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Perspectives and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families in Wales: A qualitative study on childcare and playwork service use

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Perspectives and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families in Wales: A qualitative study on childcare and playwork service use

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

ALN

A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.

ArWAP

The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) was developed in response to the growing recognition of the need to address systemic racism and promote racial equality in Wales. The plan is co-produced and aims to create a more inclusive and fairer society by tackling the root causes of racial inequalities and making sure that all individuals, whatever their race or ethnicity, have equal opportunities to succeed.

Asylum Seeker

A person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country, but whose application has not yet been concluded.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

All ethnic groups except White British, including White minority groups such as Romani Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Roma or Jewish people, and parents and children of mixed heritage.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW is the organisation that registers, inspects and takes action to improve the quality and safety of childcare services.

Childcare

Care for the child by a carer other than a close family member for more than two hours a day for payment.

Childcare Offer for Wales

The Childcare Offer for Wales provides 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for working parents and parents in education and training, of 3- and 4-year-old children, for up to 48 weeks of the year. To find out more about the Childcare Offer for Wales please go to [Childcare Offer for Wales](#).

Cwlwm

Cwlwm is a consortium of 5 Childcare and Play partners, whose focus is to provide a bilingual integrated service that provides positive outcomes for children and families across Wales. To find out more about Cwlwm go to [Cwlwm](#).

Diversity and Anti-racist Professional Learning (DARPL)

DARPL is a Welsh Government initiative designed to embed anti-racist practice across education, childcare and play sectors in Wales. They provide professional learning resources, guidance and training to support educators and leaders in implementing the curriculum and advancing anti-racist principles.

Early years

Early years is defined by Welsh Government as the period in a child's life from 0 to 7 years old.

ECPLC

Early Childhood Play, Learning, and Care is an integrated approach to education and childcare for children aged 0-5, focusing on holistic development to support well-being and lifelong learning, aligning with the Curriculum for Wales. While the term ECEC (Early Childhood Care and Education) is also recognized it is not as widely used as ECPLC in Wales.

Ethnicity

A self-identified cultural identity based on shared heritage, ancestry, language, religion or cultural traditions, and is distinct from race.

Family Hubs

Hub services are provided by some local authorities through public buildings such as libraries. They provide advice on various matters such as housing, adult learning and financial advice,

Flying Start

Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme that supports families with young children aimed at giving children under 4 years old in disadvantaged areas the best possible start in life. The programme provides funded, part-time childcare for 2- to 3-year-olds, plus extra support for families in some areas of Wales and is being expanded to all areas of Wales.

Home Start

A voluntary community service that provides trained volunteers and specialist support to families with at least one young child. Home-Start offers practical and emotional help during challenging times, working directly with families in their homes and local communities across the UK. Support is tailored to each family's individual needs.

Mudiad Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin is a Welsh early-years organisation. It focuses on providing Welsh-medium childcare and playgroups.

IPPO

IPPO is the International Public Policy Observatory, which aims to mobilise and assess evidence from across the four nations of the United Kingdom, and beyond, to inform policymakers about the best ways to address social harms.

Play

Play is a behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children, as non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation, not a means to an end and that has key characteristics of fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productive.

Play Wales

Play Wales is the national charity for children's play in Wales.

Playwork

Playwork is a way of working with children where the main focus is supporting children's play, rather than education or care.

Refugee

A person outside of their country, who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. They are unable or unwilling to return there, for fear of persecution.

Registered Childcare setting

A setting registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide childcare for children 0 to 12 years of age.

Setting

Childcare settings include day nurseries, registered childminders, pre-school playgroups, Cylch Meithrin, out of school childcare clubs. Formal education settings refer to schools providing Foundation Learning.

WCPP

Welsh Centre for Public Policy is a research organisation that works to address key economic and societal challenges in Wales.

Welsh Government Community Mentors

Individuals working with Welsh Government who are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities with knowledge or lived experience of the impact of racism within childcare, playwork and early years. Community Mentors share their lived experience with Welsh Government officials and provide independent input, expertise and advice to support the Anti-racist Wales Childcare and Play Governance group, sub-groups and key stakeholders.

1. Introduction and background

The Welsh Government commissioned IAITH to undertake qualitative research on the perspectives and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families in Wales on childcare and playwork service use. The report presents the findings from qualitative research conducted in collaboration with 20 parents from ethnic minority families with 0- to 8-year-old children, living in three local authority areas in Wales, Cardiff, Gwynedd and Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

The Welsh Government's [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan \(ArWAP\)](#) sets out the vision for Wales to be an Anti-racist country. Its aim is to promote joint working to make a measurable difference to the lives of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The ArWAP has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of communities and organisations across all parts of Wales. The goals and actions have been shaped jointly with people from ethnic minority backgrounds and 'valuing lived experience' is one of the core values underpinning the plan.

The ArWAP contains a stand-alone chapter and ten actions that highlight childcare and play as crucial areas for promoting equality, ensuring access, and embedding Anti-racist practices across early years provision in Wales. Early Childhood Play, Learning, and Care (ECPLC) is recognized as vital for child development, lifelong learning, and social integration. The Welsh Government identified low uptake of childcare among ethnic minority families as a priority issue. The ArWAP sets out specific goals and actions for the childcare and playwork sectors, focusing on inclusivity and representation.

The Childcare & Play chapter of ArWAP (2024) reiterates that there are persistent disparities in early years attainment among ethnic minority groups and that parents from ethnic minority backgrounds face cultural and educational barriers in accessing childcare. The Welsh Government is embedding anti-racism across childcare and play through evidence, professional learning, and community engagement. The Welsh Government is collaborating with DARPL, Cwlwm and Community Mentors to build safe, inclusive environments and allyship working with ethnic minority parents and carers to identify and remove barriers. The refreshed plan sharpens actions for measurability, focusing on leadership, workforce diversity, culturally sensitive provision, and children's experiences. These anti-racist actions operate alongside broader guidance for childcare services in Wales, which shapes the day-to-day experiences of children and families.

Families in Wales benefit from a range of funded early years entitlements. All children aged 3 to 4 are entitled to a minimum of 10 hours per week of early education through their local authority. [The Childcare Offer](#) provides eligible parents of children aged 3 to 4 with up to 20 hours additional funded childcare per week (up to a maximum of 30 hours a week), available for up to 48 weeks per year. The childcare element of Flying Start, the early years programme for children aged 0 to 4 living in disadvantaged areas, is currently being expanded through a phased approach to provide 12.5 hours per week of childcare for 39 weeks of the year to all 2-year-olds in Wales.

1.1 Research context

Evidence from a 2018 Equality and Human Rights Commission study suggested that early years attainment in Wales remained different for children from ethnic minority backgrounds. In particular, the attainment of Black pupils was lower than that of White British pupils during early years education. Furthermore, the report notes that early years education provision remains a work in progress in terms of access and outcomes for ethnic minority children and families, and Black pupils in particular (EHRC, 2018).

A qualitative study of beliefs, behaviours and barriers affecting parental decisions about childcare and early education undertaken by IAITH, was published by the Welsh Government (2022). The study covered nine areas of Wales and included seven parents from ethnic minority communities. The research found that the majority of families from ethnic minority communities made use of childcare provision, even if they did not qualify for the Childcare Offer. Some of the reasons given in relation to accessing childcare and early education provision were contrasting or similar educational experiences compared to their home country, attempting to reproduce elements of their own upbringing and maintaining cultural and linguistic practices whilst managing the different social norms and behaviours expected in childcare provision and foundation learning in Wales.

The [Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care Plan in Wales](#) (2024) sets out the Welsh Government's vision for giving every child aged 0 to 5 the best start in life, with a strong emphasis on play, bilingual learning, inclusivity, and support for families and practitioners. To ensure all children in Wales grow, learn, and play in safe, healthy, and inclusive environments. Every child has the right to thrive, supported by a valued and diverse workforce and this plan is a commitment to shaping Wales as a nation where every child is nurtured, valued, and given equal opportunities. By embedding play and care into early learning, Wales aims to create resilient, confident learners who carry these foundations into their future schooling and lifelong learning. The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places statutory duty on local authorities for childcare sufficiency. This means they must assess local need, regularly review whether families have access to adequate childcare provision, and provide inclusive childcare that meets the needs of children with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds.

The IPPO report '[Increasing Access to Childcare for Ethnic Minority and Disadvantaged Communities](#)' (Mendizabal-Espinosa et al., 2024) highlights how early childhood education and care (ECEC) is essential for reducing inequalities, yet many families face barriers to access. It calls for tackling financial, cultural, and structural obstacles to ensure equitable childcare provision, especially for ethnic minority and disadvantaged groups.

Access to quality ECEC is part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4.2), aiming by 2030 to ensure all children, especially vulnerable ones, benefit from pre-primary education. Initiatives such as the G20 Early Childhood Development framework emphasise expanding access to disadvantaged communities.

The main themes of UNICEF's [Out of Sight, Out of Mind](#) (2023) report focuses on the hidden struggles of refugee and asylum-seeking children in England, particularly around access to early childhood education, care, and basic needs. Refugee and asylum-seeking families face significant obstacles in accessing nurseries, preschools, and other ECEC settings. These include bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness, and systemic exclusion. Many families struggle to provide adequate learning opportunities at home due to limited resources, language barriers, and unstable living conditions. Families live in insecure housing, face poverty, and experience trauma, all of which compound the difficulties of raising young children in safe and nurturing environments. When early childhood education is accessible, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive, it can dramatically improve outcomes for refugee and asylum-seeking children and their parents, offering stability and hope. The report noted that challenges faced by UK asylum seekers and refugees include significant financial difficulties in trying to provide for their children, including travel costs and access to indoor play areas. Women seeking asylum are often socially isolated due to their childcare responsibilities, preventing them from improving their language skills and participating in community activities. In addition, parents are concerned about their children's development due to the lack of access to nurseries and appropriate childcare.

