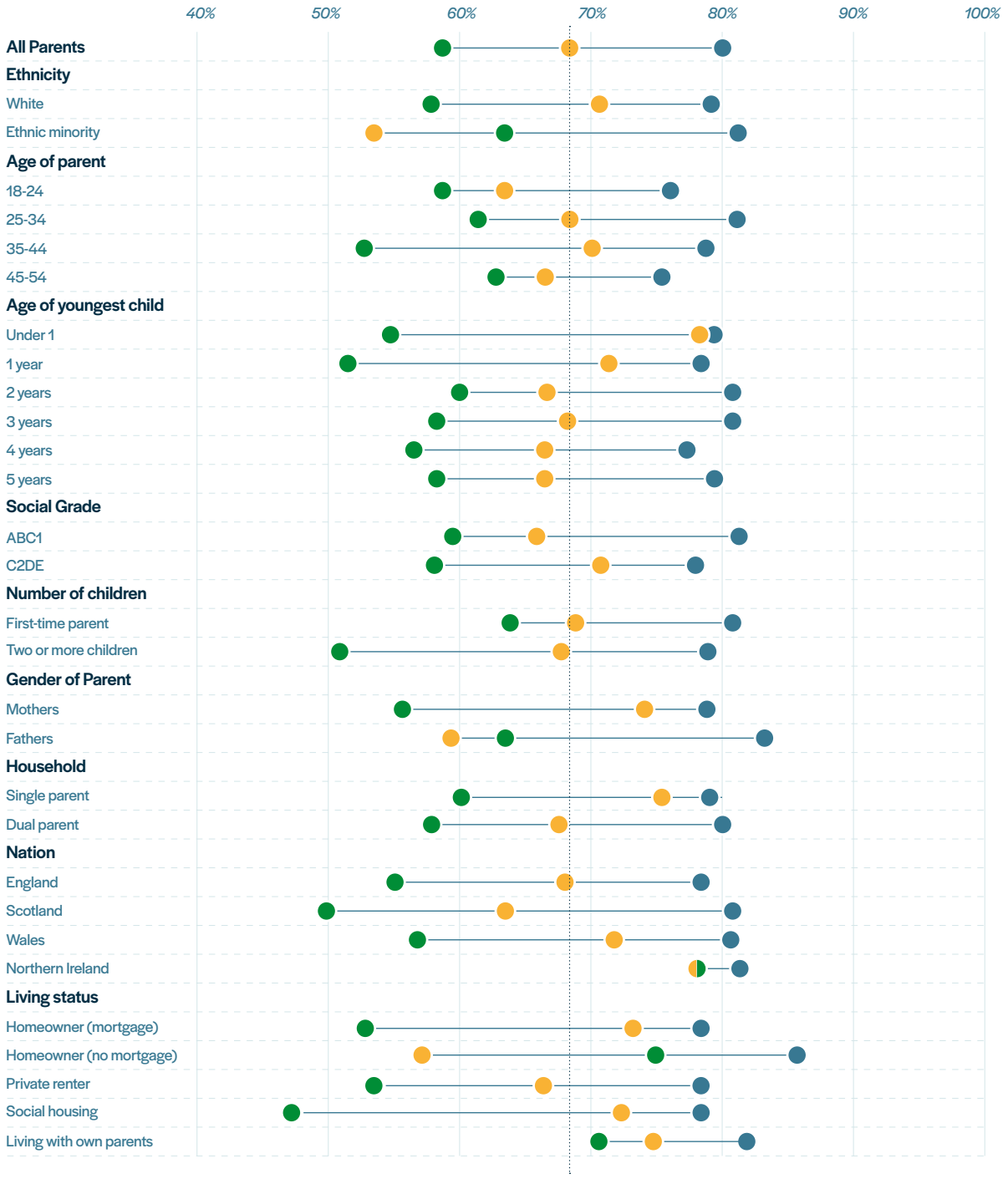
> **"I know him best...I've really gained a lot more confidence through his [child] development and understanding him more as a person."**
>
> *Parent, London*

Q5_1. I feel confident in my role as a parent: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET: Agree). BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

At the same time, **68%** agree they often worry that they are not doing enough (**18%** disagree). The gap between ethnic minority parents (**54%**) and white parents (**71%**) is statistically significant, as is that between parents of children with no suspicion of SEND (**65%**) and a diagnosis (**81%**).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET: Agree)



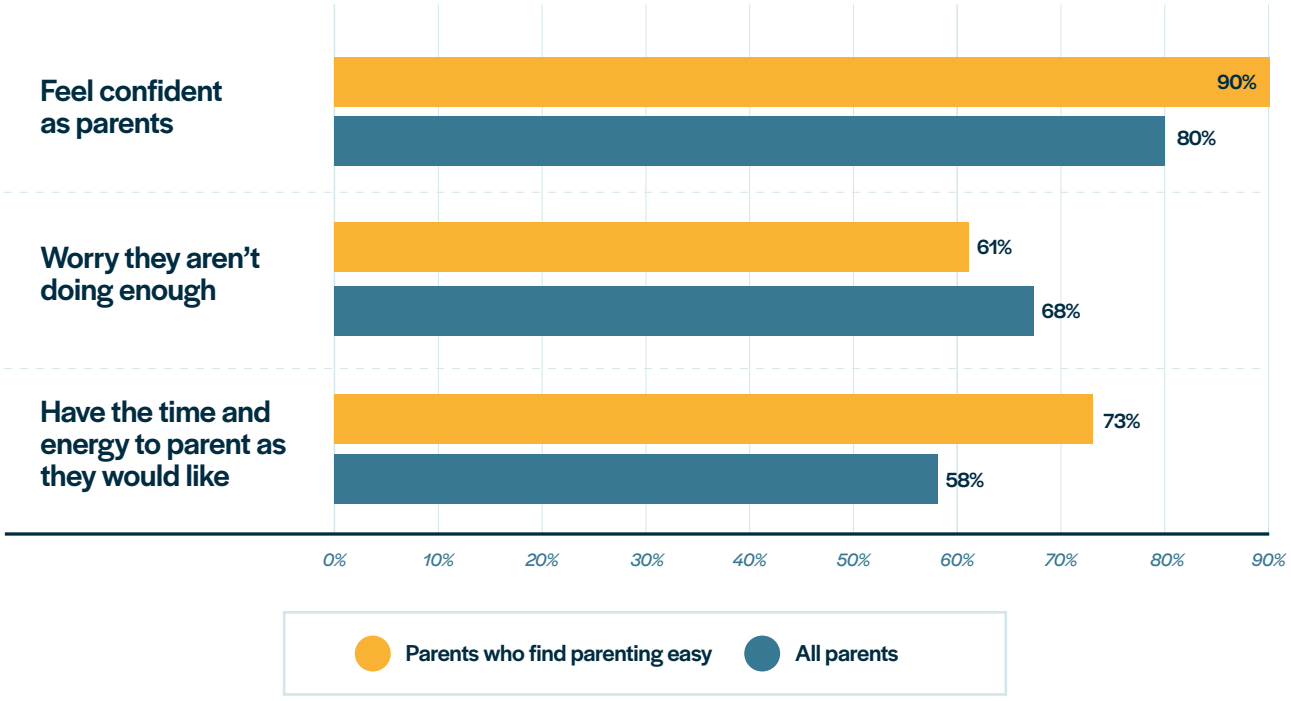
Feel confident in their role · Worry they are not doing enough · Have the time and energy they'd like

Q5_1 / Q5_2 / Q5_3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (NET: Agree). BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564. Where two groups share a value the dot is split between their colours.

Kindred²

58% feel they have enough time and energy to parent in the way they'd like to (**27%** disagree). This rises to **77%** in Northern Ireland compared to **55%** in England, **51%** in Scotland and **57%** in Wales. First time parents feel a greater sense of capacity (**64%**) compared to **51%** of parents with two or more children.

Parents feel they are falling short

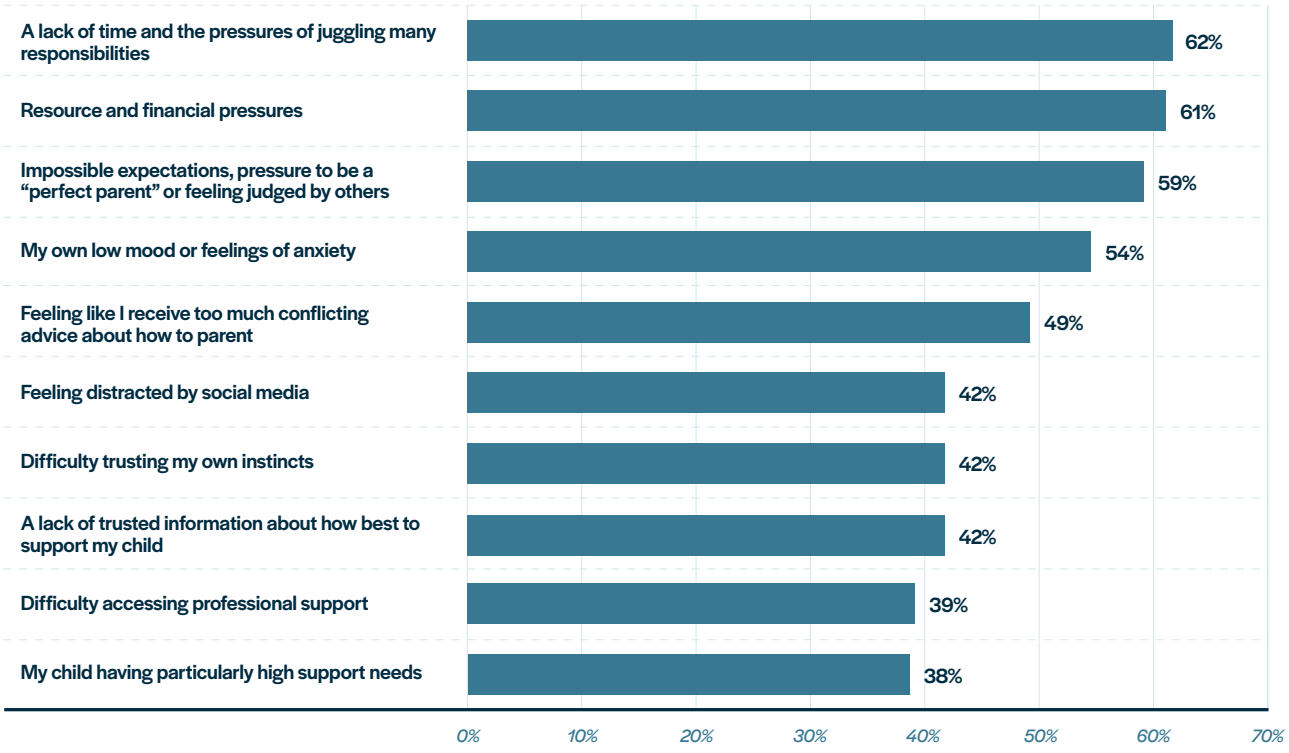


Juggling responsibilities with parenting is a worry for **62%** concerned they are not able to respond effectively to their child's needs. Additionally, **59%** agree that impossible expectations and the pressure to be a perfect parent or feeling judged makes them worry about being an effective parent.

Q5_1 / Q5_2 / Q5_3 (NET: Agree), among parents who find parenting easy. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564; parents finding parenting easy n=1,381.

Kindred²

Q6. NET Agree: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 'I sometimes worry that I am not able to respond effectively to my child's needs because of...'



> **"I don't think you can put into words quite how tough the first two years are. It is absolute trench warfare."**
>
> *Parent, West Midlands*

Financial pressure appears to peak in the first year of parenthood. **70%** of parents of a child under one cite resource and financial pressures as a worry, but this falls to **58%** among parents whose youngest child is aged five. The worry that they are not doing enough as a parent follows a similar trend, from **77%** among parents of under-ones to **65%** of parents of five-year-olds.

61% cite resources and financial pressures; this rises to **77%** for parents of children with diagnosed SEND (compared to **57%** of parents with no SEND).

59% worry about 'impossible expectations, pressure to be a 'perfect parent' or feeling judged by others'. The greatest variance here is between parents in Northern Ireland (**73%**) and Scotland (**52%**). Parents of children with diagnosed SEND are similarly struggling (**73%**) compared to parents of children with no diagnosis (**55%**).

Q6. Summary. NET: Agree: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 'I sometimes worry that I am not able to respond effectively to my child's needs because of...' BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

> **"I was sort of feeling this overwhelming pressure to be perfect. Like, you have to be perfect in everything. And I think social media influencers really get into your head and make you think that it's possible to be that way, but in reality, it's really not."**
>
> *Parent, London*

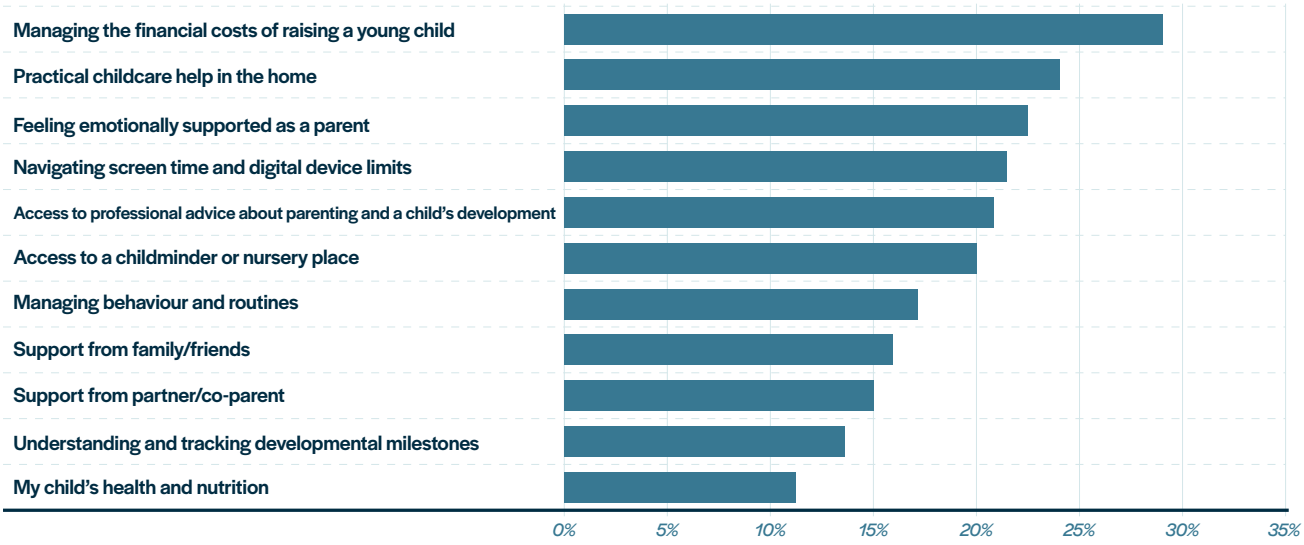
Parents of children with a SEND diagnosis (**71%**) and parents in Northern Ireland (**68%**) are disproportionately likely to feel they receive too much conflicting advice about how to parent, compared with **49%** nationally. These groups are also more likely to report a lack of trusted information about how best to support their child, with **68%** of parents of children with SEND diagnoses saying this compared with **35%** of parents of children with no diagnosis, and **65%** of parents in Northern Ireland compared with **32%** in Scotland. Both groups are also more likely to say they feel distracted by social media, relative to the national average of **42%**.

Parents of children with diagnosed SEND struggle with low mood (**72%**: national **54%**). Low mood is a particularly prevalent issue for parents in Northern Ireland (**67%**: national **54%**) who also cite having difficulty trusting their own instincts (**65%**: national **42%**).

The extent to which parents feel supported varies - the area of least support identified by parents was in managing the financial costs of raising a young child (**29%**) and practical childcare help in the home (**24%**). The demographic groupings with the greatest variances here are between urban (**29%**) and rural (**44%**) and between Northern Ireland (**17%**) and other tested nations (England: **30%**, Scotland: **36%**, Wales: **32%**).

> **"There's not enough time in the day. We don't even have enough time to watch anything in the evening when the kids go to bed — just beavering away, doing the laundry and cleaning up."**
>
> *Parent, London*

How supported, if at all, do you feel in the following areas? (NET: Not supported)



Q7. Summary. NET: Not supported: How supported, if at all, do you feel in the following areas? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

"I'm constantly thinking that all other people have got money to give their kids all different kinds of things and sometimes you're like, oh no, I've not."

Parent, West Midlands

"As a working mum... I don't always have the time to do as much as I'd like to do."

Parent, South East

"I work full time and by the time it comes to the evening, I don't have that time or that energy in me to say, let's sit down and actually read a book through... most of the time I'm just knackered and I just want all of them to go to bed."

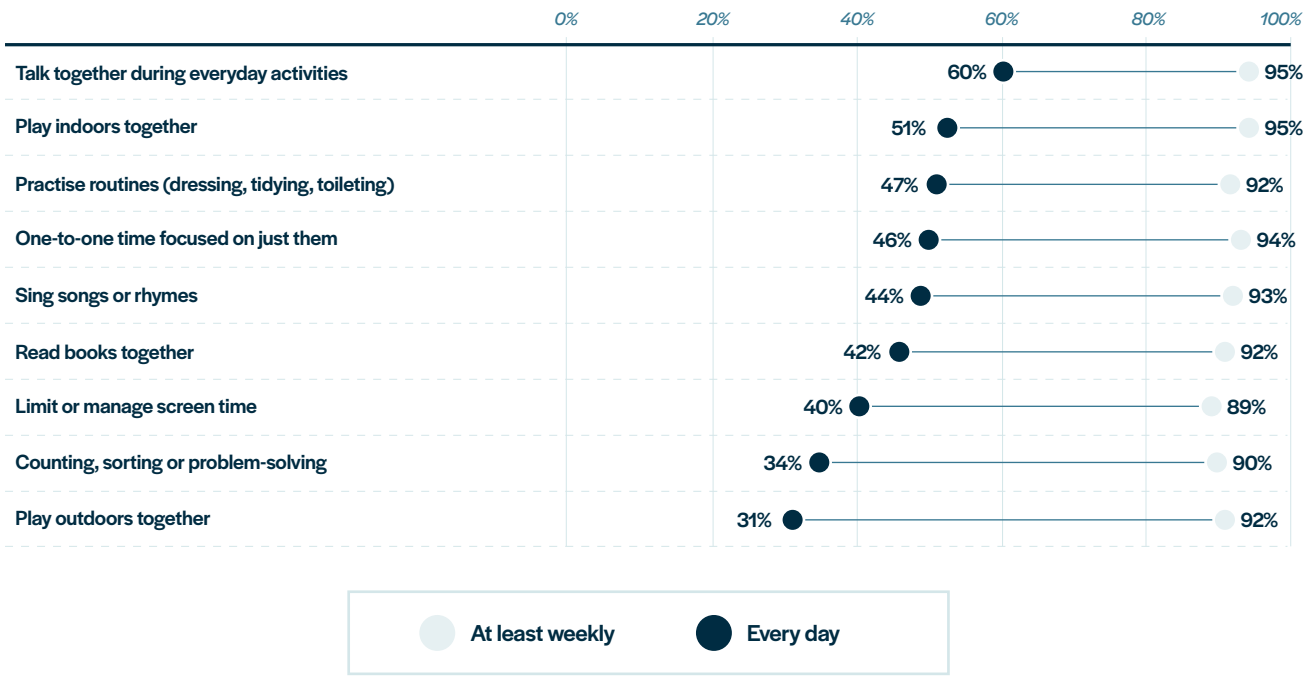
Parent, South East

Among the total **24%** of parents who say they do not feel supported getting practical childcare in the home, significant variance is seen between Northern Ireland (**14%**) and other tested nations (England: **25%**, Scotland: **28%**, Wales: **23%**). Housing is also a key demographic of variance here, with a gap between **39%** of those in social housing saying they do not feel supported compared to **25%** of homeowners with mortgages.

20% of parents say they do not feel supported getting access to a childminder or nursery place. Parents of children aged 2 and under (**24%**) are more likely to say they do not feel supported compared to parents of children aged 3 or older (**17%**). Parents with English as a second language (**29%**) and parents in social housing (**27%**) are also significantly more likely to cite limited support than those with English as a first language (**19%**) and parents with a mortgage (**19%**).

Over **90%** of parents are engaging with a range of tested activities at least weekly, ranging from playing indoors and outdoors, helping them practise routines like dressing or tidying, singing, reading books together or counting, sorting or problem solving.

Q8. Summary Table: In a typical week, how often, if at all, do you do the following activities with your youngest child?



