

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Early Years Session 2021-22 Parent Survey Findings

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the findings of the parent survey and actions to address the issues raised.

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Early Years Session 2021-22 Parent Survey Findings.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Early years consulted with parents/carers/carers through a survey, which closed on 2 November 2021. The survey covered the following themes:
- 2.1.1 Delivery of 1140 hours
 - 2.1.2 The application process for a funded place
 - 2.1.3 Parent/carer satisfaction with the quality of provision
 - 2.1.4 Support for children with additional support needs
 - 2.1.5 Parental engagement and involvement
 - 2.1.6 Deferring entry to primary 1
- 2.2 This report outlines the findings of the survey and sets out how the council will address the issues raised.

3. Background

Duty to consult and plan on delivery of early learning and childcare.

- 3.1 Under section 50(1) of the 2014 Act, education authorities must, at least once every 2 years:
- 3.1.1 Consult with persons who appear to be representative of parents of children under school age in their area about how they should make early learning and childcare available.
 - 3.1.2 Have regard to the views expressed in the consultation and must prepare and publish a plan setting out how they intend to make early learning and childcare available.

4. Main report

Delivery of 1140 hours

- 4.1 786 parents/ carers responded to the survey. 65.27% access their funded early learning and childcare at local authority nursery and forest kindergarten settings, and 29.64% in private partner provider provision. The remaining responses came from parents/carers using voluntary sector, childminder or a blend of provision.
- 4.2 The majority of parents/carers were able to access their first choice of setting 92.37%. Of the sixty responses who did not receive a place at their first choice setting, 95% received a place at their second or third choice setting.

- 4.3 1140 hour placements are provided through a variety of delivery models including full year and term time provision. 56.15% of parents/carers had a term time placement and 41.67% a full year placement. Of the full year placements, 17.82% had the option to purchase additional hours. The remaining responses had blended placements. The model provided, met the needs of 74.1% of the respondents.
- 4.3.1 48.34% would prefer term time
- 4.3.2 43.92 % would prefer full year
- 4.3.3 8.06% would prefer a blended model
- 4.4 Seventy four comments were submitted in relation to the model of delivery and it was clear that many parents/carers would prefer more flexibility in the models of delivery available to them. We are confident we will be able to provide more flexible options for parents/carers from August 2022 with the completion of the five new build early years settings across the city.

The application process for a funded place

- 4.5 We asked parents/carers to comment on what could be done to improve the process of accessing a place at nursery. 14.6% of respondents provided feedback on how the process could be improved. The following provides details of the key themes, issues for parents/carers and what could be done to address these:
- 1. Theme - Council website**
Issues - Difficult to find information on childcare.
Solution – Early years is working with the communications team to update the website and make it easier for parents/carers to navigate and find the information they need.
 - 2. Theme – Online centrally managed applications.**
Issues – Parents/carers complete multiple applications. Requirement to email or hand in personally to settings.
Solution – The creation of an online application process started in 2019 and this was due to be linked with the new national SEEMIS early years system with an expectation it would be in place for August 2020. Unfortunately, significant delays to the national system has negatively impacted on the availability of the online application process for parents/carers. The newly created online application form has been tested with a sample group of parents/carers and is ready to start as soon as the new SEEMIs early years system is due to go live in session 2022-23.
 - 3. Theme – Communication.**
Issues – When and how

 - to apply for a place
 - to receive notification of a place

Solution – Although guidance on sharing placement offers with parents is available to all settings, it is evident from some parental responses, that communication about places and what happens when places are not available, could be clearer. Therefore, a flowchart will be created and added to the web page. This will then be shared with all EY settings for them to communicate with parents/carers. This communication will be updated annually and include information on what happens on receipt of their applications and the dates when parents/carers should expect notification/confirmation of their child's placement. The process for advising parents/carers when places are not available will also be included.

The admissions criteria for allocating places

- 4.6 77.42% of respondents agreed with the current criteria for allocating funded places. Eighty comments were received regarding the admissions criteria; there was a wide variety of views expressed with no clear preference for change. Views expressed on the criteria related to; the inclusion of siblings; catchment areas; priority for working parents/carers and also the order of priority for the criteria.

Parent/carer satisfaction with the quality of provision

- 4.7 Parents/carers were asked what was important to them when considering the quality of early learning and childcare based on a scale of 1-9 where 1 is the most important. The following shows the order of importance to parents/carers and the level of satisfaction they have with their current setting for each factor.

Order of priority	Factor	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
1	How staff interact with my child.	87.13%	11.21%	1.66%
2	How much individual care and attention my child gets.	75.48%	19.57%	4.96%
3	How much my child is learning	81.66%	15.80%	2.55%
4	The range of different experiences my child gets.	78.02%	17.28%	4.70%
5	The qualifications of staff.	77.11%	21.23%	1.66%
6	How well the provider keeps me informed and engaged.	73.66	15.27%	11.07%
7	Facilities of the setting.	82.82%	13.99%	3.18%
8	Setting's inspection reports.	75.73%	22.48%	1.79%
9	Local reputation.	75.19%	23.92	0.89%

- 4.8 "How well the provider keeps me informed and engaged," received the highest level of dissatisfaction which correlates to a common theme in responses throughout the survey. Parents/carers shared the impact that COVID restrictions have had on communication and engagement with their child's early years setting. Comments include;

- 4.8.1 *As we no longer are allowed in nursery we don't see what's going on every day – themes/topics etc.*
- 4.8.2 *I know COVID has restricted a lot of things, but I feel in the dark about what's going on at my child's nursery.*
- 4.8.3 *Feel detached from my son's experience in nursery...*
- 4.8.4 *Would like to view my child's learning setting in person...*
- 4.8.5 *If workload allows, more individual images of my child going about her everyday life at nursery. This would be lovely to see as we cannot enter the building at present due to COVID restrictions...*
- 4.8.6 *Now that collection is at the door there is very little opportunity to hear from staff what children have done.*
- 4.8.7 *I would like to see inside the nursery or at least a video of a walk round as due to COVID restrictions I haven't seen inside.*

Parental/carer engagement and involvement.

- 4.9 In order to target support for parents/carers, it was essential to find out which areas they were most interested in being involved in. 79% wanted to find out more about their child's learning, which was a highlighted/strong/continuous theme throughout the survey. The majority of parents were also interested in learning how families can help their child and
- Education, Children and Families Committee 1 March 2022

how everyday experiences can support their child's learning. 58.58% of parents/carers would like to be more involved in their child's setting e.g. volunteering.

Support for children with additional support needs

- 4.10 27% of parents/carers (215) responded to the questions regarding additional support needs. 56.67% of total ASN responses (119) felt their child was welcomed and included in the early years setting and 69.28% (115) agreed appropriate support is in place to support their child.
- 4.11 A small number of parents/carers commented that their child's nursery went 'above and beyond' to support their child. None of the comments received expressed negative experiences about the level of support for their child, but there were a few comments that suggested communication could be improved and the return of access into the nursery would relieve concerns about how their child was doing. This may be why the percentage of responses above have a lower rate of satisfaction than we would expect.

