

**The Families, Children and Child Care
Study**

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Some results from first 3 years

- Qualitative study, Non Maternal Care (NMC) by 6 months
- Factors predicting satisfaction with NMC and communication with carer at 10 months
- Quality at 10 and 18 months
- Factors predicting child outcomes at 36 months
- Factors predicting management of child care at 3 years

The FCCC study

- Major UK study N=1201
- 2 Sites: North London, Oxford
- Followed families from 3 months to 51 months

Research team:

Professor Jacqueline Barnes

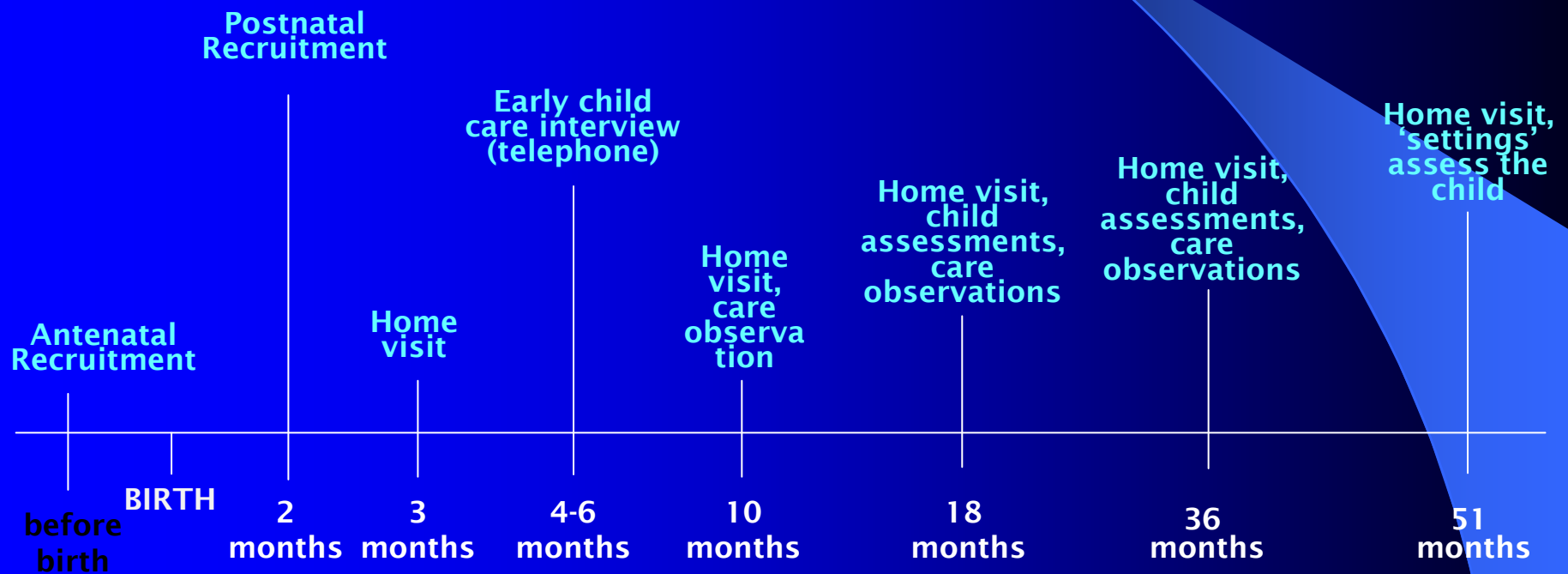
Dr. Penelope Leach

Dr. Lars-Erik Malmberg

Professor Alan Stein

Professor Kathy Sylva

Design of the study 1997 - 2004



Participants

- Social class mix:
 - intermediate (18%)
 - working (40%)
 - professional (42%)
- Some ethnic variability:
 - white 79%
 - black 10%
 - Asian 5%
 - other 6%
- Child first born 51%
- Girl 50%

Most not using Non-Maternal Childcare at 3 months

● Sole maternal care	1100	91.6%
● Father	30	2.5%
● Grandparent	29	2.4%
● Childminder	16	1.3%
● Nanny	10	0.8%
● Friend	6	0.5%
● Relative	5	0.4%
● Nursery	5	0.4%

In-depth study, child care started prior to 6 months

- Discussed in detail how they went about deciding whether to return to work, which type of child care, and which carer
- Explored feelings about the child care type
- Explored feelings about the carer