Q8. Summary Table: In a typical week, how often, if at all, do you do the following activities with your youngest child? (NET: At least weekly, and 'Every day or almost every day'). BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

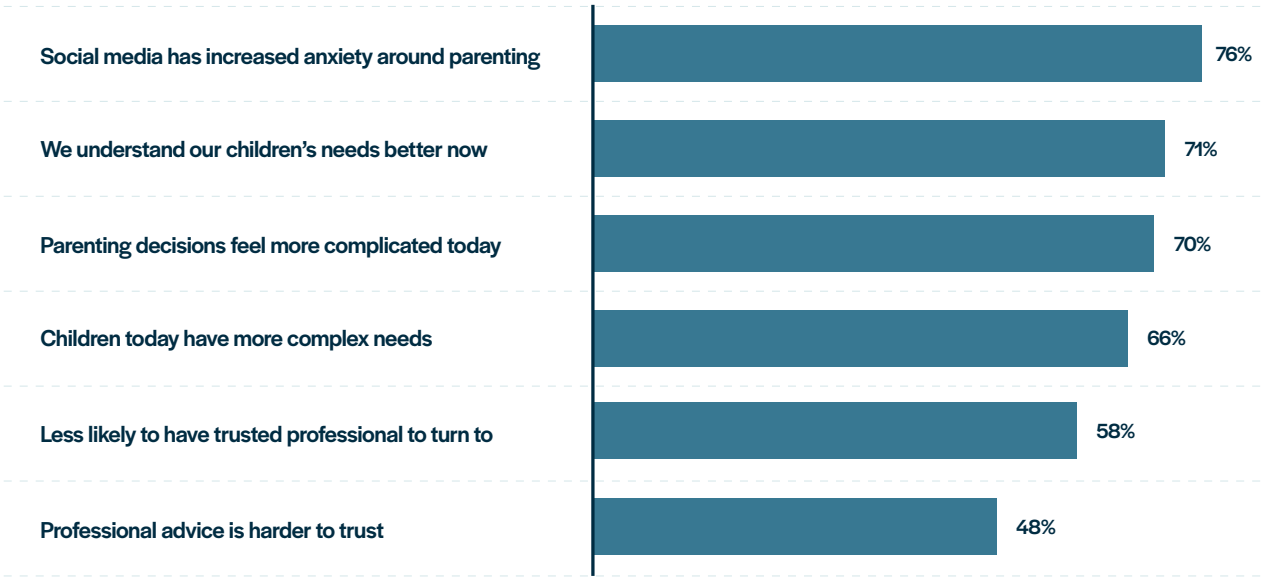
Trust and influence

Most parents (**71%**) believe we understand children's needs better now than in previous generations. But **76%** say social media has increased anxiety, and **70%** that decisions feel more complicated.

Almost half of parents (**48%**) believe that it is harder to trust the advice that professionals give than in previous generations, with greatest variances evident amongst parents of children with SEND and between Northern Ireland and Scotland. First time parents (**54%**) also find it harder to trust the advice of professionals than parents of multiple children (**41%**).

> "For me, I would say it's different in the sense that we're more emotionally aware of what's happening with our children, with ourselves. Whereas I feel like the older generation, it was just, you just get on with it basically."
>
> *Parent, South West*

Views on parenting today vs previous generations (% agree)



> "I love my parents, but they have no idea what it is like bringing up a child in 2026... they don't quite understand that it's not as simple."
>
> *Parent, West Midlands*

> "I go by what she wants and what she needs and work around that, as well as my older child doing the school run and meeting her demands and things like that."
>
> *Parent, North West*

> "I think things are a lot more child-led, which is great. I can see how easy it is to lean on a hit and a smack because that can control the situation very quickly, but it's not the right way to do things. So I think as parents now we seem to be learning to cope with these things without having to resort to those old ways."
>
> *Parent, East of England*

Q9. Summary. NET: Agree: Thinking about parenting today compared to previous generations, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

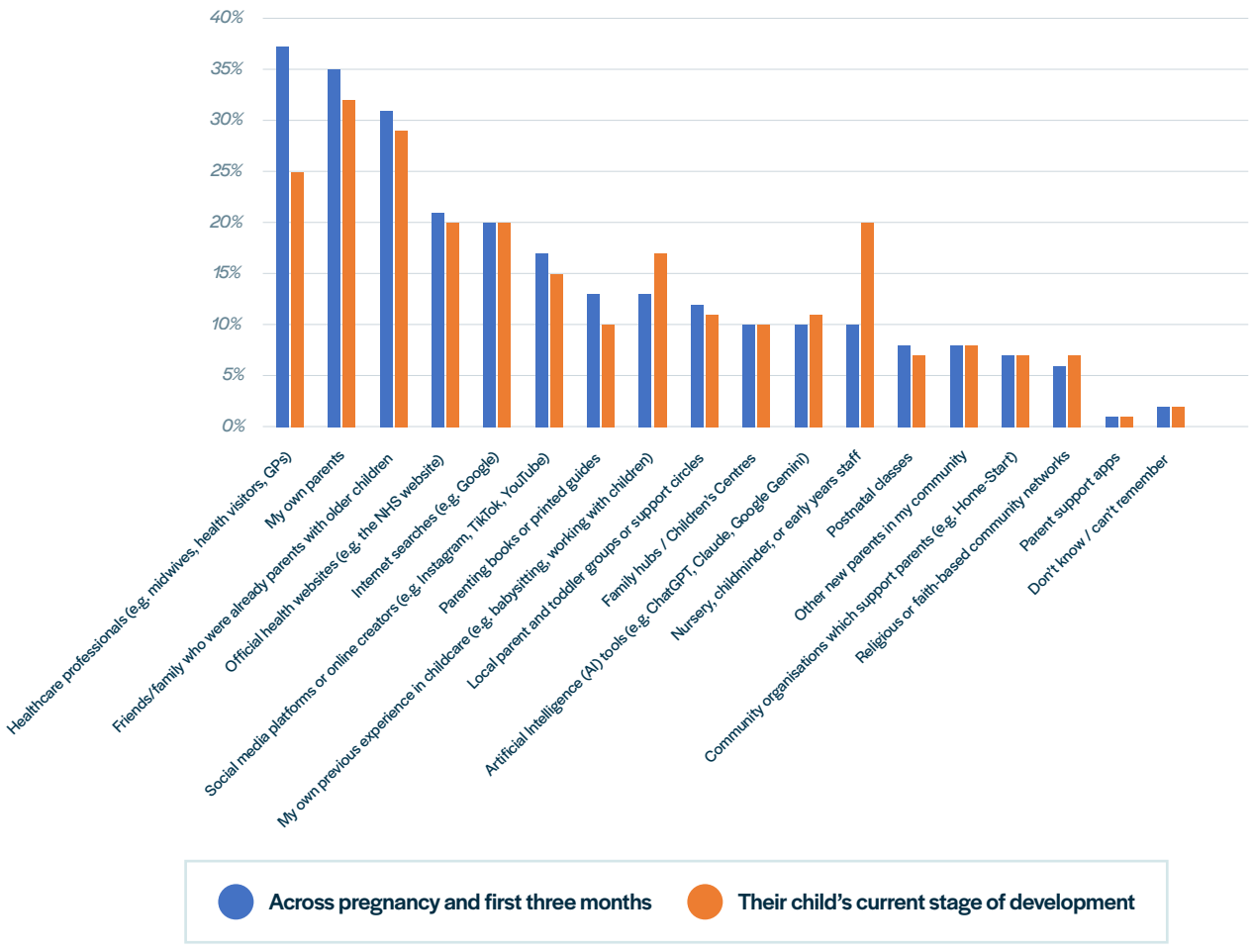
58% say parents today are less likely to have professionals they know well, rising to **72%** in Northern Ireland and **70%** among parents of children with SEND.

Fewer than half of parents have accessed support from various early childhood professionals in the last year: **45%** have seen a GP; **41%** a nursery or childcare provider down to **12%** access to an early intervention or social worker. **13%** had no contact with any of the professional types listed.

For GP contact, first language English speakers (**44%**) have been in touch significantly less than parents for whom English is not their mother tongue (**68%**).

40% of parents have accessed support from health visitors in the last year, rising to **64%** of parents with a child under one. This drops to less than a third (**30%**) by age five. Half of tenants in social housing (**50%**) have seen a health visitor. Only **2%** of families with a diagnosed SEND report no contact with any of these professionals in the last year, against **13%** of parents overall.

Sources of information across different stages of child's development



Q11. When you first became a parent, which of these, if any, were your main sources of guidance across pregnancy and the first three months? And Q11a. Thinking about your youngest child's current stage of development, which of the following are your main sources of parenting advice and guidance now? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Where parents turn to for changes shifts as their child grows. Healthcare professionals were a main source of guidance for **37%** of parents during pregnancy and the first three months, whereas **25%** name them for their child's current stage. Nursery, childminder and early years staff move the other way, from **10%** to **20%**.

Parents take guidance from many places across pregnancy and the first three months with healthcare professionals being the most frequently cited (**37%**). Seeking advice from healthcare professionals is most common in Scotland (**45%**) compared to other nations (England: **38%**, Wales: **32%**, N. Ireland: **29%**). **40%** of female parents compared to **31%** of males access healthcare professionals, and **42%** of parents in the least deprived IMD quartile compared to **35%** of those in the most deprived quartile.

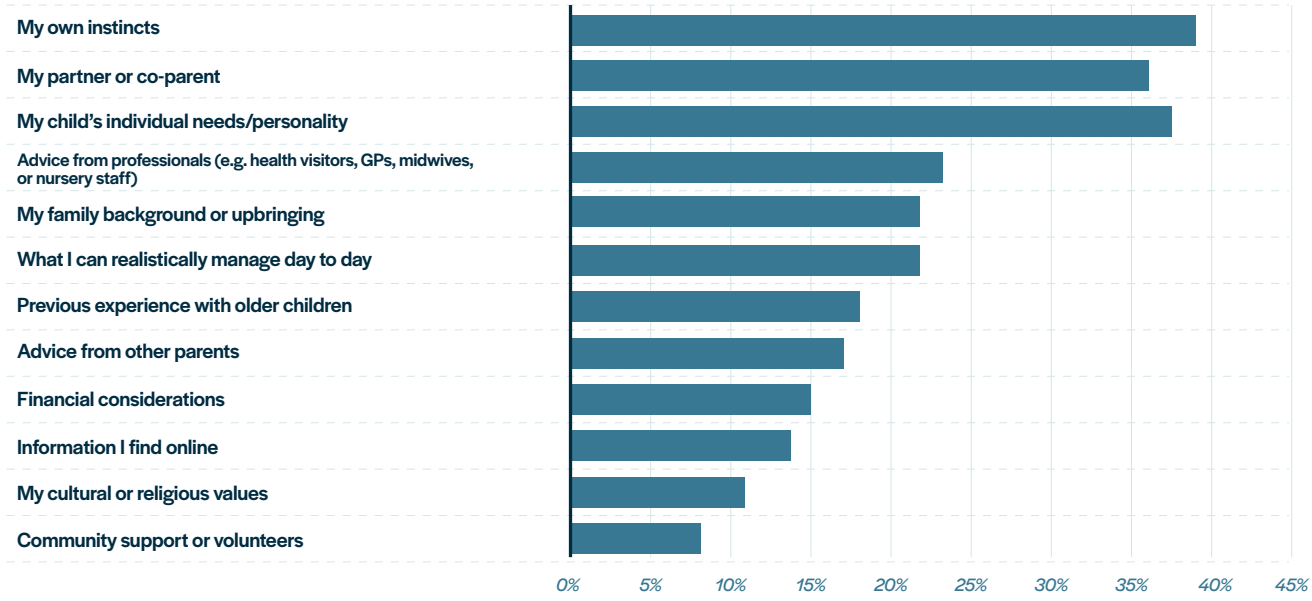
Parents' own parents are the second most frequently accessed source of advice (**35%**). Friends and families with children are the only other group who are the choice of around a third of parents (**31%**).

Parents were asked to identify their greatest influences. Their own instincts (**39%**), child's needs (**37%**) and partner or co-parent (**36%**) came top; online information was identified by **14%** of parents with financial considerations important to **15%**.

Scottish and English parents were more likely to be influenced by their own instincts (**45%** and **41%**) than parents in Northern Ireland and Wales (**31%** and **36%**). The 'instinct' gap is also considerable between parents of children with and without diagnosed SEND (**27%** to **41%**). In Northern Ireland, parents are significantly less likely to say they are led by their child's individual needs/ personality (**27%**).

> **"I had amazing support from my midwives... when I couldn't get to the GP with some concerns, they referred me straight away."**
>
> *Parent, South West*

Q12. When making parenting decisions, what tends to influence you most?



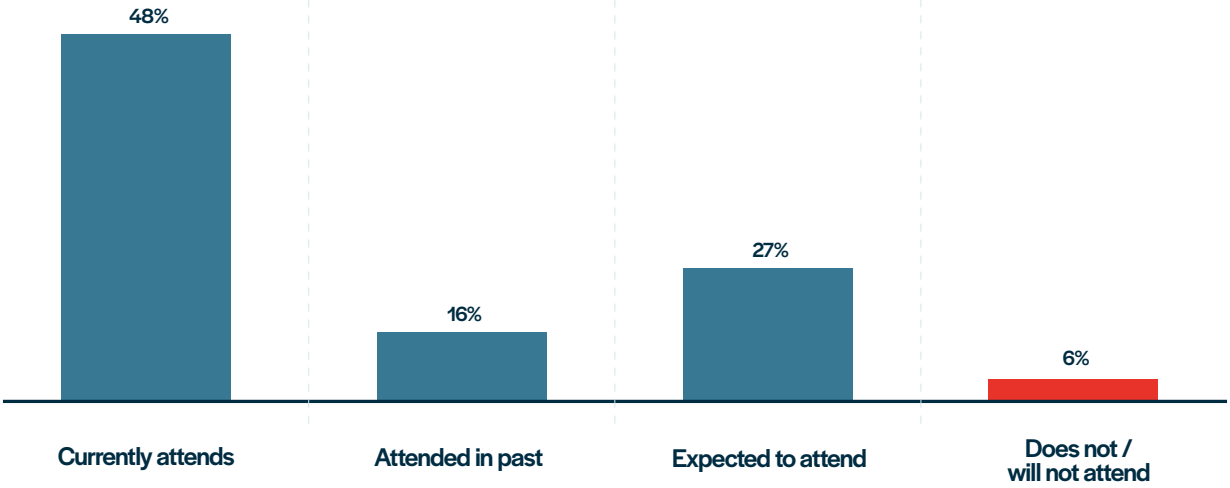
Q12. When making parenting decisions, what tends to influence you most? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564. Multi-choice, up to three.

Kindred²

Early Education and Childcare Settings

More than nine in ten (**92%**) of parents report their child has either attended, is currently attending, or is expected to attend an early education and childcare setting before starting Reception. **27%** expect their child to attend in the future; in the parents of the under-ones, this rises to **63%**, whereas for parents of children with diagnosed SEND it falls to **15%**. Parents of a child with diagnosed SEND are most likely to have a nanny or au pair when compared to the total of **8%** (**19%** SEND; **21%** Northern Ireland).

Nursery or early years provider attendance for youngest child



Of those whose youngest child has, is currently, or will attend an early education and childcare setting, most (**70%**) parents say they attended or will attend nursery - either school-based (**36%**) or a private or voluntary nursery (**34%**). And most (**79%**) attend for between 10-30 hours a week. 17% have regular childcare provided by a family member such as a grandparent.

Of those whose youngest child attended/is enrolled at early years childcare, **38%** say their young child attended or currently attends Early Education and Childcare Settings for between 10-15 hours a week. Among parents in social housing this increases to **50%** compared to **36%** of mortgaged homeowners. Parents in the most deprived areas (1st quartile IMD) (**42%**) and White C2DE (**43%**) parents are significantly more likely to access this many hours of childcare than 4th quartile IMD (**32%**) and White ABC1 (**33%**) parents.

Parents accessing 16-30 hours a week (**41%** total) is more common among single child parents (**43%** vs **33%** of parents with two children). Homeowners with a mortgage (**45%**) are more likely to have a child in 16-30 hours of childcare than parents who are social housing tenants (**32%**).

Parents were asked to consider the ways in which using Early Education and Childcare Settings has supported them and promoted their child's development, with **52%** identifying the teaching of skills and behaviours they need before starting Reception.

Q13. Still thinking about your youngest child, have they attended, or do you expect them to attend, nursery or another early years provider before starting Reception/school?
BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

But the value to parents is also recognised. Accessing early education and childcare settings gives **43%** of parents the freedom to work or manage other responsibilities and for **36%** of parents it supports their own learning about child development. **25%** of parents said that such childcare supported them to identify developmental delays or special educational needs as early as possible.

One in five (**20%**) parents report early education and childcare settings providing a nudge to take specific actions e.g. potty training (lower among parents whose first language is not English, at **9%**, and social housing tenants, at **13%**).

The groups parents attend most are baby and informal toddler groups (**47%**) . Staff or volunteer-led group activities such as rhyme time also popular (**37%**). **19%** of parents have never attended any parenting classes or support groups.

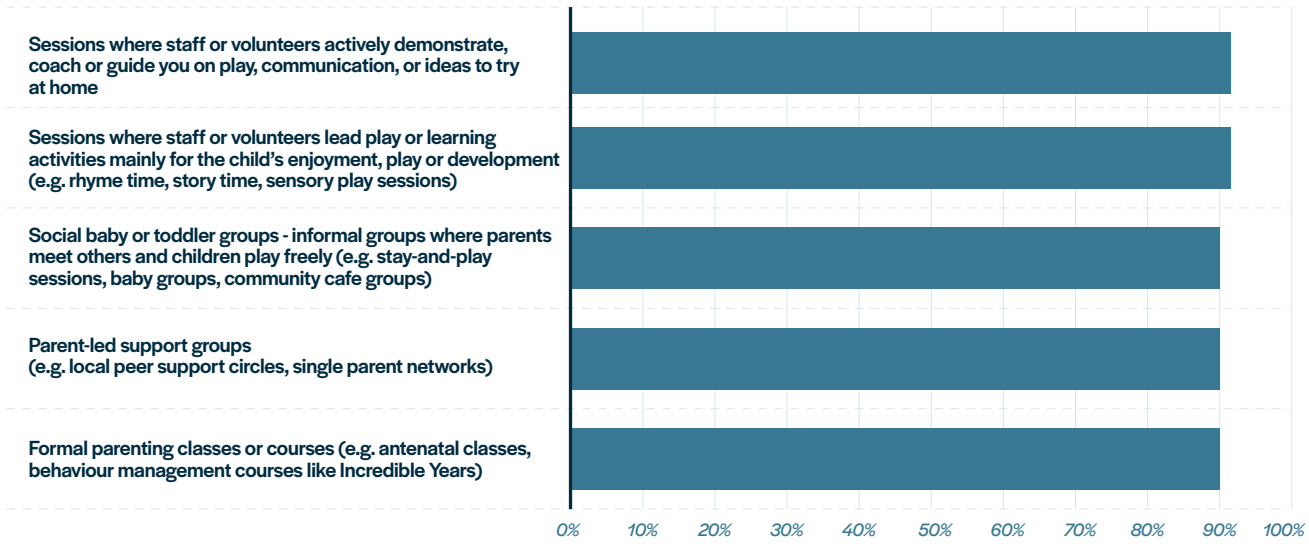
The variances in this group are considerable: **33%** of EAL parents, **33%** in social housing, **33%** of parents of babies under one year, **24%** C2DE (vs **16%** of ABC1), and **22%** of parents with two or more children (vs **17%** first-time parents) report having never attended a support group.

The impact of the attendance variances is particularly stark given the uniquely large majority of attendees who find attendance at every kind of these groups helpful; **90%** or **91%** found every type of group supportive of them as parents.

> **"For me, what I expect from the nursery is to help them just to build their confidence and be around other children, do activities that I wouldn't do at home."**
>
> *Parent, South East*

> **"My first child was born premature and he was speech-delayed. As soon as we started just two and a half days of the nursery, he spoke to the room and now he just doesn't want to stop talking."**
>
> *Parent, South West*

Q15a. NET: How useful, if at all, did you find attending these groups/ classes in supporting you as a parent



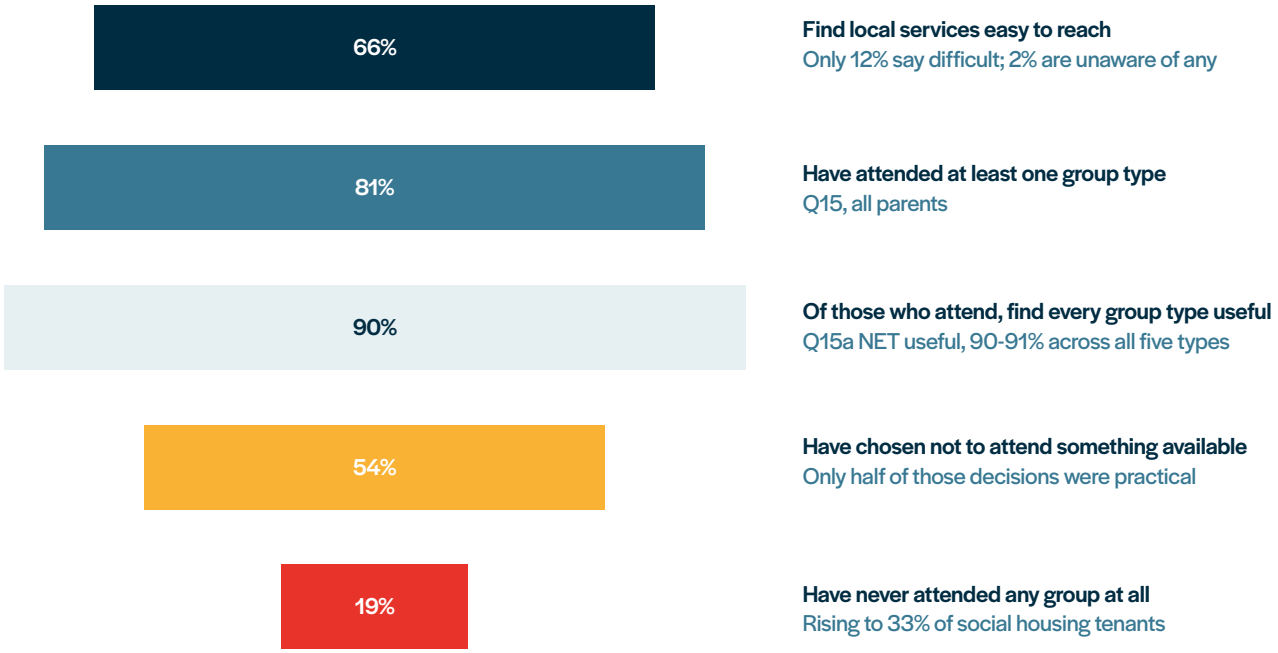
Q15a. Summary. NET: Useful: How useful, if at all, did you find attending these groups/classes in supporting you as a parent? BASE: Those whose youngest child has attended baby groups/classes: July-August 2026. Unweighted bases by group type: social baby/toddler groups n=1,678; staff-led play or learning n=1,320; formal parenting classes n=958; staff coaching/guiding n=867; parent-led support groups n=788.

