

# Scotland: Mothers more likely to return to work but childcare still an issue, study finds <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

The research compared the employment patterns of two groups of mothers – those who had children in 2004/05 and those who gave birth in 2010/11.

Researchers found 62% of women whose children were born in 2010/11 were in work or on maternity leave when the child was 10-months-old compared with 58% of women who gave birth in 2004/05.

The proportion of mothers in employment increased as their child grew up, with 70% of those who gave birth in 2010/11 in work by the time their child turned five, up from 65% six years earlier, an increase equivalent to nearly 3,000 more mothers in work.

There was no change in the proportion of mothers who are looking for work as in both groups about 6% were looking for paid work when their child were babies, aged three and aged five.

The report from the Growing Up in Scotland study carried out for the Scottish Government by ScotCen Social Research found mothers looking for work were more likely to be younger, single parents and to live in lower-income households

More than half (53%) of mothers who were looking for a job when their child was 10-months-old felt there was a shortage of suitable roles, a complaint which dropped to just over a quarter (27%) by the time the child turned five .

Problems with childcare were cited as a barrier to looking for work by more than a quarter (26%) of mothers of five-year-olds questioned , compared with 14% of mothers with a 10-month-old.

Single mothers were almost twice as likely to report childcare as a problem in looking for work than those with a partner, at 19% compared with 10%, when their child was 10-months-old.

ScotCen senior researcher Line Knudsen said: “A rise in the number of women with young children in work is good news for the Scottish Government, who have committed to supporting women to return to work after childbirth.

“However, there is no room for complacency and it’s important to acknowledge that mothers who want to return to work still face barriers to doing so – especially younger mothers, single mothers and those with fewer qualifications.”

Minister for employability and training Jamie Hepburn said: “This study shows that over a six-year period the number of mums returning to work after having a child increased.

“Clearly there is still more that we can do to ensure no-one is forced to choose between their career or their family responsibilities, and that those looking for work can find work.”

He said the government has committed to a pilot scheme to reduce childcare costs and to almost double free early learning and childcare, and would also continue to examine how to remove barriers to work and promote flexible working.

-reprinted from Evening Express

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<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [7]

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