

Lost opportunities, lost incomes ^[1]

Why families in England need further reform of childcare and early education to get into work

Author: Save the Children

Source: Save the Children, United Kingdom

Format: Report

Publication Date: 31 Dec 2017

AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Executive summary

Parents- particularly mothers- of young children in England are struggling to get into work.

This briefing paper presents new analysis by Save the Children of the Labour Force Survey and Family Resources Survey.

This analysis reveals that, despite significant reforms to the childcare system in England, many parents are still struggling to get into work or increase their working hours. It also shows that mothers are most likely to struggle:

- Over 450,000 mothers with children under five in England are looking for work or would like to increase their hours but are unable to do so,
- This means that fewer than one in three mothers with a child under five are in full-time work.

This is despite record levels of employment among women. The reality for many mothers is that a lack of support with childcare is stopping them from working.

Over half of mothers out of work say that they would move into work if they could find high quality, affordable, and convenient childcare.

In this paper, we estimate how much these families are missing out on. We focus on mothers' earnings because of the particular challenges they face. These estimates show:

- A mother in an average family with young children could be losing between £3,400 and £11,400 because they can't get into work or aren't able to increase working hours.
- Nationally, mothers are losing out on over £1.2 billion in earnings every year.

Related link: Lack of affordable childcare costing mothers £1.2bn a year in lost earnings ^[3]

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[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/01/lack-affordable-childcare-costing-mothers-£12bn-year-lost-earnings>

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