



Parent childcare survey 2025

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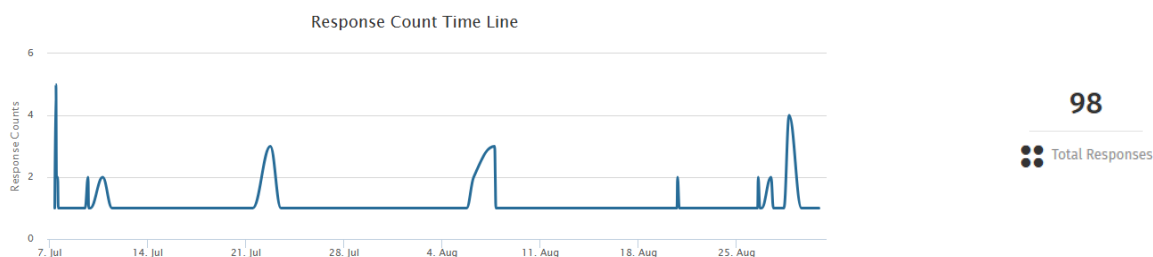
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Introduction

The 2025 parent survey for NEL was open during July and August. The survey went out via all social media platforms and shared with and by our childcare providers. Most responses were completed early in the survey despite it being advertised regularly throughout the time it was open. This is likely to be due to the school and family holidays.



Summary

Most respondents had just one child (54%) with 39% of all having 2 children. The most represented age group was the parents /carers of Primary aged children at 32%, closely followed by families with the under 2's (31%) 2-year-olds (12%) and secondary school age (10%)

Over half (64%) of families already use formal childcare. This is an increase from last year of 10%. For those who do not use formal childcare, not needing any was the main reason at 43%, followed by not being able to afford it at 24%.

Most families currently use childcare to enable them to work (58%) with the majority (73%) using childcare all year round. The number of families using all year-round childcare has increased by 12% since the last survey. This could be due to more families knowing about (83%) and using the stretched offer for the working families funded offers.

Over half of those responding (65%), could get the right amount of childcare required to enable them to work, train or access education. However more than half (52%) of those using wraparound childcare could not access the right number of hours to meet their needs. This overall percentage for being able to access the hours that families need has decreased slightly (2%) since the previous survey.

A high proportion of families can access the right number of hours required for them to work, train or study (73%), and to access their funded childcare offer (68%) Families who require wraparound childcare had more difficulty accessing the hours that they need with half being able to get the right number of hours, but half could not.

The main reason for not being able to access the childcare families required was that they cannot afford the hours that they need (42%). This number has reduced by 23% in the last four years. Needing atypical hours remains a barrier to getting the childcare hours that families need. Requiring childcare before 8am has increased by 20% since 2021 and is now 68%. However, needing a later finish, after 6pm has fallen since last year and is now 15%.

Over the last year, the number of hours childcare that families used has remained stable with 55% confirming they use about the same as they did last year. Just under a quarter of families reported using more childcare (22%) and 10% used less than the previous year.

1. Childcare Preferences

Most families prefer their childcare to be close to home (53%) and 57% need childcare in order work, study, or train. Two thirds of families (66%) of respondents more than 15 hours childcare per week. Of those 44% required up to 30 hours and a further 22% needed more than 30 hours per week

2. General Comments

The main themes from the comments included.

2.1 Affordability- Some respondents report still finding childcare to be expensive. Although the funded childcare offers have expanded significantly in the last few years some families are still struggling with the cost. In September 2025, the final stage of the funded childcare expansion rolls out and will enable eligible families to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare (term time offer) from the term after a child turns 9 months up to starting school.

2.2 Availability- The number of families requiring childcare before 8am continues to increase whereas requiring a later finish, after 6pm has decreased by 13% in the last year. Some families have reported that they have had difficulty finding a suitable place even though they have contacted providers in early pregnancy. Many have had to put names down on waiting lists at multiple providers in the hope of getting a place nearer the time. Families with school age children have reported they need more wraparound childcare., including an earlier start, later finish, and more availability during the school holidays.

2.3 Accessibility- Families with children with additional needs have found it difficult to access childcare places as they feel that providers do not have the knowledge and experience to meet their Childs needs.

