

# Welsh Government Childcare Offer benefiting low income families – new research

The research on the offer's first year of operation shows 80% of the lowest earning parents in each household accessing the offer earn less than the average salary in Wales. 88% of surveyed parents reported having more disposable income as a result of accessing the offer, and 67% reported the offer gave them more opportunities to increase their future earnings.

The Welsh Government is committed to providing 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year.

The childcare offer is currently being roll-out across Wales, and is available in at least some areas in half of Wales' 22 local authorities. It will be available across the country by 2020.

More than 3,300 children have benefited from the Welsh Government's ground-breaking childcare offer during its first year.

Arad Research, in partnership with NatCen Social Research, was commissioned by the Welsh Government in August 2017 to undertake an independent evaluation of the first year of early implementation of the Childcare Offer in Wales.

The research shows:

- 60% of all parents accessing the Offer (and 80% of the lowest earners in households) accessing the Offer earned the equivalent or less than the median population earnings in Wales;
- 67% reported having more flexibility in the types of jobs they do and the hours they work; and 60% reported having more opportunities for training;
- Access to the offer had encouraged 40% of parents surveyed to access more hours of formal childcare, and 16% of parents say they now use less informal childcare in favour of more formal childcare

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"It's great to see how well our ground-breaking childcare offer is being received among families right across Wales.

"I'm particularly pleased the offer is benefiting low income families, putting more money back into their pockets and allowing them to take up more work or training.

"That's not only good for the Welsh economy, but it's also reducing strain on family incomes."