Kindred²

66% of parents find physically accessing baby groups very or somewhat easy compared to **12%** who say they find it difficult, and **7%** who are unaware or have never tried to access them (**18%** of EAL parents). The groups less likely than average to find access easy include social housing tenants (**50%**), EAL parents (**51%**), C2DE (**60%**) and White C2DE (**61%**). The parents finding physical access most difficult include social housing tenants (**19%**) and those parents of a child with diagnosed SEND (**18%**).

"Even just chatting with other parents while you're there does quite a lot for you as a parent, to hear that other parents are having the same problems that you are... they've been up all night with their child as well."

Parent, Wales



Find local services easy to reach
Only 12% say difficult; 2% are unaware of any

Have attended at least one group type
Q15, all parents

Of those who attend, find every group type useful
Q15a NET useful, 90-91% across all five types

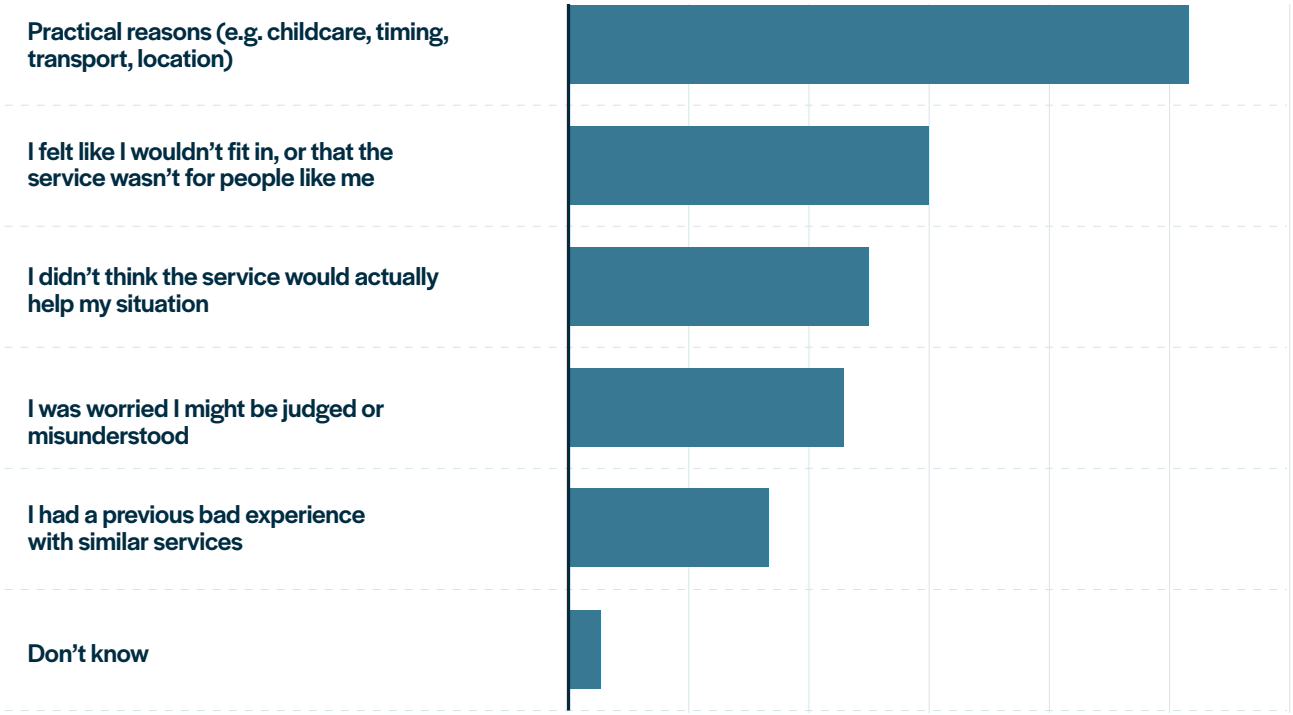
Have chosen not to attend something available
Only half of those decisions were practical

Have never attended any group at all
Rising to 33% of social housing tenants

Q16 (NET: Easy; NET: Difficult; NET: Unaware/never tried). Q15 (any group attended; None of these). Q15a Summary NET: Useful. Q17 – Yes. Q17a. What were the reasons you decided not to attend? – Practical reasons. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564, except Q15a (see p32 bases) and Q17a, BASE: Those who decided not to attend baby groups/classes available to them, n=1,923.

Kindred²

Q17a. What were the reasons you decided not to attend?



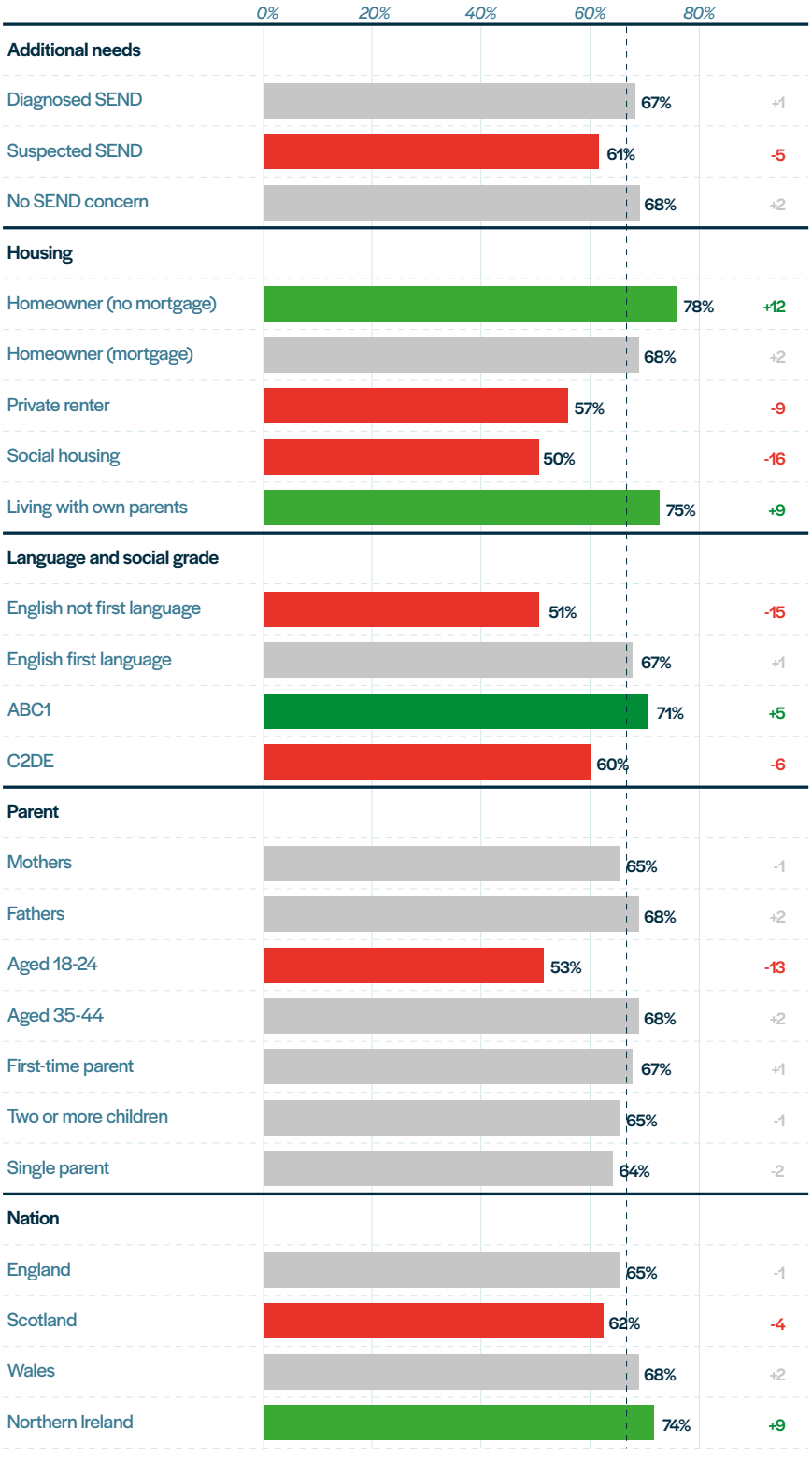
"I really wanted to take advantage of more stay-and-play in the local area, but most of them are term-time only — which means in the summer, when I'm going to want to be out and about more, they're just not going to be there."

Parent, London

Q17a. What were the reasons you decided not to attend? BASE: Those who decided not to attend baby groups/classes available to them: July-August 2026, n=1,923.

Kindred²

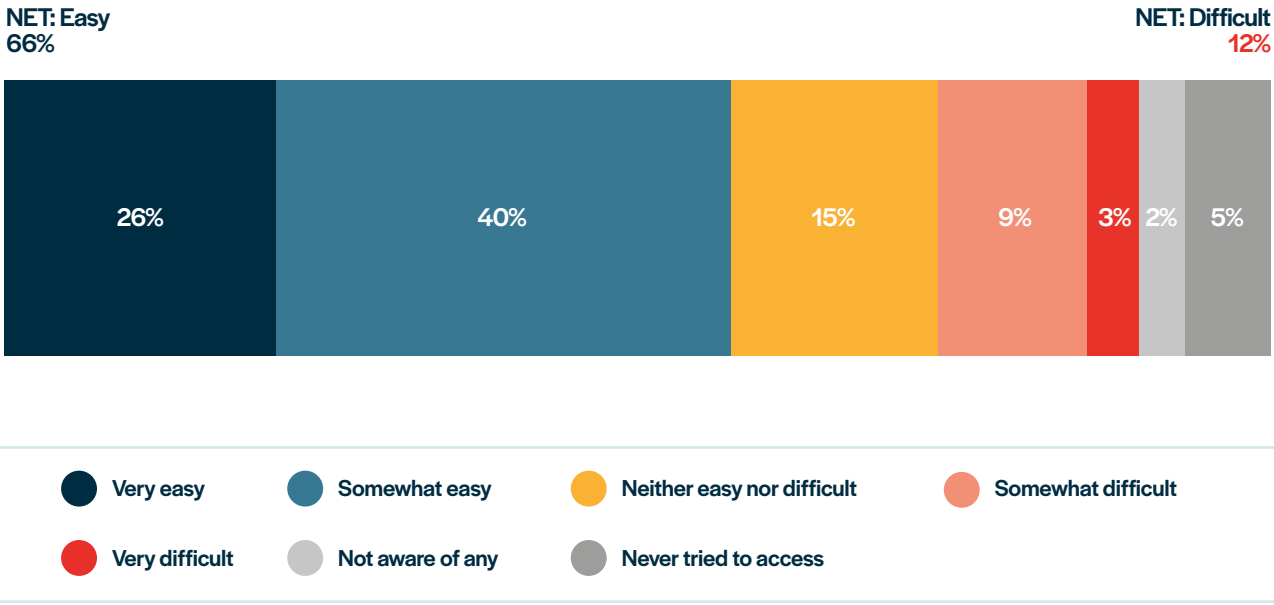
Q16. How easy or difficult is it to physically access baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups in your area? (NET: Easy)



Q16. How easy or difficult is it to physically access baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups in your area? (NET: Easy). BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Q16. How easy or difficult is it to physically access baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups in your area?



More than half of parents (**54%**) have not attended a group that was available to them. Half of them (**52%**) gave practical reasons such as timing, transport or childcare. Almost a third (**30%**) felt the group wasn't for people like them or that they would not fit in.

This reason was more often cited by single parents (**35%**), social housing tenants (**36%**), and parents of suspected SEND children (**37%**). Concerns about being misjudged or misunderstood acting as a barrier was selected by **23%** of parents (**29%** White C2DE, **30%** single parents, social housing tenants, **36%** diagnosed SEND).

Q16. How easy or difficult is it to physically access baby groups, workshops, parenting classes, or support groups in your area? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

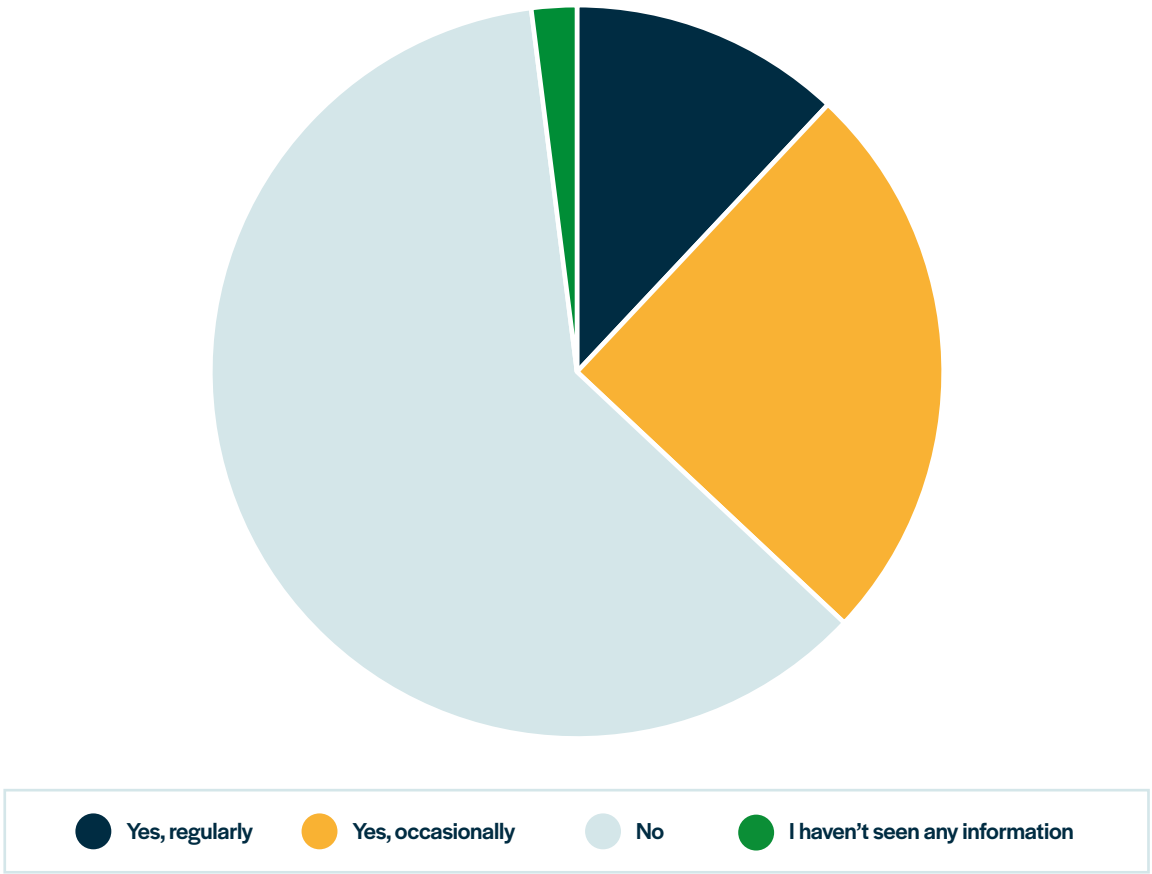
Kindred²

Information

Parents don't seem to have a shortage of information; they have a navigation and trust problem. When information becomes difficult, the biggest barriers are too much of it, not knowing where to start and conflicting advice. Parents report some difficulties with information: what matters now, what applies to them and who they can trust.

36% of parents say they've had difficulty understanding written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services. Of these, **35%** find there's too much information and **30%** are unclear where to start. **28%** say conflicting advice is the issue; **25%** that the information is not relevant to them and 22% that it is judgemental.

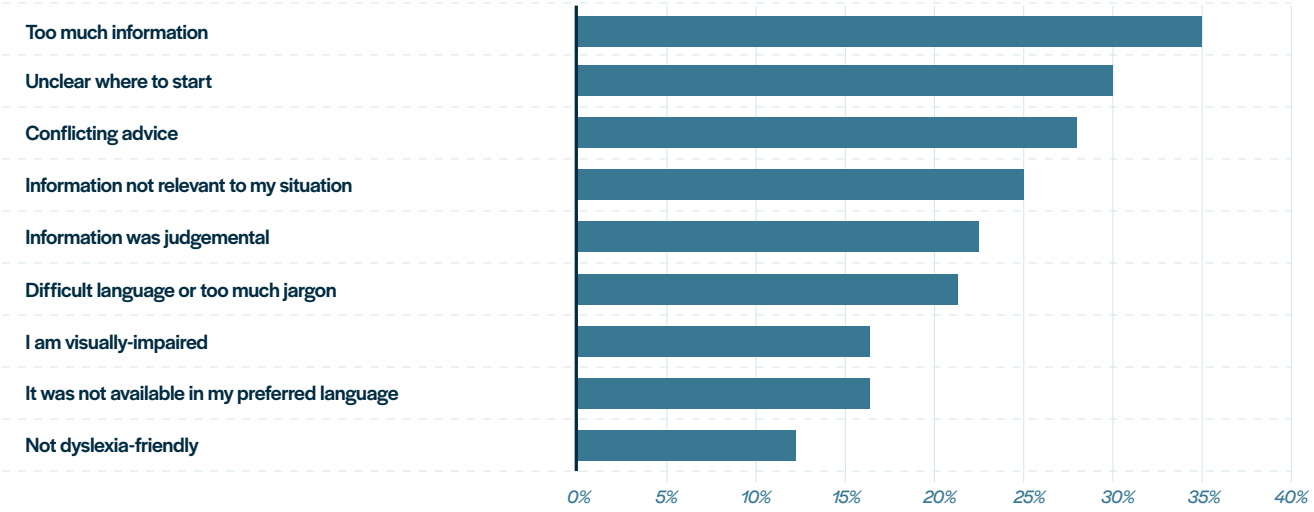
Q18. Have you ever had difficulty understanding written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services?



Q18. Have you ever had difficulty understanding written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Q18a. What made the information difficult to understand?

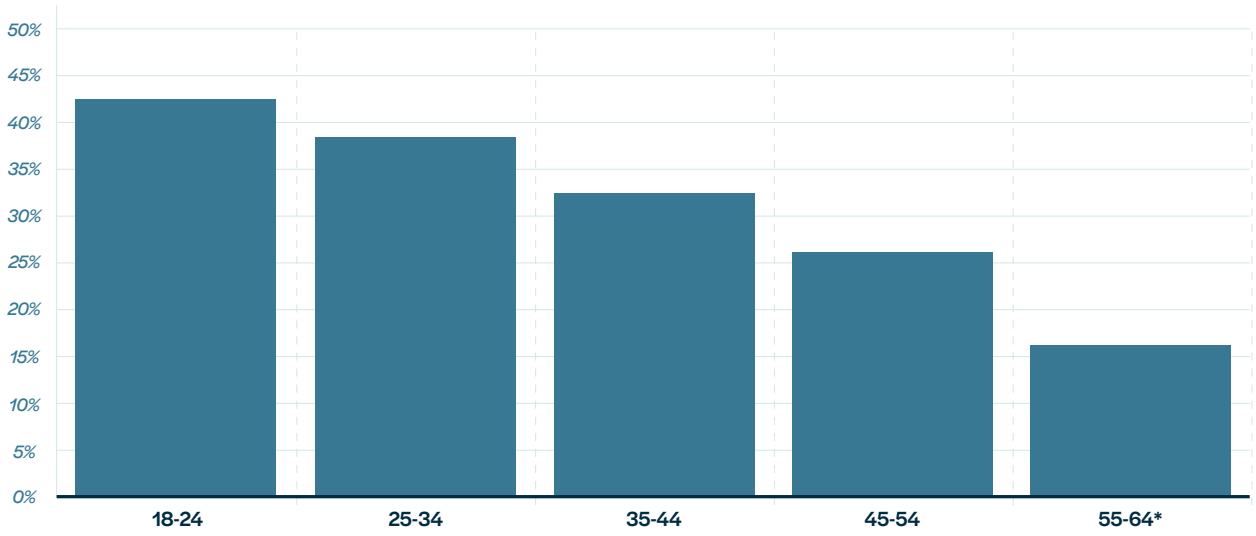


Q18a. What made the information difficult to understand? BASE: Those who have had difficulty understanding information about childcare services: July-August 2026, n=1,284.

Parents pointing to jargon (**21%**) and information not being available in their preferred language (**16%**) as challenges.

Younger parents are more likely to struggle to understand written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services. **39%** of 18–34-year-olds report difficulty, higher than **32%** of 35-54s.