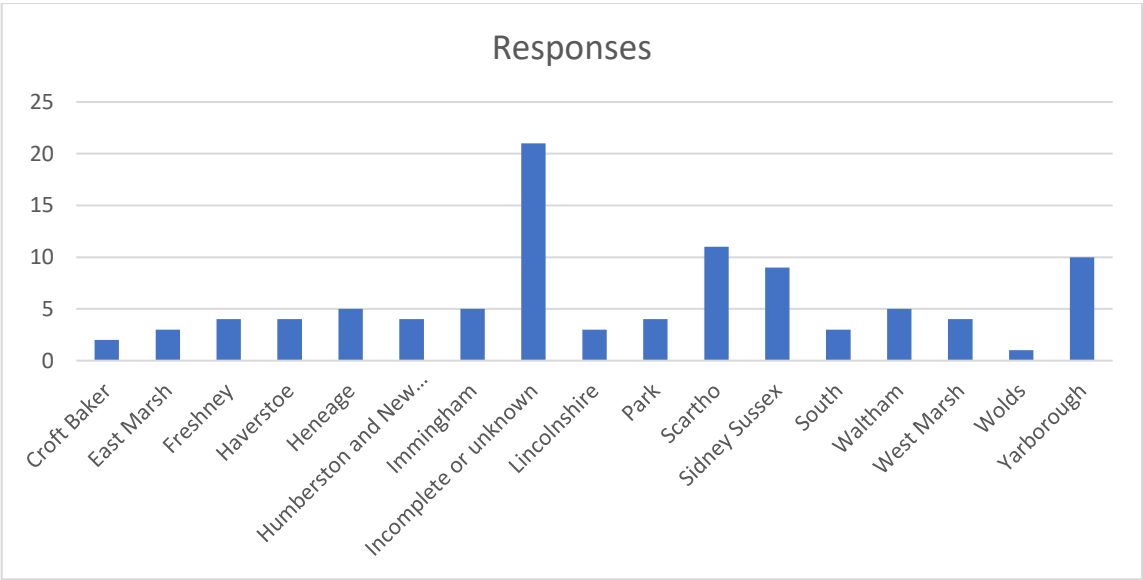
3. What next

NELC will share the results of the survey with local childcare providers and will collaborate with them to review and explore ways to increase their childcare offers to meet the needs of local families.

The Families Information service will continue to market and raise awareness of the childcare funding offers including what is available, who is eligible and how to access. The FIS web pages on the NELC website will be reviewed regularly, as will the information shared on the social media pages. This will ensure that information is clear, up to date and comprehensive for families with a specific focus on the availability of childcare and funding for local families.

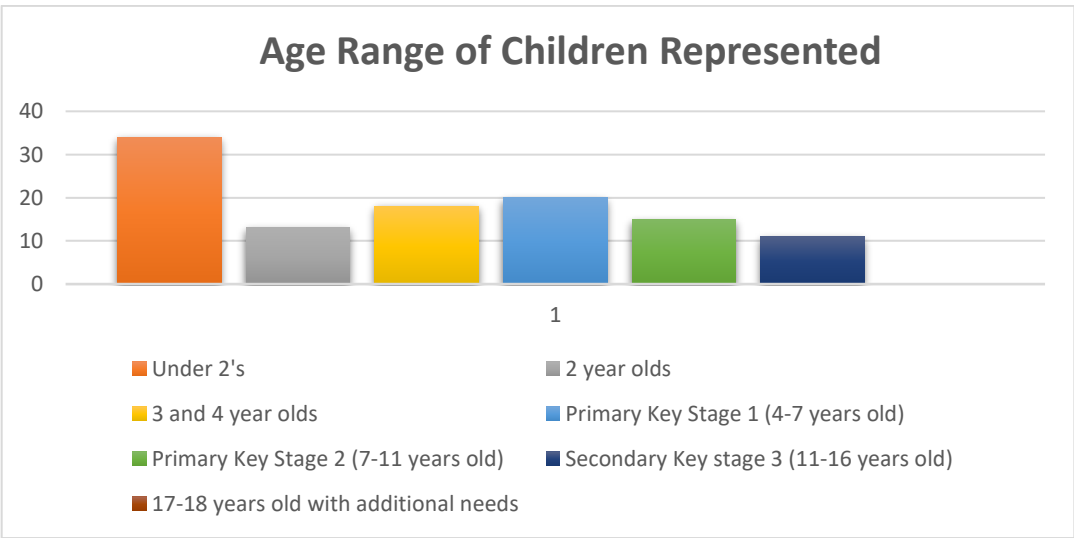
4. Results of the Parent Childcare Survey 2025

All fifteen wards within the borough were represented, and a further 24 responses were submitted from Lincolnshire or had incomplete postcodes recorded. The biggest response (11%) came from families living in Scartho ward with the average of all other wards being 5%.