Between November 2023 to October 2024, the International Public Policy Observatory (IPPO) and the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) worked in partnership to provide the Welsh Government with evidence to inform further research and policy decisions on supporting ethnic minority children and families in Wales (Palá et al., 2024). They concluded that existing evidence and data on the uptake, perspectives and experiences of ethnic minority families in the UK is inadequate to inform robust policy action and monitor the effectiveness of interventions. In addition, their overarching findings included:

- government-funded entitlements and programmes can increase uptake but need to be tailored to target population needs
- removing financial barriers is only part of the solution, cultural barriers need to be addressed as well. Concerns about quality, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability to the different needs of ethnic minority children and families also play important roles
- lack of ethnic minority representation in the sector can affect uptake
- diversity of childcare and playwork staff and inclusive and diverse practice (e.g. inclusive of dietary restrictions, religious practices, and through the representation of cultural practices in books, activities and celebrations) are important factors affecting uptake
- established community relationships are essential for supporting ethnic minority families to access ECPLC. Communities can be key enablers for raising awareness and understanding about ECPLC and embedding services for accessible outreach and/or setting locations, which support families to enrol, maintain attendance, and improve ECPLC practice

Building on the findings from the work undertaken by IPPO and the WCPP, this research intended to increase the understanding of perspectives and experiences of ethnic minority families in Wales in accessing ECPLC. By identifying the social, cultural, and practical factors affecting ECPLC uptake, it was intended that this research increases the evidence base around the needs of ethnic minority families, helping to inform future development of inclusive policies and interventions within the sector.

1.2 Research aims and objectives

The aim of this study was to understand how life experiences, cultural influences, and family preferences shape the use of early childhood play, learning and care (ECPLC) services, while identifying key barriers families face in finding suitable options, understanding and applying for entitlements, and using services. This includes exploring the challenges families encounter in accessing provision, and the factors that encourage uptake, with particular attention to how these dynamics affect ethnic minority families. Given the small scale of this study, and the limited amount of time spent with families, findings provide an indicative insight only.

1.3 Report structure

The structure of the remainder of this report is as follows:

- methodology – this section sets out the aims and objectives, and outlines the methodological approach adopted for this study. It reflects on the study limitations, challenges and adaptations made to the research approach.
- findings – this section presents the research findings based upon our analysis of the qualitative data collected in this study. The section includes evidence from parents who participated in the study.
- conclusions – this section provides an overview of the study’s principal findings and conclusions.
- recommendations – this section presents recommendations based on the research findings.

2. Methodology

This section sets out the research objectives, and outlines the methodology taken. A number of challenges arose during data collection which are explained below.

Building on the findings from the work undertaken by IPPO and the WCPP, this research intended to increase the understanding of perspectives and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families in Wales in accessing Early Childhood Play, Learning, and Care (ECPLC). By identifying the social, cultural, and practical factors affecting ECPLC uptake, it was intended that this research would increase the evidence base around the needs of ethnic minority families, helping to inform future development of inclusive policies and interventions within the sector.

2.1 Research questions

The research objectives that this study sought to explore were to:

- increase understanding of how life experiences, cultural factors, individual family needs and preferences impact ECPLC use
- analyse patterns of needs and pain points for families, taking into consideration the steps involved in taking up a childcare or playwork service, for example: locating a suitable service, awareness and understanding of entitlements, applying for places and use of the services
- increase understanding of what different types of families need from ECPLC services, what issues do they encounter in accessing them, and what would encourage take-up of services
- increase understanding of how these factors influence patterns of current ECPLC use among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families

2.2 The research team

The research team for this project comprised three local community researchers, two external consultants from a professional childcare background, and three of IAITH's office-based researchers. We also consulted with and sought advice from Mudiad Meithrin managers.

The research team comprised of members who were male and female and from ethnic minority backgrounds and White British. The three community researchers were from ethnic minority backgrounds; two were postgraduate university students and one had professional experience of working in childcare. The team brought together local researchers—who had access to social networks of ethnic minority parents and carers with young children—and IAITH's research staff, whose expertise in qualitative methods and early childhood education and care strengthened the project.

There are recognised advantages to forming a research team that combines ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives (Copland & Creese, 2015). These advantages include drawing upon an ‘insider’s’ detailed understanding of a local community, being trusted as a ‘local’ with shared community knowledge and contacts and having a shared understanding of the research participants’ experiences. Combining this with the ‘outsider’ perspective can bring added objectivity to the study and enables the team to question assumptions that ‘insiders’ may take as given.

2.3 Research approach

The project attempted to adopt a reflective, inclusive, and ethical methodology. The approach recognised the role of the researcher and participants as collaborative partners in the research process (Kemmis et al., 2014), ensuring that any potential bias or influence is subject to continuous reflection. To ensure an inclusive approach, IAITH community researchers who are members from ethnic minority communities, played a central role in the study. This approach ensured that the research process built trust between the participants and the researchers. The researchers offered insights into the best ways to approach community members and facilitate meaningful conversations, reducing barriers related to mistrust or language. This approach also recognised the value of insider knowledge in conducting meaningful and relevant research to the communities involved.

An ethical approach was central to the project, ensuring that the research was conducted in a way that prioritises the confidentiality, dignity and well-being of each individual involved. Accessible methods of securing consent were employed, including: clearly explaining research processes in relevant languages, and providing opportunities for participants to ask questions or withdraw at any time. Across the research team, eight different languages are spoken, namely Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Italian, Russian, Kiswahili and Welsh. In practice, all interviews took place in English, with the exception of one interview that was held in Arabic (the interview was held by one of the community researchers). There was a commitment to protecting and respecting personal data throughout the process.

2.4 Involvement of Welsh Government community mentors

We also sought advice and insights on recruiting participants from the Welsh Government Community Mentors. Community Mentors took part in the online workshop. They shared information about community groups that could be approached for assistance with recruiting participants and advised on cultural sensitivities that the research team should take into consideration when attempting to recruit participants from different ethnic minority backgrounds.

2.5 Online workshop

An online workshop with Welsh Government officials, Community Mentors, and stakeholders was convened at the start of the project. By sharing their lived experience, Community Mentors work with Welsh Government officials to offer independent advice, expertise and insight that supports the Anti-racist Wales Childcare and Play Governance

group. The aim of the workshop was to collect advice and information about aspects of the project methodology. During the discussions with officials, mentors, and stakeholders, initial contact ideas for recruiting participants, sample framework, and initial research tools for recruiting participants were discussed.

2.6 Sampling frame

Following the workshop a fuller sampling frame was developed to ensure a range of characteristics in participating families. The sampling frame aimed to include participants with a combination of some of the following attributes:

- parents accessing childcare or playwork
- parents not accessing childcare or playwork
- language of childcare/playwork provision accessed
- home languages
- child age
- rural/urban residential area
- mother
- father
- other carers including grandparents
- foster parents
- child with ALN
- parents in work
- parents not in work
- refugees and asylum seekers
- migrants (economic)
- 2nd and 3rd generation
- mixed heritage
- ethnicity of parents
- faith

2.7 Recruiting parents and carers

The methods used to recruit parents and carers were varied and included:

- distribution of posters: A pre-prepared poster explaining the purpose of the project was shared with organisations, groups, and professionals working with parents and families in each area. Examples included Early Years Wales (EYW), Flying Start Family Centres, religious establishments, community hubs, and friendship or community societies that promote inclusivity and cultural exchange
- contacting childcare settings: Outreach included multilingual English-medium nurseries and playgroups, Welsh-medium Cylchoedd Meithrin, Welsh-English bilingual nurseries, and Welsh Flying Start settings
- use of all researchers' networks: Information about the project was shared through researchers' own local social networks
- where communities have been more difficult to engage, efforts were made to engage families via support officers, agencies, and charities, including those working with the Gypsy and Traveller Community and charities supporting ethnic minority communities

At the outset of this research, the research team were very aware that recruiting ethnic minority families to participate in research can be hindered by mistrust, cultural and language barriers, lack of representation, and practical obstacles such as time, childcare, and accessibility. Historical underrepresentation and negative experiences with services can lead to scepticism about research motives. Communities may fear exploitation or tokenism rather than genuine inclusion (Javed et al, 2025).

Traditional recruitment methods (flyers, formal invitations) often fail to reach ethnic minority communities. Reliance on mainstream networks excludes families who are less connected to formal childcare or research systems. The NIHR CLAHRC East Midlands Centre for Ethnic Health Research (2018, 2023) reported that families are more likely to participate when trusted community leaders or organisations are involved in recruitment Bashir (2023); NIHR (2018); Coram (n.d.). Limited awareness of research opportunities among ethnic minority families contributes to low participation. A BMC Medical Research Methodology review (Farooqi et al., 2022) found that limited awareness and poor dissemination of information are major reasons for low participation among ethnic minority families.

These factors often intersect, making participation more difficult and limiting diversity in research samples. These matters were consistently taken into account during data collection planning and participant recruitment.

2.8 The participants

A total of 20 individuals participated in the research study and all had children aged between 0 and 8 years. Within some families there were a number of siblings within this age range. Six participants were refugees and asylum-seeking parents and 2 were economic migrants. Four participants said they were 2nd or 3rd generation and 8 said they were of mixed heritage. Some of the participants had more than one characteristic.