Q18. Have you ever had difficulty understanding written or spoken information about parenting, childcare or local services? (NET: Yes)



*Q18 (NET: Yes), by parent age. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564. * sample size under 50*

Kindred²

> "I feel you're going to hear information and you're going to have 10 different opinions about how to do something, and probably you'd just be more confused at the end of it. So I would just try to do what I know best or how I've handled it in the past, which has probably worked."
>
> *Parent, North East*

> "Everyone has an opinion and it's very difficult to filter."
>
> *Parent, North East*

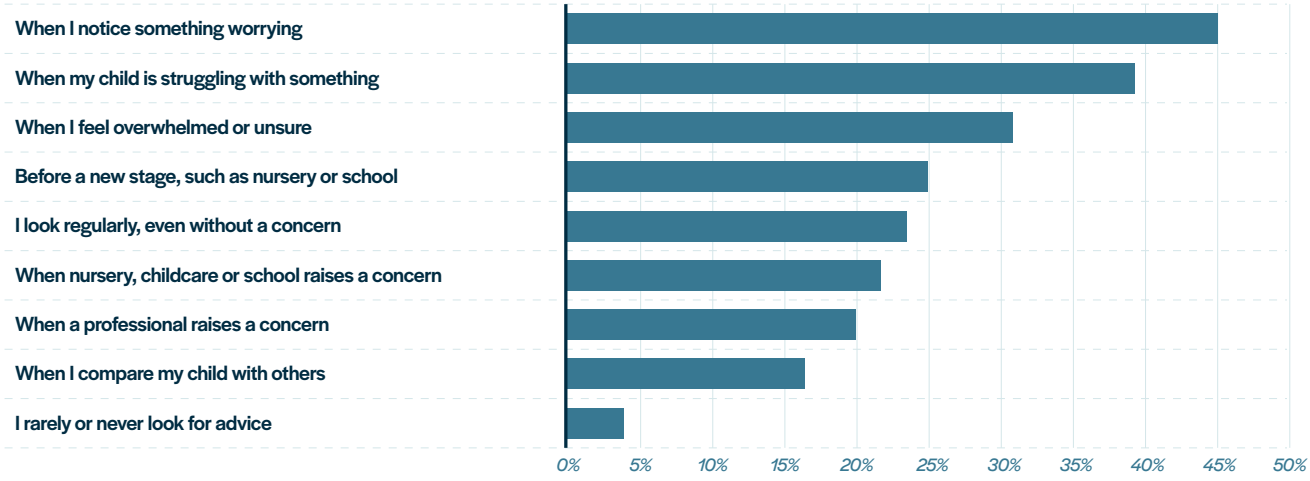
Difficulty in comprehension is particularly high among first-time parents (**43%** vs **26%** of parents with two or more children). Additionally, it's perceived as more challenging by parents of children with diagnosed SEND (**64%** citing struggles compared to **28%** of parents of children with no SEND).

Amongst the one in five finding information judgemental, the greatest variances are between those with children with diagnosed SEND (**30%**) and those with no SEND (**20%**), and between those living at home with family (**28%**) and tenants in social housing (**15%**).

Many parents seek parenting advice; **14%** daily and **44%** at least weekly. Those most likely to do so on a weekly basis are parents of children with SEND (**58%** vs **42%** of parents with children with no SEND) and those living at home (**60%**). Parents aged 18–34 are more likely than parents aged 35–54 to look for parenting advice at least weekly (**47%** against **41%**). Parents in Northern Ireland (**25%**) are significantly more likely than parents in England (**11%**), Scotland (**12%**) or Wales (**14%**) to say they access advice daily.

Advice-seeking tends to be reactive to a worry (**45%**), when a child is struggling with something (**39%**) or when the parent feels overwhelmed or unsure (**36%**). Reacting to noticing something worrying is less common among parents of children with diagnosed SEND (**34%** vs **46%** of parents with no SEND concern) and more common among ethnic minority parents (**51%** vs **43%** of White parents).

Q20. At what points, if ever, do you usually look for advice or support about your child's development?



Q20. At what points, if ever, do you usually look for advice or support about your child's development? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Where parents go for parenting advice also varies. Half (**51%**) choose family members and over a third turn to friends (**36%**). Around a third (**31%**) consult a health visitor, and a minority (**21%**) now consult AI tools such as ChatGPT. Parents living at home with family are significantly less likely than those in social housing to use the NHS as a source of support (**22%** vs **41%**).

31% of parents consult health visitors. This increases to **41%** of parents of children aged under a year. EAL parents are more likely (**43%**) to ask a health visitor for advice than those with English as their first language (**30%**). Women are more likely to ask than men (**34%** vs **26%**). C2DE ethnic minority parents are more likely to ask a GP (**46%**) than the total (**31%**) or White ABC1 parents (28%).

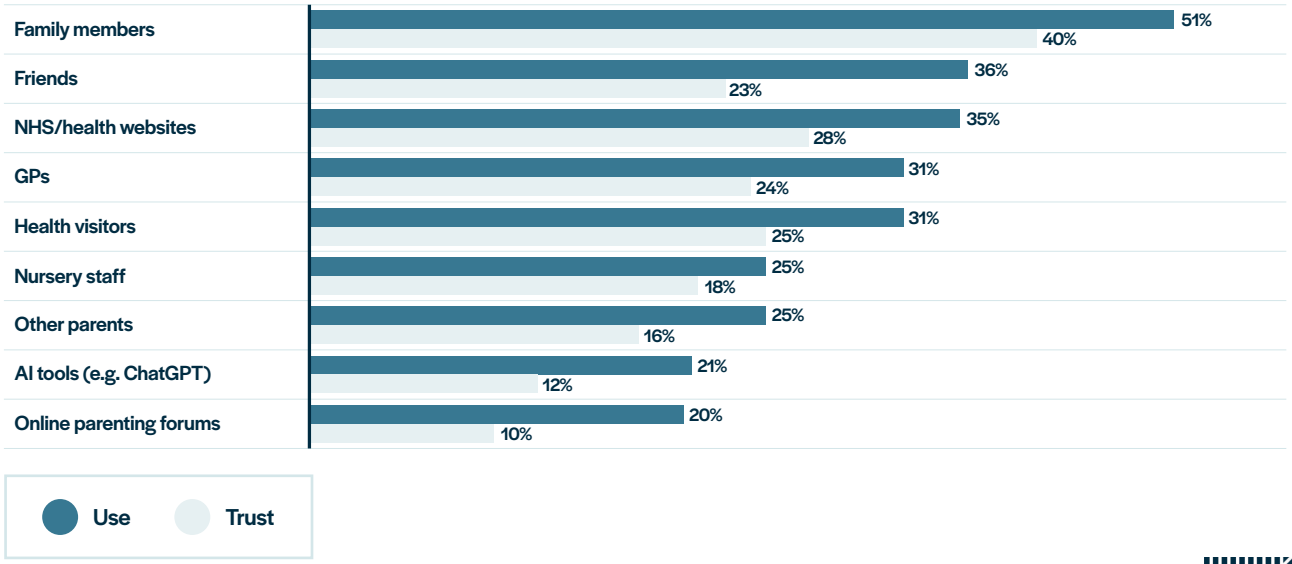
25% of total parents say they use other parents as information sources. Notable demographic splits include female parents being more likely than male parents (**26%** vs **22%**), ABC1 being more likely than C2DE (**27%** vs **21%**), and 4th quartile IMD being more likely than 1st quartile IMD (28% vs **22%**).

AI usage as a source of advice (total **21%**) is greatest amongst homeowners without a mortgage (**27%** vs **14%** of social housing tenants), and ABC1 parents (**24%** vs **18%** of C2DE).

However, usage and trust doesn't always align for parents. For example, digital and peer-based sources are more likely to be used than trusted. One in five use AI tools such as ChatGPT (**21%**) and online parenting forums (**20%**), but only **12%** name AI and **10%** name forums among the sources they trust most. Similarly, **25%** use nursery staff and **25%** use other parents, but only **18%** and **16%** respectively say they trust them.

> **"I'd love to use my in-laws more, but unfortunately they've pretty much said that they won't do structured or fixed childcare for us — which is really unfortunate because I know a lot of my friends really rely on their parents... It would be a huge help. But yeah, unfortunately, they've said that they won't commit to that."**
>
> *Parent, London*

Q21. Which sources do you currently use for parenting advice? Which sources do you trust?



Q21. Which, if any, of the following sources do you use for parenting advice? And Q22. And which, if any, of the following sources do you trust most for parenting advice? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

Family members (**40%**) and the NHS (**28%**) lead the way as the most trusted sources of parenting advice.

Ethnic minority parents are significantly more likely than White parents to trust advice from medical sources such as the NHS (**33%** vs **26%**) or a GP (**30%** vs **22%**). EAL parents also demonstrate higher trust in GPs than parents for whom English is their first language (**37%** vs **23%**).

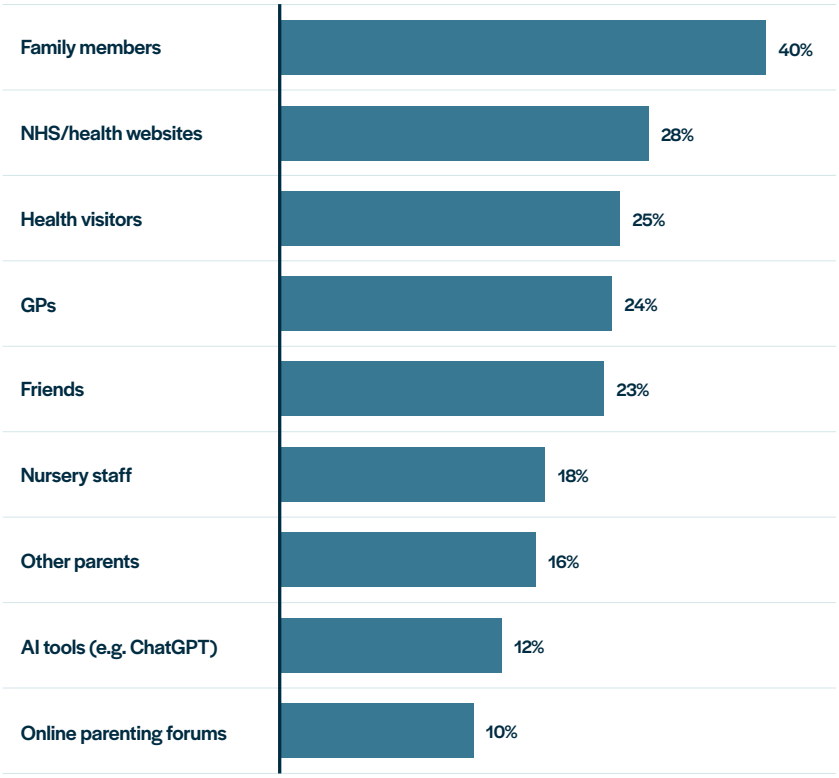
"As for me personally, social media did not increase my anxiety around parenting. They make it easier... It takes the pressure away from me and just lets me enjoy the moment."

Parent, South West

"Social media has an awful lot to answer for, full stop. It increases anxiety and turns even the most basic situation into a toxic bin fire. So it makes sense that something as tough as parenting is going to be affected."

Parent, West Midlands

Q22. Which sources do you trust most for parenting advice?



"I would go with the advice that professionals give is harder to trust. I'll say that because I feel like nowadays, your GP doesn't really know you as much anymore. Everything feels rushed, basically. You kind of have to diagnose yourself before you go to them."

Parent, South East

"I found that you really have to advocate for your children even to get a referral. I have to go into the GP's office almost every week to follow it up. Navigating certain structures like the NHS can be really, really difficult to get to what you need. I ended up having to use savings and go private."

Parent, London

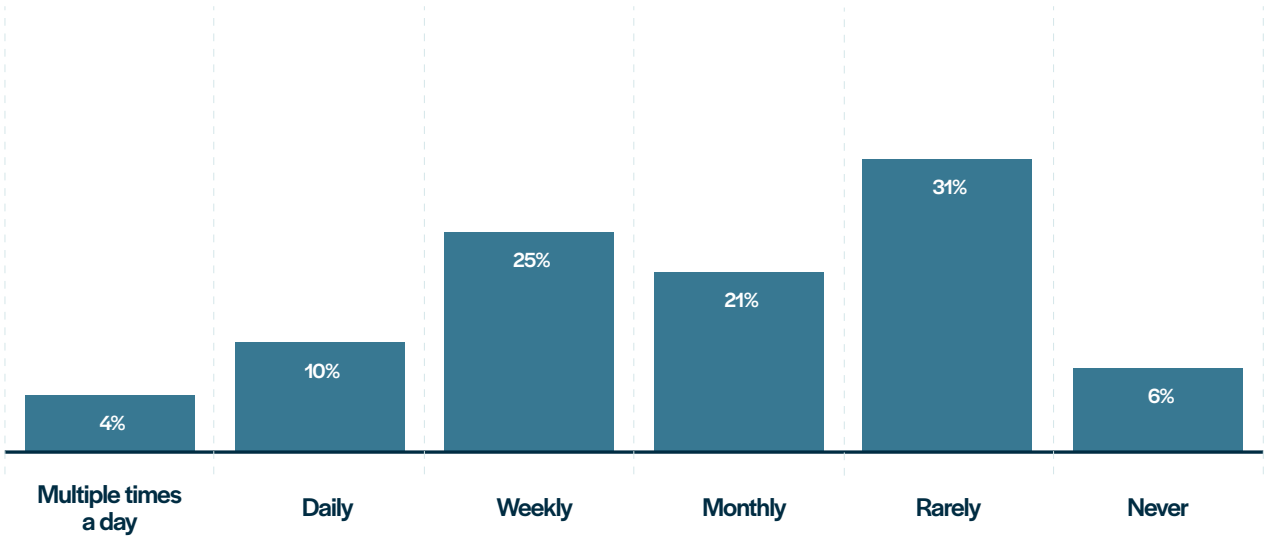
Q22. And which, if any, of the following sources do you trust most for parenting advice? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

As well as going out in search of parenting information and advice from a variety of sources, parents also report finding themselves in receipt of unasked-for advice: **39%** on a weekly basis and **14%** at least daily unsolicited advice. Daily or more common advice is most often received by parents of children diagnosed with SEND (**27%**) compared to parents of children not suspected of SEND (**12%**). More parents in Northern Ireland receive at least daily advice (**24%**) than in England (**12%**), Scotland (**12%**) or Wales (**15%**).

> **"I just go with my instinct or what I know how to do best... At times, like if I'm kind of confused, I'll maybe ask my husband or maybe speak to my parents, but it's never really... actively seeking help."**
>
> *Parent, North East*

Q23. How often do you receive parenting advice you did not ask for?



> **"It was a lot of... Googling online or checking online or maybe asking friends... how you'd go about certain day-to-day issues."**
>
> *Parent, North East*

Similar demographic splits emerge among parents reporting at least weekly unsolicited advice. This applies more to parents living at home (56%) than in any other living arrangements. High reports of unsolicited parenting advice among parents living at home with their own parents aligned with parents being the most common source of unasked for advice (50%). Friends who are parents (37%) are another common source

> **"I'm able to do things without having to... turn to somebody, unless it really gets hard."**
>
> *Parent, North East*

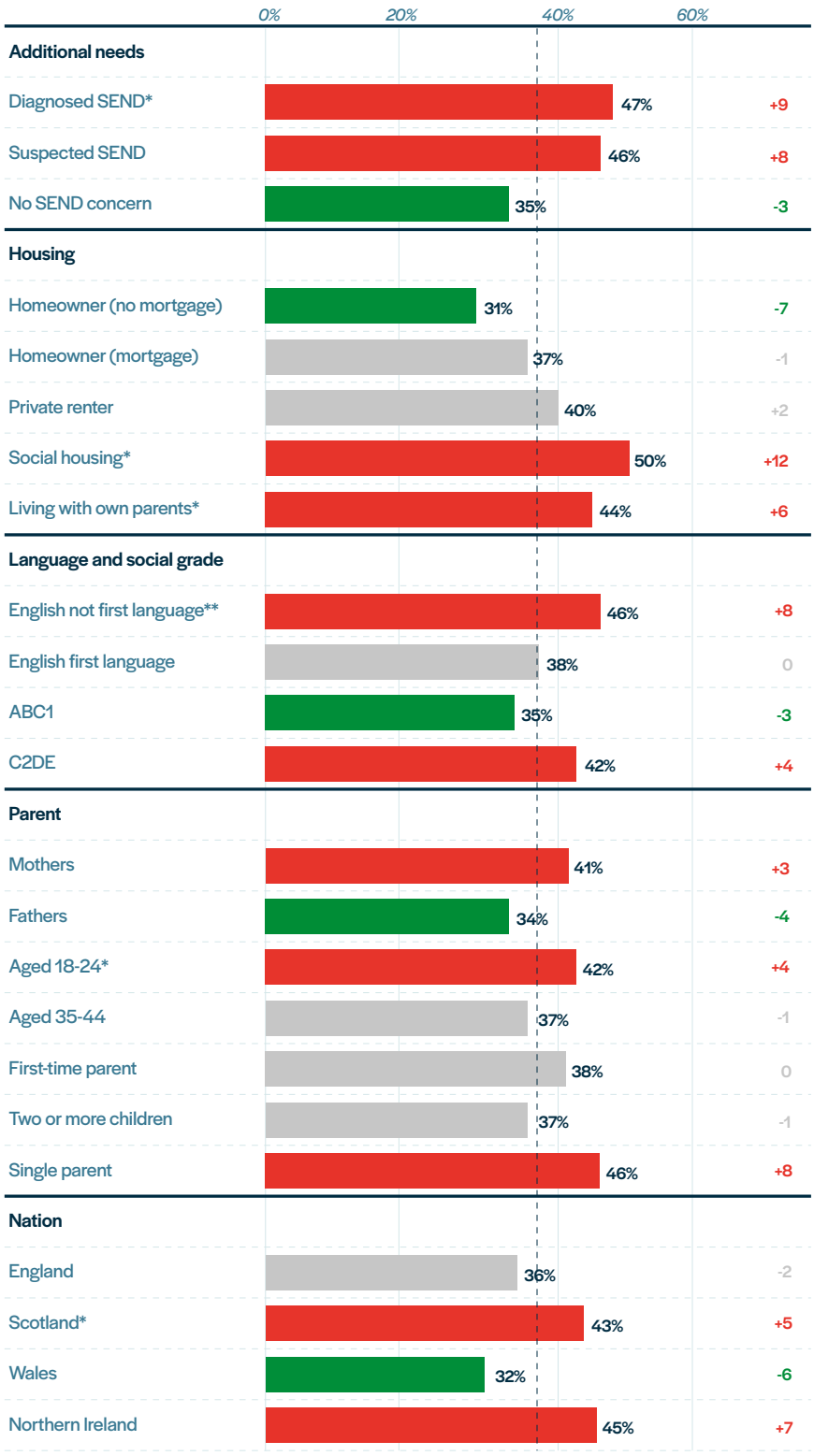
48% in Northern Ireland and **45%** in Wales report receving unasked for advice, higher than England (**37%**) and Scotland (**35%**) respectively. And **53%** of parents of children with diagnosed SEND receive unsolicited advice, higher than parents of children with no diagnosed SEND (**37%**).

Q23. How often, if at all, do you receive advice you didn't ask for about how you should be parenting your child? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

High reports of unsolicited parenting advice among parents living at home with their own parents aligned with parents being the most common source of unasked for advice (**50%**). Friends who are parents (**37%**) are another common source.

The variances here are considerable and significant. SEND diagnosis, country, social grade, housing status and single parent households are all characteristics that increase the number of parents struggling with negative feelings after receiving unasked for advice. The spread of those feeling gratitude is also considerable; parents of 5 year olds, ABC1, ethnic minority and outright homeowner parents are all more likely to receive messages positively.



*Q23b How does receiving this unasked-for advice make you feel? - "It makes me feel judged or criticised as a parent". BASE: Those who receive unasked-for advice, July-August 2026, n=1,430. *indicative figures, **base smaller than 100*

Kindred²

Community

Parents were asked if they or their child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice? **12%** have no local support outside their immediate household. Nearly half (**49%**) have just 1 or 2 people they could call on. Only **6%** have six or more.