Numbers entering the study

- 527 thought to be eligible, based on 3 month interview, planning child care <6 months
- Telephone contact only 397 eligible
- 162 participated in the study (interviewer availability limited)
- 57 Face to Face interview, remainder brief telephone interview
- All - attitudinal questionnaires

Descriptive information

- Mean age starting care 4.6 months
 - London 4.4
 - Oxford 4.7
- Mean time per week 31.1 hours
 - London 35.8
 - Oxford 27.6

Type of child care used by face to face interviewees

- 17 (30%) Childminder
- 14 (25%) Grandparent
- 11 (19%) Nursery
- 10 (18%) Nanny
- 4 (7%) Relative
- 1 (2%) Friend

Coding framework for maternal work decision

- Maternal – career orientated, relationships beyond motherhood
- Contextual – child care provision, maternity leave, work responsibilities & pressures, job security
- Financial – family need, maternal financial independence
- Infant – temperament, ease of separation, social interaction

Coding framework for type of child care decision

- Practical – cost, convenience, availability, flexibility
- Attributes of care type – learning, safety, 1:1, accredited, healthy
- Attributes of carer – family, familiar, age, personality, experience, qualified
- Relationships – trust, communication, values, existing relationship
- Other influences – media, culture, sibling experience, offers

Decision to work (1)

Maternal and contextual factors

- Maternal factors cited by 90%, especially career orientation (but timing was not their choice)

Many mothers were seeking relationships outside motherhood ('adult' vs. 'baby' worlds)

- Maternity leave was the biggest contextual constraint on choice to work, unpaid leave could not be afforded
- Family's financial need mentioned by 47%

Timing dilemma

I agreed to take short maternity leave. It was an arrangement, but on hindsight I went back too soon to be honest. That's partly why I went for the days. I should have waited till he was at least six months, because I've spoken to a lot of friends and they've all said sort of around six months they were sort of ready to go back to work, whereas I wasn't. But you're naïve when you have your first child.

Mother's identity

I felt strange like he was missing but I also felt... well to say relieved makes me sound like some kind of negligent mother... I went straight into a total work situation. I had to meet with some people – I didn't really have time to dwell on the fact that I wasn't with (child) but I felt relieved that I could do my job properly.

Decision to work (2)

The child

- Infant factors were mentioned by only 14%, all from managerial/professional occupations, and older than average

“The type of baby she is (very easy going and happy) makes me feel happier about using child care. I don’t think I could go out if she was a very crying baby.”

Choice - financial, setting, and infant

“I couldn’t afford a nursery. I had to use a childminder. You’re jealous when you give up your kid to someone just like you except she’s paid to be home with your baby.”

“A lot of my friends with children in nurseries, then spend a lot of time not taking them in because they’ve caught everything that’s going.”

“ She [childminder] seemed to charge the same per hour as people who clean your house which suited me pretty fair !”

Decision, type of care (1)

Fitting in with family needs

- Practical considerations were paramount, mentioned by 87%
- Availability by 62%
- Convenience by 62%
- Cost by 48%
- Flexibility by 42%

Decision, type of care (2)

The environment

- The majority (79%) specified some environmental features
- Provision of learning opportunities and/or social interaction 50%
- 1:1 care by 37%
- Small group size by 33%
- Safety by 33%

Learning: He's in a nice environment where he's got babies to play with, and everyone sort of love, the staff are very dedicated, they love their jobs, which is very important. There's lots of toys for (child's name) to play with, there's a lot of different toys.

Safety: Well, obviously a safe environment for him where there are no dangers going on with loads of animals and lots of strangers around and things like that. (child with grandparent)

1:1 and home: I think I wanted (child's name) to be able to have somebody that she could directly relate to, specifically at this stage in her development. So rather than, say, go to a private nursery where, although she would have a key worker, she would have different people caring for her. I wanted somebody that would actually play a nurturing role and somebody that she could form a close relationship with.

Decision, type of care (3)

The caregiver

- Even more (96%) specified some carer characteristics

- Specific personality type 52%

"She was family orientated and generous"

- Experienced 42%

- Child/carer interactions 42%

- Familiarity 33%

"I'm not sure I'd have chosen her if I'd never met her before"

Childminder optimal

- I think little babies need too much attention, I think they are also more prone to catching things. A lot of my friends who've got small children in nurseries, then spend the next three months not taking them in because they've just caught everything that's going. I might look at that you know when she's over a year and a bit more robust. She (childminder) seemed to charge the same per hour as people who clean your house which suited me pretty fair !

Childminder avoided - preserving mother's role

- I didn't want someone else replacing me, I wanted him in a different place. I didn't want a childminder pushing him round the shops like I would, I wanted him in a different environment.