Table 1: Key characteristics of participating families

Characteristic	Number
Parents accessing childcare or playwork services	12
Parents not accessing Childcare or playwork services	8
Mother	11
Father	9
Parents in work	6
Parents not in work	4
Parent employment not disclosed	10
Refugee and asylum seekers	6
Migrants (economic)	2
2 nd or 3 rd generation	4
Mixed heritage	8

Faiths represented among participants included Christian, Muslim, and Sikh, as well as no faith (either not declared or individuals chose not to disclose).

Ethnicities of the participants included Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups; Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British; Black, Black Welsh, Black British; Caribbean or African and other ethnic group; African background; Asian background, Black, Black British or Black Caribbean background; other Mixed or Multiple background; other White background and other ethnic groups.

Employment among parents and carers covered a wide range of occupations, including hospitality, beauty and care, carpentry, taxi driving, retail work, translation and running their own businesses.

2.9 Challenges in recruiting research participants

Recruiting parents and carers who were willing to take part in the research proved to be a significant challenge. We experienced considerable difficulty in making contact with the target group: there was very little response to the project leaflet, and both professional and non-professional contacts who work closely with parents and carers were also unable to generate engagement. Difficulties were encountered in contacting specific ethnic groups.

Twelve of the parents who took part in the research were accessing or had accessed childcare or playwork services. Some parents expressed unwillingness to discuss their

personal circumstances, although they were willing to participate in general discussions. Five families had experienced difficulties with elements of childcare services and did not wish to discuss their experience and were fearful of further difficulties if they took part in the research. Others were unwilling to participate at all, as they did not want any focus on their families through research. Five parents who had initially agreed to participate in the study withdrew unexpectedly due to various family circumstances and time commitments. On two occasions, a parent did not turn up to pre-arranged meetings with a researcher.

The research team included multilingual speakers to ensure as far as possible that language would not be a barrier for individuals taking part and there were no examples of being unable to take part due to language choices. We attempted to make sure that the research team was diverse and had some shared understanding of participants' lived experiences. As far as possible the interviews were arranged in a location that was familiar and convenient to the participants, and the times of telephone conversation and MS Teams interviews were organised to be convenient for the participants. We attempted to tailor the interview times to suit the participants. We also prepared post-interview support signposting sheets.

2.10 Ethical issues and prioritising participant wellbeing

Participants were informed on the Privacy Notice at the first point of contact and again at the start of each interview that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time, including pausing or leaving the interview at any time. They were advised to take as much time as they needed to think about the questions before starting to answer them. If there were questions they did not want to answer, they were free not to do so. It was stressed that participation was confidential, which means that personal information and full responses in discussions would not be shared with the Welsh Government. No personal information would appear on any material that is published.

2.11 Data collection

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the sample is not intended to be representative of the ethnic minority population with children aged between 0 and 8 years old in Wales as a whole but rather provide an in-depth understanding of participant perspectives and experiences. The final sample was self-selected as parents responded to the posters distributed by researchers or were contacted directly by members of the research team to ask if they would be interested in taking part in the project. Twenty parents were interviewed by the community researchers. Team research meetings and individual conversations with IAITH community researchers were held from the outset of the project.

Mudiad Meithrin staff provided assistance in distributing posters to playgroups and nursery settings and also advised on organisations and other contacts such as Cwlwm who might have been able to identify possible participants. Welsh Government officials also assisted in the recruitment process by distributing the information to ArWAP Childcare group members. Unfortunately, these attempts did not lead to recruiting any additional participants.

Snowball sampling formed part of the recruitment approach used by the research team (Parker et al., 2019). This method is particularly suitable in research involving communities that have experienced intervention or are less visible in formal service connections. By leveraging the natural social networks of the researchers and community researchers, it was possible to reach participants who would otherwise be difficult to include in research. Snowball sampling ensures that participants are nominated by individuals they already trust, encouraging participation and ensuring high-quality, representative data reflecting the diversity of communities.

2.12 Research areas

Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Gwynedd were proposed as three research sites to reflect the demographic and geographical diversity of Wales. These sites represent a mix of urban and rural areas, a city region, industrial towns, university towns and rural villages. There are also differences in language (including Welsh speakers), socio-economic background, and levels of ethnic diversity. The selection provides a comprehensive picture of the experiences of communities in different Welsh contexts. IAITH's community researchers and members of the IAITH team living in these areas could offer key local knowledge to facilitate a more contextual and meaningful approach to the research. We anticipated that community contacts would ensure a sensitive and effective approach in recruiting participants. This strategic approach attempted to ensure a diverse approach to make the best use of available resources. The number of research participants recruited from each area was as follows: 8 in Cardiff, 7 in Gwynedd and 5 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Table 2 (below) provides a breakdown of population by ethnicity across the three local authority areas included in this study

Table 2: Ethnic profile of sample localities

Ethnic group	Geographical areas					
	Cardiff		Gwynedd		Rhondda Cynon Taf	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
White	286,931	79.2%	112,987	96.2%	229,923	96.7%
Asian	34,983	9.7%	1,968	1.7%	3,506	1.5%
Mixed	14,506	4.0%	1,333	1.1%	2,469	1.0%
Black	13,896	3.8%	513	0.4%	997	0.4%
Other ethnic groups	11,994	3.3%	591	0.5%	758	0.3%
Total	362,310	N/A	117,392	N/A	237,653	N/A

Source: 2021 Census

2.13 Data quality

The data collected for each family was reviewed by IAITH’s project research manager. As far as possible, parity of level of detail and content was achieved across the data. During the process of reviewing the data collected for each family, the records were checked for clarity and detail, that the information given was relevant and provided an understanding of each family’s background, circumstances, choices and experiences with regard to childcare and playwork.

A combination of face-to-face, virtual and telephone data collection methods were used. Face to-face meetings were conducted in locations that were familiar to participants and in environments that could encourage participants to be forthcoming about their experiences. Some participants were willing to take part in virtual interviews but did not agree to the use of the camera. Others were only willing to participate via a telephone conversation.

2.14 Research tools

The research tools for this study consisted of: a project poster explaining the objectives of the study to potential participants; a consent form for participants stating the background to the study; and an agreement to participate in the study. A structured question sheet for participant interviews was also produced which served as a recording sheet for notes.

2.15 Data analysis

The data was sorted and coded according to themes identified from the project research questions, research literature, anecdotal evidence, and additional themes identified in the data. These codes were drawn together to provide an analytical framework for the research. The data gathered was then sorted and grouped under corresponding data codes within the framework, with a focus on similarities and dissimilarities and illustrative examples in the data.

3. Findings

In this section, we present the findings based upon our analysis of the data collected in collaboration with 20 ethnic minority families. These findings are reported under the following headings:

- Family life, background, and parents' memories of childcare
- Access - application processes; barriers to accessing formal childcare and playwork services
- Use - experiences when using formal childcare
- Language
- Benefits of childcare and playwork

3.1 Family Life, background, and parents' memories of childcare

We asked participants about family life, background and their own experiences of childcare in order to increase understanding of how life experiences, cultural factors, individual family needs and preferences impact ECPLC use. By inviting them to reflect on their upbringing, cultural expectations, caregiving roles, and day-to-day family routines, we aimed to understand how these lived experiences influence their childcare decisions. This approach helped illuminate the diverse needs, preferences, and pressures that families navigate, and how these, in turn, affect when, why, and how they use ECPLC services.

3.1.1 Family life and background

Most research participants reported that their experience of living in Wales was a positive one. Of the 20 families that participated, 18 had moved to Wales at a point during their lives, either from another region of the United Kingdom or from abroad. Reasons for moving to Wales included their refugee status or to seek asylum, student or family visas, as economic migrants, or for family and work reasons. Among the 2nd or 3rd generation participants,^[footnote 1] their reasons for moving to Wales included relationships, quality of life, and employment. Two participants had lived in Wales all their lives.

Mixed views were expressed by participants about feeling part of the community in Wales. Research shows that parents' awareness of community resources significantly enhances their ability to make informed decisions about childcare and early years education. Burns et al. (2022) emphasise that parents are often "poorly informed consumers" of early childhood education and care services and that informational barriers directly affect the quality and suitability of the choices they make. Evidence from

[1] In the UK, "second-generation" and "third-generation" usually refer to how many generations of a family have lived in the country after immigration. They are their social and demographic descriptions.

parental engagement initiatives, such as the Families Connect programme developed by Save the Children UK (2020) demonstrate that strengthening parents' knowledge of available services improves their confidence and ability to support early learning, while also enhancing their capacity to navigate community resources effectively. Views on feeling part of the community is relevant to this study as knowing what resources are available within a community helps parents to make informed choices about childcare and early years education options that are available to them. In urban areas participants commented that they lived in multicultural areas that "felt safe." For example, a parent commented about living in Cardiff:

"The neighbourhood is friendly and multicultural, and there are many local facilities such as parks, shops, and schools nearby. People are generally kind and helpful, which makes it a pleasant place to raise children."

Another parent said that living in Wales was really interesting because it has a multi diverse culture. They said that in their area,

"We have people working for factories. Some of them are unemployed. I have people from Romania, Nigeria, Kurdistan. Czech Republic, Wales, London, England in general [...] people from Greece, some from Portugal. So, it's a very multi diverse community."

