

# Impact of Care to Learn: Tracking the destinations of young parents funded in 2004/05

Sally Dench



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# Impact of Care to Learn: Tracking the Destinations of Young Parents Funded in 2004/05

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# Executive Summary

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As part of the national evaluation of Care to Learn, a telephone survey was conducted of 1,000 of the 3,666 young parents who received Care to Learn funding during the 2004/05 academic year. The survey was conducted during September/October 2005, to allow time after the end of the previous academic year for these young parents to have obtained any examination results and to have moved on, eg to further study, a job, or a period of inactivity.

## The importance and impact of Care to Learn

Care to Learn was very important in supporting these young parents in learning – 88 per cent said that they would not have gone on a course without the support provided. Only two per cent reported that the funding they received to pay for their childcare had made no difference to their learning.

Comparing the qualifications held at the beginning of the academic year and those obtained during the year, there is clear evidence of progression:

- Thirty-nine per cent of this sample of young parents had no qualifications at the beginning of the academic year; by the autumn a year later, this had fallen to 20 per cent.
- This fall in the proportion of young parents with no qualifications was not just due to 16 year olds reaching the age that they sat their first examinations. The proportion of 17, 18 and 19 year olds fell from around one-third of each age group to around one-tenth.
- The majority of 15 and 16 year olds were studying for GCSEs, although there was some evidence of older respondents catching up on lost schooling by studying GCSEs.
- A-levels were mostly being studied for by the expected age groups (17/18 year olds); however, there was also some evidence of catching up for lost schooling by older age groups studying for A-levels.

Looking further at the change in qualifications achieved during the 2004/05 academic year:

- Of those who started the year with no qualifications (394 respondents):
  - 24 per cent were still studying
  - 21 per cent had achieved a Level 1 qualification
  - 15 per cent a Level 2 qualification, and
  - two per cent a Level 3 qualification.
- Amongst those starting the year with Level 1 (274 respondents):
  - 26 per cent were still studying
  - 18 per cent had achieved further Level 1 qualifications (many of these had moved from an academic to a vocational route)
  - 25 per cent had moved on to Level 2, and
  - seven per cent to Level 3.
- Of the 280 respondents starting the year at Level 2:
  - seven per cent had obtained Level 1
  - 23 per cent had obtained further Level 2 qualifications (many of these had either moved from an academic to a vocational route, or had bettered their previous academic qualifications)
  - 20 per cent had obtained a Level 3 qualification.

## Activities the following year

The majority of these young parents (70 per cent) were still in learning at the beginning of the following academic year. Around half of these were on the same course as they had been doing in 2004/05 and the rest were on a different course.

Of those on a different course, the majority (82 per cent) had completed their original course and moved on to another one. The rest had dropped out of their original course and started a new one.

Amongst those who had moved on to a new course, there was evidence of further progression:

- Of those who were at school in 2004/05, the majority had moved on to a sixth form or FE college in 2005/06.

- Of those studying at an FE college in 2004/05, nine per cent had progressed to university.
- Of those studying in a sixth form, 20 per cent (eight respondents) had progressed to an FE college and 20 per cent (eight respondents) to university.
- Sixty-four respondents who had changed course had been studying GCSEs in 2004/05 – one-third had moved on to study A/S and A-levels in 2005/06; just over half had moved on to a wide range of vocational courses.
- twenty-seven of those who had changed courses had been studying A-levels – 16 had progressed to university and to a range of vocational courses at an FE college.
- Twenty-two respondents (who had changed course) had been studying basic skills in 2004/05, 13 of these had progressed to a range of vocational courses and four were studying GCSEs.

Six per cent (63) were working and seven per cent (67) were looking for work at the time of the survey. Amongst those in work, three types of job were most common: retail/shop assistant, office/administrative work, and catering/restaurant/bar work. Just under half reported that the course they were on during the 2004/05 academic year had helped them to find their job and two-fifths that the job was related to the course they had studied. Just over half were receiving some training in their job.

Fifteen per cent of respondents were staying at home, looking after their child, at the beginning of the 2005/06 academic year. A number of responses suggested that staying at home was a temporary situation. For example, almost one-fifth were waiting to start a new course and a few others were looking for another course. A few had personal problems that had to be addressed before they could move on to anything else.

Respondents were asked what they saw themselves doing in three years' time. Nearly two-fifths said that they would be working, a quarter at university and one-tenth studying but not at university. Only four per cent did not know, and one per cent thought that they would be bringing up their children full time.

## Use of Care to Learn (2004/05)

The majority (93 per cent) reported that the funding they received covered all the time that they were at their place of learning or doing private study. There were variations in what was not covered amongst the rest. Some reported specific activities or times that were not covered while others reported general shortfalls. Home study time was most commonly not covered, exams and holidays were also mentioned by a few. This funding shortfall was most commonly made by the young person or their families; or private study was done once their child had gone to bed.

## Other support and advice

Overall 42 per cent had received some other financial support – either in the form of an EMA (27 per cent) or from their learning provider (19 per cent). Help with the cost of books and equipment and transport were most commonly received from a learning provider. A range of other support was mentioned but each by only a few respondents (eg uniform, food/lunches, trips/outings, work placements).

The wider advice, information and support provided to young parents alongside the funding for childcare remains crucial. Just over three-quarters had received some sort of help or advice on accessing or staying on their course. This included deciding what course to do, finding and applying for a course, dealing with problems/issues relating to the course itself and dealing with personal problems while on the course. The sources of help and advice were very varied with the most common being someone at the learning provider, family and friends, or a Connexions PA. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents would have liked to receive more help or advice while accessing or on their course.