Keep care in the family?

“If it wasn't me it would have to be my Mum... there's nobody else I'd trust.”

“Of course I'm grateful to her [grandmother]. But she does sort of expect that and rub it in that if it wasn't for her Lucy would be with a stranger.”

Emotional conflict

“It's almost as if that bond you've had with him since he was born, it's not broken, but it's just you just sort of feel.....

I felt I trusted them in the end, the care workers, but the fact of leaving, I just felt a bit

In my job I'm very busy, obviously I miss him, and I still do every time I'm away from him. But it wasn't that I couldn't do it, but it was just the initial starting of work, getting used to not being with him that I found difficult.....

I've learnt to trust these people more, I know them and know how they know Jack more. So I feel happier having been there for a time, but that initial leaving, I don't look forward to leaving him....”

Parent – carer communication, complex balance

“I remember I didn’t ring (childminder) or anything, I thought I mustn’t ring because I don’t want to seem too OTT and an obsessed mother, ringing all the time to find out how my child is. So I didn’t ring and I got back (to childminder’s) at the end of the day and she said “Oh, you didn’t ring”, so it was as if she was shocked and then I felt like a really bad mother because I hadn’t phoned.”

Mother-carer

- You've got to like the person and talk to them and discuss things with them...

(Q confident right choice?)

Obviously I didn't know her so well, I know her a lot better now. It's just a matter of that relationship developing really, isn't it. You learn to trust them.

Decision, type of care (4)

The child

- Fewer mothers (35%) mentioned child factors in relation to their decision
- Age was mentioned by 29%
 - “ *I think 6 months was a good age for him to start nursery because he was not clingy*”
- Child’s emotional well-being by 12%
 - “ *What was best for him was the one key thing*”

Conclusions, early NMC

- Planning for non-maternal infant care is challenging
- Many complex factors were relevant to their eventual decisions
- Choice about the type was more often pragmatic than 'real' choice, some based on avoiding a dislike rather than opting for a preference
- Strong emotions were identified about feelings after returning to work
- Policy implications (Maternity leave 52 weeks in UK now, 39 paid)

Source

Leach P., Barnes, J., Nichols, M. Goldin, J., Stein, A., Sylva, K., Malmberg L-E. and the FCCC team. (2006)

Child care before 6 months of age: a qualitative study of mothers' decisions and feelings about employment and non-maternal care.

Infant and Child Development, 15, 471-502.

Ideal and actual childcare, satisfaction and communication

- Aims of study
 - What predicts satisfaction with child care?
 - What predicts good communication with the care giver?
 - Does achieving ideal child care make a difference?

Ideal plan at 3 months and actual childcare at 10 months

	Number	Ideal %	Actual %
Mother at home full time	501	46	49
Father as carer	94	0.5	<u>9</u>
Grandparent	119	13	12
Other relative/friend	32	2	3
Childminder	122	4	<u>12</u>
Nanny	43	7	4
Nursery / Centre	113	11	11

Proportion who had said it was their ideal type of care

	Number	% using type who said ideal at 3m.
Mother at home full time	326/501	65
Father as carer	2/94	2
Grandparent	30/119	25
Other relative/friend	2/32	6
Childminder	17/122	14
Nanny	21/43	49
Nursery / Centre	37/113	33

Ratings of NMC at 10 months

	Mean Hours	Satisfaction (1-5)	Communication (1-5)
Father	28	4.6 ^A	4.5
Grandparent	30	4.6 ^A	4.7
Childminder	30	4.4 ^{AB}	4.7
Nanny	36	4.4 ^{AB}	4.6
Nursery	32	4.2 ^B	4.5

Predictors of child care hours

- Using ideal type, more hours
- Greater belief in the benefits to the child of mother working, more hours (e.g. children whose mothers work learn valuable lessons about other people they can rely on)
- More belief in costs to the child or mother working, fewer hours (e.g. children are less likely to form a warm and secure relationship with a mother who is working full time)

Predictors of Satisfaction

- Higher maternal education, less satisfaction
- More progressive attitudes, more satisfaction (e.g. children should be allowed to disagree with their parents)
- More confidence in communication, more satisfaction

Carers who relate best to babies/mothers: % assigned top rating by mothers

	Grand- parent	Nanny	Child- minder	Nursery
Very close & loving with baby	98%	76%	85%	58%
Baby greets carer “joyfully”	81%	69%	53%	30%
Baby leaves carer sadly (may cry)	33%	0%	44%	22%
Carer greets baby “joyfully”	93%	65%	70%	56%
Mother gets on “very well” with carer	76%	75%	80%	72%
Mother “very confident” of being told if baby is unhappy	78%	58%	72%	62%