Others were not so positive about their community in Cardiff, and felt that the areas where they lived were not always suitable for raising children. One parent explained that at first they were living in accommodation for homeless families, but drug users and sellers were also in the area and their children were not able to play outside. They had since moved to another area of Cardiff but the problem was a lack of children in the neighbourhood. The community was "all old people, not even a child." The parent said that the new neighbourhood was more pleasant and the neighbours were nice, but the parent felt that "they don't know us. We are refugees" and this created feelings of isolation.

Some parents said that they had personally suffered racism when they first arrived in Wales and this could affect their desire to participate in childcare groups, in positive and negative ways. A parent explained that when they first arrived in rural Wales, they suffered racism that was reported to the police. However, the situation had improved: "now there are good connections with parents from school, the Cylch community and through neighbours." Making connections through a childcare setting had assisted them. Another parent said that they struggled with confidence and identity as they lived in a very rural area and that their family "stand out as the only ethnic family around" and found it difficult to trust and use services due to their experiences. A parent moved to a quiet town in a rural area from a city in England and enjoyed how calm it is compared to the city but did not appreciate what they regarded as judgement comments from others in their area. However another parent felt that their rural community was welcoming, where people "look out for each other, better than life in the city."

Alongside these practical challenges, parents also reflected on how their personal interests fit into family life. Many enjoyed hobbies rooted in their communities—sports, social events, film nights, or creative activities like crafting. These activities offered connection and enjoyment. Yet for some, especially those at home full-time with young children, such opportunities felt out of reach. The demands of childcare left little time or energy for hobbies or socialising, and this absence of personal space sometimes led to feelings of isolation. Without regular involvement in community activities, parents risked missing out on more than just leisure. They lost chances to build friendships, share advice, and learn about local childcare or playwork options. They also became less connected to valuable community resources—playgroups, hubs, parenting programmes—that could otherwise offer support.

3.1.2 Participants' childhood experiences of Nursery Education or Childcare

Parents' childhood experiences with nursery or childcare matter because they shape how they feel about childcare, what they trust, and what they expect. This influence is especially important to understand for parents from ethnic minority backgrounds, because their early experiences are often shaped by cultural norms, migration histories, and access barriers that differ from the majority population.

The participants' experiences of nursery education or formal childcare when they were children in this study was varied. One parent shared that they attended nursery because they were an only child. Their parents wanted them to have opportunities to socialise and interact with other children; their experience had influenced their decisions about their own children attending nursery and play services, in a positive way, and they were using services.

Growing up in Africa, a parent recalled attending nursery where children spoke their mother tongues and local languages. Nursery was seen as important preparation for school, as it introduced French to children before formal education began. Raised in Asia another parent attended both nursery and childcare. They explained that the experience shaped their belief in the value of early education, as it had a positive influence on them to use childcare services for their own children.

A parent described attending nursery as a child and said it gave them a positive view of early education. They felt it helped build confidence and highlighted the importance of learning in early years and wanted this for their own child. Another parent remembered attending a nursery owned by their mother's friend. Because of the personal connection, childcare felt safer and more comfortable. Later experiences with unfamiliar providers felt less secure by comparison, and led to scepticism and not being able to fully trust provision.

A parent recalled that as a child they struggled in nursery. Eventually, they were taken out because staff could not cope with their needs. This experience left a lasting impact, making them worry that settings might not cope with their own children, who also struggle with anxiety. Another parent explained that they did not attend nursery in Africa and went

straight into Year One. They felt nursery was not necessary, believing that most of a child's education should be provided at home.

A parent described their own first day at school in their native country, without previous nursery or childcare experience as "overwhelming." They had never seen or used a pen, pencil, book, or copybook before. Holding and using these tools felt strange, and they needed help from others to learn how to use them. This emphasised the challenges of entering school without prior nursery preparation.

Due to their own childhood experiences, some parents saw nursery education or formal childcare as essential for their child. However, others believed home education was more suitable for their child or children based on their own non-attendance of nursery provision.

3.2 Access - application processes and barriers to accessing use of formal childcare and playwork services

Focusing on families' experiences with childcare and playwork services reveals a consistent set of needs and pain points i.e. issue, or barriers that causes difficulty, frustration, stress for parents. From the initial search for a suitable provider, to navigating entitlements and application processes, and the practical realities of using a service day-to-day, each step can introduce pressures and uncertainties. These challenges shape not only how families access provision but also how confidently and consistently they are able to use it. This section outlines the patterns that emerge across these stages, highlighting where families encounter barriers, and what support they most often require.

Twelve families who participated in the research reported that they were currently using, or had previously used, formal childcare or play services for their children. Most families indicated that they knew how to access information about available services. Common sources of information included friends and neighbours through word-of-mouth, as well as more formal channels such as the local authority website and the local library. A parent explained: "I looked on the Council website and got a list of childminder names. I chose according to who I felt was the best fit for my child at the time. Later, I used the university nursery because I knew there was one available." Another parent said they did not know how to access information: "I didn't know where to find the information at first; I had to ask the Family Hub". Some parents described contacting childminders or nurseries directly after searching through the local authority's gateway portal. Others mentioned being referred to services via community hubs, underlining the role of local networks and formal referral pathways in connecting families to childcare options.

3.2.1 Knowing how to apply for suitable services childcare or play services

In their responses 80% of parents reported knowing how to apply for childcare or play services. Typically, parents with children aged 3 to 4, or those who already had older siblings, were familiar with the process of applying for nursery education at their local school or nursery. Some had previously used these services and therefore knew how to apply for the Childcare Offer, who to contact regarding funded educational hours, and

where to seek guidance. Others relied on advice from neighbours and friends. In addition, health professionals played a key role in signposting services, particularly for refugee and asylum-seeking families. These responses suggest that experienced parents, who were not new to parenting had confidence navigating the system and community networks supported those less familiar with the system. Professional support from support workers ensured inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking families. Refugee and asylum-seeking families may depend heavily on professional signposting, highlighting the importance of accessible, culturally sensitive guidance.

Many had prior experience using these services, which gave them confidence in navigating the application process. They were familiar with online applications and knew who to contact for educational services. A minority of parents struggled with application forms, due to difficulties understanding the language used. These challenges were usually resolved through support from partners or by asking other parents for guidance. For a small group, support workers played a crucial role in helping them apply for childcare or nursery places. Parents described booking appointments with these workers when needed: “If anytime we need the support, then we call him. We book appointment and go to him.”

The majority of parents indicated that information about childcare services is generally accessible. Prior experience with services builds confidence and reduces barriers. Asking other parents and friends was an informal but effective method for a number of families. However, reliance on partners, or other parents and families suggests that official guidance may not always be clear or user-friendly. Language and terminology in application forms can be a barrier for some parents, particularly those with limited literacy or English proficiency. A small group required professional support such as guidance from support workers or health visitors.

3.2.2 Awareness of Welsh Government Programmes (Flying Start and the Childcare Offer for Wales)

Awareness of Welsh Government initiatives such as Flying Start and the Childcare Offer for Wales varied amongst participants. Around half of parents reported knowing about Flying Start or other (non-Welsh Government) schemes such as Home-Start. However, Flying Start was not available in some areas, leaving parents who would have been interested unable to access it. Refugee and asylum-seeking families are eligible for Flying Start if they live in designated disadvantaged areas, although rollout is at different levels within each Local Authority. Parents expressed mixed experiences with government funding, for example: “Government funding doesn’t support families where only one parent works.” Another parent said: “It depends on your income, your status, and also, the forms are difficult to fill out.”

3.2.3 Barriers that make it difficult to access formal childcare or play services

The main barriers mentioned by parents in accessing formal childcare and play services underline issues related to cost, accessibility, cultural differences, safety concerns, and service availability.

Administrative barriers

Administrative barriers included application forms for childcare services which were described by some participants as difficult to complete, creating challenges for parents unfamiliar with the process. A parent commented that “the forms are difficult to fill out.” A lack of clear information about funding and eligibility was noted, with parents requesting more transparency. A small number of parents did not know how to apply for government-funded services. Reasons included ineligibility or a lack of interest in using the services.

Financial Barriers

The cost of services was the most frequently mentioned barrier. Parents not eligible for funded places reported significant difficulties in affording childcare. A parent stated that childcare costs are challenging for parents who are not eligible for services, and children may miss out on service provision. Some parents suggested that more financial support would be beneficial to ensure equal access. For some participants, cost was also a factor for choosing not to use childcare services. For example, a parent said that “parents can’t afford childcare anymore.”

Childcare availability

Limited availability of childcare sessions at suitable times for parents’ needs was a recurring issue. A parent explained: “My working hours do not match the hours when these services are available.” Families said that they would like to access more flexible timings to accommodate work and school schedules. Flexibility in scheduling childcare was seen as crucial, as many parents struggled to match childcare hours with work commitments.

Distance from services and accessibility

Distance from services was mentioned as a barrier particularly by families in rural areas where provision is more limited. Where provision was available, families travelled by personal vehicles as the limited public transport timetables often did not align with childcare service provision. In many villages only one childcare service is available (e.g. Ti a Fi or Cylch Meithrin). Urban participants generally reported fewer barriers, noting that playgroups and childcare provision were local and easily accessible.

Families in the study gave a varied picture of how they moved through their daily routines and accessed the support they needed. Many travelled in their own cars, giving them the flexibility to reach childcare or playwork services with relative ease. Others depended on public transport—most often buses—which, while less convenient, still allowed them to get to the services they relied on. For parents living in towns and cities, the situation felt even simpler. Childcare, shops, and other essentials were often just a short walk away, making everyday life feel manageable and well connected.

The experience was different for families in rural areas. Several parents spoke about the scarcity of local facilities and the limited opportunities available for their children.