## Reasons for learning

The main reasons for deciding to do a course were: wanting to improve their chances in the labour market (49 per cent), having the chance to do something they had always wanted to do (33 per cent), thinking that the course sounded interesting (23 per cent) and wanting a better future for their child (14 per cent).

Almost one-fifth dropped out of their course during the 2004/05 academic year. The main reasons for this were: it being too difficult to study and look after a child, having too many personal or family problems, becoming pregnant again, and the course not being what they expected. By the time of the survey, one-third of these were on another course, ten per cent were in work and 11 per cent were looking for work.

## Use of childcare

The main types of childcare used while studying were registered childminder, a nursery school or day nursery (not at their place of learning) or childcare provision at their learning provider.

The main reasons for choosing the childcare were its location, it being the best of the available options and wanting someone properly trained to care for their child. Roughly similar proportions wanted their childcare to be close to home and to be close to their learning provider. The choices young parents make relating to childcare are as varied as parents generally.

The majority (three-quarters) reported that it had been easy to find the childcare they wanted. The main difficulties reported were there being too few places available

locally, childcare being too expensive, and there not being enough help or advice available. Almost all these young parents were satisfied or very satisfied with their childcare. They valued the quality of the service provided, the friendly/helpful staff, and that their children were benefiting from the childcare. Two-fifths had asked their childcare provider for some help or advice, for example, related to child development, nutrition and diet, their child's health or behaviour, or appropriate play activities.

## Survey Methodology

The interview sample was selected randomly from the whole sample. Respondents from a range of backgrounds and of various ages were interviewed. The ethnic origin reported by respondents in the survey is very similar to the distribution of the whole 2004/05 cohort. There were, however, two clear differences – 22 per cent of survey respondents said they were black or black British, compared to 12 per cent of the 2004/05 cohort; less than one per cent of survey respondents refused to report their ethnic origin, while this data is missing from ten per cent of the application forms. It is possible that black young parents were more likely than other groups to miss completing the question on the application form about their ethnic origin. However, comparing responses in the survey to the management information shows that this only provides part of the explanation. For some reason, it seems that black young parents were more likely to respond to the survey compared to their representation in the whole sample.

## Concluding comment

This report looks at the impact of Care to Learn on just one cohort of recipients and only over one year. It shows that the funding and related support are very important to young parents remaining in, or returning to, learning. Furthermore, Care to Learn enabled many of these young parents to progress in terms of obtaining qualifications and enhancing their ability to enter and compete effectively in the labour market.



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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Introduction

As part of the national evaluation of Care to Learn, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) conducted a telephone survey of 1,000 young parents who had received funding through the programme during the 2004/05 academic year. The survey was conducted during September/October 2005, to allow time after the end of the previous academic year for these young parents to have obtained any examination results and to have moved on, eg to further study, a job or a period of inactivity. The aim was to explore what happened to them following the 2004/05 academic year and the short-term impact of Care to Learn. The survey also looked at the childcare they used while studying and issues around access to and funding for childcare, as well as more general support and advice received.

This chapter starts by providing some background on Care to Learn and goes on to report some characteristics of respondents to the survey. Chapter 2 looks at the impact of Care to Learn, including what this cohort of young parents were doing early in the 2005/06 academic year. In Chapter 3, the young parents' views of Care to Learn are explored, and Chapter 4 provides an overview of young parents' use of, and preferences, for different types of childcare. Finally, Chapter 5 draws some conclusions.

## 1.2 Care to Learn

In the 2002 Spending Review, the government responded to a bid from the Department of Health (where the Teenage Pregnancy Unit [TPU] was then placed) and the Sure Start Unit to establish a single universal scheme supporting childcare for young parents so that they could continue to learn. Care to Learn was introduced as a Childcare Pilot in 2002/03. That academic year, 16 to 18 year old parents studying in school sixth forms and sixth form colleges were able to apply for financial support towards the cost of their childcare from a central processing function. By 2004/05, any young parent starting a publicly-funded course before their 19th birthday was able to

## 2 Impact of Care to Learn

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apply for this childcare support. They had to use OFSTED-registered childcare to qualify for this funding and could claim up to £5,125 a year.

Young fathers are eligible to apply for Care to Learn funding as long as they have the main caring responsibility for their child. In practice, this means that young fathers rarely apply – in 2004/05 five young fathers received this funding and in 2005/06 12 fathers received it.

During the 2004/05 academic year 3,666 young parents received Care to Learn funding. The survey was aiming to interview 1,000 of these, and everyone who was contacted and agreed to take part was interviewed.

### 1.3 Characteristics of respondents

#### 1.3.1 Age and gender

All the parents interviewed were mothers.

At the time this cohort were applying to Care to Learn, any young parent starting a course before their 19th birthday was eligible to apply. The course could continue for some time after their 19th birthday but had to be at school or further education level, including work-based learning; higher education is not covered by this funding stream. The young parents participating in this survey were asked how old they were at their last birthday. Their ages ranged from 14 to 22 (one refused to give their age). Table 1.1 shows the age distribution of these young parents at their last birthday. The survey was conducted during the autumn of 2005, at least a year after they had applied for Care to Learn funding. The small number of older respondents would have been on longer courses that started before their 19th birthday.