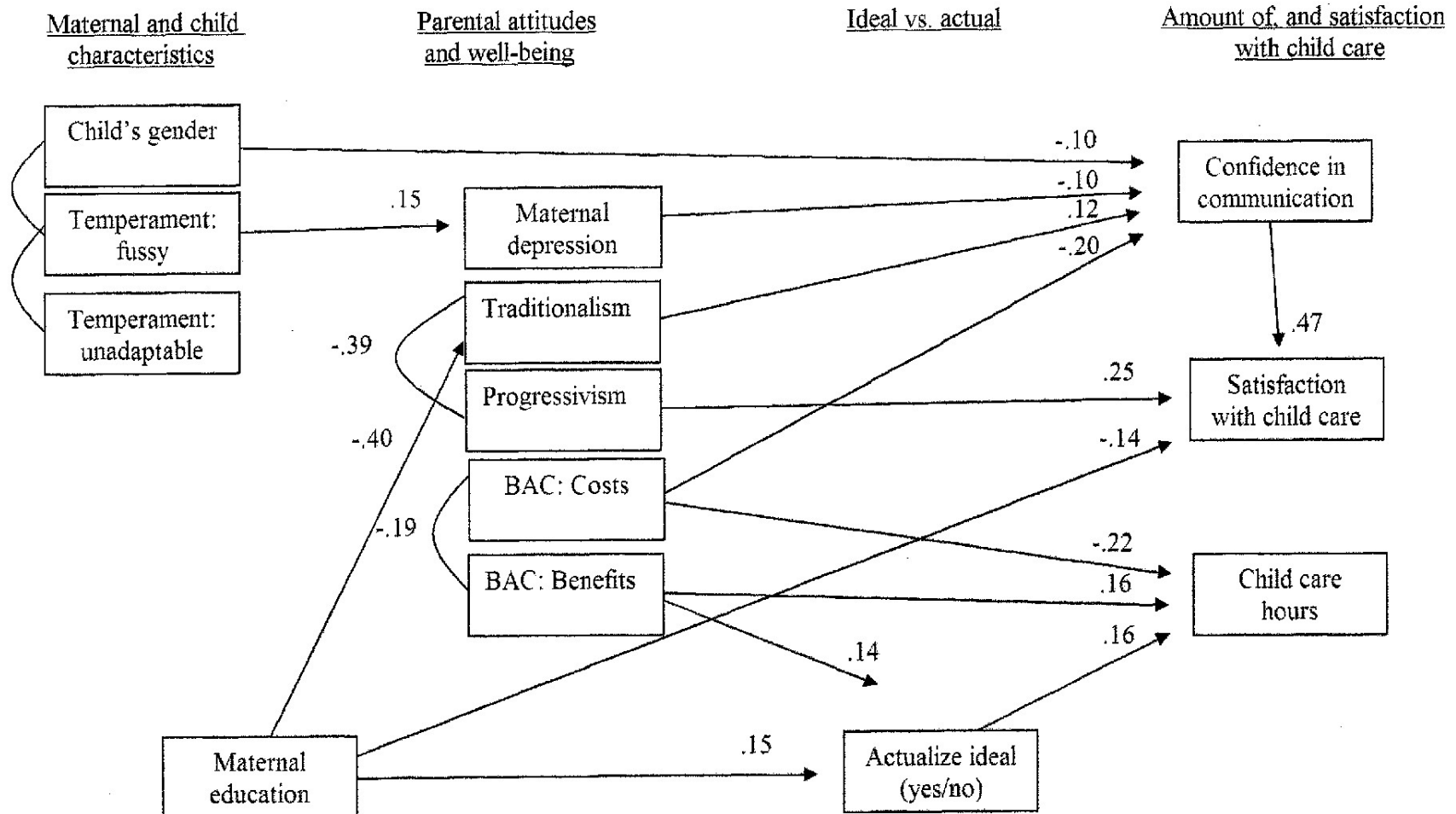
Predictors of Confidence in communication

- More traditional, more confidence (e.g. children should not question the authority of their parents; less education, more traditional)
- More depressed, less confidence (fussy child a predictor of depression)
- Stronger belief in costs to child to maternal working, less confidence
- Child is a girl, less confident