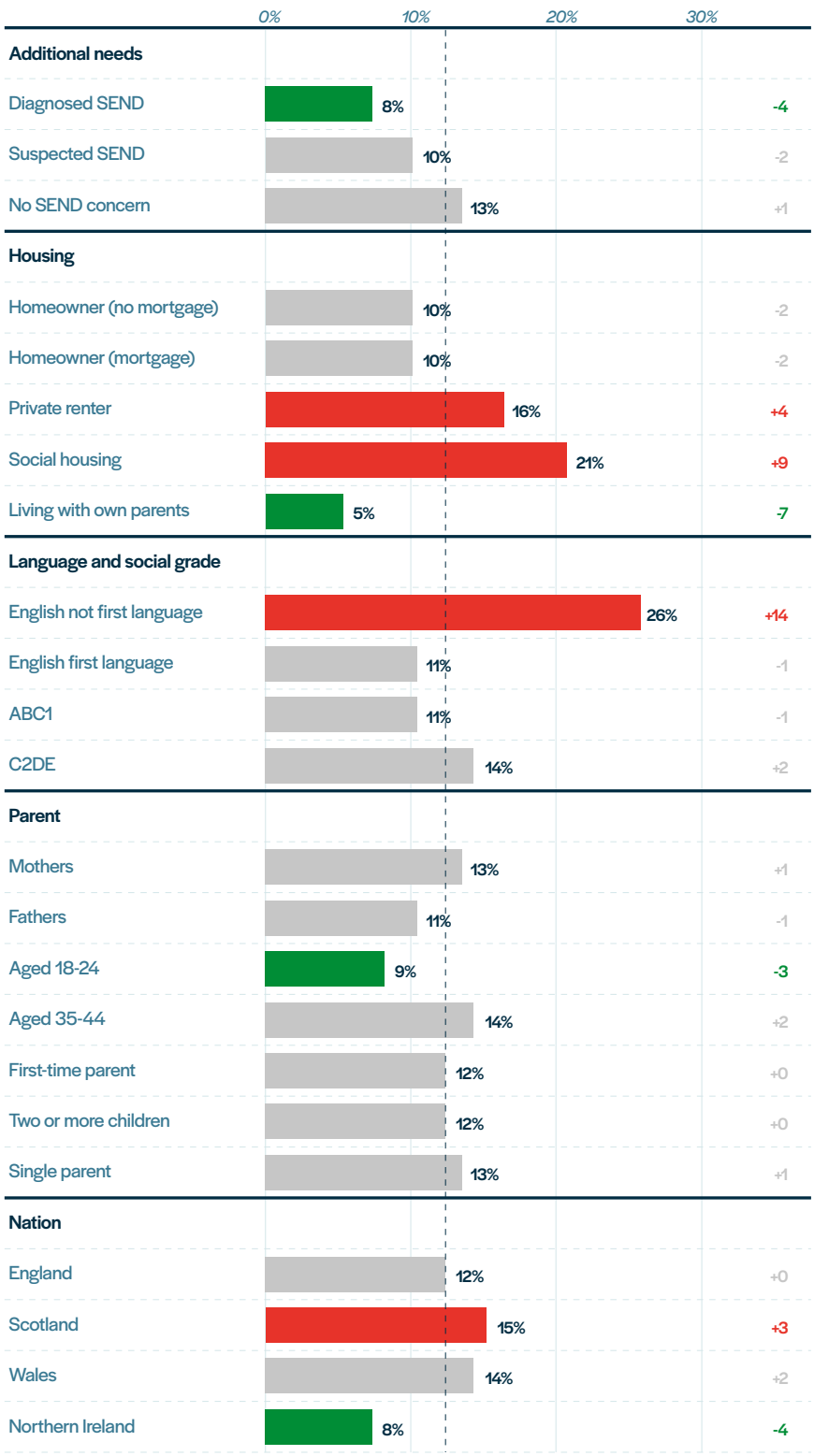
Social housing tenants are significantly more likely to have no local emergency support (**21%**) compared to homeowners (**10%**), with private renters falling in between (**16%**).

"No one I could call. It has to be between me or my wife. We just have to adjust to meet the emergency."

Parent, Wales

"It would have to be something like losing a limb before one of us didn't do what we needed to do. We just have to push through it, because we don't have the safety net."

Parent, West Midlands

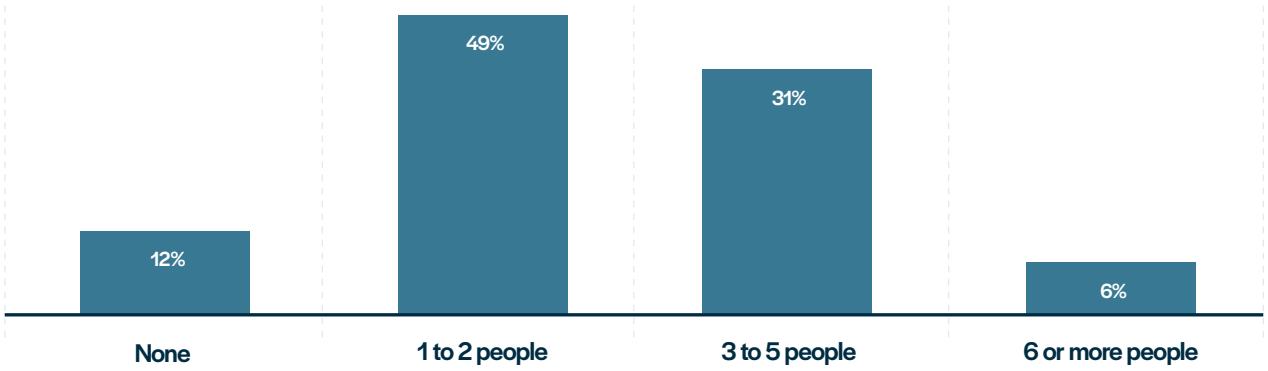


Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice? – None. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Kindred²

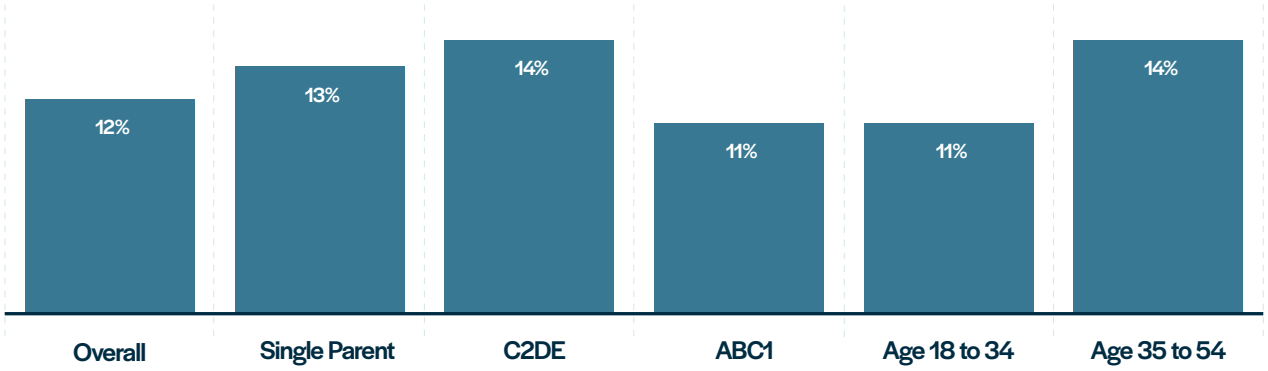
Parents still living with their own parents report significantly better access to emergency networks (**17%** have six or more such local contacts compared to 4–6% elsewhere).

Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice?



Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice? BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Parents that have no one nearby to call on in childcare emergency, by group



Q24. If you or your child's caregivers experienced a sudden illness or emergency tomorrow, how many people living nearby to your home could you realistically call to look after your child at an hour's notice? - None. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

"I've got my family. So I've got my parents that live about 15 minutes from me. If anything, God forbid, was to happen, I know there's people I can call straight away."

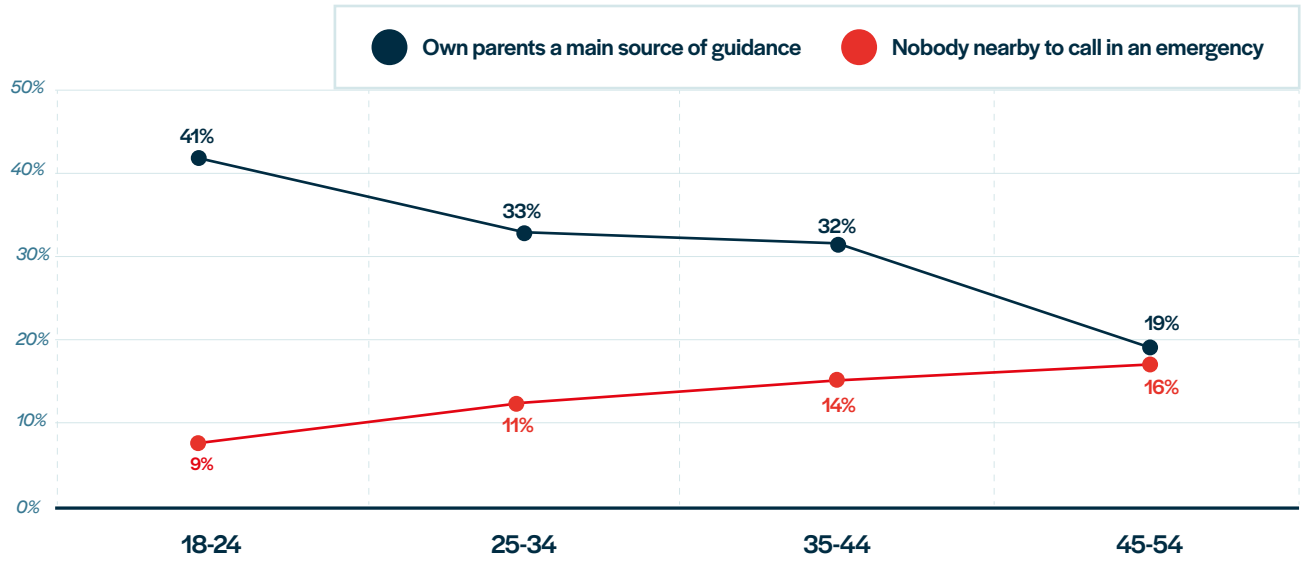
Parent, South East

"I'm in it with you. It's not like I'm on the outside looking in because there is empathy because they have walked where you've walked."

Parent, North West

"I don't feel isolated because even though I feel there is no one I could call in a very short notice, I have a brother and a church community where if a need arises, there will be someone that will make themselves available to assist."

Parent, Wales



Q11a – My own parents, and Q24 – None, by parent age. BASE: All respondents: July-August 2026, n=3,564.

Around half (**49%**) of parents say they are very or fairly worried about their child's future. **50%** are either not very or not at all worried. **31%** of parents of children with diagnosed SEND are very worried, significantly higher than parents of non-SEND children (**10%**).

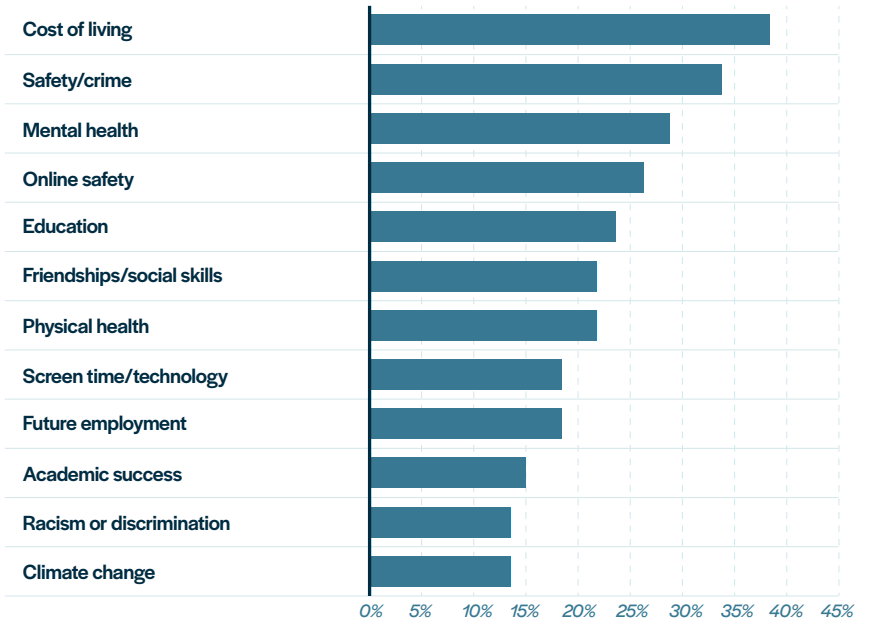
Parents in Northern Ireland are more likely to be very worried (**22%**) than those in the other nations (England: **11%**, Scotland: **9%** and Wales: **13%**), as are parents in the most deprived quartile (**15%**) compared to the least deprived (**9%**).

Among parents worried about their child's future, the cost of living is the top concern (**39%**), followed by safety and crime (**34%**), mental health (**29%**), and online safety (**26%**).

> "I don't think the country is in a very good state at the moment... the cost of things, parks, education, just society in general — it adds to the pressure you face as parents. Not only to keep your children happy, but to equip them with the skills they'll need to survive."
>
> *Parent, Wales*

> "The world we live in is filled with technology and so many other things — there are certain issues that never existed in the past. Before you had bullying in the class, now you have online bullying."
>
> *Parent, North West*

Q25a. You said you were worried about your child's future overall. Which, if any, of the following concern you the most?



Q25a. You said you were worried about your child's future overall. Which, if any, of the following concern you the most? BASE: Those who are worried about their child's future overall: July-August 2026, n=1,714.

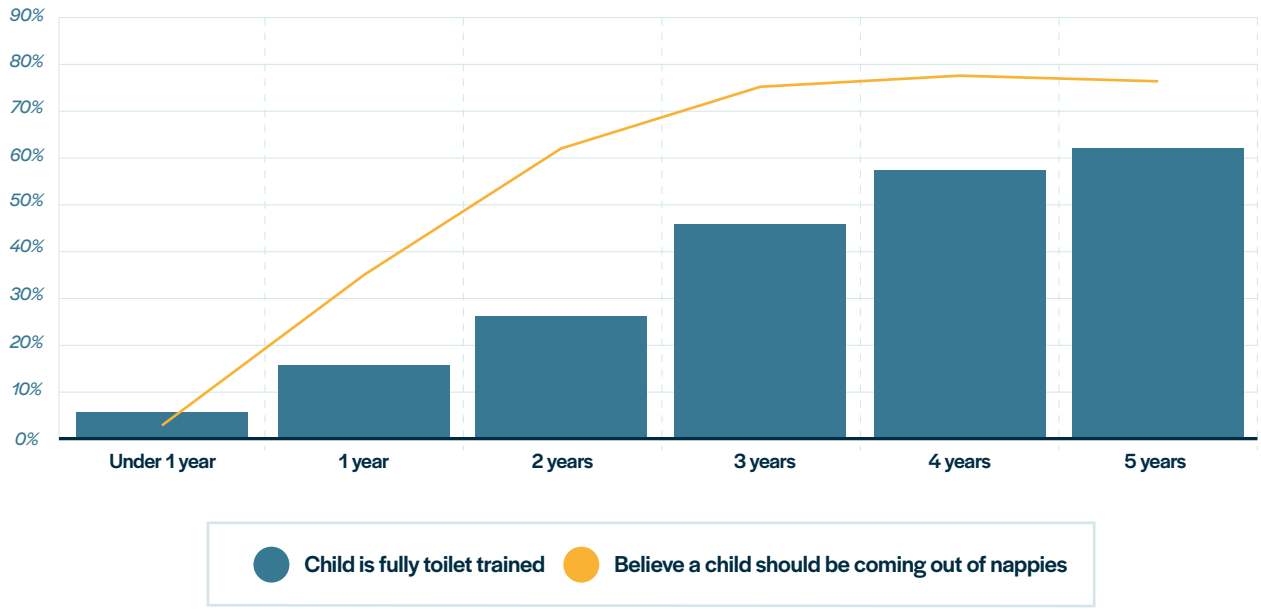
Kindred²

Finally, we asked parents about the age they think their children should be coming out of nappies. **61%** of parents think children should be out of nappies by age 2 or earlier (**19%** say it depends on the individual child). **75%** say the best time for children to be coming out of nappies is 3 and under.

Parents were also asked if their child is toilet trained and therefore no longer in nappies. The number of parents of children 24-35 months who say their child is not yet out of nappies is **36%** (**61%** social housing tenants, **52%** rural, **41%** White C2DE, **45%** EAL). At two years old, **27%** of parents say their children are fully toilet trained (**36%** daytime only, **36%** not yet).

At age 3, **44%** are fully toilet trained. By age 5, **12%** still are not fully-trained, with a further **26%** still in nappies at night.

Comparing belief on when a child should be out of nappies, against when they are



"I don't think it should solely be on the nursery to teach them everything like potty training and all that sort of stuff."

Parent, North West

PARENT3a. Is your youngest child toilet trained (by which we mean they are no longer in nappies/pull-ups)? And Q26. In your opinion, when is the best time for children with no medical diagnosis (such as a bowel or bladder condition) to be coming out of nappies? BASE for Q26: All respondents, n=3,564. BASE for PARENT3a by age: under 1 year n=144, 1 year n=591; 2 years n=783; 3 years n=847; 4 years n=851; 5 years n=778: July-August 2026.

04

DEMOGRAPHIC COMMENTARY ON THE NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Each section below summarises what the survey shows for demographic characteristics. These charts show a small selection of measures rather than the full picture; the dotted line marks the all-parent figure in each case.

The full list of characteristics can be viewed in our data tool at: https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-tool.

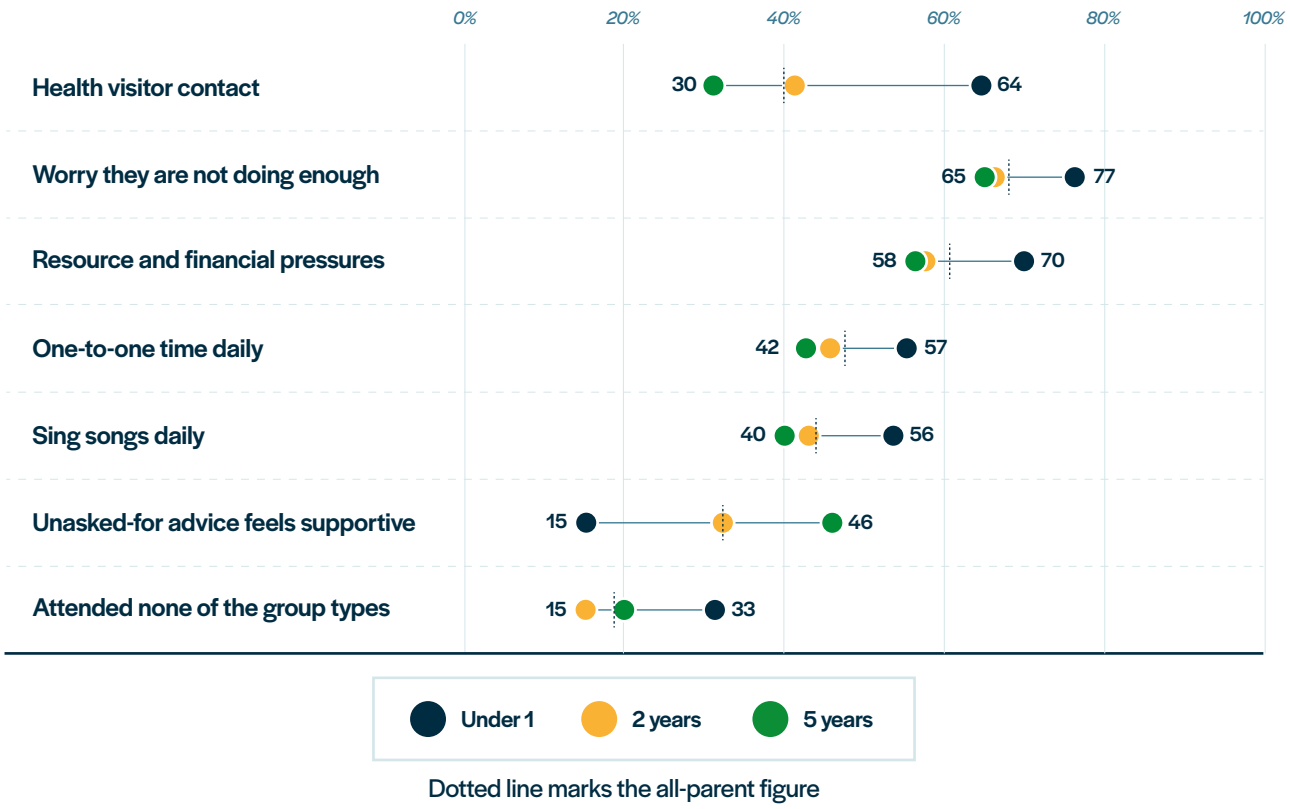
Throughout: Distance from the average is not the same as statistical significance, and several of these groups have small unweighted bases. Where this is the case it is flagged in the section.

Age of the youngest child

The first year of their child's life is when parents report the most pressure: **77%** of parents of a child under one worry they are not doing 'enough', falling to **65%** among parents of children aged five. **70%** cite financial pressure against **58%**. This is also the year of greatest day-to-day engagement; **57%** spend one-to-one time with their child daily, compared with **42%** of parents of five-year-olds, and **56%** sing with their babies daily against **40%**. The shift happens sharply between the first and second birthday; the data on parents of children under one and under two is similar and quite different from that of parents of older children

Contact with services shifts over the same period. **64%** report contact with a health visitor in the first year, falling to **30%** by age five. Nursery attendance climbs from **18%** to **78%** over the same period.

A third of parents of under-ones (**33%**) have attended none of the group types measured, falling to **15%** by age two before rising again to **20%** by age five. The proportion accessing none of the services is similar, lowest in the first year (**11%**) and its rising to **19%** at age 5. And the meaning of advice changes: only **15%** of parents of under-ones find unasked-for advice supportive, against **46%** of parents of five-year-olds. Parents receive the most advice at the point they are least able to hear it as help.