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**Table 1.1: Age of survey participants at their last birthday (column per cent, N = 999)**

	%
Under 16	3
16	8
17	18
18	29
19	35
Over 19	8

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*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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#### 1.3.2 Marital status and living arrangements

One-third (32 per cent) were living with their parents and almost two-thirds (63 per cent) reported living in their own home. The remaining five per cent were living in a hostel, with friends or relatives, in a foster home, with their partner's parents, in



temporary/shared/Social Services accommodation.<sup>1</sup> The younger a young parent, the more likely they were to be living with their parents; however, just over one-third of 16 year olds were living independently from their family (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Living arrangements and age at last birthday (column per cent, may not add to 100 per cent due to only main forms of accommodation being included in the table)**

	<16	16	17	18	19	Over 19
Living with parents	94	61	47	30	18	15
Living in own home (1 person)		29	45	68	76	85
Living in a hostel	-	2	4	1	3	-
<i>N</i> =	31	76	182	285	346	79

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

The majority were single (97 per cent). Three per cent were married and one per cent (five people) reported being separated.<sup>2</sup> However, when those who were living in their own home were asked who they lived with, apart from their child or children, 21 per cent (or 13 per cent of the whole sample) reported living with a partner. The majority of those in their own home were living just with their child or children (77 per cent of those with their own home, 49 per cent of the whole sample). Others had friends, lodgers or other family members living with them. Amongst those living in their own home, there was hardly any variation by age in the proportion living alone or with a partner.

The majority (94 per cent) had one child, with six per cent having two. Three young parents (less than one per cent) had three children – there was one set of twins amongst these. While the parents aged 19 or over were more likely to have more than one child, three 16 year olds did report having two children and one of the three, with three children, was 18.

### 1.3.3 Ethnic origin

Table 1.3 shows the self-reported ethnic origin of survey participants.

This is in many ways very similar to the distribution of the whole 2004/05 cohort in that 70 per cent of Care to Learn recipients reported being white on their application form, five per cent reported being of mixed race, one per cent Asian or Asian British, and less than one per cent Chinese. There were, however, two clear differences – 22 per cent of survey respondents said they were black or black British, compared to 12 per cent of the 2004/05 cohort; less than one per cent of survey respondents refused to report their ethnic origin, while this data is missing from ten per cent of the application forms. It is possible that black young parents were more likely than other groups to

<sup>1</sup> Four refused to answer this question.

<sup>2</sup> Four refused to answer this question.

miss completing the question on the application form about their ethnic origin. However, comparing responses in the survey to the management information shows that this only provides part of the explanation. The sample was randomly selected. For some reason, it seems that black young parents were more likely to respond to the survey compared to their representation in the whole sample.

**Table 1.3: Ethnic origin of participants (column per cent, N = 1,000)**

	%
White	70
Black or black British	22
Mixed	6
Asian or Asian British	1
Chinese	1
Other	1
Refused	<1

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

### 1.3.4 Sources of income

Table 1.4 reports the main sources of income these young parents had at the time of the survey – and this should be remembered in interpreting the findings. Five young parents (one per cent) reported having no income at the time of the survey, 18 (two per cent) did not know and seven (one per cent) did not want to answer the question. These responses did not show any particular pattern by age – for example, it was not the youngest respondents who reported not knowing their sources of income or having no income.

In the survey a list of possible income sources was read out to respondents. These are listed in Table 1.4 as all respondents were specifically asked about these. As the table shows, the majority of these young parents were reliant on benefits of one type or another. This is not surprising given that the majority were either still studying or inactive at the time of the survey (see Chapter 2).

In addition to the possible income sources listed in Table 1.4, respondents were asked whether they had any other sources of income and a range of answers was given. These are the answers that certain respondents thought of and therefore probably underestimate the extent to which they were accessed by this sample of young parents. Only one ‘other’ response was mentioned by a relatively large proportion of respondents – Housing Benefit (14 per cent). Other responses included Council Tax benefit (three per cent); Job Seekers’ Allowance, student loan, relatives/parents (each by one per cent); Modern Apprenticeship allowance, NHS student grant/bursary. Disability Living Allowance, Entry to Employment Allowance (called the ‘Training Allowance’ and replaced by the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in April 2006), and Sure Start Maternity Grant, were each reported by less than one per cent.

Overall, these data show a wide range of possible income sources, which can be confusing to those trying to access the full range of support available to them. However, as will be discussed later in this report, 70 per cent were still studying at the time of the survey. Some (six per cent) were in work and a few had progressed on to university – which goes some way to explain the range of sources of income reported.

The majority of those reporting earnings from a job had finished their studies (at least for the time being) by the time of the survey and were in employment. However, a small number (five per cent of 705 respondents) of those still studying also had income from a job, suggesting that they were combining work, study and family responsibilities.

**Table 1.4: Main sources of income received by respondents (column per cent, N = 1,000)**

	%
Child benefit	94
Income support	65
Child Tax Credit	52
Earnings from a job	13
Working Tax Credit	9
Partner's earnings from a job	9
Maintenance payments (for self or child)	8
Partner's income support/unemployment	2
Childcare Tax Credit (part of WTC)	2

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

### 1.3.5 Previous situation

The majority of young parents in this sample had moved out of inactivity during the 2004/05 academic year (Table 1.5). Immediately before starting the course in which they were participating in that academic year, around two-thirds reported that they had been looking after their child (including having recently given birth). Almost one-third were studying – some on the same course and others on a different course.

**Table 1.5: Situation before starting the course (column per cent, N = 1,000)**

	%
Looking after child	65
Still at school	17
Studying on the same course (not at school)	7
Studying on another course	8
Working	3

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

## 6 Impact of Care to Learn

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Only three per cent were working immediately before starting their course – two per cent part time and one per cent full time. The numbers do become very small when looking at the jobs these young parents were doing. However, the majority were low or very low skilled. For example, respondents reported being cleaners; working as a warehouse assistant or factory operative; being a waitress or in a bar, kitchen and other basic catering jobs; being a care worker. Around one-quarter of those in work (seven people) were in customer service or retail roles.