Childcare options were fewer and often far from home, meaning long journeys were a routine part of arranging care. Transport, or the lack of it, became a defining factor in their daily lives. Where urban families benefitted from proximity and convenience, rural families faced logistical hurdles that narrowed their choices and added pressure.

Language provision as a barrier

Language and provision in English and/or Welsh was not widely reported as a barrier, although a parent noted that the Welsh language could deter families who do not understand it from using childcare, as the childcare provision in some areas is available in Welsh only. Another parent emphasised efficiency over language concerns: “My main concern is really to ensure that we have an efficient service that actually works.”

Cultural barriers

Some parents expressed concerns about cultural differences and whether staff would understand their background or language. For example, parents referred to wanting to preserve native languages in addition to using English and or Welsh. They were concerned for their children needing to navigate different cultural practices in childcare settings and at home. It was emphasised that it was important for children to stay connected to their cultural and linguistic roots. Parents referred to not forgetting “our language,” “our religion” and “our traditions”. A parent said that culture was important for their children as “it's their culture, so it's very, very important to know where they're from, know their roots and be proud of where they're from.”

Feelings about safety

A minority of parents raised concerns about child safety in childcare settings. A parent mentioned: “Past negative experience your child reports to you, such as bad treatment to the child” could make parents reluctant to use childcare. One parent referred to a situation where a friend’s child was assaulted by another child in an educational setting. This experience had deeply influenced the parent’s approach to their own children’s safety. As a result, they were reluctant to enrol them in early education or childcare until they were confident English speakers, or able to express themselves clearly should anything harmful occur. This concern becomes more pronounced for families from ethnic minority backgrounds, who may already feel less trust in institutions or worry about not being understood. A parent said that past experiences of childcare, either locally or abroad, “may discourage families from using childcare services due to negative experiences.”

Other parents also commented on worries about their child’s safety within childcare settings. One parent cited security concerns as the decisive factor. They explained that, due to their political affiliation and ongoing application for political asylum, they felt compelled to scrutinise childcare environments closely. If the setting did not meet their personal standards for safety, they would decline the service, prioritising the protection of their family. For vulnerable individuals or families such as asylum seekers, safety considerations outweigh convenience of location and accessibility of services and the developmental benefits of childcare.

Parents expected high standards of cleanliness and safety in childcare settings. Lapses can undermine trust in the setting. A parent raised issues about children sitting on dirty carpets, questioning hygiene. They explained “I had a healthy argument with the staff about the healthy, about the safety, about the hygiene, about the ergonomic things. For example, asking the kids to sit down, keep sitting down on the carpet, which is very filthy, dirty. All the kids they have here dirty shoes. Playing on the carpet and at the same time sitting over there.”

Parents consistently highlighted children’s safety as the most important concern. A parent mentioned that their decision was based on knowledge and information about raising children, emphasising that reassurance about safety protocols is essential. Another parent emphasised that clear information about safety measures would determine whether they allow their child to attend a setting. Visible safety measures build trust and reduce parental anxiety.

Lack of availability of suitable childcare

A small number of participants in the study reported using self-funded private childcare. Their decision was often shaped by necessity rather than preference. Reasons for using self-funded childcare included lack of availability when settings who accepted CCO funded places were full, leaving parents without access. In some instances, funded childcare provision did not match the hours and days required by parents. For some, private childcare was the only option to enable them to return to work. A parent explained: “because we’ve had no option for work, we had to pay childcare to be able to return to work and everything.” Without affordable and available childcare, parents, particularly mothers, face barriers to re-entering the workforce. Some parents also said that private childcare was prohibitively expensive, describing it as “out of reach.” The perception of self-funded childcare as “out of reach” emphasises affordability issues, especially for Refugee parents. Even when families manage to pay, the financial burden can be significant.

3.3 Use - experiences when using childcare

Supporting families effectively begins with understanding the diverse realities they navigate. This section explores what different types of families need from ECPLC services, and the factors that would make childcare provision more appealing and easier to use.

Parents from ethnic minority backgrounds in both rural and urban areas generally expressed positive views about childcare services. They described them as inclusive, supportive, and welcoming. A parent explained their decision-making process:

“I usually make decisions after visiting the setting, meeting the staff, and hearing feedback from other parents. A friendly and welcoming environment makes a big difference.

Some parents admitted they did not know much about playwork services in their communities. Others felt that provision was too far away to be useful, limiting accessibility and uptake.

In Cardiff, one group of parents described how they organised their own activities by renting a community hall for two hours a week to provide activities through the medium of their mutual native language. They pooled resources to pay for a teacher who provided language lessons and sports activities. A parent explained: “In our group, we have boys and girls of the same age. Before we meet, we put a message on the group chat. We bring all the young kids together. The boys have training and play with each other, and we support them like that.” This is an example of parents creating their own solutions when formal provision was absent, suggesting unmet demand. Parents were resourceful, and willing to self-organise when services were lacking, but this places additional financial and logistical burdens on them.

3.3.1 Informal Childcare Provided by Family and Friends

Parents consistently emphasised the importance of trust when relying on informal childcare. Support was sought from people they knew well such as family members, in-laws, close friends, or trusted neighbours, as familiarity provides reassurance and peace of mind. Trust is often rooted in shared experiences, such as relatives having children of similar ages or long-standing friendships. Participants referred to their mother, mother-in-law, and partner’s family providing consistent help, especially with school runs and at weekends. One parent explained: “That support is actually very important because without it I would not be able to do voluntary work or attend meetings.” Family members and in-laws living in the same city are a common source of childcare, offering both regular and occasional assistance.

Friends frequently helped with school pick-ups or short periods of care, for example when parents have appointments. Trusted neighbours also played a role. Parents describe this support as essential for balancing work, volunteering, and personal responsibilities. Informal childcare provides flexibility and peace of mind, especially when family members have experience with children. A parent explained: “It is very important. Having trusted family or friends to rely on provides peace of mind and flexibility in managing family and personal responsibilities.”

Not all parents feel able to rely on others. For example, a parent said that they could not “trust anyone to look after their children due to personal issues.” For these families, lack of trust or personal circumstances can limit access to informal childcare, increasing the struggle to manage daily commitments. Parents relied on informal childcare only when they feel confident in the caregiver’s reliability and experience.

3.3.2 Local services or organisations that support families with young children

Participants often relied on a mix of formal and informal support networks. Health visitors played a central role, offering guidance, connecting families to services, and sometimes engaging directly with enrolling for provision. Some families had used Home-Start

services which provides free confidential support and practical help to parents of young children living in Wales who are going through challenging experiences. Tailored support about finding childcare was offered to families, particularly about childcare and child development, which encouraged them to use childcare.

Faith-based organisations often provided community support, though access could depend heavily on personal connections and involvement. However, faith-based organisations often required existing relationships, which can exclude families who are less connected. Several participants referred to local authority websites and online and social media platforms which could signpost families to services and information. Some parents mentioned that libraries such as Cardiff Library and Gwynedd LA library hosted activities for children, providing both educational and social opportunities. Activities for children were also available to families in local authority leisure centres. Parents who were refugees or asylum seekers living in Cardiff referred to support provided by community hubs.

3.3.3 Reasons for deciding not to use childcare or play services

The primary reasons why 8 parents chose not to use childcare or play services were based on three main factors:

- a desire to care personally for their children as stay-at-home parents, due to personal beliefs. Some parents hold strong personal convictions about raising their children themselves, often linked to cultural or family values, such as not wanting their children to forget their family language, background culture or religion
- negative prior experiences with childcare, either directly or through peers, friends or family. Peer experiences play a significant role in shaping parental decisions, showing how community narratives can reinforce or undermine trust in childcare care
- the cost of childcare services is prohibitive for certain families making caring for children at home the only viable option

A small number of parents reported that although they had previously used childcare for older siblings, they decided against it for younger children because of “bad or mixed experiences” suggesting evolving perceptions or heightened caution. Similarly, hearing about family or friends’ negative experiences in childcare and nurseries influenced some parents’ decisions

Some participants felt that other parents, who were not from ethnic minority backgrounds, resisted awareness sessions on diversity topics (race, culture), believing children should only learn about local traditions from Wales. These attitudes caused some of the participants to be unsure about using childcare services. A parent explained: “Some parents don’t like their children to learn about different ethnicities... they [feel they] should only be learning about Wales.”

Additionally, in this research some families from different cultural backgrounds felt that aspects of service provision did not fully align with their values or practices. For example, three parents in the study indicated that gender and identity diversity among staff in settings was unfamiliar to them and were misaligned with their own cultural or personal beliefs.

Some participants said that families experiencing social isolation may not seek out childcare services. A parent commented, “they don’t go outside, they don’t ask... nobody guides them and they don’t have support from social services.” A lack of knowledge or awareness about childcare services and the benefits of childcare can reduce motivation. A small number of parents said they would prefer to wait until children are 5 to 6 years old before using childcare or play services other than early education because they felt it was too early for their child, as they could not express themselves fully. Others were uncertain if their child was ready for childcare for developmental reasons including developing common illness when exposed to others.

Parents’ hesitations about using childcare and play services were not just about cost or logistics. Worries reflected deeper issues of trust, cultural values, language, and social support. Some concerns were practical (cost, accessibility), while others were emotional or cultural. These examples show that concerns vary widely across families, meaning solutions must be flexible and sensitive to diverse needs.