Deferring entry to primary 1

- 4.12 Seven hundred and seventy six parent/carers responded to the question, "Do you plan to apply for a deferred year i.e. an additional year at nursery?"
- 4.12.1 13.84% (106) stated yes.
- 4.12.2 Three hundred and eleven comments were provided for this question. Thirty one parent/carers stated their child currently had a deferred year and thirty five stated they were undecided if they will choose to defer entry to primary 1. Several comments referred to seeking advice from their child's nursery before making their decision.
- 4.13 Sixty eight parent/carers who have decided to defer entry to primary 1 provided a comment. The reasons stated varied and included the following:-
- 4.13.1 Child has additional support needs
"My child is autistic and is a bit behind her peers. We feel that she will benefit from an extra year."
"Child awaiting additional support for learning services due to global developmental delays."
- 4.13.2 Their child would be too young to start school.
"I would like her to start in 2023. I feel 4 is too young and an extra year at nursery will be for the best."
"I feel he would benefit from being older when he starts school, rather than being one of the youngest in his peer group."
- 4.13.3 Looking ahead to High School.
"...I would prefer him to be a little older when he makes important decisions in high school regarding exams and life choices."
"...Thinking ahead, I think she may find it difficult starting secondary school aged 11.5 as she may still be small for her age and possibly not emotionally ready."
- 4.13.4 COVID
"Covid, emotional immaturity, has not had much socialisation."
"...due to not having enough time in a nursery setting as we had a delayed start..."

- 4.14 One hundred and seventy seven comments were received stating parents/carers would not apply to defer entry to primary 1. Most referred to their child being ready to start school. Some felt another year at nursery would not benefit their child:
- 4.14.1 *“We feel she is more than ready to start primary school and it would be detrimental to her to hold her back another year.”*
 - 4.14.2 *“I feel my child is quite advanced and would not benefit from being held back.”*
 - 4.14.3 *“I don’t believe nursery would be enough for him at this stage.”*
 - 4.14.4 *“I feel it would hold him back if I kept him deferred.”*
- 4.15 A few commented they would prefer the option for their child to start school earlier than the current school starting age.
- 4.15.1 *“...if anything I’d like her to be able to start earlier...”*
 - 4.15.2 *“I wish for my child to start primary school early in 2022 rather than 2023.”*
- 4.16 Comments were also received regarding the impact deferrals would have on the ages of children in a primary 1 class.
- 4.16.1 *“I think that the spread of ages in a year group is getting quite extreme as parents try to get their child an advantage to their peers by starting them at school at a later age...someone has to be the youngest in class...”*
 - 4.16.2 *“...she will be academically ready for school despite December birthday...I am more concerned that allowing automatic deferral will mean there are children over a year older than her...”*
 - 4.16.3 *“I’m concerned my daughter will be in a year group with children that will be turning 6 and she will be 4.”*

5. Next Steps

The admissions criteria for allocating places

- 5.1 A link to the early years admissions` policy will be included on the council website as this includes the criteria used by settings for allocating places. The online admissions process will be available to parents once the updated SEEMIs becomes available.

Parental/carers engagement and involvement.

- 5.2 There is career long professional learning (CLPL) is made available to enable all practitioners to develop their skills in working in partnership with families which continues to be a priority for early years.
- 5.3 Four additional learning opportunities are planned this session to support staff to develop their skills in parental engagement, parental involvement, family learning and learning at home. Developing self-evaluation and sharing good practice when working in partnership with parents is supported through network meetings throughout the year across early years, primary and secondary sectors.
- 5.4 The Peep Learning Together program continues to be developed through network meetings, Peep Champions as well as feedback from managers. These interventions will lead to improved approaches and parents/carers will have increased opportunities to be both involved in the life of the Early Learning and Childcare and engaged in their child’s learning.

Support for children with additional support needs

- 5.5 Many early years settings have managed to keep parents/carers well informed throughout the COVID 19 pandemic by using video chats and virtual tours of the nursery.
- 5.6 The Early Years Leading the Strategy sessions in January 2022 provided an opportunity to showcase innovative approaches used by early years settings to ensure parents/carers and children can be supported and welcomed, whilst also acknowledging the challenges of managing COVID restrictions.

Deferring entry to primary 1

- 5.7 Information for parents regarding the deferral process is available on the council website, but the landing page is not easy for parents to find and the early years information on the website is not easy to negotiate. We will work with the council website team to make this more accessible.
- 5.8 Information will be added to the website on how to apply for early access to primary 1 for those parents/carers who would like more information on this option.
- 5.9 Early years settings and schools will be supported to ensure parents/carers are aware of the approaches to developing play pedagogy in primary 1 classes to support children's continuity of learning experiences across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The additional cost of accommodating a child deferring entry to Primary 1 in a Partner Provider setting is £6,748 per annum.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Background reading/external references

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/early-learning-childcare-statutory-guidance-july-2021/>

8. Background/External Reading

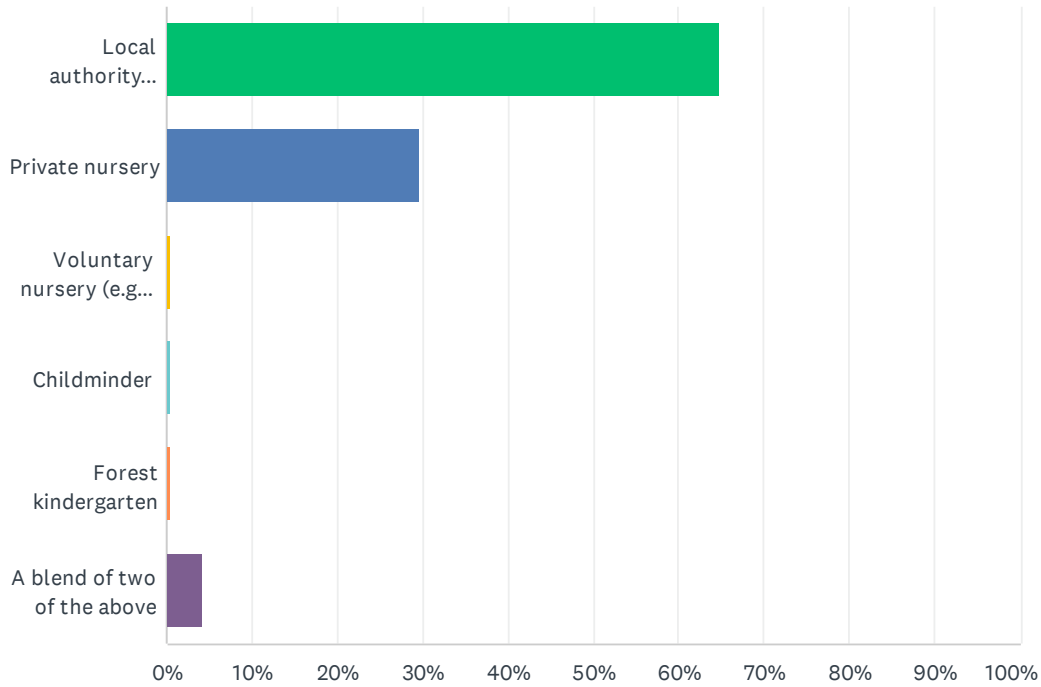
N/A

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Early Learning and Childcare Parent and Carer Survey 2021

Q1 How do you currently access your funded hours of early learning and childcare?