There were 123 children aged 0 to 16 age range represented within the responses. A total of seventeen respondents did not specify the number of children.

Over half (59%) of the children were aged 0 to 4 years. The under 2's had the most children represented at 31% of all. Of the other age ranges, 18% were Key stage 1, 13% Key stage 2 (primary age) and 10% in Key stage 3 (secondary age)



5. Survey responses and comments

Q. Do any of your children have additional needs?

Yes	12%	No	66%	Blank	22%
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Q. Have you found it difficult to find the right childcare for your child with additional needs?

Yes	50%	No	50%
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Q. What issues did you have?

Setting not able to meet their needs	40%
Didn't feel confident with the options available	40%
Other (please specify) (20%) • My children needing to fit in with other children and the school rather than adapting the environment. • Due to child's needs, physical, newspaper lot more looking after	

Q. Is your child registered for and using school transport?

Yes	2%	No	76%	Blank	22%
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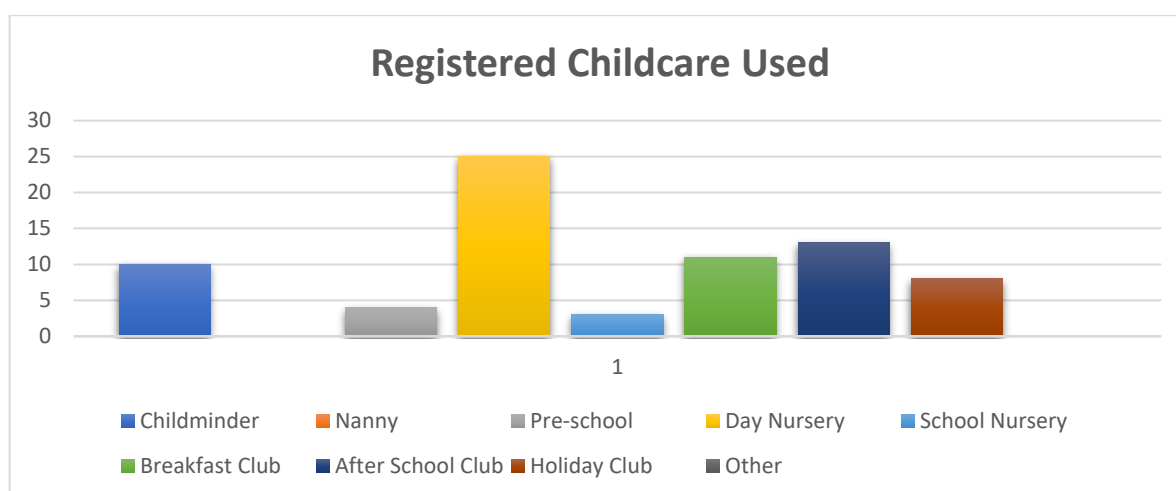
Q. Do you use registered childcare or wraparound childcare?

Yes	50%	No	25%	Blank	25%
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Q. Are you likely to use childcare or wraparound childcare in the future?