3.3.4 What would help parents to make decisions about nursery education or childcare

Participants said that parents from ethnic minority backgrounds are helped most when childcare and nursery education settings combine practical reliability with emotional reassurance welcoming families to the settings, and connecting parents to wider networks like health visitors and peer groups. Participants referred to practical considerations: location, affordability, opening hours, flexibility around work hours and availability of places on waiting lists. A parent explained that it was very important to have childcare support and it be subsidised “because for being able to work as a family, to be able to afford the cost of living, you need to be able to get access to work.”

Recommendations from friends, family, or community networks were important factors for many participants along with word-of-mouth experiences from other parents, that children will be safe, cared for, and happy. Many of these issues raised in the research are common to parents of young children, and not only for parents from ethnic minority backgrounds.

First impressions when visiting a setting for the first time was a significant factor, including friendly staff and clear communication. Visiting the setting allowed parents to gauge inclusivity within the environment, in particular respect for cultural, linguistic, and family differences. The role of Health Visitors was referred to by several participants, and their role in providing continuity of care from birth helped parents feel supported and less isolated. For those families eligible for Flying Start, the input from Health Visitors, which acted as a bridge between families and wider services such as childcare, speech

therapy, and parenting groups, was appreciated. A parent who was a Refugee suggested that support workers could show families around childcare settings to build familiarity.

Parents highlighted several factors influencing their use of childcare and play services. Many parents worried about their children's safety and wanted reassurance about protocols. They also wanted childcare services that are safe, affordable, flexible, culturally inclusive, and supported by clear information and community guidance.

Participants in the research emphasised that parents are looking for information about childcare that is straightforward, accessible, and available through multiple channels. Families want to be able to understand what services exist, how they work, and what support they might be entitled to, without having to search extensively or navigate complex systems. This includes clear online information, printed materials such as leaflets that can be picked up in community settings, and direct guidance from trusted professionals who can explain options in a simple, culturally sensitive way.

It was also noted that parents often struggle with rigid schedules within childcare settings. Families with irregular work hours or multiple children would benefit from adaptable childcare schedules. Offering extended hours, part-time options, and drop-in sessions would make services more accessible to working families. Parents also spoke of the lack of free after school services, such as sport or music activities for young children. After-school childcare or play services for school-age children was seen as the biggest gap in childcare provision.

3.4 Language

Language shapes how ethnic minority families first encounter and continue to experience formal childcare. When information is unclear, not available in a family's preferred language, or delivered without cultural awareness, it can create confusion and weaken trust. These barriers can make families feel unwelcome and ultimately discourage them from engaging with childcare services.

3.4.1 Language use at home

Across the families who took part in the research, language played a significant role in shaping how they approached childcare and playwork options. Eight families primarily used English at home, while seven used other languages such as Dari, Punjabi, French, Arabic and Kurdish. Many were bilingual or multilingual, blending English with Welsh, Yoruba, Arabic, Turkish, Spanish or Malay. These linguistic backgrounds influenced what families looked for in childcare settings, particularly around communication, cultural understanding and opportunities for children to use or maintain their home languages.

Parents consistently highlighted the importance of their children staying connected to their native languages, and this shaped their expectations of childcare and playwork environments. Some families used English at home but wove in native languages such as Cambodian, Kurdish or Arabic, through daily routines, conversations and media. They valued childcare settings that respected and supported these practices. One mother, for

example, used Cambodian words with her children and cherished hearing them speak the language when talking to their grandmother. Another family used Kurdish exclusively at home, while others supported Arabic learning through structured writing practice, cartoons and religious or cultural routines, especially during Ramadan. Parents stressed that early exposure to their native language was essential, and they looked for childcare providers who understood why this mattered. There were examples of deliberate adjustments to language practices to complement language use in childcare or early education. A parent explained:

“We continue to speak almost entirely in Kurdish—about 99% of the time. When I teach, I focus on English, Kurdish, and Arabic. If the children get stuck, I translate into Kurdish. These three languages are central: English for education, Kurdish and Arabic for family, employment, and future engagement in society. I don’t expect my mother to learn English to speak with my children, but I do expect my children to maintain Kurdish so they can communicate with their grandparents and cousins when we visit our home country.”

Another participant emphasised the importance of maintaining their native language: “We keep our language because we don’t want to lose it. Every Saturday we hire a language teacher and pay for lessons. At home, we always speak our language. Since moving to Wales, we continue to speak Dari with our children.” Another parent described using Punjabi at home: “I want my children not to forget our culture and not to forget our Sikh religion.” However, the parent said that they now “use more English at home, especially because my children attend school in Wales. However, we still make an effort to speak Punjabi with family to keep the language alive.” Another parent reflected on Turkish and Arabic use at home and explained how they sometimes speak Turkish and listen to Turkish songs, “But Arabic is more important because it is our native language... I tell her that sooner or later she will learn English, and she already speaks it fluently, but she must also learn Arabic.” The parent emphasised that they buy Arabic teaching books and materials for their children “because it is very important for them to learn our language.”

Families also emphasised that maintaining their native language helped children communicate with relatives and community members, particularly during visits abroad. Their strategies—daily practice, media use, community reinforcement—demonstrated a strong commitment to language maintenance. For these families, childcare and playwork choices were not only about practical support but also about identity, belonging, and ensuring their children’s linguistic and cultural roots were recognised and valued.

Most participants reported that they had not made significant changes to their language practices, either using English at home as they always had or they continued to use their native languages. Families continued to prioritise their native languages, while integrating English mainly for education and wider society.

3.4.2 Using Welsh medium or bilingual provision

Most participants reported using English-medium childcare settings in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The use of Welsh-medium childcare provision was more common amongst parents in Gwynedd. Participants in some areas in Gwynedd said that Welsh medium provision through Mudiad Meithrin's Cylchoedd Methrin or Ti a Fi was the only provision available to them.

In general, parents expressed pride and encouragement for their children learning Welsh. A parent said, "they speak Welsh in school and sometimes with my Welsh friends. I am very proud of them. I would like them to learn more Welsh because it's part of the culture here and can be beneficial for education and community life". Another parent highlighted trilingualism, commenting that their child speaks "our language, Welsh, and English."

Parents noted that Welsh-medium provision increased exposure to Welsh, especially through school and reading materials. They were more aware of Welsh since children started Cylch and school, and brought reading books home. Parents linked Welsh learning to school readiness and community integration. A participant who did not speak Welsh said that they were "happy for my children to speak Welsh, as that's the language they need for school."

Some parents were open to accessing Welsh-medium education provision in the future, although they were not currently using it for childcare. A parent said "I have seen a few Welsh-medium options nearby... I would consider it in the future as I value bilingual learning." Most parents were non-Welsh-speaking but they supported bilingual provision for their children where there was opportunity for them to access it. Welsh was seen not only as a school subject but as part of cultural native and identity by a number of participants. Parents who do not speak Welsh themselves may feel limited in supporting their children's learning at home. However, bilingual provision was seen as a solution, allowing children to learn Welsh as it can enhance their language skills and appreciation for local culture.

3.5 Benefits of childcare and playwork

In the research parents spoke about childcare and playwork not only as providing practical support, but as experiences that shape children's futures. Many hoped that childcare settings would offer more than supervision, imagining them as places where children could grow in independence, confidence, and social awareness. They described environments where children learn to navigate relationships, express themselves, and explore the world beyond their families. One parent reflected on this transformation, sharing that her child "became more confident, developed good friendships, and adapted well to structured learning activities."

For several parents, early education was seen as a crucial stepping stone into school life. They believed that nursery and play-based learning nurtured both emotional resilience and academic readiness. As one parent put it, nursery education provides "a great

foundation for school learning and social interaction,” helping children enter formal education with curiosity and assurance.

The social dimension of childcare was especially valued. Parents spoke about the friendships their children formed and the memories they created within a safe, supportive environment. They appreciated that childcare offered children the chance to spend time away from home, encounter different family structures and cultures, and develop the confidence and social skills that come from mixing with peers. Many felt these early friendships would become part of the children’s long-term social world as they grew up together.

Beyond the benefits for children, parents also described childcare as essential to the stability and wellbeing of the whole family. It was not viewed as a luxury, but as a vital part of daily life—something that enabled parents to work, maintain routines, and reduce stress. One parent explained how childcare allowed them “to keep [their] job,” while another described the relief of no longer having to juggle work and full-time caregiving: “the stress of how to reconcile work and at the same time look after the child... this was the stress I was facing.” For some families, childcare even offered a sense of structure and belonging, helping them adapt to life in the UK. As one parent shared, using childcare “gives us routine, discipline, and time management. This experience will help us to face the challenges of living in the UK.”

4. Conclusions

Overall, the findings show that ethnic minority parents' family backgrounds, migration histories, and childhood experiences of care play a significant role in shaping how they understand and use ECPLC services. Most families had moved to Wales at some point in their lives, often for safety, education, work, or family reasons, and many described Wales as a positive and multicultural place to raise children. For those who had migrated to Wales, migration was driven by diverse factors including refugee status, education, employment, and family ties. However, experiences of community belonging varied widely. While some parents felt welcomed and connected, others—particularly refugees and those living in rural areas—reported isolation, racism, or a lack of local networks. These factors influenced not only their sense of safety and wellbeing but also their awareness of community resources and their confidence in accessing childcare.

Parents' own childhood experiences of nursery or childcare also shaped their expectations and decisions. For some, positive early experiences reinforced the value of early education and encouraged them to enrol their children. For others, limited or negative experiences, such as growing up in contexts where nursery was uncommon, or feeling unsupported as a child, led to greater hesitation or a preference for home-based care. Personal histories, combined with cultural norms and migration experiences, contributed to diverse beliefs about what constitutes appropriate early learning and care.