Maternal depression

- At 3 months 11% above EPDS cut-off
- At 10 months 11% above EPDS cut-off
- Negative relationship between 3 month EPDS and 10 month maternal confidence in communication with caregiver
- More depression, less:
 - total confidence
 - confidence will be told about feeding
 - confidence will be told about difficulties
 - confidence will be told if child unhappy

Prediction of satisfaction and confidence in communication



(N=507; $\chi^2_{[59]} = 66.59$; $p = .23$; $\chi^2/df = 1.13$; RMSEA = .016; NNFI .977; CFI = .985; AIC = 156.591)

Conclusions

- Planning for early non-maternal infant care is challenging
- A relatively small proportion get their ideal
- Individual beliefs about family life underpinned most decisions
- Many complex factors were relevant to their eventual decisions

Conclusions

- Child care ideals are rationalisations of personal situations, but actual childcare 'choice' beyond their control, except for those with many personal resources and strong motivation
- Satisfaction unrelated to achieving ideal, but more advantaged mothers were less satisfied

Conclusions

- Satisfaction associated with confidence in communicating with carer, but this predicted mainly by a strong belief that maternal employment could be damaging to infants (guilt? Anxiety?)
- One striking finding, more than half mothers wanted to be the carer for the first year. If working most were part-time

Policy implications

- Current UK policy to extend maternity leave to 12 months in line with families' ideas
- Many were using some NMC by 10 months
- Development of a relationship with the carer linked closely with maternal attitudes, about gender roles, family life, and potential harm to the child of extensive time in NMC
- Guidance for families should address this

Source

Barnes, J., Leach, P., Sylva, K., Stein, A., Malmberg, L-E. & the FCCC team. (2006)

Infant child care in England: mothers' aspirations, experiences, satisfaction and caregiver relationships.

Early Child Development and Care, 176(5), 553-573.

Quality at 10 months

Home based carers (childminder, nanny and grandparent) similar on most measures

Childminders: better safety than grandparent and nursery

Childminders: more language and reasoning stimulation than nursery

Nursery: better space and furnishings; less positive, staff more detached, less responsive to infants

Quality at 18 months

- Nanny most positive, grandparent and nursery least
- Nursery staff more detached, least responsive
- Grandparents lowest safety, fewest activities of home-based care
- Nursery highest safety, more learning activities than childminders

Cost and quality

- Cost unrelated to quality for grandparents, nannies
- Childminders, more cost, better safety (10m); less punitive (18m), better adult-child interaction (18m)
- Nurseries: higher cost less responsiveness (10m)
- Nurseries: bigger child:adult ratio, less positive behaviour, more detachment, more punitiveness (10 & 18m)

Source

Leach, P., Barnes, J., Malmberg L-E.,
Sylva, K., Stein A. (2008)

The quality of different types of child care
at 10 and 18 months.

Early Child Development and Care, 178,
177-209.

Behaviour at 36 months

- Adaptive Social Behaviour Inventory
 - Expressiveness and Sociability
 - Compliance
 - Disruptiveness
- Demographic characteristics
- Maternal sensitivity (current and previous)
- Mother harsh discipline (current and earlier)

Predictors of behaviour problems (Disruptive) at 36 months

- Male
- Mother older
- Mother ethnic minority (Asian, mixed)
- Mother harsh 10 & 18 m
- Mother sensitive and warm 36m ↓
- **NOT** predictive - NMC amount, age at onset, type of care or quality

Predictors of expressive and sociable behaviour at 36m

- Mother sensitive at 10 and 18 m
- Mother sensitive at 36 month
- Mother Asian ↓

NMC

- More NMC hours, 19 to 36 months
- More nanny or nursery hours
- Including quality of care - more grandparent, childminder and nanny hours, marginal for more nursery hours

Conclusions

- Results do not replicate findings from USA, no evidence that use of NMC in first three years increases likelihood of aggressive or disruptive behaviour problems.
- Possibly UK NMC of more consistent [higher?] quality than USA?
- Some benefits of NMC likely, especially in small group with one carer [better quality] and after 18 months.
- Thus, no indication to encourage or discourage use of NMC prior to 18 months, from that time it could enhance child's social confidence.