Very Unlikely	25%	Unlikely	21%	Neutral	8%
Very Likely	25%	Likely	21%		

Q. Which type of registered childcare do you use?



Q. How many days a week do you use breakfast club?

1	0%	2	0%	3	9%	4	0%	5	36%
Varies each week			45%		Only when needed			10%	

Q. How many days a week do you use after school club?

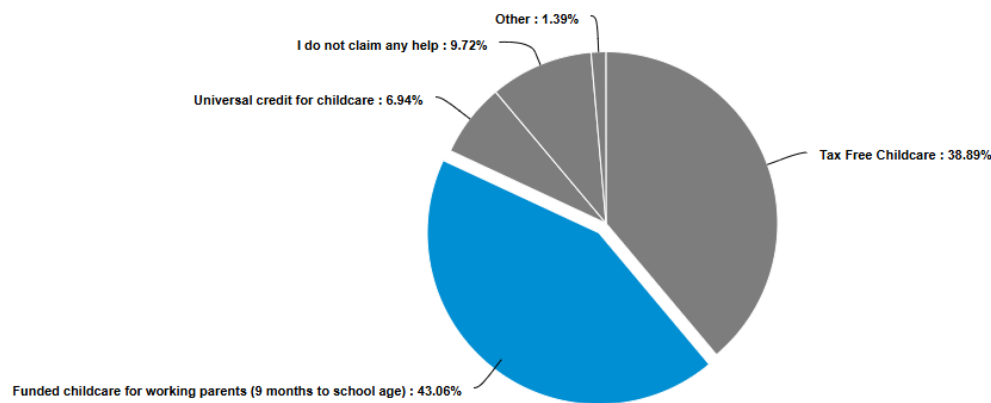
1	0%	2	23%	3	23%	4	15%	5	8%
Varies each week			23%		Only when needed			8%	

Q. Could you tell us the name of your childcare provider or School? A full list is available on request

Childminder	PVI* Childcare	School	Other including out of area settings
9	15 Day Nurseries 3 Pre-schools 4 WAC	1 Breakfast Club 5 Infants or Juniors 13 Primaries 3 Secondaries	2

*Private, Voluntary, or independent provider

Q. Do you use any of the following to help with your childcare costs? Tick all that apply

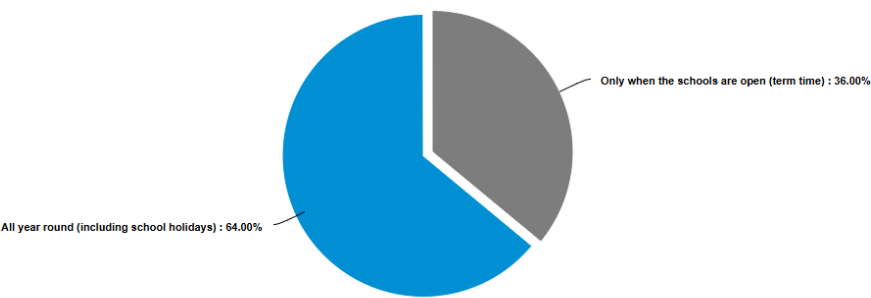


Other- I'm not able to access any other help.

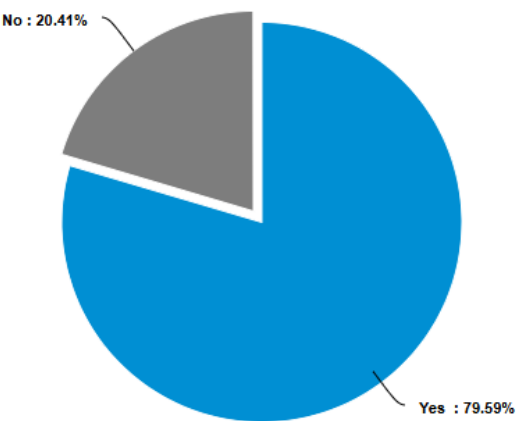
Q. If you do not use formal childcare, what stops you from using formal childcare and /or wraparound childcare? Please select all that apply

My chosen childcare provider is full	15%
I can't afford it	18%
I can't get the hours I need	7%
I don't need childcare	33%
Other (please specify) (27%)	
- No suitable clubs for my disabled child. Nursery she attended out of school clubs at (previous times) charged me for the sessions (£10) and (£12.41ph) on top for a 1:1. Meaning 2 hours at clubs cost me £34.82 - Family help with wraparound childcare - can't find any, they are all full - Currently on maternity leave (2) - Lack of understanding and support for additional needs	