Urban living brought practical advantages. Families could walk to childcare, schools, and essential services, making daily routines more manageable. Rural families, by contrast, sometimes faced long journeys and limited facilities that narrowed their childcare choices. Across Wales, families sought connection through hobbies, community groups, and local activities, which helped build friendships and support networks. But stay-at-home parents often struggled to carve out time for themselves, leading to isolation and fewer opportunities to form the relationships that might otherwise support their childcare needs, and provide access to information on childcare options open to them

The findings suggest that ECPLC use is deeply influenced by families' lived experiences, cultural identities, and the extent to which they feel connected to their communities. Understanding these factors is essential for designing childcare provision that is accessible, trusted, and responsive to the varied needs of ethnic minority background families across Wales.

4.1. Access to childcare

In this research ethnic minority families' experiences with childcare and playwork services reveal a consistent pattern of practical, financial, and emotional challenges that shape how confidently and consistently they can access support. Most parents know where to find information and how to apply for services, drawing on a mix of formal sources and community networks. Awareness of government initiatives such as Flying Start and the Childcare Offer for Wales was mixed. Eligibility varied by postcode, income, and family circumstances, leaving some parents feeling excluded or unfairly treated. While some found the application process straightforward, others struggled with complex forms or

confusion about which schemes they qualified for. However, official guidance is not always clear, and families with limited English or literacy rely heavily on partners, peers, or professional support workers to navigate administrative processes. While language itself was rarely a barrier, cultural expectations and past negative experiences influenced some families' willingness to engage with childcare settings.

Support from Health Visitors was highly valued, and programmes like Home-Start offered tailored help to families facing challenges. Faith-based organisations also played a role in providing community and social support, though their reliance on existing networks sometimes limited access for those without established connections.

Digital resources, including local authority websites and social media, were important tools for finding information. Public spaces such as libraries and leisure centres enriched family life by offering activities and opportunities for children to socialise.

Cost was a very significant barrier, with families not eligible for funded places finding childcare unaffordable or "out of reach." Limited availability, inflexible session times, and rural distance constraints further restricted access, particularly for those without reliable transport. When government-funded places were unavailable or unsuitable, some parents turned to self-funded childcare out of necessity rather than preference. But private provision was often described as prohibitively expensive, disproportionately affecting parents' ability to work.

In the study, parents consistently prioritised safety above all else. Concerns about hygiene, supervision, and their child's ability to communicate, especially for refugee and asylum-seeking families, shaped decisions about when and whether to enrol children. For vulnerable families, trust in the setting and visible safety measures were essential prerequisites for participation. For vulnerable families such as asylum seekers, safety was paramount. They scrutinised childcare environments closely, seeking reassurance that their children would be protected.

While many families have the knowledge and networks needed to navigate childcare systems, persistent barriers - financial pressures, limited availability, cultural concerns, and safety anxieties - continue to constrain equitable access. Addressing these issues through clearer guidance, culturally sensitive support, affordable provision, and transparent safety practices would strengthen families' confidence and ensure that more children can benefit from early years services.

4.2. Experiences when using childcare

Patterns of childcare provision varied across Wales. English-medium settings were most commonly used by the research participants based in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf, while Welsh-medium childcare was more prevalent in Gwynedd—sometimes the only option available. Many parents took pride in their children learning Welsh, seeing it as a meaningful link to local culture, identity, and community life.

Formal childcare and play services were widely used, and most families felt confident navigating the information available to them. They relied on a blend of informal advice from friends, neighbours, other parents, and formal sources such as local authority websites, libraries, and community hubs. While many parents managed the system independently, others needed guidance from family hubs or community organisations. Word-of-mouth and official information worked hand in hand to help families find suitable childcare.

Informal childcare, trusted relatives, in-laws, and close friends, was a cornerstone for many families. Familiarity and shared cultural understanding made these arrangements feel safe and reliable.

Affordability was a major barrier. Families who did not qualify for funded places often found childcare too expensive, forcing them to rely on home-based care. For many, the cost alone was enough to rule out formal childcare entirely. Limited flexibility in childcare hours added another layer of difficulty, especially for working parents whose schedules did not align with standard provision.

Not all parents in the study wanted or needed formal childcare. Some chose to care for their children themselves, guided by cultural beliefs, personal values, or financial situation. Parental decisions were shaped by both personal experiences and stories shared within their communities. Negative experiences, whether in Wales, other regions of the UK or abroad, fuelled distrust, prompting some parents to wait until their children were older and able to articulate their experiences before enrolling them.

4.3. Language

For some ethnic minority families engaging with childcare, language is a core part of identity, belonging and cultural continuity. Although many families speak English and their native language, for most participants their use of language in the home shaped how they navigated childcare systems, what they valued in providers and how confident or welcome they felt when accessing services. When information was unclear, not translated or delivered without cultural sensitivity, trust weakened and participation in childcare services became more challenging.

Language was central to family identity. Bilingualism and multilingualism were common, with families weaving English and native languages into daily life. Native languages were nurtured through lessons, media, and family interactions, helping children maintain connections with relatives abroad. While most families continued long-standing language practices, some adjusted their routines to support children's schooling by introducing more English at home. Parents showed deep commitment to maintaining their native languages, while also recognising the importance of English for education and daily life. Many families actively blended languages and used structured learning at home or relied on community and family networks to keep linguistic heritage alive. Their childcare choices were therefore closely tied to whether settings respected these priorities and supported multilingual development.

Welsh-medium and bilingual provision added another layer. While most families used English-medium childcare, many expressed pride in their children learning Welsh and saw it as a pathway to cultural integration, school readiness and broader opportunities. Even parents who did not speak Welsh themselves valued bilingualism, though some felt limited in how much they could support it at home.

4.4. Benefits of childcare and playwork

Parents spoke about childcare and playwork not only as providing practical support, but as experiences that shape children's futures. Many hoped that childcare settings would offer more than supervision, imagining them as places where children could grow in independence, confidence, and social awareness. They described environments where children learn to navigate relationships, express themselves, and explore the world beyond their families. For several parents, early education was seen as a crucial stepping stone into school life. They believed that nursery and play-based learning nurtured both emotional resilience and academic readiness.

The social dimension of childcare was especially valued. Parents spoke about the friendships their children formed and the memories they created within a safe, supportive environment. They appreciated that childcare offered children the chance to spend time away from home, encounter different family structures and cultures, and develop the confidence and social skills that come from mixing with peers. Many felt these early friendships would become part of the children's long-term social world as they grew up together.

A significant gap emerged around after-school childcare and play services for school-age children; affordable or free programmes would greatly support working parents. Beyond the benefits for children, parents described childcare as essential to the stability and wellbeing of the whole family. It was not viewed as a luxury, but as a vital part of daily life—something that enabled parents to work, maintain routines, and reduce stress. childcare even offered a sense of structure and belonging, helping them adapt to life in the UK.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Ensure clear, accessible, and culturally relevant information

Ethnic minority families sometimes encounter unfamiliar systems and language barriers in understanding how to access services. Some of these difficulties could be addressed through the Welsh Government and Local Authorities:

- providing simple, multilingual guidance explaining childcare eligibility and funded options, using easy-read formats and simplified application forms
- simplifying the language in application forms for childcare provision could reduce dependency by parents on external help to complete forms
- standardising childcare information across Wales so families receive consistent messages regardless of where they live
- sharing information through trusted community spaces, libraries, community hubs, GP surgeries, schools, faith centres, and social media, recognising that not all families engage with formal channels or local authority websites

5.2. Build trust through safeguarding transparency and strong communication

Some ethnic minority families, including asylum seekers and refugees, may have had negative experiences with institutions or may be unfamiliar with UK safeguarding systems. Possible approaches to help families could include Local Authorities:

- encouraging childcare providers to share clear safeguarding policies and feedback mechanisms in accessible formats
- offering settling-in sessions, open days, and opportunities for parents to observe the environment, helping families feel confident about safety and staff practice
- providing regular updates about children's routines, learning, and wellbeing through photos, apps, or brief conversations — especially valuable for parents with limited English or Welsh

5.3. Expand flexible, affordable childcare that meets needs of diverse working

Ethnic minority families are more likely to work in shift-based, low-paid, or unpredictable jobs, making childcare flexibility a significant issue. To help families in these situations practical steps taken by the Welsh Government and Local Authorities might include:

- increasing funding for childcare outside standard hours — early mornings, evenings, and weekends

- promoting affordable or free after-school clubs and play services, which can be vital for families with limited financial resources
- encouraging settings to offer part-time sessions, extended hours, or adaptable packages for irregular childcare needs
- supporting partnerships between schools, community groups, and childcare providers to widen provision in areas with high ethnic minority populations, such as workshops on navigating the education system, and setting up parent advisory groups representing different ethnic communities.

5.4. Promote cultural awareness, inclusion, and multilingualism in childcare Settings

Ethnic minority families benefit when childcare environments reflect and respect their identities, languages, and cultural practices. This can be supported through actions from the Welsh Government and Local Authorities such as:

- providing staff training in cultural awareness, anti-racist practice, and inclusive communication
- celebrating cultural diversity through books, activities, food, and events that reflect the communities served
- using visual aids, translated materials, and clear signage to support families with limited English or Welsh
- promoting the benefits of bilingual and multilingual education, recognising the value of home languages
- offering additional reassurance and tailored support for families with past negative childcare experiences or those from vulnerable backgrounds

5.5 Strengthen community connections and trusted support networks

Ethnic minority families often rely on informal networks — relatives, faith groups, community organisations — for childcare advice and emotional support. Possible approaches to develop this include Local Authorities:

- working with trusted community organisations, faith groups, and groups like Home Start to reach families who may not engage with formal services
- providing low-commitment, flexible activities for stay-at-home parents to reduce isolation and build confidence

- encouraging childcare settings to host parent-provider meet-ups, trial sessions, and open days that feel welcoming to families from diverse backgrounds

The Welsh Government should work with key partners, including Cwlwm and local authorities, to explore how these recommendations may be taken forward in ways that reflect existing structures, responsibilities, and resource considerations across the childcare and playwork sector.

