

'My child care headaches' [GB] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY
See text below.

EXCERPTS

Bathea Cranko, and her husband, John, have two children, Zarah, eight, and Kai, 13.

This summer Zarah will be attending a play scheme at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, where John works as a draughtsman.

"The scheme is subsidised but still costs between £12 and £15 a day," says Bathea, who lives in Clayhall, Essex.

"A huge proportion of the money we earn goes out on child care, both during term and during the holidays."

Families face an average 9% rise in the costs of holiday child care this year, according to a survey by the Daycare Trust.

The Daycare Trust survey reports a particular lack of provision for children aged 11 and over and Bathea agrees.

"I know children under 14 are not supposed to be left alone but Kai will stay at home and go out with friends.

"The only other thing would be to send him to a residential camp and they cost about £200 or £300 a week."

Bathea's children are members of Jewish Care, a health and social care charity. Each summer the organisation runs a programme for children, costing between £50 and £60 a week.

"But it finishes at about 3pm so it doesn't really accommodate working parents," says Bathea.

During term time, Zarah goes to a breakfast club, then either an after-school club or a childminder on days the club doesn't run. This costs a total of around £45 a week.

"We lived in the Netherlands five years ago and their system is way ahead of Britain - they have the most amazing child care system," says Bathea.

"Half the cost of child care there is paid by the employer. The cost was reasonable - both my kids went and we didn't seem to struggle like we do here.

"Also, it's income-related so someone on a low wage has the same facilities as someone earning a lot more.

"I've lived and worked in South Africa too and definitely find it hardest here in Britain."

- reprinted from the BBC

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