Q. If you do use formal childcare, when do you use it?



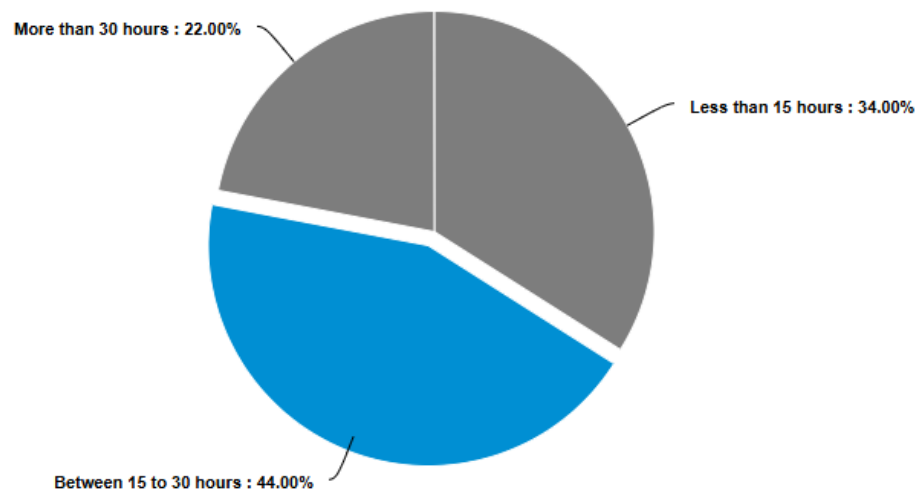
Q. Do you know you can “stretch” the funded childcare offers?



Q. What are your main reasons for using childcare? Please tick all that apply.

So that I can work	55%	So that I can study/train	2%
I use the funded childcare places for working families	10%	To help my Childs development	28%
So that I can do other things	4%	To give me respite as my child has additional needs/SEND	1%
Other			

Q. How many hours of childcare do you use over a normal week?



Q. Since June 2024 have you used more or less childcare?

I use about the same	55%
I use less childcare because I can no longer afford too	8%
I use less childcare because the hours/days offered no longer suit me	2%
I use less childcare because my childcare provider is closed	0%
I use less childcare because I no longer need the childcare as my work has changed	2%
I use more childcare because I can no longer use family and friends to look after my child/ren	11%
I use more childcare as I have increased my working hours	11%
Other 11% - I use less childcare as I moved my son from nursery to preschool due to issues with the nursery. - not used any - Year on year, there has never been adequate provision. I've gone from my child being a baby to now 14 without any provision available. - On maternity leave - I use less childcare as I struggle to find a setting that meets my youngest needs. - Baby born last year. Just entered childcare. - I struggle as opens the same time as I need to start work	

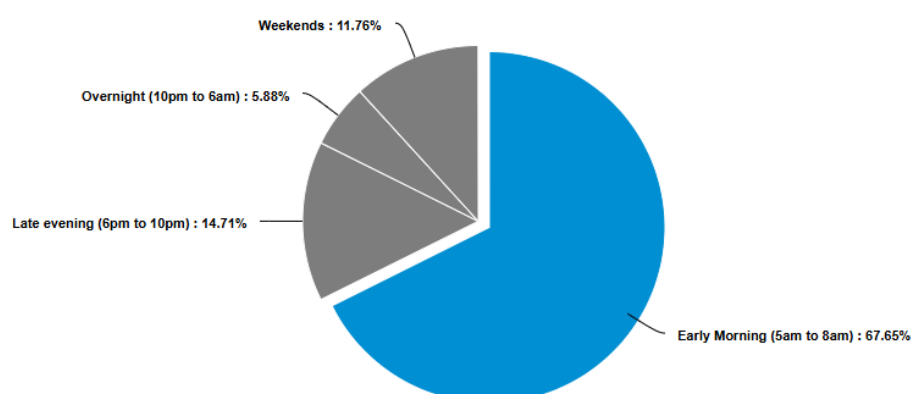
Q. Can you get the right number of hours for children for

	Yes	No
work, training and education	73%	27%
the funded childcare from 9 months to school age	68%	32%
Wraparound childcare in school/s	50%	50%

Q. If you use formal childcare (pre-school, nursery, school nursery, childminder, after school, holiday club, etc) or have used formal children but cannot get enough hours, what stops you using more childcare?