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Annex A

Recruitment poster

JOIN OUR RESEARCH STUDY !



Are you Black, Asian or minority ethnic and a parent / carer of children?

Do you live in Cardiff, Gwynedd or Rhondda Cynon Taf?

We want to hear about your experiences of accessing childcare and playwork services in Wales.

Who are we?

We are a team of researchers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, supported by Welsh Government community mentors and other researchers

What's involved?

A friendly conversation or small group discussion

Around 45-60 minutes duration

Online/telephone or in person

Your identity will be kept confidential

Why take part?

Share your views to help improve childcare services for families

Help us shape a Welsh Government Report

Interested?

Contact: post@iaith.cymru



Interview questions

Perspectives and Experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Families in Wales: A Qualitative Study on Childcare and Playwork Service Use

Hello, my name is X.

The Welsh Government has commissioned IAITH to carry out a study to help us understand how life experiences, culture and family needs influence how people use Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) services. The Welsh Government wants to work with parents and carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, to improve access to childcare and play settings as well as access to play opportunities. The insight from this will help support more inclusive policies in future.

Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. I would like to talk to you as part of our research into childcare and play services. .

I'd like the session to be quite informal, but I will be asking a series of questions about your views and experiences of childcare so that future services better meet the needs of all families. I will be noting (and/or recording) your responses during our conversation and afterwards so please don't get distracted by that. We will check with you that your views have been noted correctly. Is that ok?

Your participation today is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time (including pausing or leaving the interview at any time). Take as much time as you need to think about the questions before you start answering **them**. **If there are any questions you don't want to answer, you don't have to, and** we can skip to the next question.

Your participation will be confidential, which means that your personal information and your full response from our discussions will not be shared with the Welsh Government. No part of your personal information will appear on any material that is published. If we choose to quote some of your words directly or refer to any examples you mention, we will not use your real name and will omit any information that could lead to your identification.

We shared a Privacy Notice and Participation Form with you prior to this interview which explained the purpose of this research and how we will use the information you share with us today. Before we start, would you like me to repeat anything, or do you have any questions?

Research focus	'Aide memoire' questions
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<p>Family Life / Background / area</p>	<p><u>Questions for all participants:</u></p> <p>1. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?</p> <p>2. What are your hobbies?</p> <p>3.Can you say a little about the neighbourhood and the community where you live and/ or your experience of living in Wales?</p> <p>Follow-up prompts:</p> <p>3a. How would you describe your local area? Have you lived there long? Where have you moved from (if applicable)? What do you like or not like about it?</p> <p>3b.How do you access shops, services or public transport?</p> <p>3c.Do you feel part of the local community? In what way?</p>
<p>Formal Childcare</p>	<p>4.Do you use formal childcare or play services? (By formal childcare we mean nurseries, daycare settings or child minders). If no go on to question 12.</p> <p>5.Which type(s) of formal childcare do you use, and how often?</p> <p>6.How did you find out about this service?</p> <p>7.What language(s) are used in the setting?</p> <p>8.How has your experience been—positive, negative, or mixed? Have any of your friends or family members used the same childcare or play services?</p> <p>9. Are there any barriers that make it difficult to access formal childcare or play services ? Is the formal childcare or play service local and easily accessible?</p> <p>Context: We'd like to understand whether parents or guardians know how to apply for a place in Nursery Education — for example, nursery classes in schools or Welsh Government-funded childcare provision. We understand that not everyone may be aware at this stage, or the information may not always be clear.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>10. Do you know how to apply for a place in Nursery Education in your local school/nursery?</p>

	<p>11. Have you ever tried to apply for a Nursery education nursery or school place for a child aged 3 or 4?</p> <p>Questions for those with 2-3 or 3-4 year olds</p> <p>12. Are you aware the childcare element of the Flying Start programme, which is 12.5 hours a week, is available to some two year old children across Wales? Would this be something you would be interested in using if you are eligible? Or learning more about?</p> <p>13. Are you aware that the Welsh Government funds a minimum of 10 hours a week of Nursery education for 3-4 year olds? Would this be something you would be interested in using? Or learning more about?</p> <p>14. Are you aware that the Welsh Government funds up to an additional 20 hours of childcare for eligible families in Wales under the Childcare Offer for Wales? Would this be something you would be interested in using if you are eligible? Or learning more about?</p> <p>For those who have children aged between 3-4 and are eligible for the Childcare offer for Wales.</p> <p>15. Do you know how to apply for the Childcare Offer for Wales?</p>
<p>General information about Childcare and Play work services</p>	<p>Questions for all participants</p> <p>16. How important do you think formal childcare in a childcare setting is for 0- 8 year olds? Why?</p> <p>17. Where would you look for information or help with applying for a place in early years education?</p> <p>18. If you have looked for information was the process clear or confusing?</p> <p>19. Did someone help you — for example, a family member, a friend, a health visitor, a support worker?</p> <p>20. What do you know about your child's entitlement to a nursery or school place? (if applicable)</p> <p>21. Have you chosen not to apply for a Nursery Education place yet? If so, why? (if applicable)</p> <p>Questions for those who have not used formal childcare to date:</p> <p>22. Have you considered using formal childcare i.e. day nursery, child minder, play settings.</p> <p>23. If you decided not to use childcare would you be happy to say why?</p>

	<p>24.If you decided not to use nursery education would you be happy to say why?</p> <p>25.If you don't use funded childcare or play work, have you used any other types of childcare, such as private ones? Why did you decide on this?</p>
<p>Informal Childcare</p>	<p>26.Do you use informal childcare provided by family or friends?</p> <p>27.Who helps you look after your child(ren), and how often?</p> <p>28.What do they usually help with—e.g. school pick-ups, evenings, weekends?</p> <p>29.How important is that support to you?</p> <p>30.Can you tell us about any local services or organisations that support families with young children in your area? Things like community centres, parenting groups and support, childcare advice, language groups, health visitors, playgroups, Flying Start, etc.</p> <p>31.Do you use any of these services?</p> <p>If yes: <i>Which ones do you use, and how often? How did you find out about them?</i></p> <p>If no: <i>Is there a reason why not — for example, lack of time, information, transport, or something else?</i></p> <p>32.How did you first hear about these services? Prompt: Family / Health visitor / school / other parents / online / social media / local council / GP</p> <p>33.What helped you decide whether or not to use a particular service? Prompt: Was it recommendations from others? Distance or cost? Language used? Welcoming environment</p>
<p>Feelings around use of services</p>	<p>34.Are there any reasons why some parents might be unsure or worried about using childcare and play services? Prompt: Could be practical things, cultural reasons, past experiences.</p> <p>35.Who or what has helped you make decisions about nursery education or childcare — if anyone? Prompt: Knowing the staff? Speaking your Language? Visiting beforehand?</p> <p>36. Did you go to nursery education or formal childcare yourself when you were a child? Do you think that influences how you feel about it now?</p>

	37. Is there anything that would help you to use childcare and play services?
Language	<p>38. Which languages do you use at home and with whom? (Follow-up prompts; Are there other family members (like grandparents) who speak different languages at home? Why is it important for you to use X language at home?)</p> <p>37. Have your language practices at home changed over time—for example since moving to Wales or since your child was born?</p> <p>38. Do any of your children speak Welsh? Would you like them to learn Welsh?</p> <p>39. Does the language used in local childcare or play settings have any part in how families make decisions about what services to use?</p> <p>Follow-up prompts (if relevant):</p> <p>40a. Do you know what languages are used in the services near you?</p> <p>40b. Have you thought about which languages you'd like your child to be exposed to at this age?</p> <p>40c. Would it make a difference to you if the setting used more than one language, or your language used at home?</p> <p>41. Have you come across Welsh-medium or bilingual nursery education or childcare in your area? Have you considered Welsh-medium or bilingual childcare for your child? Why or why not?</p> <p><u>Prompts</u> Do you know how to find Welsh medium nursery education/ childcare/ play settings in your area? Would you like your child to speak Welsh? Why or why not?</p>
Long term impact of childcare	<p>Questions for participants who have used nursery education, formal childcare and play services.</p> <p>42. What were your hopes or expectations before using</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. formal childcare and play services? b. Nursery Education? <p>43. Did it meet those expectations? In what ways did it work well — or not — for you and your child?</p> <p>44. For how long did you use formal childcare and play services?</p> <p>45. For how long did you use nursery Education? What influenced when or why you stopped (e.g. starting school, change in routine)?</p>

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| | <p>46. Would you consider using formal childcare and play services again? Why or why not?</p> <p>47. Would you consider using Nursery education again? Why or why not?</p> <p>48. Did you and your child(ren) feel welcomed by the setting when using formal childcare and play services?</p> <p>49. Did you and your child(ren) feel welcomed by the setting when using nursery education?</p> <p>50. Has using childcare or nursery education made any difference for your child or your family? In what way?</p> <p>51. Has it made any difference to your own daily life? In what way?</p> <p>52. Do you see any benefits, challenges in the long run — for your child or your family?</p> |
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