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## 2 The Impact of Care to Learn

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores what the young parents participating in this survey were doing at the time the interviews were conducted, ie at the beginning of the 2005/06 academic year. Improving chances in the labour market and making a better future for their child had been important reasons for these teenage parents being in learning (see Chapter 4), and this is reflected in the subsequent activities of a substantial proportion of respondents. The majority (70 per cent) were continuing in learning, six per cent were in employment and seven per cent were looking for work.

This chapter looks at the overall importance of Care to Learn, the impact of their study on the qualifications held by these young parents and what happened to them following the end of the 2004/05 academic year. Finally, their longer-term ambitions are reported.

### 2.2 Overall importance of Care to Learn funding

Care to Learn was very important in supporting these young parents in learning (Table 2.1).

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**Table 2.1 The difference Care to Learn made on their ability to study (N = 1,000)**

	%
I would not have gone on a course without Care to Learn paying for childcare	88
I would probably have gone on a course but the help made it much easier	5
I would have done some study but the help meant I could do more	5
Help with paying for childcare made no difference; I would have done a course anyway	2

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*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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Almost 90 per cent reported that they would not have gone on a course without the support provided by Care to Learn. Only two per cent reported that the funding they received for childcare had made no difference to their learning.

## 2.3 Qualifications aimed for and obtained

During the survey, a number of questions were asked about qualifications held, at the time and at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year, and qualifications aimed for through their study. These data can be used to demonstrate patterns of progression. Given that only one academic year is being looked at, it might not be expected that there would be much evidence of progression; however, a picture does begin to emerge when various parts of the data are looked at in conjunction with each other.

### 2.3.1 Qualifications at beginning of academic year

The qualification levels of this sample of young people at the beginning of the 2004/2005 academic year were quite mixed, which is perhaps not surprising given the age range of respondents. Many were reaching crucial points in their education in relation to the timing of obtaining qualifications. However, due to becoming a young parent, alongside other factors, a number were likely to have missed out at various stages and be behind their peers.

**Table 2.2: Qualifications held at the beginning of 2004/05 academic year (N = 1,000)**

	%
None	39
<Level 1	2
Level 1	27
Level 2	28
Level 3	2
Have qualifications but level not clear	2

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

Qualification levels were generally low – for example, four-tenths of this sample of young parents had no qualifications (Table 2.2). As would be expected, the youngest (ie aged 16 or under at the time of the survey) were very unlikely to report having any qualifications at the beginning of the academic year (Table 2.3). They would not have been old enough at that stage to have sat many, probably any, public examinations. However, around one-third of 17, 18, 19 and 20 year olds reported starting with no qualifications – and this is higher than would normally be expected amongst these age groups. Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show that in autumn 2005, between seven and ten per cent of all 17, 18, 19 and 20 year olds had no formal qualifications.

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**Table 2.3: Proportion of each age group with no qualifications at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year**

	% (of age group)	No. in age group
<16	94	31
16	83	76
17	35	182
18	36	285
19	32	346
Over 19	32	79

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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### 2.3.2 Qualifications being studied during 2004/05 academic year

Moving on to look at the qualifications aimed for on the course studied in 2004/05, and the qualifications achieved by the end of that year, a clear picture does begin to emerge of progression and improvements in qualification levels. These data are presented here in two ways. First, by reporting general patterns across the whole sample and showing how these change over time; and secondly, by showing some elements of individual progression.

Table 2.4 reports the qualification levels aimed for on the course being followed in 2004/05.

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**Table 2.4: Qualifications aimed for on course studied 2004/05 (N = 1,000)**

	%
Below Level 1	5
Level 1	15
Level 2	27
Level 3	14
Level 4	1
GCSEs	14
A/S levels	2
A-levels	11
Not taking a qualification	3
Qualification aimed for but level not clear	8

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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For some academic qualifications (ie A-levels, A/S levels and GCSEs) it was not possible to assess level at this point – the number and level of passes was unknown. The course had not been completed at that stage. As might be expected given the existing qualification levels of these young parents, a wide range of qualification levels were being aimed for, with Level 2 generally being the most common. Nevertheless, there

were a number who were aiming for A/S levels (two per cent) or A-levels (11 per cent). The sample included those on an academic and vocational track.

The pattern by age of qualifications being aimed for does become quite complicated. However, a number of themes do emerge:

- The majority of 15 and 16 year olds were studying for GCSEs, although there was also some evidence of older respondents perhaps catching up on lost schooling by studying for GCSEs – 14 per cent of 17 year olds were studying GCSEs, seven per cent of 18 year olds and five per cent of 19 year olds.
- Level 2 was the qualification most likely to be aimed for by all 17 year olds and older – for example, 28 per cent of 17 year olds, 31 per cent of 18 year olds and 30 per cent of 19 year olds were aiming for this level.
- As with GCSEs, A-levels were mostly being studied for by the expected age groups (17-18); however, again, there was some evidence of catching up – 24 per cent of 20 year olds were studying A-levels.

### 2.3.3 Qualifications obtained by end of academic year

At the time of the survey, 46 per cent had not obtained any further qualifications (Table 2.5). Almost two-thirds of these were still studying for their qualifications (28 per cent of the whole sample). The rest had not obtained qualifications due to dropping out of their course (18 per cent of the whole sample – the reasons for this are explored in Section 3.4). Three per cent had some qualifications but the level was not clear, and two per cent did not know what qualifications they had obtained. Levels 2 and 3 qualifications had most commonly been achieved by the rest.