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Q10, Q5_2, Q6_7, Q8_9, Q8_2, Q23b, Q15 by age of youngest child. Unweighted bases 383 to 851. Q23b is based on those who received unasked-for advice, n=1,430

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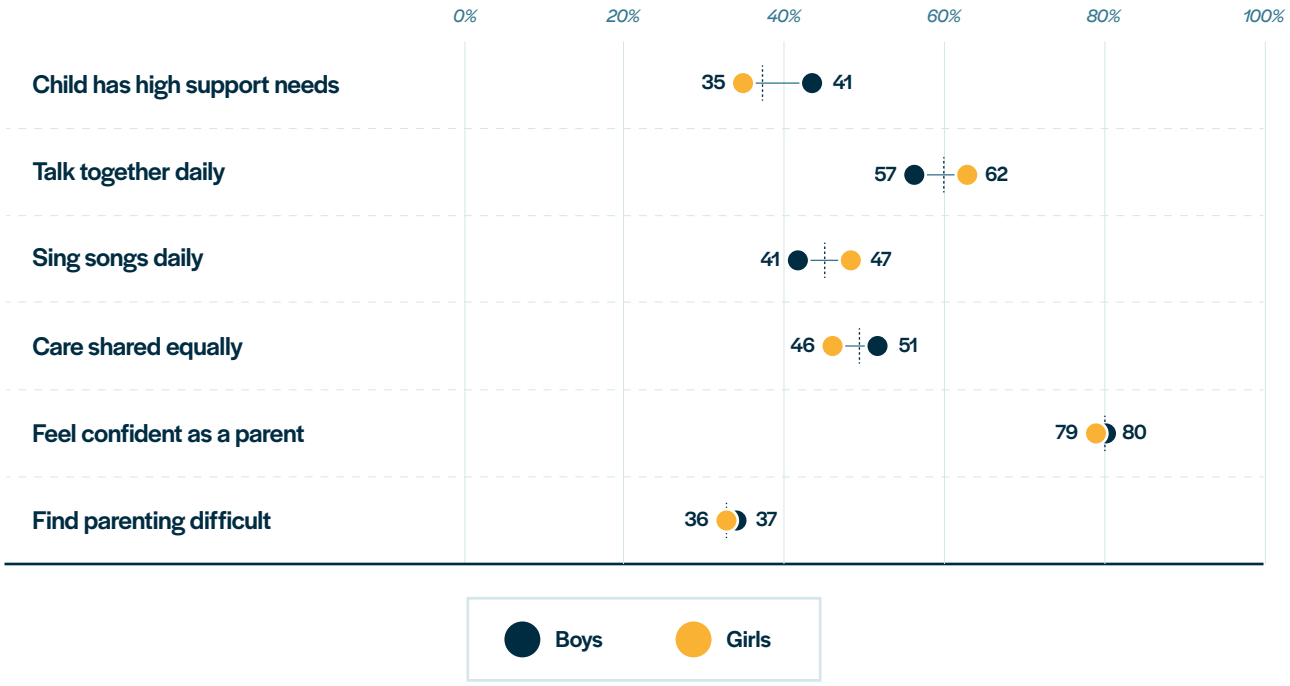
Gender of the youngest child



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Parents report little difference in their experience based on the gender of their child. Across the entire survey, no measure separates parents of boys and girls by more than seven percentage points. Parents of boys are more likely to agree their child having particularly high support needs is a source of worry (**41%** against **35%**), and more likely to say care is shared equally with a partner (**51%** against **46%**). Parents of girls report marginally more daily interaction — talking together **62%** against **57%**, singing **47%** against **41%**, practising routines **49%** against **44%**.

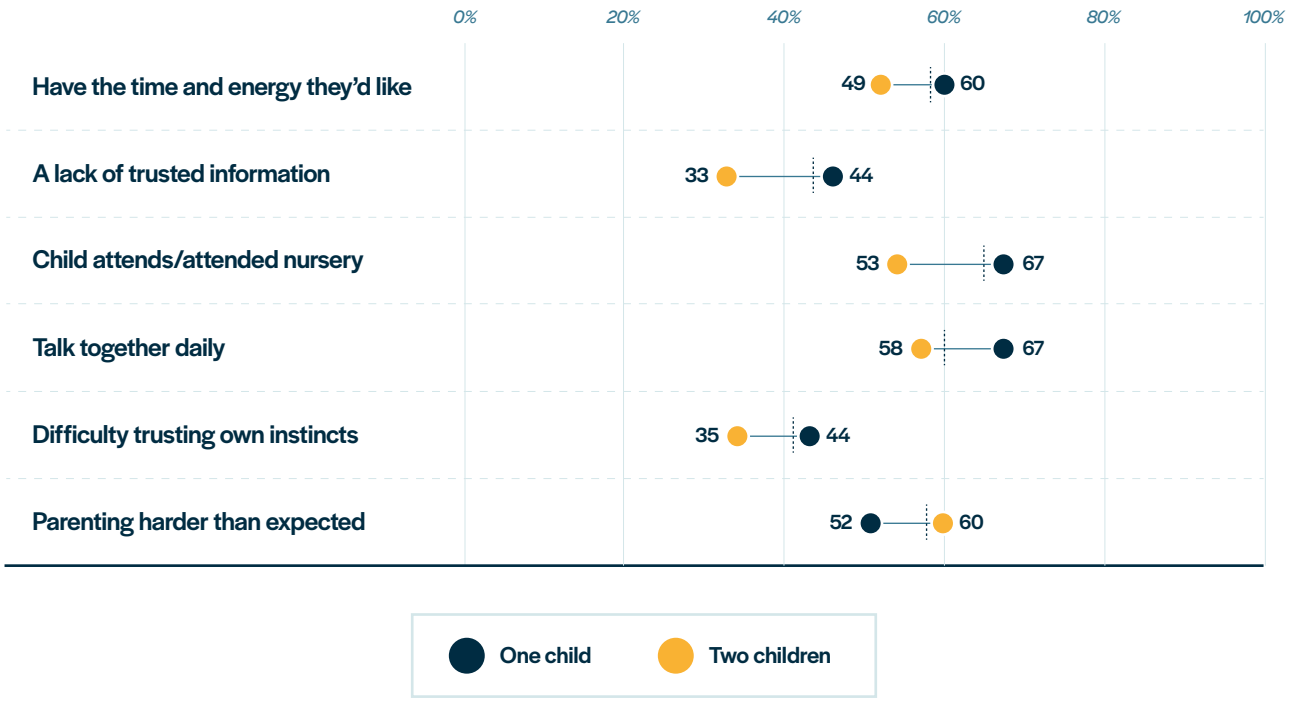
Q6_10, Q8_3, Q8_2, Q4, Q5_1, Q1 by gender of youngest child. Boys n=1,831, girls n=1,728 unweighted.

Kindred²

Number of children

Parents with one child under five and parents with two describe different problems rather than different amounts of the same problem. Parents of one child appear to report more issues around information and uncertainty: **44%** cite a lack of trusted information against **33%**, **44%** find it difficult to trust their own instincts against **35%**, **41%** report difficulty accessing professional support against **31%**, and **37%** have struggled to understand information about services against **29%**.

Parents of two frequently report issues around capacity. Only **49%** feel they have the time and energy to parent as they would like, against **60%** of parents with one child under five, and **60%** say parenting has been harder than they expected against **52%**. Their children are also less likely to be in early years provision (**53%** against **67%**), and they are more likely to have attended no groups at all (**25%** against **18%**). They report more daily interaction, not less — talking together **67%** against **58%**, practising routines **54%** against **45%**.

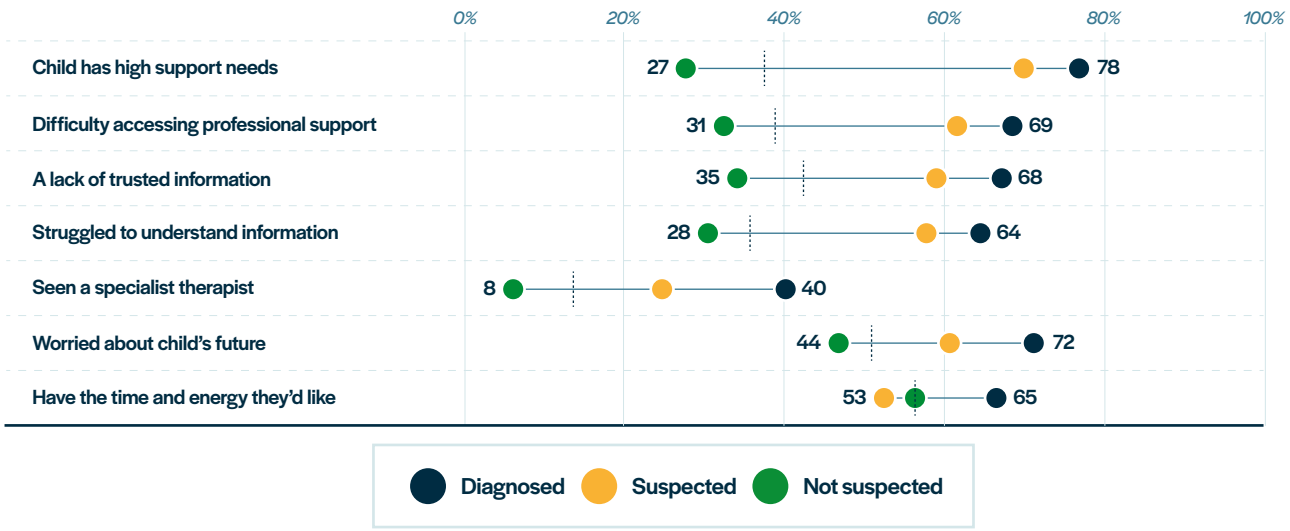


Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Q5_3, Q6_3, Q13, Q8_3, Q6_2, Q2 by number of children aged 0–5. One child aged 0–5 n=2,920, two children aged 0–5 n=621 (unweighted)

Kindred²

SEND diagnosis and suspicion



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

SEND status separates parents on strain and need more sharply than any other demographic in the survey. Families with a diagnosis report the highest strain on almost every measure: **78%** say their child has particularly high support needs against **27%** of families with no SEND concern, **69%** report difficulty accessing professional support against **31%**, **68%** cite a lack of trusted information against **35%**, and **64%** have struggled to understand information about services against **28%**. Worry about the child's future runs at **72%** against **44%**.

Families with a diagnosis are markedly less reliant on family for parenting advice (**33%** against **53%** of families with no SEND suspicion) and only **29%** name family as the source they trust most, against **43%**. Friends fall away too, at **27%** against **37%**. In their place sit professionals: **40%** have seen a specialist therapist against **8%** of families with no concern, and **26%** have had contact with early intervention or a social worker against **9%**. **2%** of diagnosed families have accessed no services in the past year, against **16%** of families with no SEND concern.

Parents with suspicion that their child has SEND rely on their families to a similar degree as parents with no suspicions (**50%** against **53%**). **26%** have seen a specialist therapist and *22%* have had contact with early intervention services. This is greater than access to these services of families with no SEND suspicions but well short of parents of children with a diagnosis.

The families who suspect SEND but have no diagnosis sit between the two groups — but not evenly. On strain they sit close to diagnosed families: **61%** report difficulty accessing professional support, **59%** a lack of trusted information, **58%** difficulty understanding information.

On service contact they sit between the two, well short of diagnosed families: **26%** have seen a specialist therapist, against **40%** of diagnosed families and **8%** of families with no concern.

Parents of a child with diagnosed SEND report more time and energy than suspected families (**65%** against **53%**) and are less likely to feel unsupported financially (**25%** against **33%**).

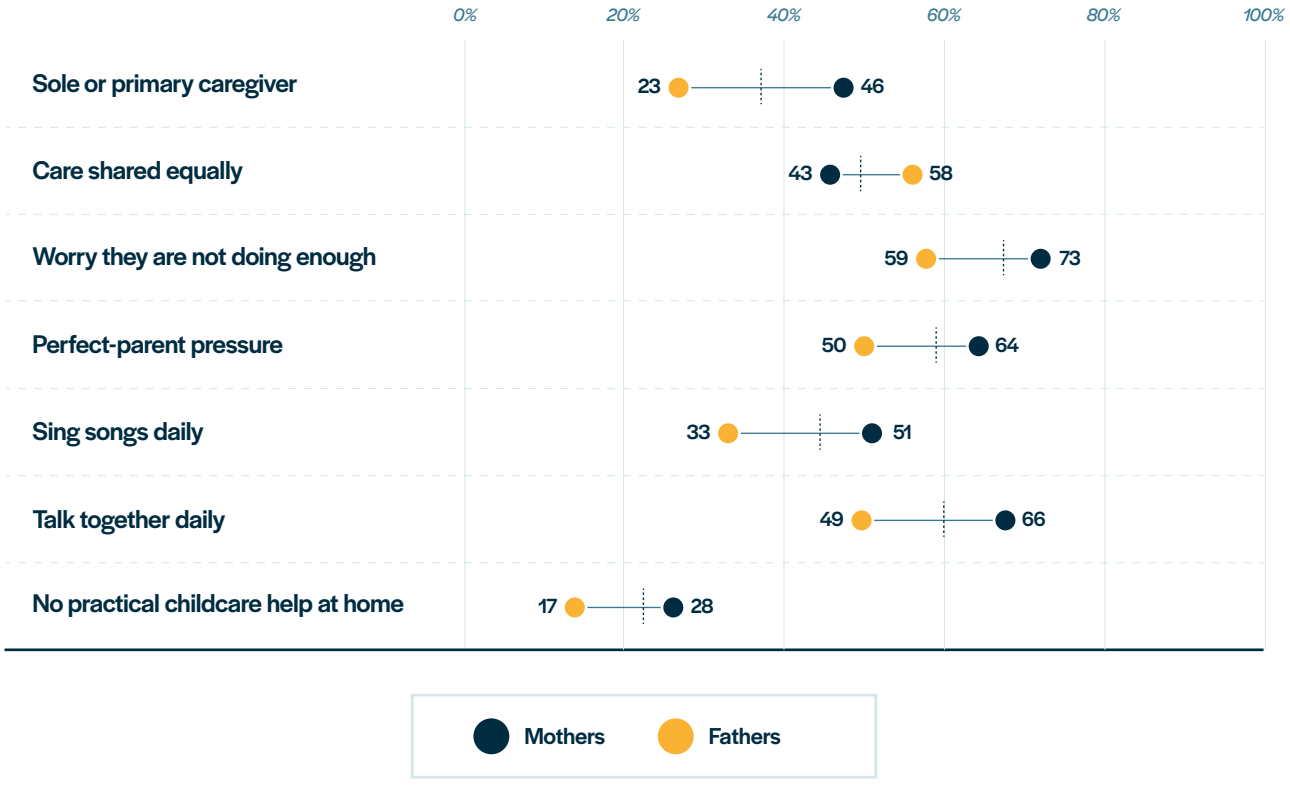
Q6_10, Q6_8, Q6_3, Q18, Q10, Q25, Q5_3 by SEND status. Diagnosed n=318, suspected n=448, not suspected n=2,681 unweighted.

Kindred²

Parent gender

Mothers and fathers describe the same households differently. **46%** of mothers say they are the sole or primary caregiver compared with **23%** of fathers. **58%** of fathers say care is shared equally with a partner while only **43%** of mothers agree. Mothers report doing more of every activity measured — singing daily **51%** against **33%**, talking together **66%** against **49%**, practising routines **53%** against **36%**, reading **48%** against **32%**.

Mothers also carry more of the pressure. **73%** worry they are not doing enough against **59%** of fathers, **64%** report pressure to be a "perfect parent" or fear of being judged against **50%**, and **57%** cite their own low mood or anxiety against **48%**. They report less support on every one of the eleven areas tested, with the widest gaps on practical childcare help in the home (**28%** not supported against **17%**) and financial costs (**33%** against **24%**). And they are more likely to have stepped back from a service: **58%** have chosen not to attend something available to them, against **48%** of fathers.



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Q4, Q5_2, Q6_9, Q8_2, Q8_3, Q7_2 by parent gender. Mothers n=2,088, fathers n=1,474 unweighted.

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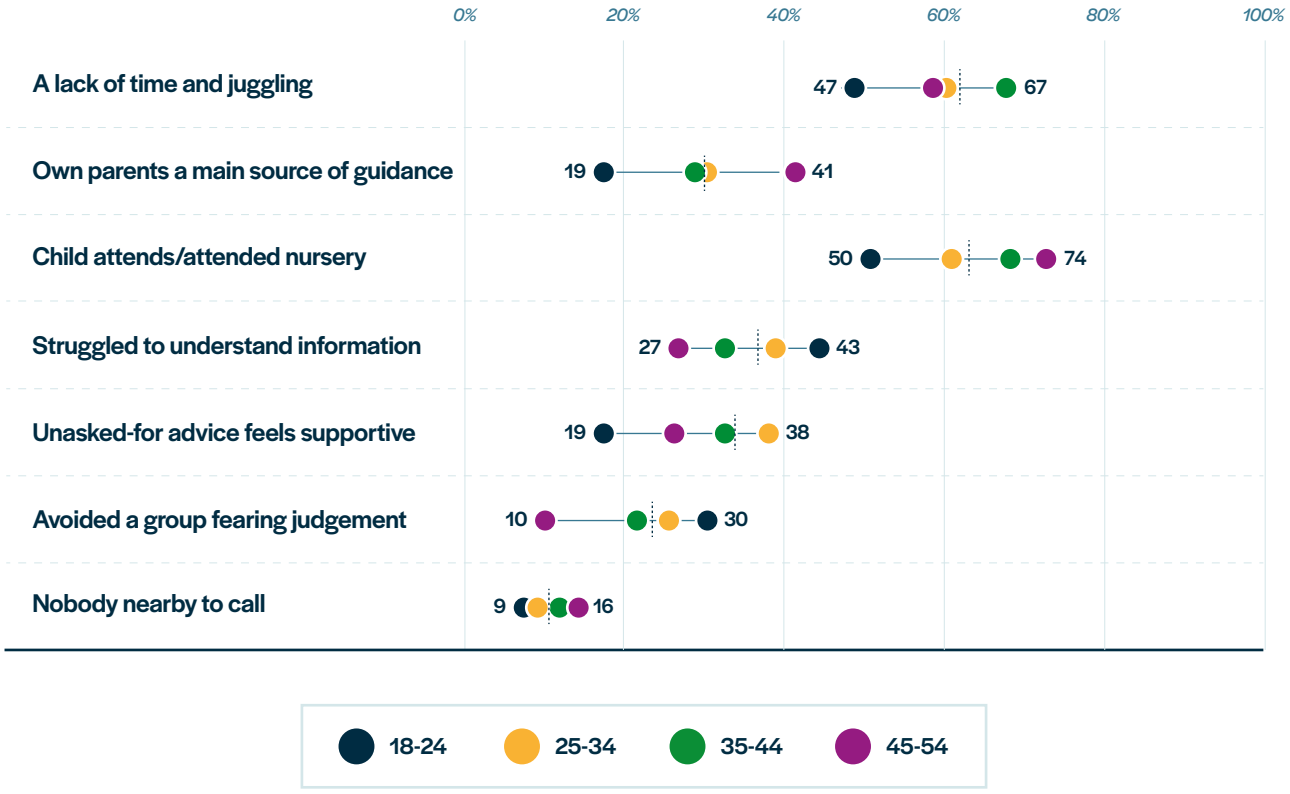
Parent age

Parents aged 18–24 report significantly less time pressure than those aged 35–44 (**47%** against **67%**) and less financial pressure (**54%** against **64%**). They are far more likely to name their own parents as a main source of guidance (**41%**, falling to **19%** among parents aged 45–54).

Younger parents are also the least connected to services. Half (**50%**) have a child in an early years setting, against **74%** of parents aged 45–54, **30%** have attended no groups at all against **17–22%** across older bands, and only **53%** find services easy to reach against 68% of parents aged 35-44. They struggle most with accessing information (**43%** against **27%** of parents aged 45–54).

Younge parents are also least likely to experience unasked-for advice (**19%** against **38%** of parents aged 25–34). One measure runs the other way: having nobody nearby to call rises with parent age, from **9%** at 18–24 to **16%** at 45–54.

Parents aged 18–24 (n=260) and 45–54 (n=181) are small bases and should be treated as indicative.



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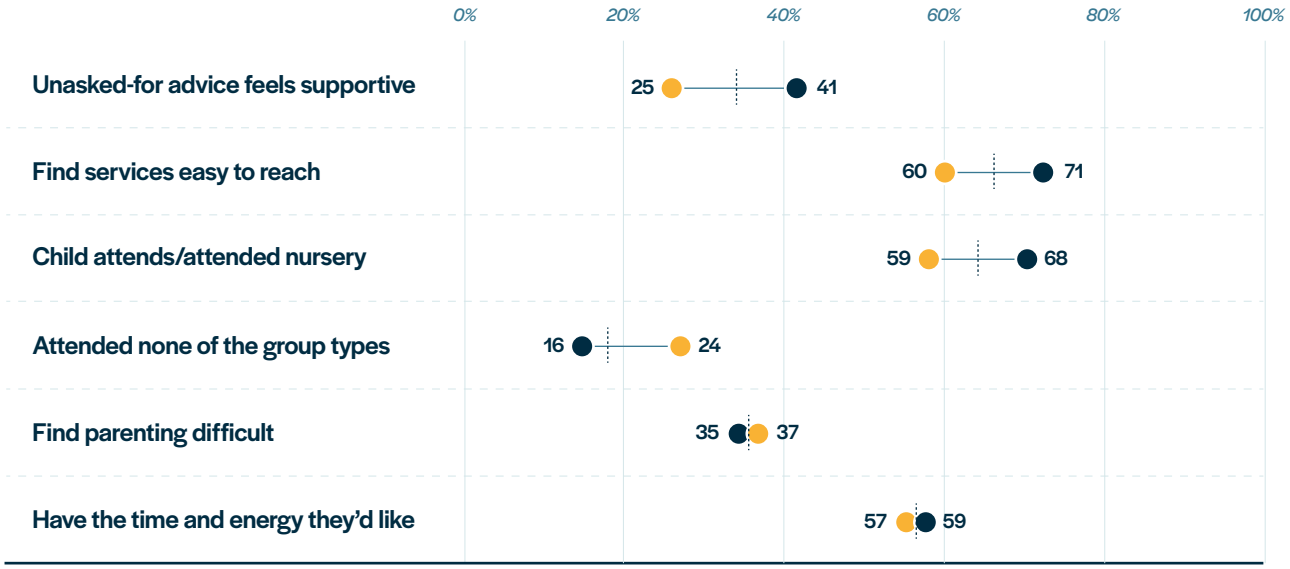
Q6_5, Q11a, Q13, Q18, Q23b, Q17a, Q24 by parent age.