Source

- **Barnes, J., Leach, P., Malmberg, L-E., Stein, A., Sylva, K. (2009)**
- Experiences of non-maternal childcare in England in relation to socio-emotional and language development at 36 months.
- *Early Child Development and Care* (available online from June)

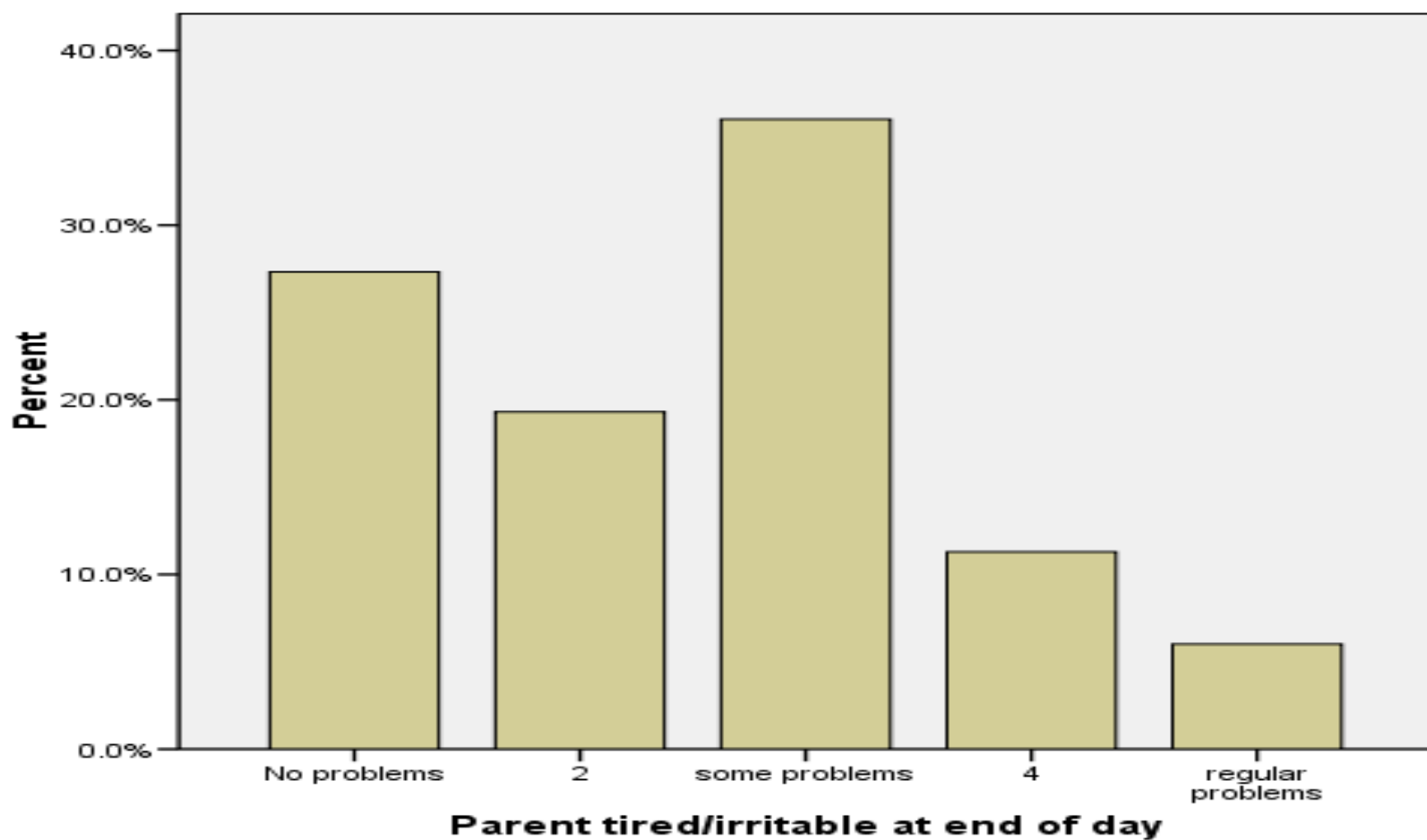
Managing childcare, 36 months

- Asked of those using at least 8 hours per week at any time during previous 6 months
- 12 questions, scored 1(no problems) to 5 (regular and frequent problems)
- E.g. Caregiver availability when child ill, making arrangements at short notice, how child and mother feel at end of day, Mother's feelings about work and asking friends of family to help.