**Table 2.5: Qualifications obtained during 2004/05 academic year (N = 1,000)**

	%
None	46
<i>Of which: still studying</i>	28
<i>Dropped out</i>	18
Entry level/<level 1	3
Level 1	17
Level 2	20
Level 3	9
Level 4	<1
Don't know	3
Qualification obtained but level not clear	3

Source: IES survey, 2005



The above tables provide an overall or average picture. However, when qualifications obtained during 2004/05 are compared with those held at the beginning of the academic year, evidence of progression does begin to emerge more clearly.

- Looking first at those who started the year with no qualifications (394 respondents):
  - 24 per cent were still studying
  - 21 per cent had achieved a Level 1 qualification
  - 15 per cent a Level 2 qualification, and
  - two per cent a Level 3 qualification.
  - However, there is also a less positive side to this group, in that 26 per cent of those starting the year with no qualifications had not achieved any qualifications by the end of the year due to dropping out of their course. The reasons for dropping out of a course are explored in Section 3.4 – it should be noted here that the distribution of reasons given for dropping out by those with no prior qualifications were no different to those with some prior qualifications.
- Amongst those starting with Level 1 (274 people):
  - 26 per cent were still studying
  - 18 per cent had obtained further Level 1 qualifications
  - 25 per cent had moved on to Level 2
  - seven per cent to Level 3
  - 16 per cent had not achieved further qualifications due to dropping out of their course
  - looking at the 18 per cent (49 respondents) who had obtained further Level 1 qualifications, almost half (23 of the 49, 47 per cent) had moved from studying academic (ie usually GCSEs) to studying vocational qualifications and hence were progressing in their studies.
- Of the 280 respondents who started the year at Level 2:
  - seven per cent had obtained Level 1 (these had, for example, changed direction, or were taking supplementary qualifications)
  - 23 per cent further Level 2 qualifications
  - 20 per cent had obtained a Level 3 qualification
  - 34 per cent were still studying and 11 per cent had dropped out before achieving further qualifications.

- looking further at the 23 per cent (64 respondents) who had obtained further Level 2 qualifications, over one-third (25 of the 64, 39 per cent) had moved from studying academic to studying vocational qualifications. Another third (22 respondents) seemed to be aiming to improve their academic qualifications (eg by obtaining more or better GCSEs).

Only 18 respondents started with a Level 3 qualification and seven were still studying. The other 11 had all achieved a further qualification, although the pattern of qualifications obtained by the end of the 2004/05 year by this group provides a less clear picture of progression. The numbers become too small to explore behind these patterns.

While these data show some clear patterns of progression for the majority of young parents participating in the survey, another pattern also emerges. There is an association between having no qualifications at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year and not achieving any by the end of the year due to dropping out of the course – 26 per cent of those with no qualifications at the beginning of the year dropped out (and therefore obtained no qualifications during the year), compared to 16 per cent holding Level 1 qualifications and 11 per cent of those holding Level 2 at the beginning of the year. The numbers do become quite small when trying to explore this further. It was shown earlier that those aged 16 were, understandably, less likely to begin the year with any qualifications. The association between having no qualifications at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year and dropping out of the course was weaker for those aged under 16 however, and this group were less likely to have dropped out and obtained no qualifications by the end of the year. Eleven per cent of those aged 16 who started the year with no qualifications dropped out of their course and did not obtain any qualifications, compared to around one-third each of unqualified 17, 18 and 19 year olds.

Another way of looking at progression is to compare the overall qualification levels of this sample of young parents at the beginning and end of the academic year (Table 2.6a). Eight per cent of respondents had achieved a qualification during the year but the level was unclear. This means that the table will slightly underestimate the extent to which the qualifications of this group had increased as a result of a year with Care to Learn funding. Nevertheless, it can be clearly seen that the proportion with no qualifications had fallen from 39 to 20 per cent. The proportion with Level 2 and 3 qualifications had increased. Table 2.6b shows that by the end of the 2004/05 academic year it was not just those taking qualifications at the end of their compulsory schooling that had moved from having no qualifications to some qualifications. The proportion in older age groups with no qualifications had fallen from around one-third (see Table 2.3) to one-fifth or less.

**Table 2.6a: Overall qualifications held at beginning and end of 2004/05 academic year (N = 1,000, column per cent)**

	Beginning of year	End of year
None	39	20
<Level 1	2	3
Level 1	27	26
Level 2	28	34
Level 3	2	10
Level 4	0	<1
Qualifications but level unclear	1	8

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

**Table 2.6b: Proportion of each age group with no qualifications at the end of the 2004/05 academic year**

	% (of age group)	No. in age group
<16	87	31
16	20	76
17	20	182
18	18	285
19	16	346
Over 19	14	79

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

### 2.3.4 Qualifications being studied for 2005/06

Those who had finished a course in 2004/05 and moved on to another course were asked what qualifications they were studying for in 2005/06. The data are slightly difficult to interpret as some were studying for qualifications for which either the level was unclear or for which the level was at that time unknown. However, Table 2.7 does begin to show further evidence of progression. For example, 20 per cent were aiming for a Level 3 qualification and 11 per cent for Level 4. Young parents who had progressed to a Level 4 course (often a degree) were no longer receiving Care to Learn funding by the time of the survey.

**Table 2.7: Qualifications held at the end of 2004/05 compared to qualifications being aimed for in 2005/06 for those who had moved on to a different course (N = 343)**

	Qualifications already obtained	Qualifications studying for 2005/06
None	10	-
< Level 1	4	3
Level 1	29	14
Level 2	33	27
Level 3	15	20
Level 4	<1	11
Other qualification but level not clear	9	7
A-levels	-	10
A/S levels	-	3
GCSEs	-	4

Note - some of the qualifications obtained by the end of 2004/05 will have been A-levels, A/S levels or GCSEs, but as the results were known it was possible to code these to a level.

