



Summary of key research findings: What do parents think?

In a prompted question the most important issues for parents and carers of children under five years were spending quality time with their children (43 percent first mention) and providing housing and food (39 percent first mention).

Looking at what would help parents and carers of children under five years the most, respondents declared that the most helpful measures would be:

- Continuing free health services for under six year olds
- Removing GST from basic food items
- Extending paid parental leave from 13 weeks to a year, and
- Having a universal tax credit system.

Other helpful measures identified by parents were:

- Lower cost day care
- Support and recognition for a parent to stay at home with children
- Advice for new mothers
- Parenting courses and information, and
- Financial support to provide learning experiences for children.

48 percent of the parents we researched use paid day-care services. Of these:

- 59 percent said they had ‘difficulty’ in getting back-up for last minute emergencies
- 49 percent said they had problems finding day-care for a mildly sick child
- 45 percent said finding affordable, quality day care was a challenge

When asked where and how often they get advice and help for the care of their children:

- 54 percent of parents go to friends ‘a lot’ or ‘quite often’
- 50 percent of parents go to their own parents ‘a lot’ or ‘quite often’
- 45 percent go to parents’ magazines ‘a lot’ or ‘quite often’

Other sources of advice identified by parents were wider family members, the doctor, early childhood educators, Plunket, PlunketLine, church, and government agencies.

When asked what is the most effective way to guide children to behave well:

- 96 percent said praising and encouraging good behaviour is the most effective
- 94 percent leading by example
- 76 percent giving them rewards for tasks well done
- 75 percent talking to them about what is right and wrong
- 63 percent taking time out

71 percent of parents told us that “smacking when they do things wrong” was the least effective way to guide children to behave well.