Kindred²

Social grade



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Social grade informs access to services far more than the experience of parenting. There is little difference between the experience of ABC1 and C2DE parents in measures around the difficulty of parenting (**35%** and **37%**), time and energy levels (**59%** and **57%**) and levels of worry (**65%** and **71%**). A more significant difference lies in how many find it easy to access services (ABC1 **71%**; C2DE **60%**) and early education and childcare (**68%**: **59%**)

Nursery and childminder take-up reflects national entitlements. More ABC1 parents send their children to private nurseries (**38%**: **27%** C2DE) than to school based nurseries (**35%**: **38%** C2DE). C2DE parents take up fewer hours (**44%** 10-15 hours compared to **33%** ABC1) with more ABC1 parents likely to take up 16-30 hours (**43%**: **38%** C2DE

The greatest single difference is not about services. Only **25%** of C2DE parents find unasked-for advice supportive, against **41%** of ABC1 parents — a sixteen-point gap, and the widest social grade difference in the survey. C2DE parents are also more likely to feel judged by that advice (**42%** against **35%**) and to have avoided a service for fear of being judged (**27%** against **20%**). Social grade informs both what parents access and how advice lands.

Q23b, Q16, Q13, Q15, Q1, Q5_3 by social grade. ABC1 n=2,271, C2DE n=1,293 unweighted.

Kindred²

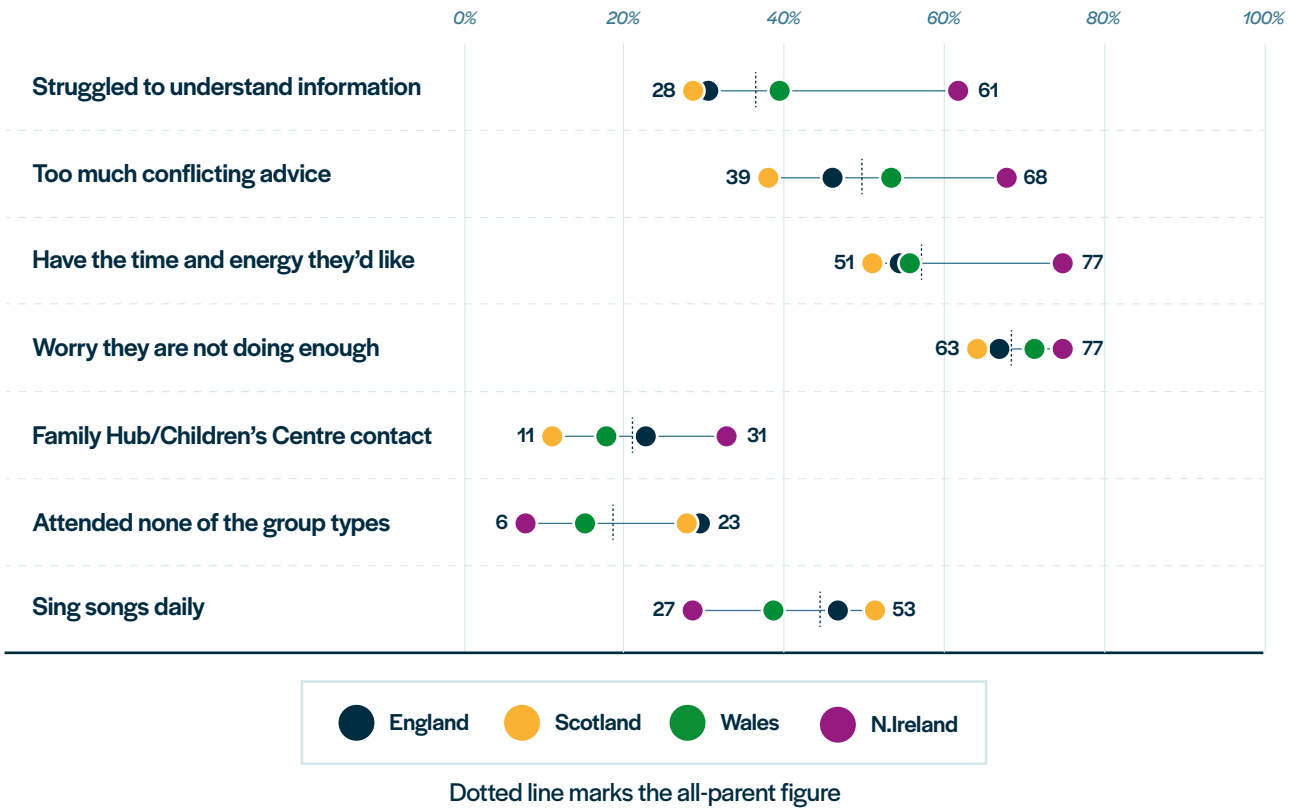
Nation

Northern Ireland is the outlier on almost every measure. Parents there report the lowest difficulty (**31%** against **40%** in Wales), the highest confidence (**82%**), the most time and energy by a wide margin (**77%** against **51%** in Scotland), and the strongest sense of support — only **17%** feel unsupported financially against **36%** in Scotland. They also have the highest Family Hub or Children's Centre contact (**31%** against **11%** in Scotland) and the lowest share who have attended no groups at all (**6%** against **23%** in England).

Yet the same parents report the highest worry that they are not doing enough (**77%** against **63%** in Scotland), the most conflicting advice (**68%** against **39%**), the greatest difficulty understanding information about parenting and services (**61%** against **28%** in Scotland) and the lowest daily engagement on every activity measured — singing daily **27%** against **53%** in Scotland, talking together **44%** against **66%**. Wales sits at the harder end of experience (**40%** find parenting difficult) with middling support.

Scottish parents feel least supported of the four nations: **36%** not supported with financial costs and **29%** not emotionally supported. Scotland also stands apart on childcare hours: **52%** of Scottish parents use 16–30 hours a week against **35%** in Wales and **40%** in England, with only **25%** in the 10–15 hour band against a UK figure of **38%.**

Around 500 parents were surveyed in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so that each nation can be reported separately. We compare nations with each other, and not with the all-parents figure as this includes them.



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Q18, Q6_4, Q5_3, Q5_2, Q10, Q15, Q8_2 by nation. England n=2,016, Scotland n=528, Wales n=504, Northern Ireland n=516 unweighted.

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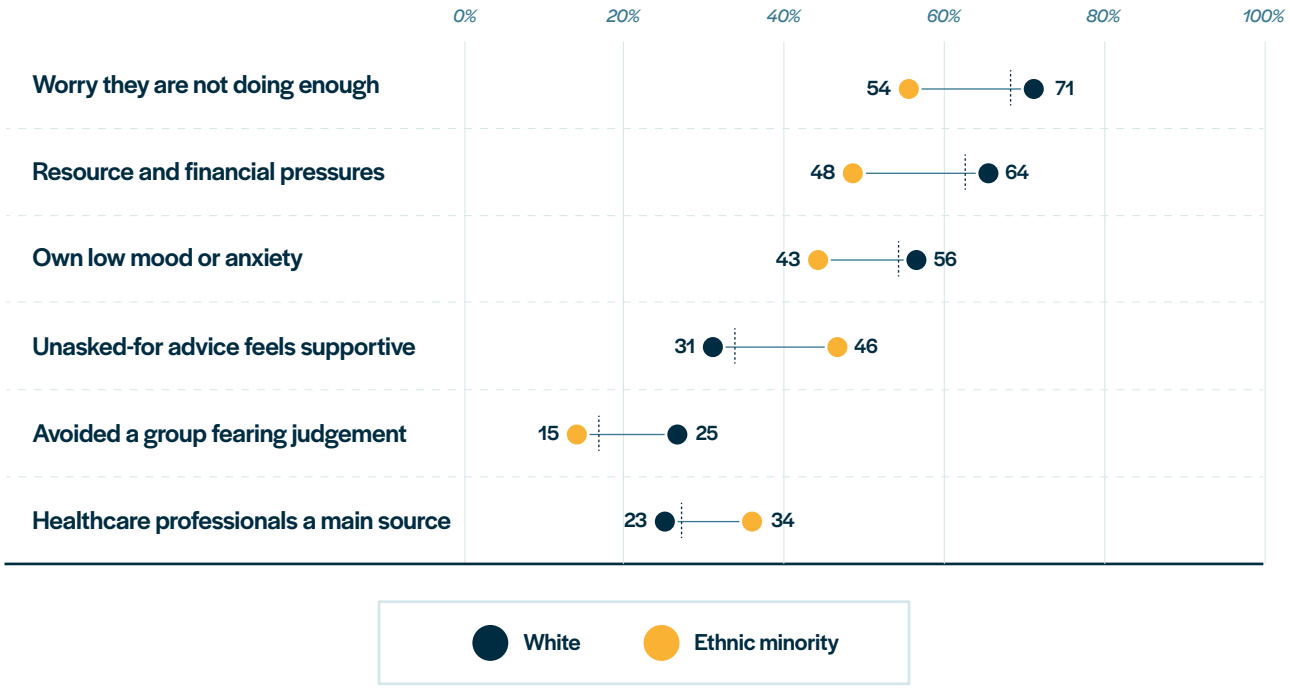
Ethnicity

Ethnic minority parents report less worry and financial pressure than White parents on most measures, but are three times as likely to fear racism or discrimination for their child's future (**34%** against **10%**). **54%** of ethnic minority parents worry they are not doing enough against White parents (**71%**), **48%** cite financial pressure against **64%**, **43%** cite their own low mood or anxiety against **56%**, **39%** report conflicting advice against **52%**, and **31%** say they are distracted by social media against **45%**. They also feel better supported: **21%** say they do not feel supported with financial costs against **31%**.

The clearest difference is in how advice lands. **46%** of ethnic minority parents find unasked-for advice supportive against **31%** of White parents, and only **15%** have avoided a service for fear of being judged against **25%**. They are also more likely to name healthcare professionals as a main source of guidance (**34%** against **23%**).



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Q5_2, Q6_7, Q6_1, Q23b, Q17a, Q11a by ethnicity. White n=2,853, ethnic minority n=708 unweighted.

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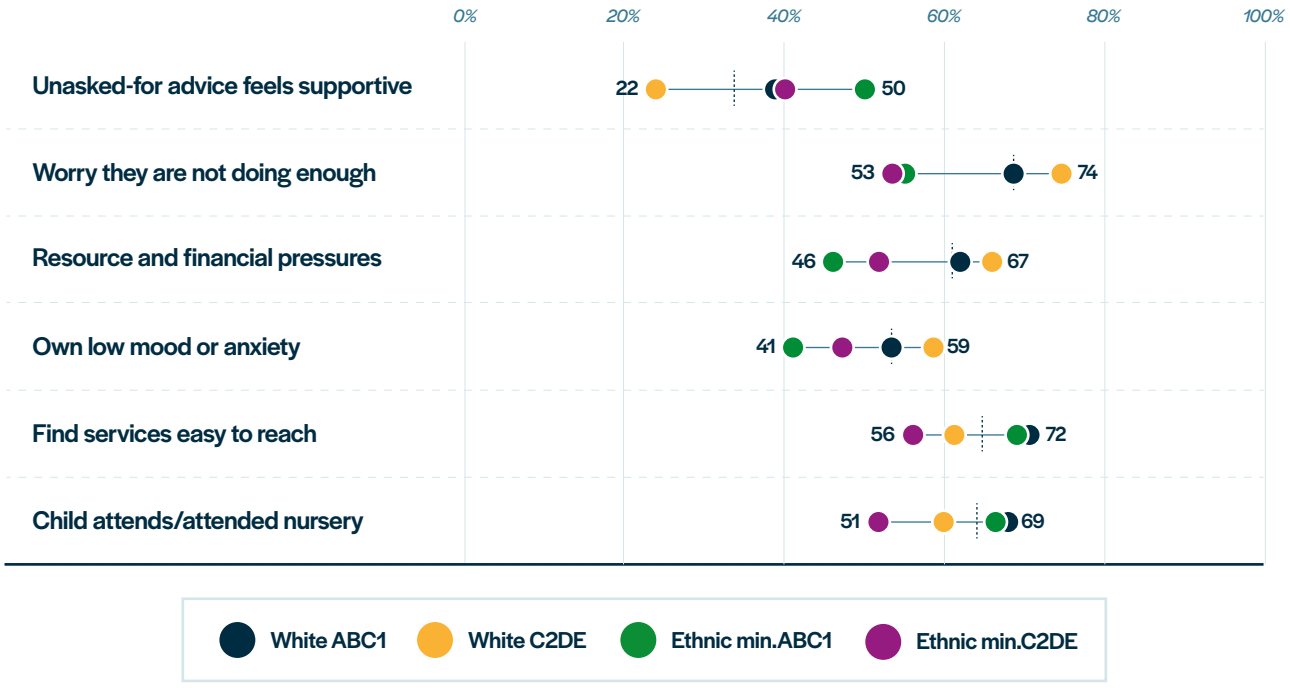
Ethnicity by social grade

The sample size when crossing ethnicity with social grade is unweighted and indicative only. But it throws up differences in experience, and identifies White C2DE parents as the highest-strain of the four groups. They report the most worry that they are not doing enough (**74%**, against **55%** of ethnic minority ABC1 parents and **53%** of ethnic minority C2DE parents), the most financial pressure (**67%** against **46%**), the most low mood or anxiety (**59%** against **41%**), and the most conflicting advice (**53%** against **37%**). They are also the most likely to have avoided a service for fear of being judged (**29%** against **14–16%** of both ethnic minority groups).

The widest gap of all is in how advice is received: only **22%** of White C2DE parents find unasked-for advice supportive, against **50%** of ethnic minority ABC1 parents - a 28-point spread, the widest of any ethnicity or social grade comparison on this measure. Ethnic minority C2DE parents show a different pattern again: lowest confidence of the four groups (**73%** against **86%**), weakest service access (**56%** find services easy to reach against **72%** of white ABC1 parents), and the lowest take up of early education and childcare (**51%** against **69%**).



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Q23b, Q5_2, Q6_7, Q6_1, Q16, Q13 by ethnicity and social grade. White ABC1 n=1,746, white C2DE n=1,107, ethnic minority ABC1 n=524, ethnic minority C2DE n=184 unweighted.

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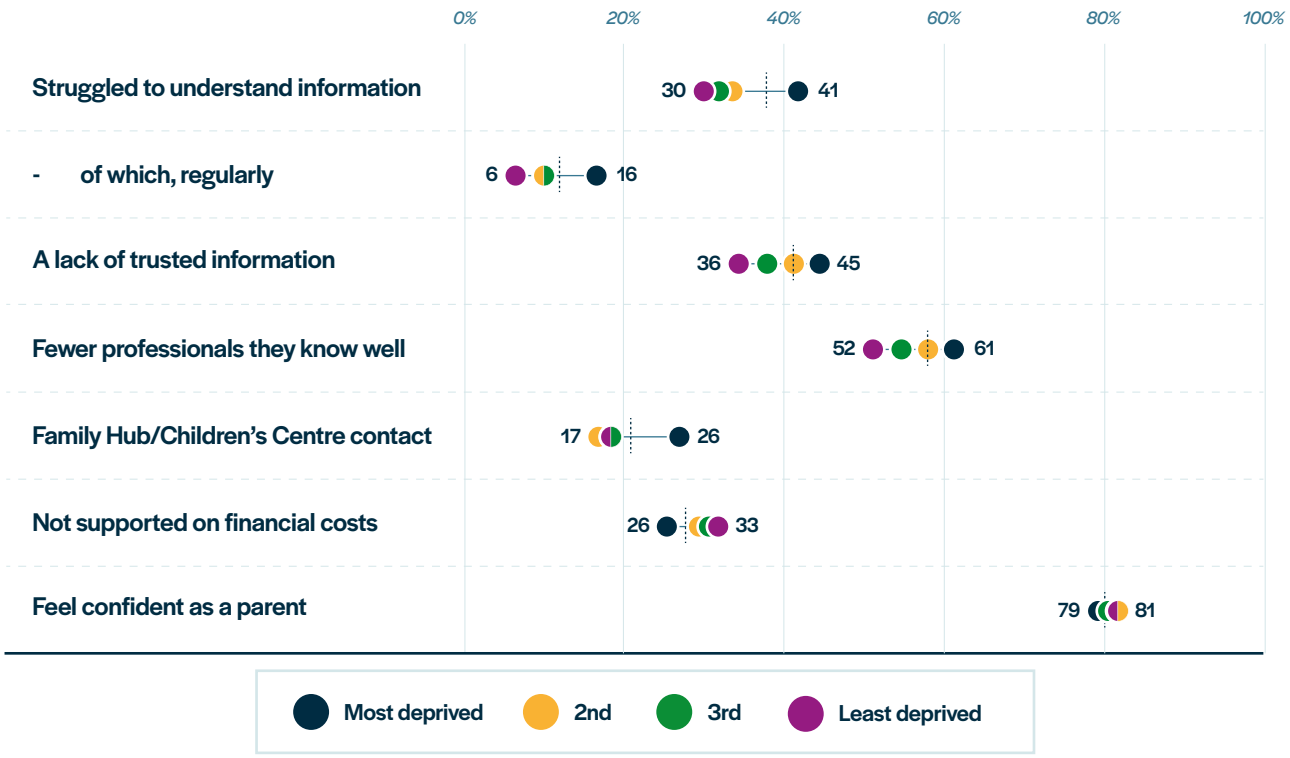
Index of Multiple Deprivation



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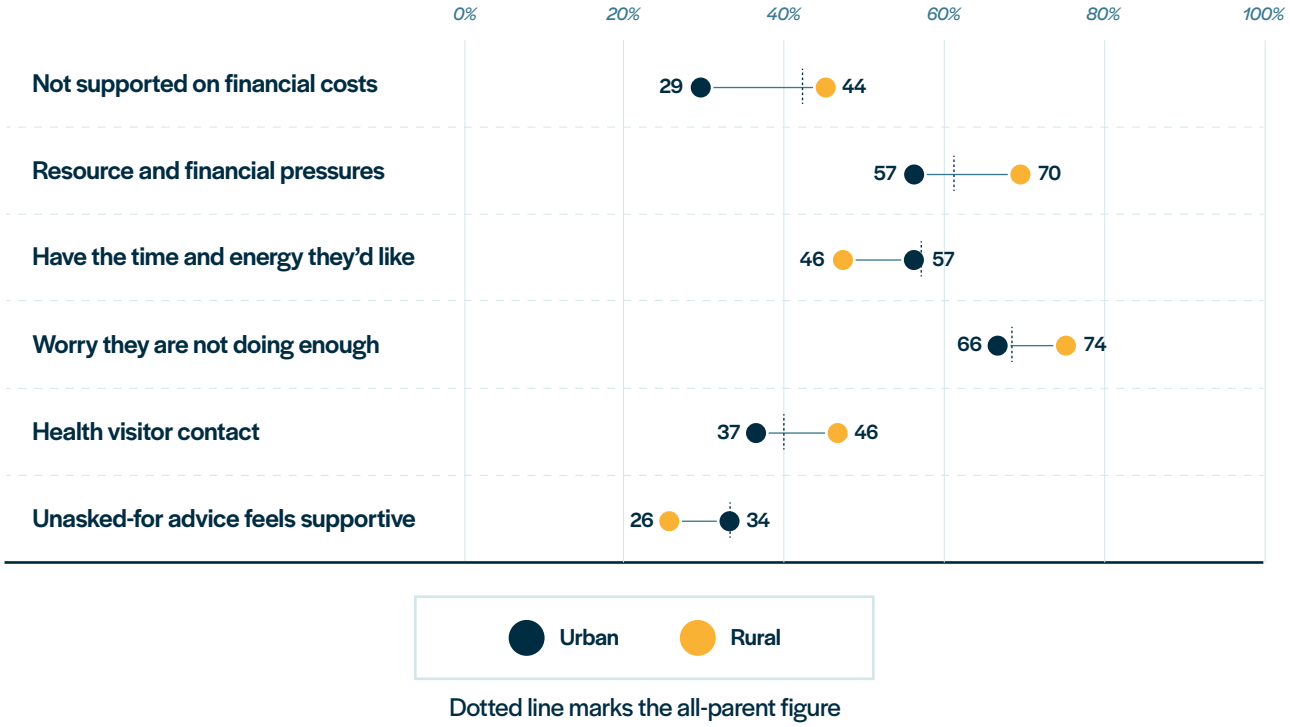
On how parenting feels, the four deprivation quartiles are close together. Confidence sits between **79%** and **81%**, worry between **67%** and **69%**, and the proportion finding parenting difficult between **34%** and **37%**. Pressure to be a "perfect parent" is almost identical at either end, at **59%** and **58%**, and financial pressure as a barrier barely moves, running **62%**, **63%**, **61%** and **59%** from most to least deprived. The widest gap between the most and least deprived quartiles on any measure in the survey is 14 percentage points.