Source: IES survey, 2005

Looking at the qualifications aimed for compared to those already achieved, further evidence of progression does appear:

- Fifty per cent of those with a Level 1 qualification from previous study were aiming for Level 2, and 12 per cent for Level 3.
- Forty per cent with a Level 2 were aiming for a Level 3.
- Sixty-three per cent with a Level 3 were aiming for Level 4.

## 2.4 Continuing learning

The majority (705) of the 1,000 young parents interviewed (70 per cent) reported that they were still in learning. Around half (51 per cent, 357) of these 705 were on the same course that they had been on during the 2004/05 academic year and the rest (49 per cent, 343) were on a different course.

### 2.4.1 Learning progression

Of those who were on a different course, the majority (82 per cent of the 343 respondents, ie 28 per cent of the whole sample) reported that they had completed their original course and moved on to another one. The rest had dropped out of their original course and started a new one. The reason for this varied, with 15 people saying that the original course was not what they expected and nine that it was too difficult juggling studying with a child. Other reasons were mentioned by five or fewer respondents and varied from personal problems, difficulties with childcare to

course-related reasons, such as deciding to change direction. Cost was not specifically mentioned amongst the difficulties related to childcare – respondents mentioned not being happy with the childcare they were using, their child not settling with the childcare provider, and childcare arrangements not being reliable and breaking down.

### Change in learning provider

Amongst those who had moved to another course there was some evidence of progression, and this can be illustrated in a number of ways. This analysis relates to 343 respondents and hence cell sizes do quickly become small when these data are sub-divided further.

First, looking at the learning institutions that those who had changed course had moved between, it can be seen that the majority were progressing with their learning.

- *Progressing from school* – 41 (12 per cent) of the 343 who had changed course were studying at school in 2004/05. At the beginning of the 2005/06 academic year, only five of these remained at school; 17 had progressed to an FE college and 14 to a school sixth form or sixth form college; three were at university. While a few of those who were at school in 2004/05 remained below the statutory school leaving age, most were beyond the age of 16 by the time of this survey. This was a point at which they could possibly most easily have dropped out of learning, but they were remaining and progressing with their learning.
- *Progressing from FE* – of the 219 studying at an FE college in 2004/05, 20 (nine per cent) had progressed to university. The majority (86 per cent) were continuing at an FE college, although on a different course; five had moved to work-based learning.
- *Progressing from a sixth form* – forty-one were in a school sixth form or sixth form college in 2004/05. Early in the 2005/06 academic year, 59 per cent (24) remained in such an institution, 20 per cent (eight) had moved to an FE college and another 20 per cent (eight) had progressed to university.

Table 2.8 shows in a simple way, for those who had changed course, the proportion studying at different types of learning institutions in 2004/05 and their distribution across these early in the 2005/06 academic year. The most striking points are that fewer were studying in a school at the later time and that 33 (ten per cent of those who had changed course – three per cent of the whole sample) had progressed to university. This does partly reflect the changing age structure of this cohort of young parents, but also shows that they are progressing with their learning.

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**Table 2.8: Learning institutions studied at in 2004/05 and 2005/06, by those who had changed course between the two academic years (N = 343, column per cent)**

	2004/05	2005/06
School	12	2
FE college	64	70
School sixth form or sixth form college	12	12
Work-based learning	4	4
Community centre	2	1
Training centre	5	2
University	0	10
Young mothers' unit	2	<1

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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### Change in course

These young parents were studying a very varied range of courses. Still looking at those who had changed course between the 2004/05 and 2005/06 academic year, there is further evidence of progression – although the patterns are less distinct here. This is mainly due to the wide range of course being studied and sometimes the mix of courses. However, the qualification paths young people take generally can be complex and seemingly unconnected. Furthermore, some young people will experiment trying different courses until they find one that suits them. This is not specific to young parents. Others will build up a portfolio of different qualifications and training.

Due to the varied nature of the courses being studied, if the whole range is looked at numbers for some become very small. Therefore, the following is based on the courses most commonly studied in 2004/05 by those who had moved to a different course in 2005/06.

Sixty-four respondents who had changed course had been studying GCSEs in 2004/05. One-third of these had moved on to study A/S and A-levels in 2005/06. Only four reported changing course but still studying GCSEs. Just over half (36) had moved on to a wide range of vocational courses.

Twenty-seven of this group of respondents had been studying A-levels in 2004/05. The majority of these (16) had moved on to university in 2005/06 – here they were studying a range of academic and more vocationally-based courses. Five reported changing course but still studying for A-levels. The rest had progressed to a range of vocational courses at an FE college. Of the 12 that were studying A/S levels in 2004/05, ten had progressed to A-levels. The other two had gone on to vocational courses.

Twenty-two of those respondents who had changed course had been studying basic skills in 2004/05. While five of these were still on a basic skills course, the rest had

progressed. This was mostly to a range of vocational courses; however, four had moved on to a GCSE course.

One of the most popular areas of study was health and social care. Fifty-three respondents who had changed course had been studying this in 2004/05. Half (27) reported that although they had changed course they were still studying health and social care – these had progressed to a higher level course in the same subject. The rest had moved on to study a range of related and seemingly unrelated, usually vocational, subjects.

## 2.5 Working

Six per cent of all respondents (63) were working and seven per cent (67) were looking for work at the time of the survey. There was some relationship with the age of a young parent – Table 2.9. These data should be treated with care as the numbers involved are so small; however, although a few of the younger respondents were either in or looking for a job, those aged 18 and 19 were more highly represented than in the whole sample.