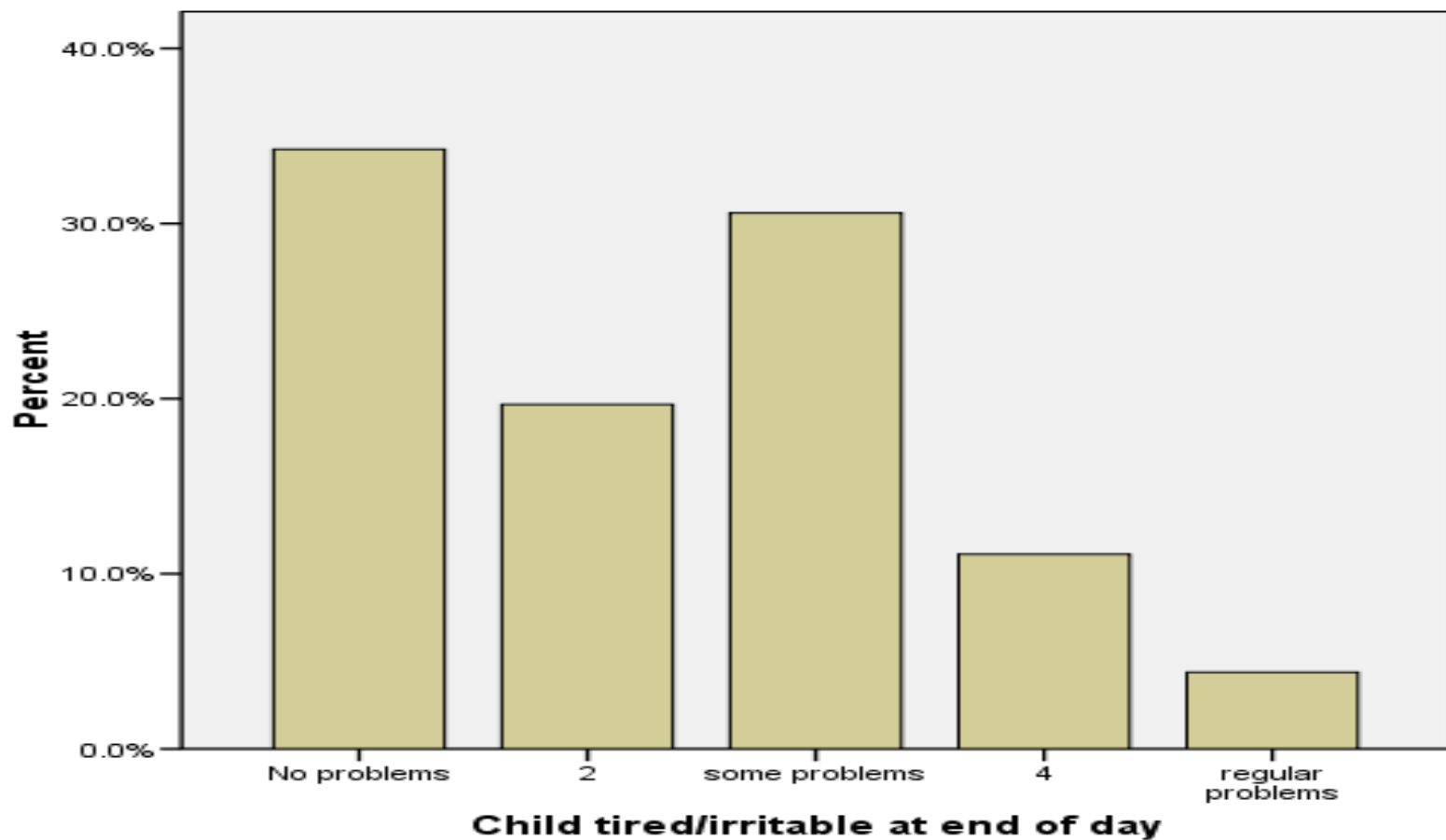
Extent of problems

- Most reported relatively few problems, with a potential range from 12 to 60, mean score 19.7 (s.d. 6.0)
- More current hours, more problems (.15)
- More problems, 2+ changes of child care in previous 6 months vs. none
 - No changes 19.3
 - 1 change 19.9
 - 2 plus changes 21.9
- Satisfaction lower if more problems (-.22)

Most frequent problem, parent tired or irritable at end of day
(mean 2.5, 53% some or more)



Next most frequent, child tired or irritable at end of day
(mean 2.3, 46% some or more)



Some problem (score 3, 4 or 5) for at least 20%

- Child not wanting to go or tearful when left (26%)
- Parent not able to commit to liked work due to child care pressure (26%)
- Finding alternative when usual care not available (24%)
- Parent feels imposing on friends or family for child care (20%)

Predictors from multiple regression

- Entering average hours from 0-18 and 19-36 months:
 - *TABQ anger* $p = .04$
 - *Mother GHQ* $p = .05$
 - *M. 10-18m. Sensitivity* $p = .04$
 - Parental Distress $p = .06$