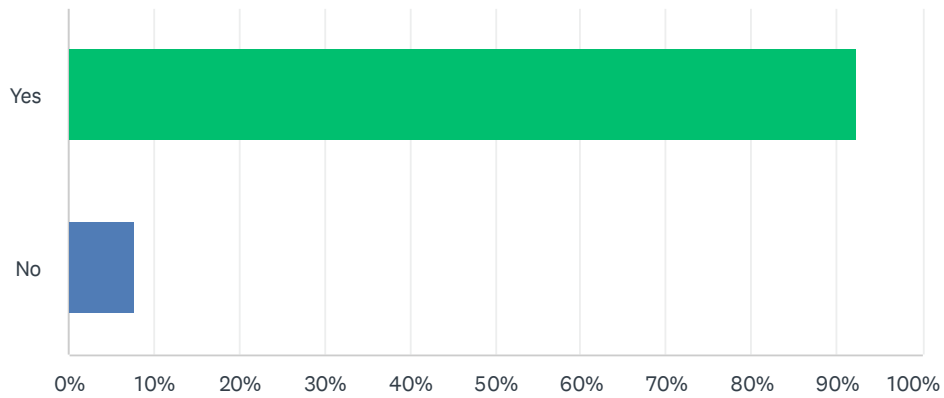
Answered: 786 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local authority nursery	64.89%	510
Private nursery	29.64%	233
Voluntary nursery (e.g. playgroup)	0.51%	4
Childminder	0.38%	3
Forest kindergarten	0.38%	3
A blend of two of the above	4.20%	33
TOTAL		786

Q2 Did you get a place at your first choice setting?

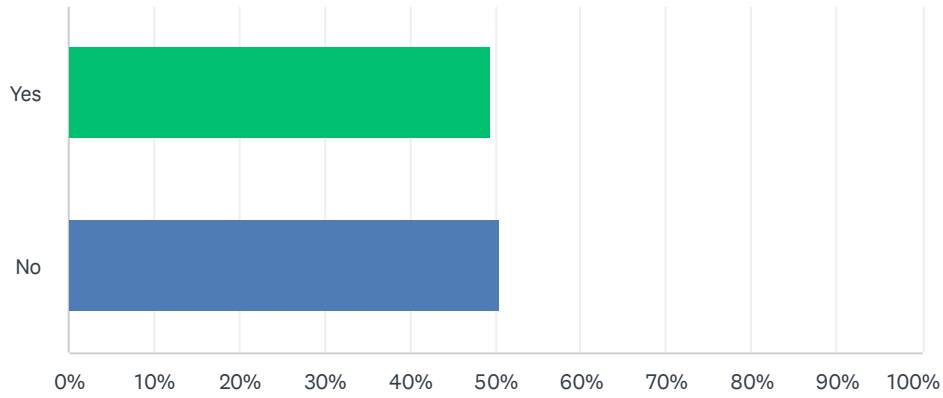
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	92.37% 726
No	7.63% 60
TOTAL	786

Q3 If you answered NO, is your current place at your second or third choice nursery?

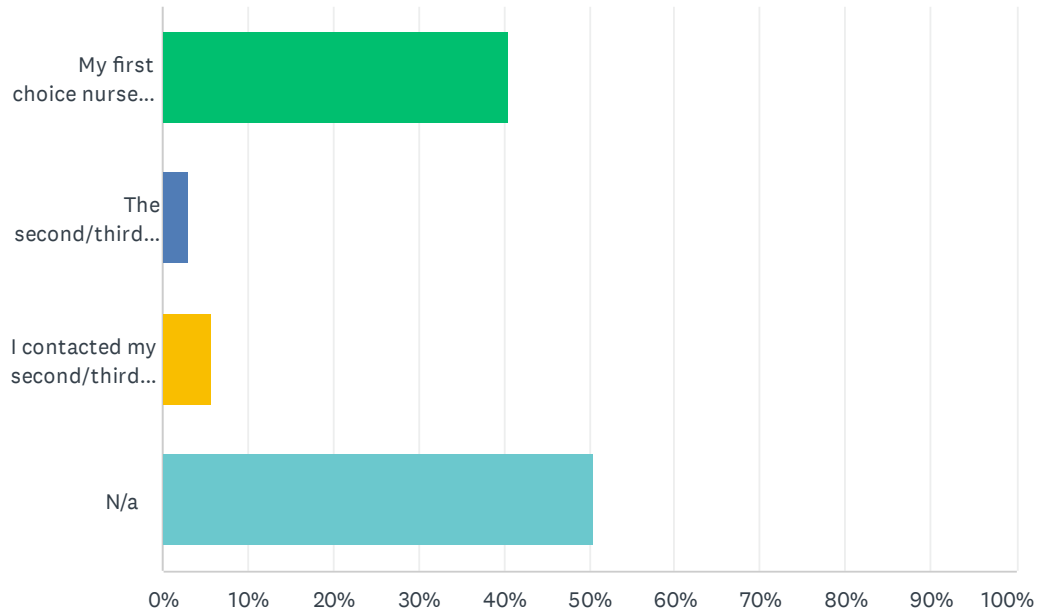
Answered: 115 Skipped: 678



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	49.57%	57
No	50.43%	58
TOTAL		115

Q4 How did you find out you had a place at your second or third choice nursery?