Where deprivation does separate parents is information and professional contact, and here the gradient is consistent across all four quartiles. Difficulty understanding information falls from **41%** in the most deprived quartile to **30%** in the least, and from **16%** to **6%** among those who experience it regularly. A lack of trusted information falls from **45%** to **36%**, difficulty accessing professional support from **43%** to **35%**, and the sense that parents today have fewer professionals they know well from **61%** to **52%**. Three measures run the other way: parents in the most deprived quartile are less likely to feel unsupported financially (**26%** against **33%**), more likely to have the time and energy they would like (**61%** against **56%**), and considerably more likely to have had Best Start Family Hub contact (**26%** against **17–19%** elsewhere).

Q18, Q6_3, Q9_3, Q10, Q7_4, Q5_1 by IMD quartile. Where two groups share a value the dot is split between their colours.

Urban and rural



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Rural parents report worse financial support than urban parents by a clear margin. **44%** say they do not feel supported managing the financial costs of raising a young child, against **29%** of urban parents — the highest of any demographic group. **70%** cite resource and financial pressures as a barrier against **57%**, only **46%** feel they have the time and energy they would like against **57%**, and **74%** worry they are not doing enough against **66%**.

The picture is not uniformly worse. Rural parents report higher health visitor contact (**46%** against **37%**) and are no less likely to find services easy to reach. But they are less connected to the wider support environment: **16%** have had Family Hub contact against **22%**, **36%** seek advice at least weekly against **43%**, and only **26%** find unasked-for advice supportive against **34%**. Rural disadvantage in this survey is about cost rather than access to health services.

Rural n=329 unweighted — indicative only.

Q7_4, Q6_7, Q5_3, Q5_2, Q10, Q23b by urban/rural.

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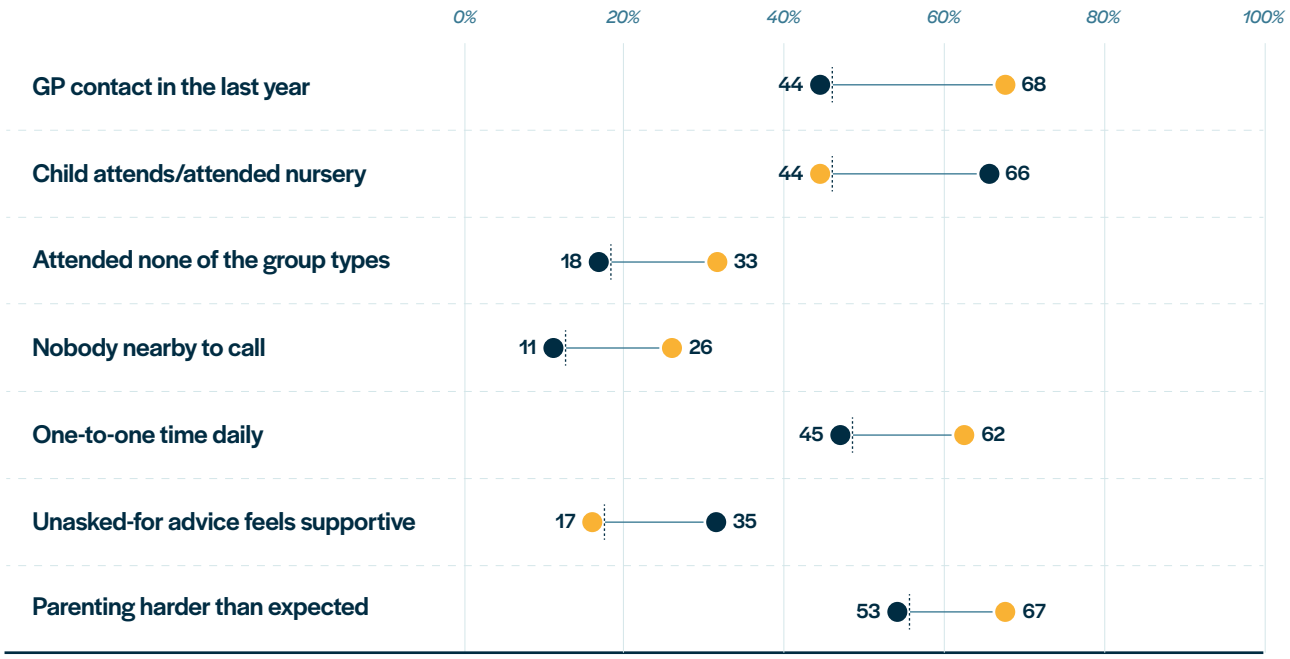
English as a first language



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Parents whose first language isn't English have the fewest people to turn to. **26%** have nobody living nearby they could call at an hour's notice, against **11%** of parents whose first language is English — one of the widest gaps on that measure of any cut. A third (**33%**) have attended none of the group types measured against **18%**, only **51%** find services easy to reach against **67%**, and **44%** have a child in early years provision against **66%**. They are also more likely to say parenting has been harder than they expected (**67%** against **53%**) and to be worried about their child's future (**63%** against **48%**).

Two things run strongly the other way. Their contact with a GP is far higher — **68%** in the past year against **44%**. And their reported daily engagement is among the highest of any group in the survey: **75%** talk with their child during everyday activities daily against **59%**, **62%** spend one-to-one time daily against **45%**, and **58%** practise routines daily against **46%**. Only **17%** find unasked-for advice supportive, among the lowest of any demographic group.

n=190 unweighted — indicative only.

Q10, Q13, Q15, Q24, Q8_9, Q23b, Q2 by English first language.

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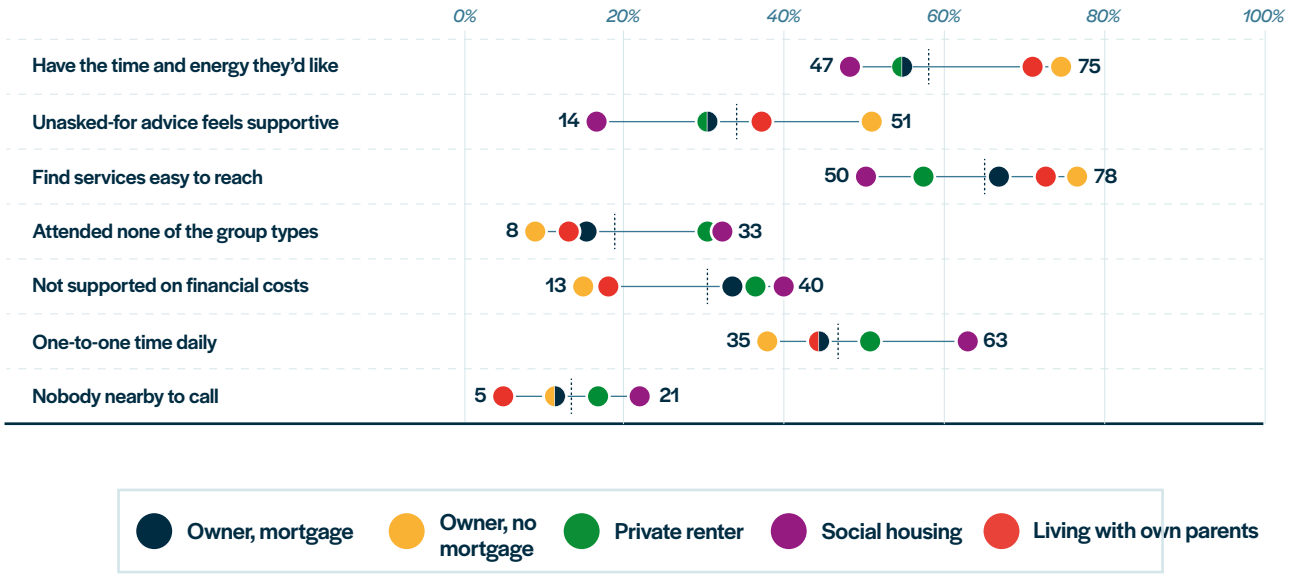
Housing tenure



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Once mortgage status is taken into account, housing tenure produces some of the widest differences in support, access and connection of any characteristic in the survey. Homeowners without a mortgage are the most comfortable group on almost every measure: **75%** have the time and energy they would like, only **13%** feel unsupported financially, **78%** find services easy to reach, and **51%** find unasked-for advice supportive. Homeowners with a mortgage look far more like renters than like their mortgage-free counterparts — **53%** have the time and energy they would like, **33%** feel unsupported financially, and **70%** cite time pressure, the highest of any tenure group.

At the opposite end of the scale, social housing tenants have least connection and support: **47%** have the time and energy they would like, **40%** feel unsupported financially, **50%** find services easy to reach, **33%** have attended no groups at all, **21%** have nobody nearby to call, and only **14%** find unasked-for advice supportive — the lowest figure recorded of any demographic group on that measure. Yet, their daily engagement with their child is consistently higher than mortgaged homeowners: one-to-one time **63%** against **44%**, talking together **72%** against **61%**, reading **53%** against **45%**. They are also far more likely to be the sole or primary caregiver (**56%** against **33%**) and far less likely to cite time pressure (**45%** against **70%**).

Parents living in their own parents' home are distinctive again. They have the most emergency support (only **5%** with nobody to call compared to **12%** national) and the highest Family Hub contact (**40%**), but are among the most likely to struggle with information (**61%**) and to have avoided a service fearing judgement (**41%**). The pattern extends to the type of provision used. **37%** of mortgaged homeowners use a private day nursery against **20%** of social housing tenants, who are more likely to use a school-based nursery (**44%** against **35%**). Half of social housing tenants (**50%**) use 10–15 hours a week against **36%** of mortgaged homeowners, while **45%** of mortgaged homeowners use 16–30 hours against **32%**.

Social housing n=358 and living with own parents n=200 unweighted — both indicative. Living with own parents is heavily correlated with parent age.

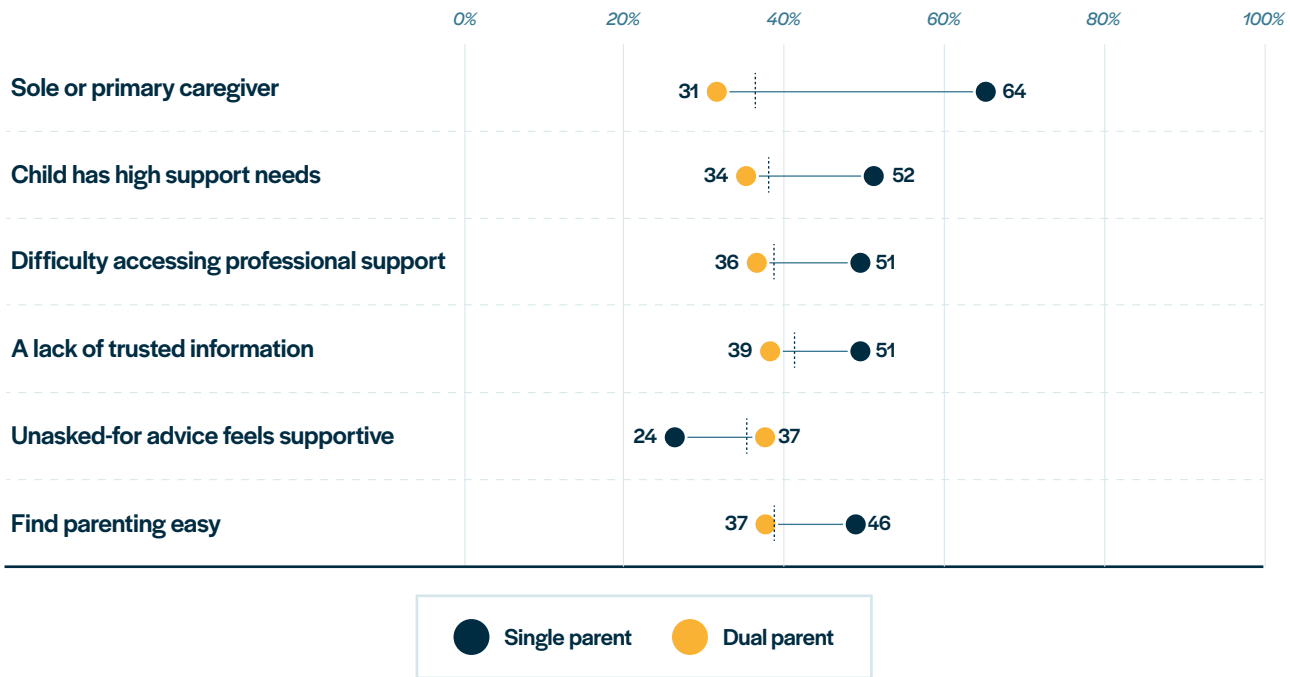
Q5_3, Q23b, Q16, Q15, Q7_4, Q8_9, Q24 by living status. Where two groups share a value the dot is split between their colours.

Household composition

Single-parent households differ from dual-parent households less on how parenting feels than on what surrounds it. **64%** of single parents are the sole or primary caregiver against **31%** in dual-parent households, and only **18%** say care is shared equally against **57%**. But they are no more likely to find parenting difficult, and in fact more likely to find it easy (**46%** against **37%**).

Where they differ sharply is in need and access. **52%** say their child has particularly high support needs against **34%**, **51%** report difficulty accessing professional support against **36%**, **51%** cite a lack of trusted information against **39%**, and **43%** have struggled to understand information about services against **33%**. They are also more exposed to judgement: **46%** feel judged by unasked-for advice against **36%**, only **24%** find it supportive against **37%**, and **30%** have avoided a service fearing judgement against **21%**.

Notably, the balance of reasons for staying away differs. Single parents cite practical reasons less often than dual-parent households (**41%** against **54%**) but every judgement-related reason more often: not fitting in (**35%** against **28%**), worrying about being judged (**30%** against **21%**) and a previous bad experience (**19%** against **13%**). Because parents could select up to three reasons, this is a difference in weighting rather than evidence that logistics are not a barrier.



Dotted line marks the all-parent figure

Q4, Q6_10, Q6_8, Q6_3, Q23b, Q1 by living situation. Single parent n=706, dual parent n=2,743 unweighted.

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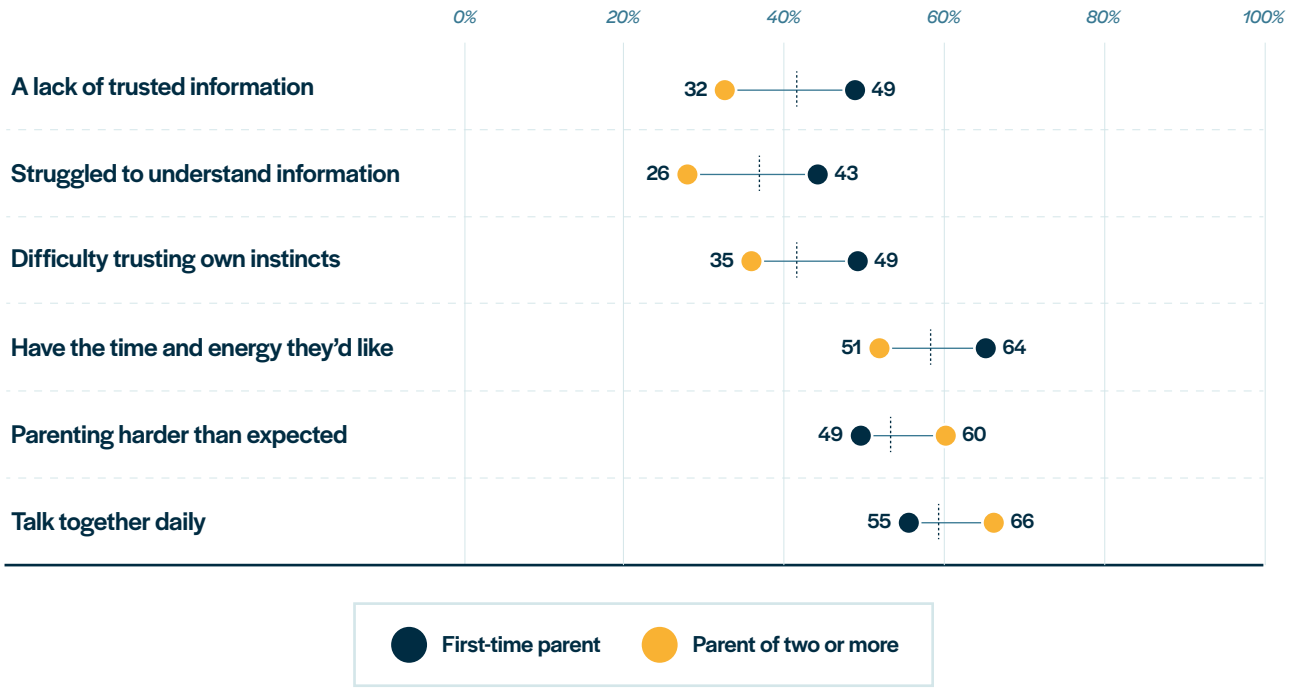
First-time parents and parents of two or more

First-time parents carry an information burden. **49%** cite a lack of trusted information about how best to support their child, against **32%** of parents with two or more children; **43%** have struggled to understand information about parenting or services against **26%**; **49%** find it difficult to trust their own instincts against **35%**; and **55%** report too much conflicting advice against **42%**. They seek advice more often (**48%** at least weekly against **40%**) and are more likely to say professional advice is harder to trust than in previous generations (**54%** against **41%**).

Parents of two or more carry a capacity burden instead. Only **51%** feel they have the time and energy to parent as they would like, against **64%** of first-time parents, and **60%** say parenting has been harder than they expected against **49%**. Their confidence and their worry are almost identical to first-time parents' — **78%** against **81%** confident, **67%** against **69%** worried — so the difference is not about how they feel about themselves but about what they are able to do. They also report more daily interaction (talking together **66%** against **55%**, practising routines **52%** against **42%**).



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Q6_3, Q18, Q6_2, Q5_3, Q2, Q8_3 by parental status. First-time n=1,961, two or more n=1,603 unweighted.

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05 Methodology

About this research

This report presents findings from Kindred Squared's national research into the experiences of parents of children aged five and under in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, conducted by Savanta. Drawing on both quantitative polling and qualitative focus groups, it explores the day-to-day realities of early parenting today: the confidence parents feel, the pressures they face, the advice they seek, and the support they access or avoid.

Methodology

Quantitative fieldwork: An online CAWI survey was conducted with n=3,564 parents of children aged 0–5 between July 8th and August 6th, 2026. The target sample consisted of n=2,000 respondents in England and n=500 within each of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
Data shown throughout this report is weighted to be nationally representative of parents of children aged 0–5 across these four countries, based on parent gender, parent age, child gender, and socio-economic group. To further help ensure representativeness, monitoring quotas were placed on parent ethnicity interlocked with country, and region within England. Sub-groups below n=75 are treated as directional only and flagged where relevant.

Category	Options	Counts (n=)	% of sample
Nation	England	2016	57%
	Scotland	528	15%
	Wales	504	14%
	Northern Ireland	516	14%
England region	North-West	280	8%
	North-East	94	3%
	Yorkshire & Humber	208	6%
	West Midlands	266	6%
	East Midlands	178	5%
	South-West	155	4%
	South-East	290	8%
	East of England	214	6%
	London	371	10%
Child age	Under 1	383	11%
	Age 1	591	17%
	Age 2	783	22%
	Age 3	847	24%
	Age 4	851	24%
	Age 5	778	22%
Parent age	18-34	2076	58%
	35-54	1459	41%
	55+	29	1%
Child gender	Male	1831	51%
	Female	1728	48%
Parent gender	Male	1474	41%
	Female	2088	59%
SEG	ABC1	2271	64%
	C2DE	1293	36%
Ethnicity	White	2853	80%
	Asian	144	4%
	Black	412	12%
	Multiple ethnic background	141	4%

Qualitative fieldwork: Two online focus groups were conducted via Microsoft Teams in July 2026 with parents of children aged 0–5 living in England and Wales. Participants were recruited to ensure a good mix across key characteristics, using soft quotas for age of child (including a spread from 0–5 years), child gender, parent age, parent gender (a mix of mothers and fathers), region (including at least one participant based in Wales per group), and ethnicity (at least one ethnic minority participant per group).

Analysis

The data from the CAWI survey has been analysed using descriptive analysis. When interpreting the figures in this report, please note that only statistically significant differences (at a 95% confidence level) are reported and that the effect of weighting is considered when significance tests are conducted. Significant differences are highlighted in the analytical report and are relative to other directly relevant subgroups (e.g., those living in high deprivation areas vs. those living in low deprivation areas).

The qualitative data has been analysed using thematic textual analysis. Verbatim quotes are used to add texture and context to the numbers.

The surveys and interviews were conducted by Savanta.

Kindred²

Savanta:

Data tables for the survey can be viewed at: https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-data

Further demographic analysis tables available for viewing at: https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-charts

Additionally, you can explore the data using our interactive data analysis tool here: https://kinsq.org/parenting-survey-tool