The childcare provider is full	29%
I can't afford it	42%
The childcare provider offers all parents the same number of hours	4%
My chosen childcare provider isn't open for all the days/times I require	9%
Other 16% • Not required (2) • We alternate working from home. • Provider availability for days required	

Q. Do you need childcare for these times or days?



Q. What extra childcare do you need? (Tick all that apply)

Pre-school	7%	School Nursery	3%
Day Nursery	24%	Breakfast club	21%
Childminder	4%	Out of school club	18%
Nanny	3%	Holiday club	20%

Q. Where do you need childcare?

Close to home	53%	Close to work	35%	Close to school	11%
Other 1% At school					

6. Other Comments**Q. Is there anything you would like to tell us about childcare provisions in North East Lincolnshire?****6.1 Affordability**

- The general cost of it is really expensive. As a single mum if I didn't qualify for universal credit I'd struggle even more than I do now.
- It's expensive, they don't cater for working parents outside of a '9-5'.
- Can't afford it even on high income we struggle, struggle to find spaces that would accommodate hours we need, we have to top up during holidays and unemployed people who don't need childcare fill up spaces that are needed for working people. There should be a priority system where working people and families with additional needs get spaces allocated first, and be able to have flexibility as a lot of us works shifts and haven't got set days, where people who are at home all the time and can do any day should be allocated spaces once working and additional needs families have got their spaces secured

6.2 Availability

- Bursar Primary academy desperately needs wraparound care. Their after-school clubs only run until 4pm which is only 45 minutes after school closes. As a teacher it's almost impossible for me to get to pick my child up on time. My husband is an engineer who works 8-4.
- Not enough school holiday clubs with better hours a lot are school hours but doesn't help for working families when you also already having to use breakfast and after

school, also for the holidays for both my children is going to cost me £1483 I only work 3 days a week so

- Earlier breakfast clubs and better access to after school clubs
- Nurseries don't open early enough (before half 7) so I have to travel out of town to a provider that does, which means it is 20 minutes away from my home.
- Was very difficult to source a place. I put my name down for numerous nurseries' whilst pregnant and multiple providers were still unable to offer me a space once this was required as they were full.
- Whilst I don't use the wrap around care at the moment due to not needing it, I will do in the future when necessary. I need childcare of the holidays which is very expensive. If you work, you get no help.
- Moving majority of nursery hours to Scartho nursery from September as my child turns 3 and will receive 30hr funding for working parents. This nursery offers more flexible sessions from as little as 3 hours as well as morning crèche and after school club. More nurseries
- My childminder is stopping school pickups this will be a big issue if out of school clubs don't go on long enough to collect my child when I work as a teacher in Scunthorpe.
- Not a lot of options for holiday clubs and before /after school club. It's difficult to get a place and when enquired it is on a 'first come first served basis so unable to organise work provisions which is very stressful.
- Limited number of spaces, long waiting lists, unable to get first choices of childcare as they were full even after putting my name down early when I was pregnant.
- it's not enough, I've been calling around for weeks.
- I'd prefer if nurseries would open a bit earlier (or for longer days).
- Needs to be more available.
- There are not enough holiday clubs covering working hours, they are all short hours like 9-3 10-2.
- When I returned to work when my child was 1 year old I could not a place at any nursery, I had added my child to the waiting list prior to him been born. As an NHS worker the havelock nursery onsite gave me a place because I was an NHs worker
- I am concerned if I expanded my family, there would not be enough childcare from 9 months old, due to the new funding which has come out and huge waiting lists in settings.
- Can be difficult to find providers local to me due to high numbers of people needing it locally. Also, on the cusp of the hours needed for funding by 1 hour per week so could become an affordability problem.

6.3 Accessibility

- Childcare providers don't have the knowledge and experience to recognise send needs in children, especially when they 'mask', this leads to children coming home unable to cope and dysregulated. I had to reduce my daughter's days from 8am to 5pm 4 days a week (planned to increase to 5 days) to just 2 days a week 9:30-4:30pm, or she has horrendous meltdowns as soon as she gets home and struggles to regulate again before she's back. Even doing 2 days in a setting that doesn't understand her needs leaves her distressed and dysregulated. My child's school doesn't offer breakfast club.