Answered: 626 Skipped: 167



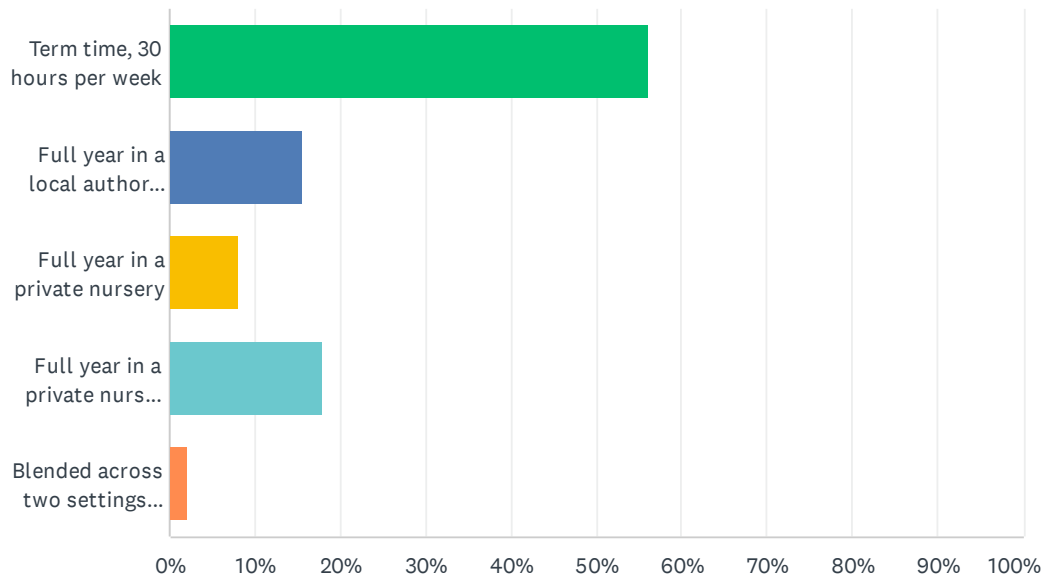
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
My first choice nursery let me know	40.58%	254
The second/third choice nursery contacted me	3.04%	19
I contacted my second/third choice nursery	5.75%	36
N/a	50.64%	317
TOTAL		626

Q5 Could anything be done to improve the process of accessing a place at your first, second or third choice nursery?

Answered: 229 Skipped: 564

Q6 How do you receive your funded hours?

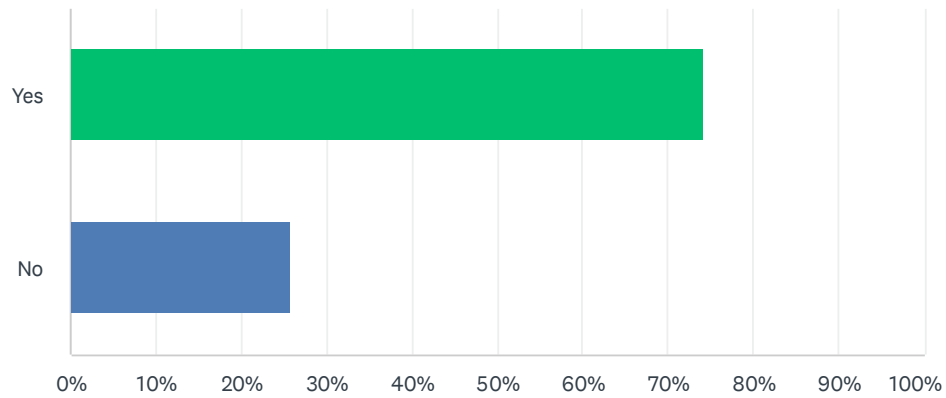
Answered: 780 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Term time, 30 hours per week	56.15%	438
Full year in a local authority nursery, two full days and flexi Friday	15.64%	122
Full year in a private nursery	8.21%	64
Full year in a private nursery with the option to purchase more hours	17.82%	139
Blended across two settings (e.g. local authority nursery and partner childminder)	2.18%	17
TOTAL		780

Q7 Does this option meet your needs?

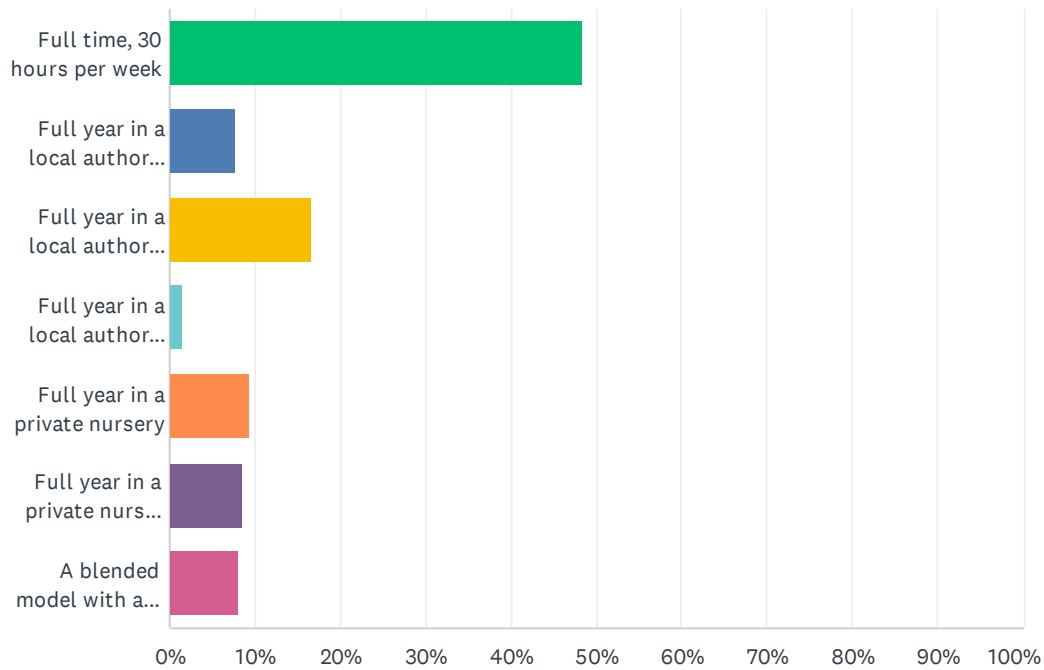
Answered: 785 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	74.14%	582
No	25.86%	203
TOTAL		785

Q8 If NO, which of the following options would you prefer?

