

ONS new data on time use and parenting in lockdown

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Parents spent more time on childcare during lockdown

- Parents spent more time on childcare during lockdown and childcare responsibilities were a big cause of disruption for working parents.
- Parents were twice as likely to be furloughed (13.6%) as those without children (7.2%).

Time spent on childcare increased for parents and caused work disruption for many working parents.

Type of childcare changed – more ‘developmental’ childcare delivered

- Parents spent more hours on developmental childcare (such as helping with school work, reading) than on things like dressing their children or taking them to school (non-developmental childcare).
- Time spent on non-development childcare fell by a third during lockdown, which includes getting ready for school and going out for recreation (56 to 38 minutes a day).
- The amount of time devoted to developmental childcare (e.g. helping with homework and homeschooling) increased 169% from 24 to 64 minutes a day.

Lockdown introduced a reversal of time spent on childcare types: more hours were devoted to developmental activities than non-developmental activities.

Fathers doing more of the ‘enjoyable’ childcare

- Parents rate developmental childcare more enjoyable than non-developmental childcare.
- Fathers are more likely to spend time on developmental than non-development childcare.

Parents rate time spent homeschooling and reading with their children (developmental childcare) as more enjoyable than feeding or supervising them (non-developmental childcare). Fathers were doing more of the fun part of raising children during lockdown.

Mothers still doing the majority of childcare – especially for younger children

- During lockdown, women were spending two-thirds more time on childcare than men, with much of this focused on non-developmental childcare and supervising children.
- The more enjoyable parts of childcare, as rated by parents (e.g. reading, helping with homework), are more equally shared between mothers and fathers.
- Women supplied a larger part of childcare for children aged under five: 78% more childcare than men. In households with children over 5, women do 20% more childcare.
- Housework, the least enjoyable activity as rated by both women and men, continues to be done overwhelmingly by women.

The larger differential in who provides care for younger children may be because younger children require more non-development childcare such as washing, feeding and cuddling, that tends to be provided by the mother.