

Who are the children enrolled in French daycare centres? ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Introduction

Daycare centres are very popular among parents of young children in France, yet in 2011 only 16% of preschoolers aged below 3 had a place. Beyond the fact that demand far outstrips supply, are some children, such as those from disadvantaged families, more likely to get a place than others? Analysing data from the 2011 family and housing survey (Famille et Logements), Nathalie Le Bouteillec, Lamia Kandil and Anne Solaz examine the profiles of the children who attend these centres.

Under the objectives set down by the Council of Europe in 2002, Member States were expected to provide childcare facilities for at least one-third of all children under 3 years of age by 2010. France has surpassed this target, with half of all under-3s enrolled in formal care, either with a childminder or in a daycare centre (crèche). While childminders are predominant, daycare centres have steadily increased their capacity over the last 20 years, providing places for 16% of preschool children in 2011. Collective daycare is much more widespread in northern Europe. Denmark, for example, offered places for 56% of preschool children in 2012. France thus offers more generous formal daycare provision than the European average, but places in collective crèches are scarce, despite strong parental demand.

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