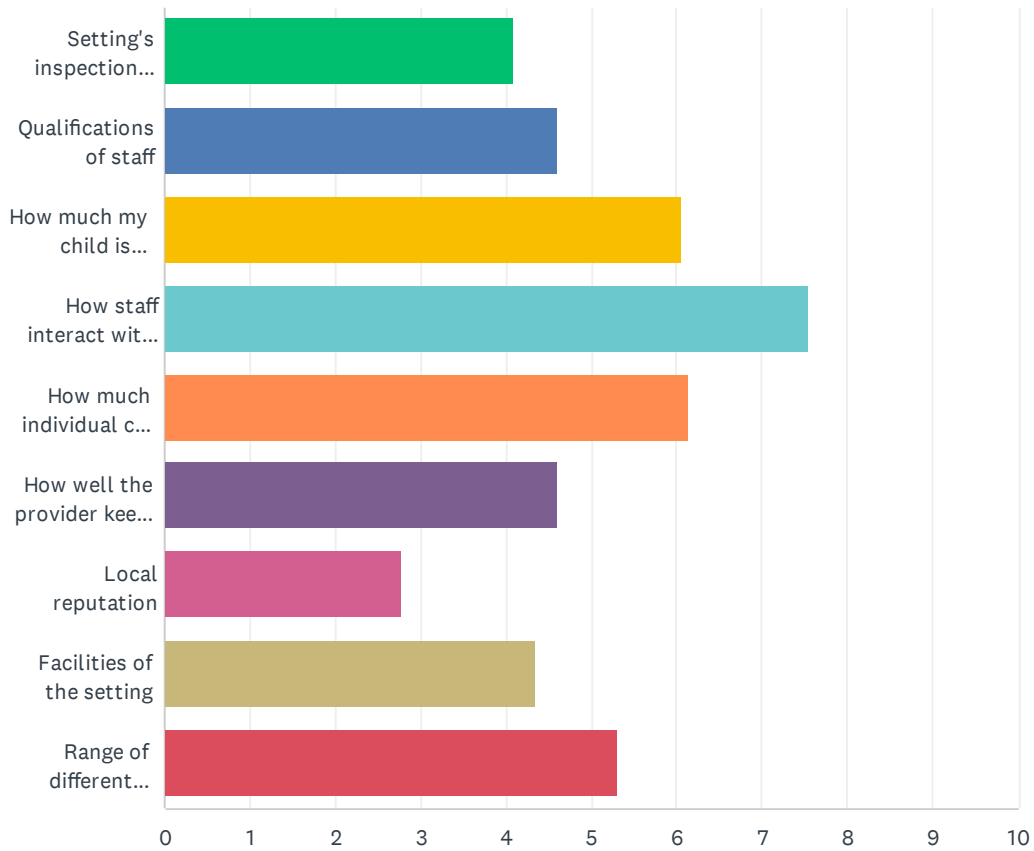
Answered: 211 Skipped: 582



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Full time, 30 hours per week	48.34%	102
Full year in a local authority nursery, two full days and a flexi Friday	7.58%	16
Full year in a local authority nursery, AM only sessions	16.59%	35
Full year in a local authority nursery, PM only sessions	1.42%	3
Full year in a private nursery	9.48%	20
Full year in a private nursery with the option to purchase more hours	8.53%	18
A blended model with a partner childminder	8.06%	17
TOTAL		211

Q9 All of the factors below are important in ensuring our services provide high quality early learning and childcare. Using 1-9 where 1 is the most important, please rate the following in order of importance to you