**Table 2.9: In employment or looking for employment after 2004/05 academic year, by age at the time of the survey**

	In employment		Looking for work		All sample
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Under 16	0	0	0	0	3
16	0	0	1	1	8
17	5	8	7	10	18
18	19	30	22	33	29
19	34	54	30	45	35
Over 19	5	8	7	10	8
<i>N</i> =	63		67		1,000

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

Looking first at those in work, we can see that a wide range of jobs had been taken up and that three types of work were most commonly reported: retail/shop assistant (13); administration, clerk, office junior, reception (11); and restaurant, catering, waitressing, bar work (14). Six had become a nursery nurse/nursery assistant and five another type of care worker; five were working in health and beauty. Others were in a variety of jobs, eg one reported having a management position, one was working in social services, one as a cleaner, one as a hospital worker.

These young parents reported a range of reasons for taking the jobs they had taken. To earn some money was the most common reason, with 18 respondents reporting this, while 11 reported career aspirations, opportunities to get on, gaining experience and training. Nine reported that the working hours were suitable. Others had taken

their job because they needed one, because of the location (ie it was convenient) or simply because 'it was there'.

Three-quarters were in permanent jobs – 26 (of the 63 in employment) were working full time and 37 part time.

Just under half reported that the course they were on between September 2004 and July 2005 had helped them find their job and 26 (41 per cent of the 63) that their job was related to the course they had studied.

Two-fifths (26 of the 63) said the job they now had was better than any job they had held previously. The main reasons for this were that they were working in a friendly environment and got on with others there, they were doing something they had always wanted to do, the working hours were suitable and they enjoyed the job. Nine felt that their job was about the same as previous jobs and ten that it was no better than previous jobs (one was not sure). For 17, this was the first job they had held.

Half (32 of the 63) said that they were receiving some training in their job, just over half (35 of the 63) were using childcare and well over half (43 of the 63) felt that finding a job had been very or fairly easy; only nine thought it had been difficult.

Those looking for a job were looking for similar jobs to those who had already obtained one – suggesting that these are the segments of the labour market most available and/or sought after by young people. Three-fifths (40) were looking for part-time work.

Almost three-fifths (39) felt that the course they had just completed was helping them to find a job and a similar number were looking for a job related to their course. In contrast to those who had already found a job, these young parents were more likely to report that obtaining a job was difficult (46 out of 67), with only seven thinking it was easy. Their main difficulties were around finding a job that fitted with their childcare and the general difficulties of combining work and family responsibilities. Also their lack of work experience presented a difficulty for some in finding a job.

## 2.6 Staying at home

Fifteen per cent (151 respondents) were at home, looking after their child and not looking for work. The main reason for this was because they had a young child and wanted to be at home at this time. The age structure of this group was very similar to the age structure of the full sample (Table 2.10). Those aged 19 or more were slightly more likely to report staying at home, compared to their share in the whole sample. However, it was by no means the case that those who were staying at home had become ineligible for Care to Learn funding.



Table 2.10: Age (at last birthday) of those staying at home, autumn 2005

	Age distribution of those staying at home (%)	Age distribution of whole sample (%)
Under 16	1	3
16	8	8
17	15	18
18	25	29
19	38	35
Over 19	12	8
<i>N</i> =	151	1,000

Note: Under 16s and 16 year olds of compulsory school age should be back at school (they are allowed up to 18 weeks' absence before or after the birth) - we can not tell why two under 16 year olds were not in learning at the time of the survey; the eight per cent (12) 16 year olds were past compulsory school age.

Source: IES survey, 2005

A number of responses did suggest that staying at home was a temporary situation. For example, 25 (17 per cent) were waiting to start a new course and a few others were looking for another course. A few had personal problems that they had to address before moving on to anything else.

## 2.7 Longer-term ambitions

While it is always difficult exploring what might happen in the future, relatively short term aims can provide a picture of the general aspirations of a group. The survey included a question asking what respondents saw themselves doing in three years' time.

Over half saw themselves as working (57 per cent), 27 per cent at university and 11 per cent studying other than at university. Only four per cent did not know, one per cent thought they would be bringing up their children full time, and three people refused to answer.

The number in the youngest age group is small and so the percentages should be treated with some care. However, it is not surprising that these young parents were less sure of what they might be doing in three years' time and also less likely to report that they would be studying at university (Table 2.11).

What is encouraging is the proportion that see themselves as still studying or working in three years' time.

Table 2.11: What respondents saw themselves doing in three years' time (column per cent)

	Under 16	16	17	18	19	Over 19	All
Working	48	50	52	59	58	68	57
Studying at university	6	28	32	25	27	23	27
Studying other than at university	29	21	13	10	9	6	11
Bringing up children full-time	0	0	0	1	2	0	1
Don't know/refused	16	1	4	5	4	1	4
<i>N</i> =	31	76	182	285	346	79	1,000

Source: IES survey, 2005

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## 3 Care to Learn (2004/05)

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### 3.1 Childcare

The sample was drawn from all those who had received Care to Learn funding during the 2004/05 academic year. Four per cent reported not receiving help with childcare costs through Care to Learn. It is likely that most of these young parents had forgotten receiving the funding, had not realised where the funding came from, or they had received a very small amount. For example, a proportion reported that their learning provider or another official agency had paid. Learning providers and other agencies do help young parents complete the Care to Learn application form, and some put it in the post, rather than relying on the young parent remembering to do so. These young parents were probably confused as to the real source of the funding. Various in-depth interviews conducted in the course of the evaluation (which are not the subject of this report) show that some young parents combine Care to Learn funding for formal care with family or friends caring for their child. If family/friends were the main form of care, a young parent might forget about the input of Care to Learn. Others had been on their course for only a short time, eg before dropping out, and had probably forgotten about the funding.