6.4 Other

- Why, in the question 'Do you need childcare for these times or days?' isn't childcare between 3.15-6.00 pm listed? I desperately need childcare after school as I work until 5pm then need to travel back from Hull but the childminder closes at 4.45 pm. School clubs are not reliable as they are stopped at short notice to accommodate school events like parent evenings etc.
- I have previously used wrap around care at school but no longer need this.
- I am a grandparent, and my daughter has to use breakfast club and after school club because I have to work myself and can't look after my grandchildren either before or after school. Had the retirement age for women stayed at age 60, many grandmothers could babysit and cook the children's evening meals rather than the government having to fund all these childcare places. I am currently age 61 and babysit when I can but with my retirement age now being 67, I can't help as much as I would like. Yes, I do understand that some children may not have a grandparent close by but historically women used to retire age 60 and very often were care givers to their own grandchildren and also their elderly parents.
- The staff at Bursar Primary Academy are absolutely incredible, we just need after school clubs every day so I can pick them up rather than relying on grandparents every day.
- I'm not sure what wrap around children in school means? And I'd like more info on the next steps for nursery/reception and if the funding hours still apply after 3/4 years old or is school free after nursery/reception age.

7. Requests for further information

Q. We are here to help If you would like to receive more information about any of the following topics, please provide an email address and we will be in touch.

Of the respondents, 21 requested further information on the following subjects. The Families Information Service (FIS) have made contact and provided the relevant information and offered further assistance if required.

	Requests
I would like to know more about the childcare available locally,	9
I would like to know more about the funding I may be entitled to, to help pay for childcare	7
I need some help finding the right childcare	5
I would like to know more about what information, advice and support is available to families locally.	6
I would like to know more about activities, clubs, or fun things to do	15

8. Early Years and Childcare Provider Feedback

Each year all early years and childcare providers, including private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and schools, are asked to complete the Families Information Service (FIS) annual childcare audit. The annual childcare audit ensures that FIS hold the most up to date and accurate information for each provider. This information can be accessed by families, professionals and other services via [Family Information Service Directory | NELC](#)

The audit is requested from

Provider Type	Total Number of Providers	Additional type of Service Provided	Total Number
Childminder	54	Breakfast Club	1
		Out of School Club	1
		Holiday Scheme	1
Day Nursery	22	Pre-School	1
		Breakfast Club	1
		Out of School Club	1
		Holiday Scheme	3
Pre-school	16	Breakfast Club	2
Out of School Care (PVI)	9	Breakfast Club	7
		Holiday Scheme	9
Nursery School	2	Breakfast Club	2
		Out of School Club	2
Primary, Infants & Junior Schools	47	Nursery Class	33
		Breakfast Club	38
		Out of School Club	26

The audit also asks providers to include feedback on any concerns from parents/carers. The information provided is below.

Q: Have you experienced parents/guardians raising concerns regarding childcare in the last 12 months around any of the following:

Choice and flexibility	Yes - 20
<i>If YES, please provide details:</i> - We have always been quite flexible but due to more babies attending or staffing numbers being tight, we can no longer offer many ad hock hours / days like we used to. We are receiving calls from several parents saying they had names down at other nurseries then getting told they can no longer start, so needing a place at short notice, - Parents have commented how they have enrolled their children in settings they don't particularly like, just so their child has a place	

- Opening hours-stay open later
- As we are currently full and have been for the last couple of years we cannot be as flexible as we previously were in terms of extra sessions or swapping days.
- parents struggling to get 2 sets of children to different childcare
- I have several parents on my list who have returned to me for a place for their unborn child after having a previous sibling with me. I am unfortunately unable to offer anything solid until September 2027 at the earliest and they are relying on the chance of someone leaving for preschool the year before rather than book elsewhere. I am unable to take on more staff due to space requirements currently
- Wanting After School Care
- Not enough spaces in the area. Other providers not as flexible as us
- Parents asking for term time only places for 0 to 2 years with working families funding which we do not provide.
- Some parents have threatened to pull their child out of my setting as I don't have more sessions available for them, 30 hours
- little choices, may have to travel
- We take children from 2 years old. If a child already attends a setting and is in receipt of the 9month old funding but don't start with us until they are 2 (after the actuals have been submitted) they will have to pay for childcare until the following term.
- I find some parents are needing weekend care only and some are wanting care to begin as early as 6 am so they can get to their place of work on time.