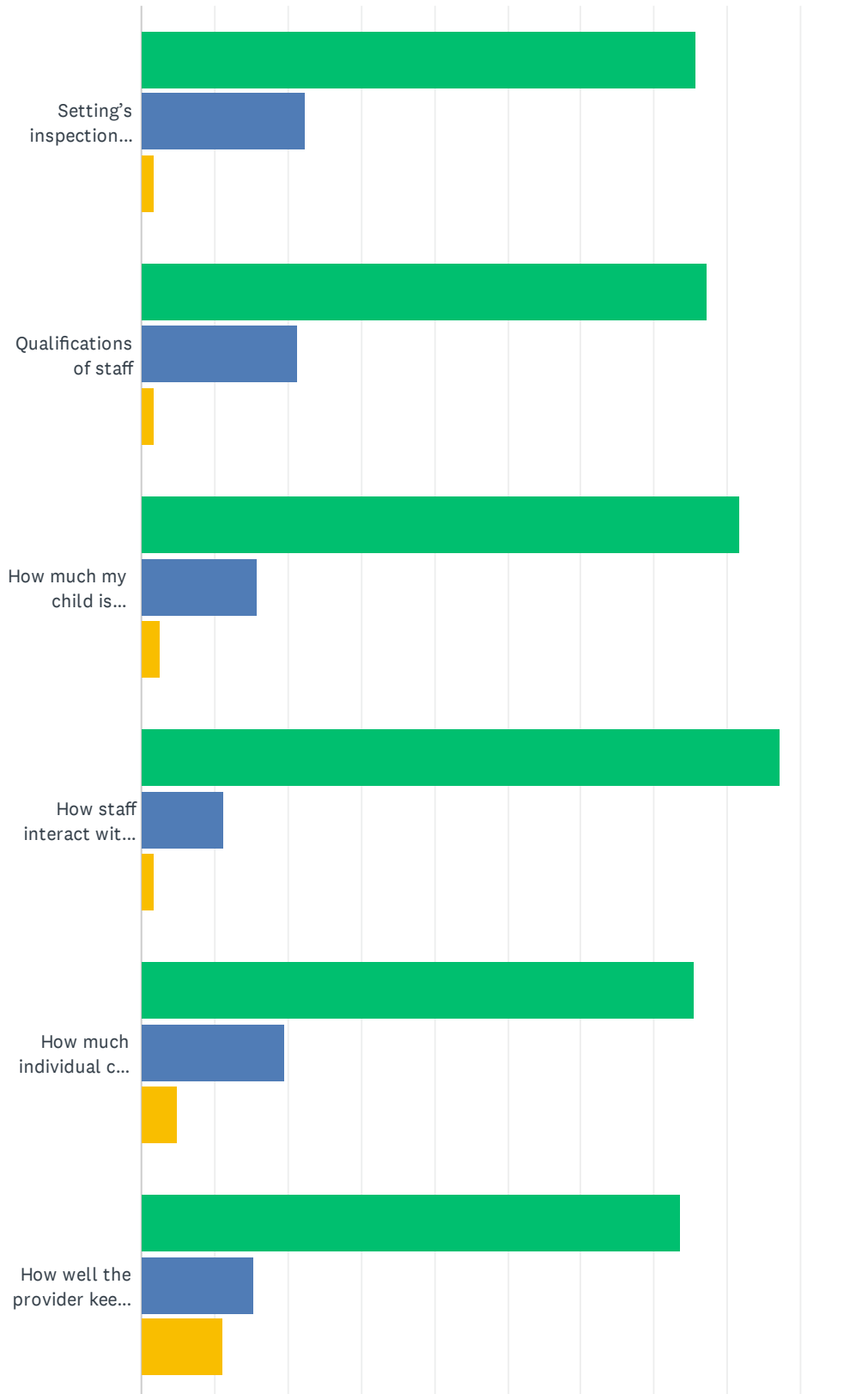
Answered: 781 Skipped: 12

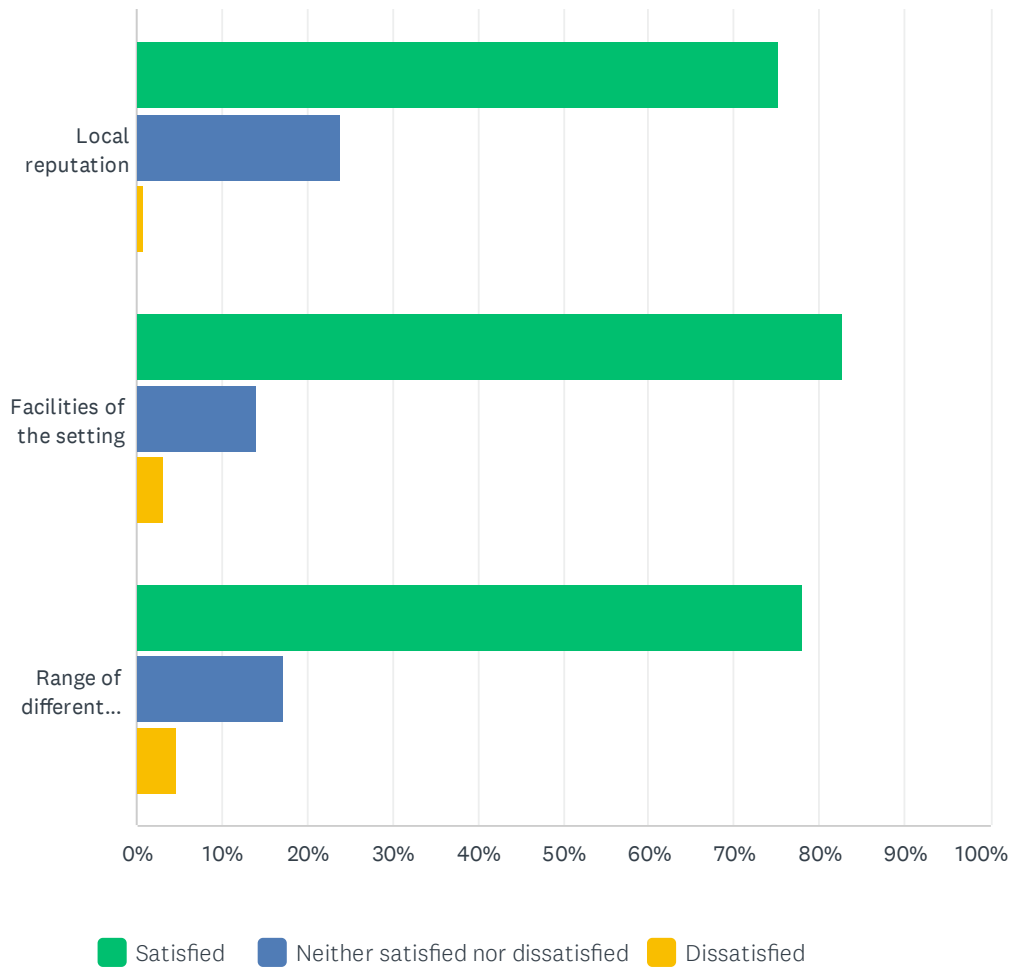


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL	SCORE
Setting's inspection reports	10.71% 78	5.63% 41	6.18% 45	7.69% 56	7.14% 52	11.13% 81	12.91% 94	20.47% 149	18.13% 132	728	4.09
Qualifications of staff	7.40% 54	9.59% 70	9.59% 70	9.73% 71	12.05% 88	10.96% 80	17.12% 125	13.56% 99	10.00% 73	730	4.61
How much my child is learning	14.56% 106	15.38% 112	17.86% 130	16.07% 117	12.23% 89	8.79% 64	6.59% 48	5.77% 42	2.75% 20	728	6.06
How staff interact with my child	41.79% 303	22.90% 166	14.34% 104	7.31% 53	5.79% 42	3.86% 28	1.24% 9	0.97% 7	1.79% 13	725	7.55
How much individual care and attention my child gets	14.31% 104	19.81% 144	15.82% 115	14.58% 106	11.83% 86	9.49% 69	6.19% 45	5.09% 37	2.89% 21	727	6.14
How well the provider keeps me informed and engaged.	1.62% 12	6.89% 51	9.59% 71	13.92% 103	18.38% 136	19.32% 143	15.00% 111	10.54% 78	4.73% 35	740	4.60
Local reputation	3.64% 27	3.78% 28	2.02% 15	3.24% 24	5.67% 42	7.02% 52	15.52% 115	19.30% 143	39.81% 295	741	2.78
Facilities of the setting	2.71% 20	6.78% 50	10.04% 74	12.35% 91	12.35% 91	15.88% 117	15.06% 111	15.74% 116	9.09% 67	737	4.34
Range of different experiences my child gets.	8.07% 62	12.11% 93	15.76% 121	14.97% 115	13.41% 103	11.46% 88	8.20% 63	7.03% 54	8.98% 69	768	5.30

Q10 How satisfied are you with your child's current setting in relation to each of the following?

Answered: 787 Skipped: 6

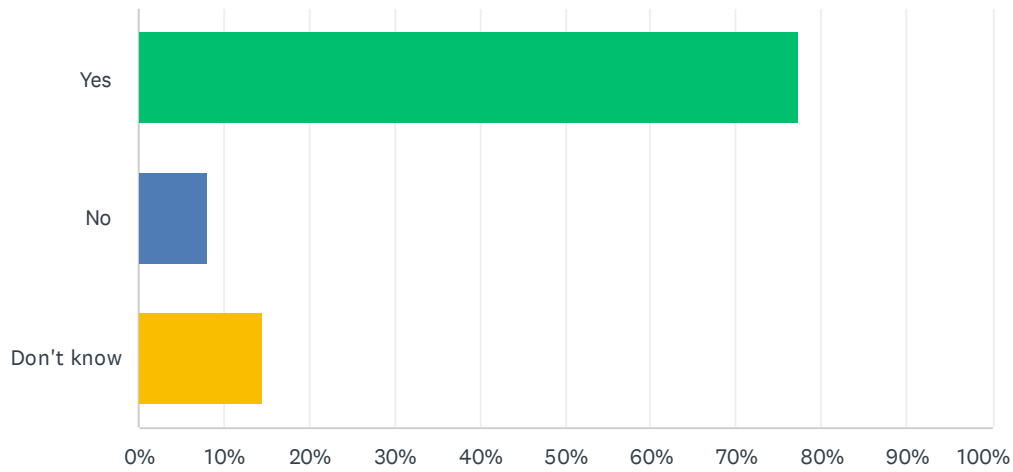




	SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
Setting's inspection reports	75.73% 593	22.48% 176	1.79% 14	783
Qualifications of staff	77.11% 603	21.23% 166	1.66% 13	782
How much my child is learning	81.66% 641	15.80% 124	2.55% 20	785
How staff interact with my child	87.13% 684	11.21% 88	1.66% 13	785
How much individual care and attention my child gets	75.48% 594	19.57% 154	4.96% 39	787
How well the provider keeps me informed and engaged	73.66% 579	15.27% 120	11.07% 87	786
Local reputation	75.19% 591	23.92% 188	0.89% 7	786
Facilities of the setting	82.82% 651	13.99% 110	3.18% 25	786
Range of different experiences my child gets	78.02% 614	17.28% 136	4.70% 37	787

Q11 Do you agree with the criteria for admissions?

