



**An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais**
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

Minister Foley publishes results from Ipsos B&A poll showing improvement in childcare affordability

- **49% of parents of pre-school age children and 53% of parents of school-going children in non-parental care report that they find it easy or fairly easy to pay for childcare.**
- **This latest data compares favourably with data from 2023 when 28% of parents of pre-school age children and 43% of parents of school-going children in non-parental care reported that they found it easy or fairly easy to pay for childcare.**
- **Three quarters of parents in receipt of childcare subsidies from the State report that they find the subsidies easy to access.**
- **85% of parents of pre-school children and 83% of school-going children report using their preferred childcare arrangement.**
- **95% of parents of pre-school children and 93% of parents of school-going children report to be satisfied with their current childcare arrangements.**

Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley, T.D. today published results of a wide-ranging survey on childcare undertaken earlier this year by Ipsos B&A on behalf the Department for Children, Disability and Equality.

The nationally representative poll of more than 700 families with children under 15 reveal increases in the proportion of parents who report to find it easy or fairly easy to pay for early learning and childcare.

Specifically, 49% of parents of pre-school age children and 53% of parents of school going children in non-parental care report they find it easy or fairly easy to pay for childcare. These latest data compare favourably with data from 2023 when 28% of parents of pre-school age children and 43% of parents of school going children in non-parental care reported they found it easy or fairly easy to pay for childcare.

These data were gathered following the introduction of fee management under the Government's Core Funding Scheme, including a fee freeze introduced in 2022. Parents also now benefit from recent increases in subsidies under the National Childcare Scheme - with

74% of parents availing of these subsidies to offset out of pocket costs for childcare reporting that the subsidies were easy to access.

Notwithstanding this progress, findings show many parents continue to experience difficulty finding a childcare place for their child and in paying for childcare, including 38% of parents of pre-school age children in non-parental care who reported they find it difficult or very difficult to meet the out-of-pocket costs.

Additional analysis of the data by staff at the Department of Children also identified key gender differences, with significantly more females reporting that difficulties arranging early learning and childcare had:

- Restricted the hours they could work or study (73% of females compared to 57% of males).
- Stopped them from taking on some study or training (46% of females versus 36% of males).
- Prevented them looking for a job (39% of females versus 22% of males).
- Made them turn down or leave a job (35% of females versus 21% of males).

The poll also gathered data on parental awareness of existing State supports. 91% reported that they were aware that all children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years and 6 months are eligible for two years free preschool under the ECCE programme while 55% reported that they were aware that families of children aged 14 and under are eligible for financial support towards the cost of childcare under the National Childcare Scheme.

Commenting on the findings, Minister Foley said:

“The National Childcare Scheme is currently supporting thousands of families to offset their childcare costs.

“Moreover, the recent extension of regulation to paid, non-relative childminders is opening up of the National Childcare Scheme to an increasing number of childminders, enabling more parents to access State subsidies who were previously unable to do so.

“These developments to the National Childcare Scheme combined with fee management measures under Core Funding, have resulted in tangible improvements for many families.

“I do recognise however that the burden on some families remains high and some continue to face challenges in accessing places, particularly families with very young children.

“That is why the Programme for Government has made very ambitious commitments in this policy area, which I am committed to delivering on.”

Minister Foley continued:

“Results from the survey show awareness of supports under the National Childcare Scheme, while improving on recent years, remains low.

“An awareness raising campaign, led by my Department, is underway.

“As part of that campaign, my Department will be engaging with families at the ‘Budding Bloomers’ section of Bord Bia Bloom this weekend to discuss the supports available to help reduce the cost of childcare.”

Full details on supports available to reduce the cost of childcare is available at www.gov.ie/childcare.

Full details on the poll of parents can be found online [here](#).

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Notes for Editors:

- This parent poll was conducted by IPSOS B&A on behalf of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.
- The objective of the research was to understand parents’ preferred arrangements for childcare, their views and experiences.
- Interviews were conducted via random digit dialling between 22 January and 12 February with 771 parents/guardians of children under 15 years. The final dataset was weighted by age of child, social class and region to better align the sample with the estimated profile of families with children in the household aged 0-14 years.
- The poll includes responses from 771 parents reporting on a total of 1,256 children, 25% were not yet in school, 59% were in primary school and 15% were in secondary school.

Table1: Impact of difficulties arranging childcare by gender

Has difficulty arranging early learning and childcare ever....	Male		Female		Total Sample	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Restricted the hours you could work or study	57%	44%	73%	28%	65%	35%
Stopped you from taking on some study or training	36%	64%	46%	54%	41%	59%
Prevented you looking for a job	22%	78%	39%	61%	31%	69%
Made you turn down or leave a job	21%	79%	35%	65%	28%	72%
Made you leave a study or training course	11%	89%	11%	89%	11%	89%