Availability**Yes - 45***If YES, please provide details:*

- Not enough spaces
- Our lack of sessions from April 2026
- Spaces limited at nurseries across the area.
- We have always been quite flexible but due to more babies attending or staffing numbers being tight, we can no longer offer many ad hock hours / days like we used to. We are receiving calls from several parents saying they had names down at other nurseries then getting told they can no longer start, so needing a place at short notice,
- Lots of people asking if I have availability and stating they are struggling to find a child minder with availability
- We just really struggle to get children in, add extra days etc.
- Some parents worrying September places will be full.
- Baby places are regularly requested
- Many have been struggling to find spaces from September due to the increase in hours
- Parent have requested baby space options. We would be keen to address this if funding was available
- Wanting extra hours but no places
- Our local preschool closed and following this I've had quite a lot of enquiries, as well as keeping on children who were due to be attending some days.
- When parents want to increase their sessions and we do not always have the availability
- We do not have availability for parents to extend sessions. We do not have availability for baby room, and I have had a few unhappy prospective parents whose babies have been on the waiting lists for a long time, and we still cannot offer places.
- Not enough spaces/ flexible hours available
- I have a lot of enquiries but unfortunately, we are full with a wait list
- I have had parents contact me looking for childcare that are struggling to find providers with the availability that they require

- We have a waiting list and could fill another 0-2 room
- parents struggling for younger siblings No space to accommodate all the extra hours
- requiring more sessions
- does not offer holiday care for over 8's.
- Availability for parents is very limited in my setting, a parent came to me at 6 weeks pregnant for a space, but I was unable to offer anything solid for 2 years. Parents are often tied to a specific area due to time constraints for work and sibling at local schools
- Wanting After School Care
- We are offering after school club from Sept 25 as the local setting has closed
- Unfortunately, sessions are full with no availability until the next academic year
- There have been families wanting to increase sessions, or potential new families wanting to join, although there was a waiting list as it took a while to find new staff.
- Not enough spaces in the area. Other providers not as flexible as us
- Yes, lots of parents enquire about places and are disappointed when I tell them I do not have availability, I don't think parents realise how early they need to book a place, and they leave it too late.
- Some parents have threatened to pull their child out of my setting as I don't have more sessions available for them, 30 hours
- having to wait.
- Parents are 'spooked' by stories in the media regarding lack of funded places for under 2's and are applying to multiple nurseries prior to birth. This has the effect of us spending administration time on children that do not eventually attend.
- a number of families have contacted me regarding care, but I simply cannot offer them one, due to being full.
- Concerns that it may not be available into next academic year and beyond as younger siblings progress into school and families require childcare support.

Quality**Yes - 9***If YES, please provide details:*

- Quite a few children have joined us from settings where they weren't happy with the quality of support for children with SEND.
- Potential parents have commented that on show rounds, settings have been eager to gain funding details before paperwork has been signed purely to secure the funding at their setting but showing low quality care and attention to Childs/parent's needs.
- parents moved children to our nursery from other settings
- Parents have been specific with me that the service I offer is of a high standard and they won't accept anything less just for convenience or cost.
- Parents having to take "any" spaces regardless of possible quality concerns
- the quality is reported as the same but there are now more costs for making gifts, going on trips and weekly resourcing. Parents sometimes do not have money for days out and experiences.

Affordability**Yes - 14***If YES, please provide details:*

- They shared that other friend's providers of childcare settings have all put their prices up and only allow funded hours to be used during certain times of the day
- A parent told me that they couldn't get the low income 2yr funding because they earn too much, but they said they couldn't have the working either. I said to double check because I hadn't heard this before.
- I have noticed a change in parents' attitudes, requiring 'more' for their funding.

- Many parents have said some early years settings, mainly nurseries are charging extra fees and top up fees which sometimes amount to the same price the parent would have paid without the funded hours.
- I have a child who attends another nursery, prices are extortionate even though they have enough funding hours
- Some changed their contracts when we changed the terms and conditions of using funded hours during term times. They used to be able to use them between 8am-5pm but it was no longer financially sustainable for us to do that. No complaints were made but some contracts were changed as a result.
- The parents that use my service openly share that they feel any additional charges and my pricing structure is honest and fair and reflects the service they receive.
- Costs going up across all of the sector
- price rise of sessions in term holidays for September. They may go up by £1
- Many families on UC cannot afford to wait for the initial payment to be repaid from UC so this limits them accessing the service. Low-income families in Eash Marsh find the costs challenging, even when reclaiming through UC



Sources of information

Families Information Service
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George Street,
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DN31 1HB

North East Lincolnshire
Parent Childcare Survey 2025

Prepared by:

Families Information Service

Title: Parent Childcare Survey 2025

Author: Early Years Entitlements Team

Published: Autumn 2025