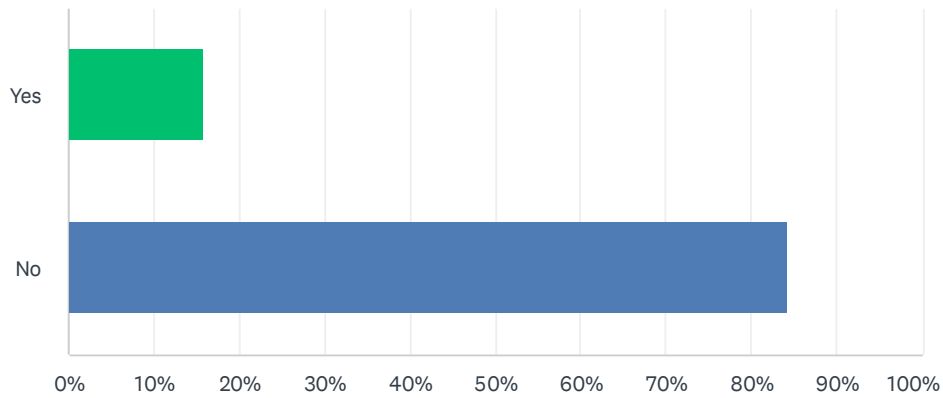
Answered: 775 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.42%	600
No	8.13%	63
Don't know	14.45%	112
TOTAL		775

Q12 Does your child have a January/February birthday?

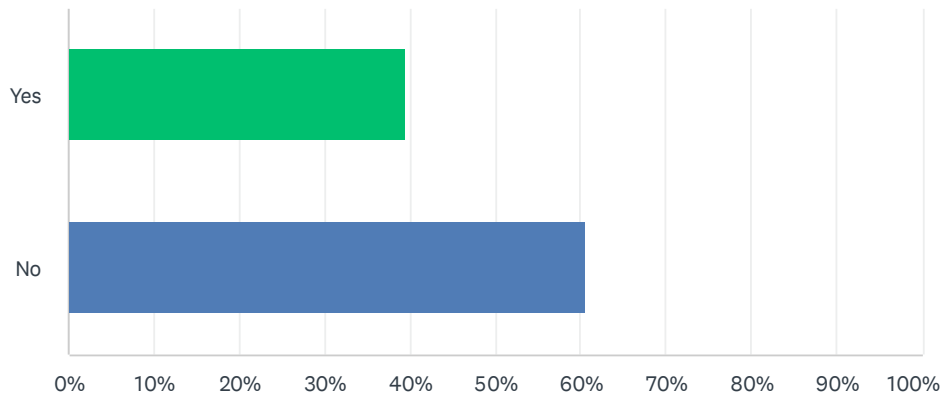
Answered: 777 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	15.83%	123
No	84.17%	654
TOTAL		777

Q13 Does your child have an August - December birthday?

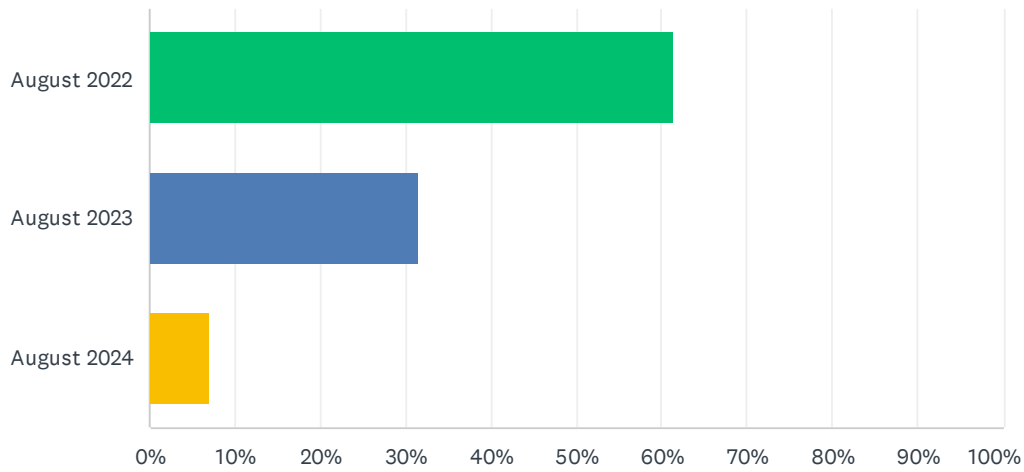
Answered: 748 Skipped: 45



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	39.44% 295
No	60.56% 453
TOTAL	748

Q14 When is your child eligible to start primary school?

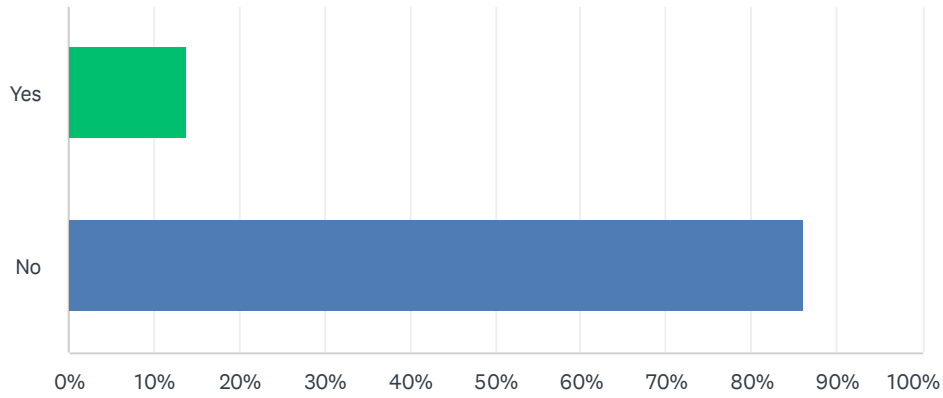
Answered: 775 Skipped: 18



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
August 2022	61.42%	476
August 2023	31.48%	244
August 2024	7.10%	55
TOTAL		775

Q15 Do you plan to apply for a deferred year i.e. an additional year at nursery?