Predictors from multiple regression

- Entering average hours of each type of child care from 0 to 36 months:
 - *Childminder hours* $p = .05$
 - *Nursery hours* $p = .004$
 - Grandparent hours $p = .07$
 - *TABQ anger* $p = .04$
 - TABQ social fear $p = .10$
 - *Mother depression* $p = .05$
 - Parental Distress $p = .06$
 - M. 10-18m. Sensitivity $p = .08$

Conclusions

- Child temperament (personality) is associated with 36m child behaviour problems, but temperament is the more powerful predictor of parental difficulties managing child care
- Maternal mental health problems predict problems with managing childcare (possibly impairs capacity to communicate and negotiate)
- Use of childcare not based at home presents difficulties, particularly nursery but also childminder and to a lesser extent grandparent

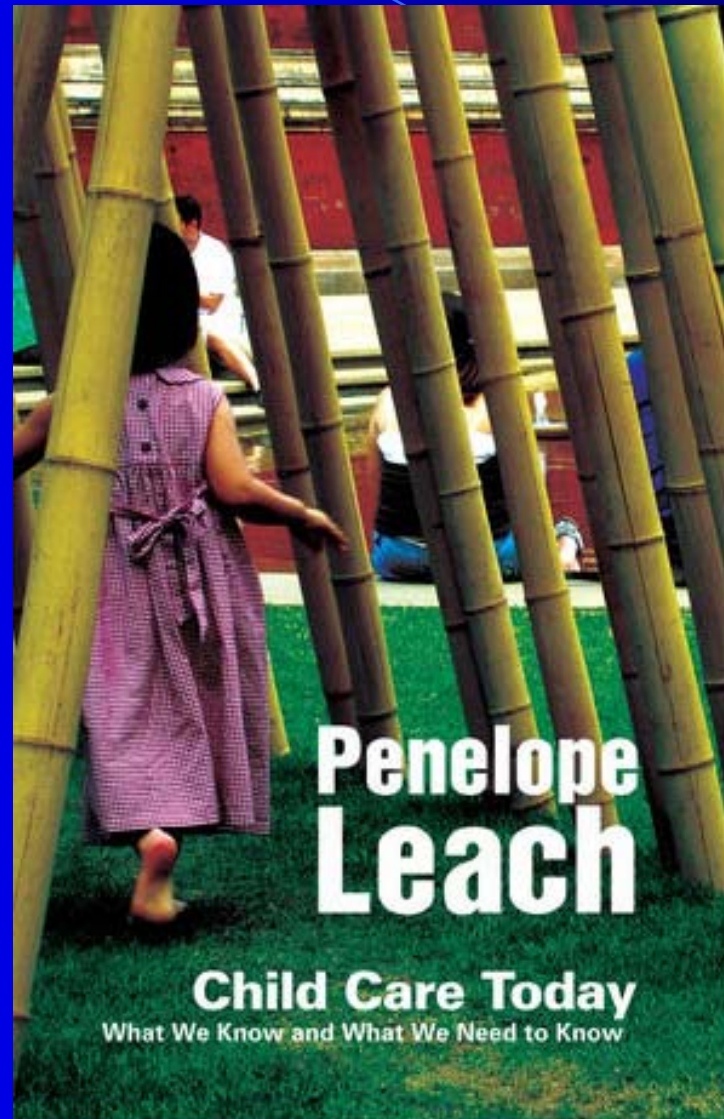
Source

- Barnes, J. (2009)
- Invited Symposium - Attitudes to employment and non-maternal childcare among parents of children aged 0 to 6. Paper - Managing childcare-what is relevant?
- 11th European Congress of Psychology, Oslo, July 8

Overall conclusions

- FCCC study not looking for 'simplistic' messages about NMC
- Emphasising complex decisions that families take
- Complex set of interactions between child and caregiver(s), and caregiver(s) and parents
- Many families constrained by availability and cost of childcare

Up to date integration of research and policy,
Child Care Today, P. Leach, Polity Press, 2009



A few messages from the book

- Developing trust between parent and caregiver is not necessarily easy
- Lack of trust can be protective, if care of poor quality
- Dual socialization – adults involved in bringing up the child inhabit two worlds
- These worlds can be complementary
- Unpaid parental leave is not worth considering as a policy
- Group settings would be better if confined to children at least 12-15 months of age
- Focus on family child care (childminder, grandparent, nanny) for infants, linked in networks

Acknowledgements and Website

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For more details see:

<http://www.familieschildrenchildcare.org/>