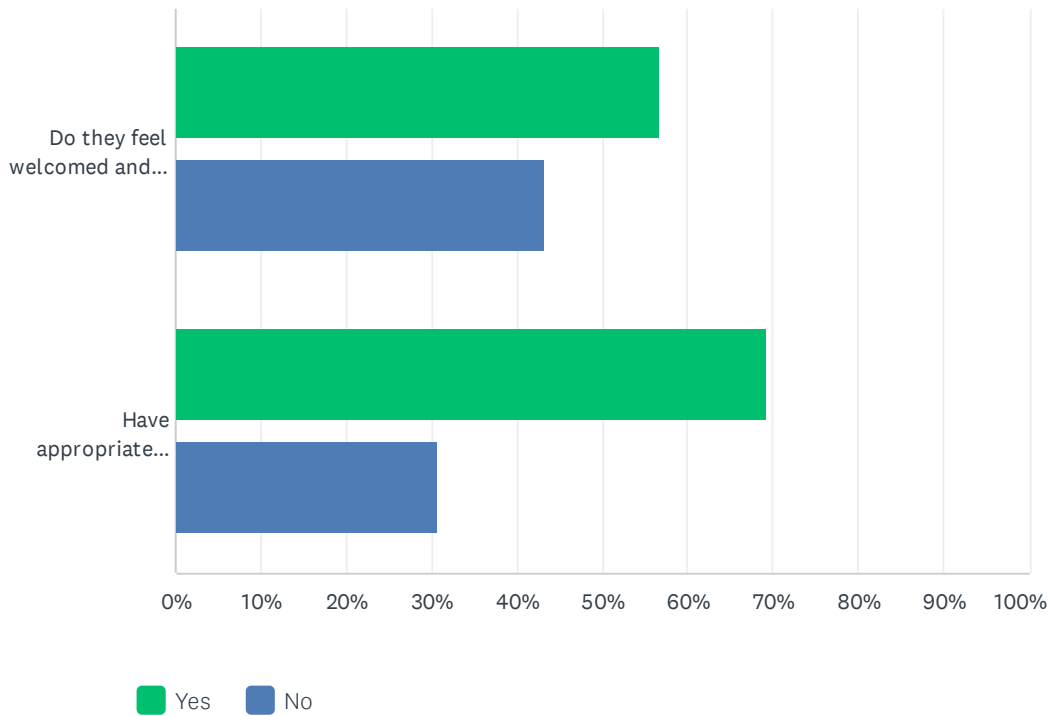
Answered: 766 Skipped: 27



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.84%	106
No	86.16%	660
TOTAL		766

Q16 If you have a child with additional support needs:

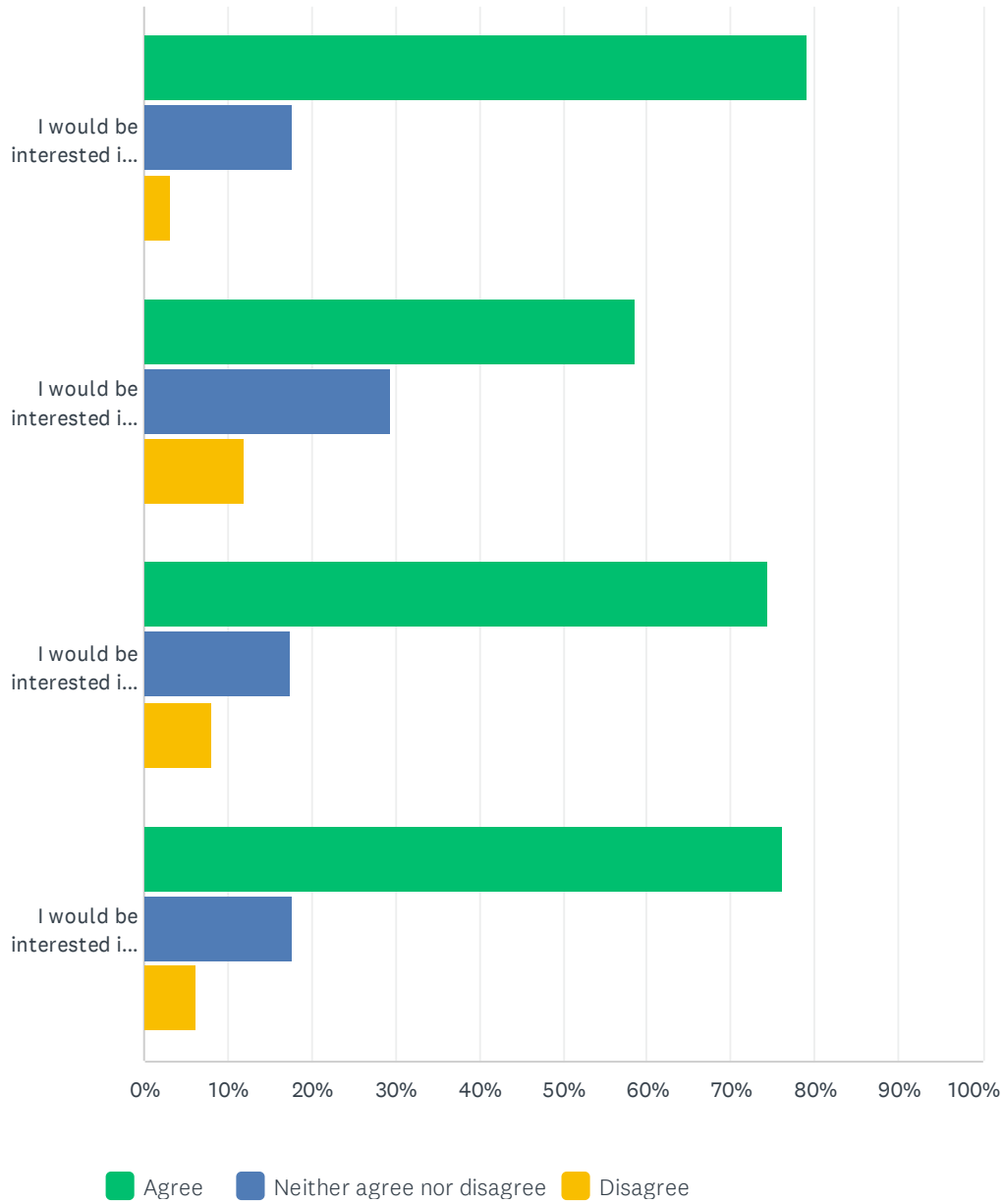
Answered: 215 Skipped: 578



	YES	NO	TOTAL
Do they feel welcomed and included in the Early Learning and Childcare setting?	56.67% 119	43.33% 91	210
Have appropriate supports been put in place for your child?	69.28% 115	30.72% 51	166

Q17 We would like to use your feedback to provide additional training for early years staff, please could you provide feedback on the following.

Answered: 779 Skipped: 14



	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	TOTAL
I would be interested in finding out more about engaging in my children's learning e.g. linking learning from home to early years setting and vice versa.	79.08% 616	17.72% 138	3.21% 25	779
I would be interested in finding out more about how to be involved in the early years setting e.g. volunteering, aims of setting, parent groups to support setting.	58.58% 454	29.42% 228	12.00% 93	775
I would be interested in finding out more about family learning e.g. how I can improve my own and my families skills to help my child.	74.45% 574	17.51% 135	8.04% 62	771
I would be interested in finding out more about learning at home e.g. how everyday experiences support my child learning.	76.20% 589	17.72% 137	6.08% 47	773

Q18 Please use this space to add additional comment on what would be helpful to you as a parent/carer.

Answered: 136 Skipped: 657