The questions on Care to Learn funding reported in this chapter are based on the 962 young parents who said that they had received Care to Learn funding. Although the rest must have received Care to Learn funding, it would not be possible to ask them questions about an initiative they did not think they had been involved with. The questions on other sources of financial support and more general support and advice (Section 3.3) are based on the whole sample.

#### 3.1.1 Young parents reporting receiving Care to Learn funding

##### Childcare

The majority (93 per cent) reported receiving help with childcare to cover all the time they were at their place of learning or doing private study related to their course.

Those saying that the funding did not cover all of this time were more likely to live in London, but not exclusively.

Management information data on the amount of funding a young parent had received were linked to the survey data. This suggests that only one-third of those saying that Care to Learn did not cover all their learning and private study time were receiving the maximum funding available through the programme at that time. This means that two-thirds did not appear to be receiving the maximum amount – there was possibly scope for them to have applied for a larger amount of funding. It is impossible to say whether this was because they were not advised properly, or simply did not think to include any private study time when calculating their childcare needs.

Those who said that the funding did not cover all of the time they were at their place of learning or doing private study related to their course (65 respondents) were asked what was not covered. Their answers were varied, in that some reported specific activities or times that were not covered while others reported more general shortfalls. For example, a quarter said that the funding didn't cover home study time; other specific activities not covered (but mentioned by very few) included exams and holidays. Around half reported that the money had not covered the whole course in some way. It is possible that some had not made allowance for home study when applying for the funding, perhaps because they did not realise they could.

Again, just looking at these 65 respondents – one-third reported paying for the additional childcare themselves, 12 had studied while their child was asleep in the evenings and in ten cases their family had helped provide care. Those paying for the childcare themselves did not appear to be using EMA or other college funding towards this – only four reported receiving an EMA and one other financial help from their learning provider.

### Transport

Twenty-eight per cent reported applying for additional help with transport costs through Care to Learn. Of these, 61 per cent said that the help they received covered all the costs of transport between their home and the childcare, six per cent received some help, 28 per cent no help and four per cent could not remember. If these figures are put in the context of the whole sample, 15 per cent received all the help towards transport costs they had asked for and two per cent some help.

Whether or not a young parent applied for and, if they did apply, received help with additional transport costs, does not appear to be related to whether they were receiving the maximum Care to Learn funding. However, it is possible that these data hide the extent to which young parents who needed the maximum funding to cover their childcare costs had applied for help with transport costs. Those in this position might have realised there was no spare money for transport or been told this by whoever helped them with their application, and therefore had not applied for any.

Of those receiving only some or no help, the majority (87 per cent, 81 respondents) had paid the fare themselves. In 11 cases, families had helped out, in six cases their college had paid and one had used EMA.

It should be remembered that Care to Learn covers only any additional transport costs relating to taking their child to the childcare provider. Learning providers have discretionary funds that can provide help with the costs of travelling between home and the place of learning – and it is a local authority duty to ensure that transport is not a barrier to learning for students of sixth form age whether they are studying at school, sixth form college or FE college. Chapter 4 shows that two key reasons for the choice of a childcare provider were that it was either near to home or college. Many young parents were unlikely to incur additional transport costs and therefore look for help with these from Care to Learn, as their childcare was either close to their home or provided at, or close to, their place of learning.

### 3.2 Other support received

Just over one-quarter (27 per cent) of respondents reported having received an EMA during the 2004/05 academic year. Nineteen per cent had received some other form of financial support from their learning provider. There was little overlap between these two groups, with only four per cent of the sample (43 respondents) saying they received both types of support. Overall, 42 per cent of this sample of young parents had received either an EMA or additional financial support from their learning provider.

In looking at the age distribution of those saying they had received an EMA during the 2004/05 academic year (Table 3.1), it must be remembered that the survey asked for age at their last birthday – so they would have been up to a year younger at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year. It is also possible that a few respondents misunderstood what an EMA was. There are a range of learner support packages and it is possible that a small number of young parents were confused about what is available and their eligibility.

**Table 3.1: Proportion reporting being in receipt of EMA, by age (per cent of each age group)**

	%	N =
Under 16	6	31
16	11	76
17	45	182
18	32	285
19	23	346
20+	11	79
<i>All</i>	27	1,000

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

Apart from EMA, the main types of other additional financial support from a learning provider were books and equipment (48 per cent of those receiving such support or nine per cent of the whole sample (N = 93)) and transport (45 per cent of those receiving any additional support or nine per cent of the whole sample (N = 86)). However, a range of other support was mentioned each by only a few respondents, eg uniform, food/lunches, trips/outings, work placement, membership fee for a professional or other organisation related to the career for which they were training.

### 3.3 Help and advice in accessing and staying on a course

All young parents were asked whether they were given any help or advice on a range of issues, related either to finding and accessing a course or dealing with issues while on their course. Overall, just over three-quarters had received some sort of help or advice. White and black young parents were equally likely to have received some help or advice. There were some differences by age, with a higher proportion of those aged under 16, 16 or 17 receiving some form of support (around or just over 80 per cent). However, three-quarters of the older young parents had also received some support, showing that the provision of help and advice remains important regardless of the age of a young parent.

Table 3.2 shows the forms this took. The help or advice sought was varied. A significant proportion had received support relating to their actual course; however, half had looked for support on more general financial and personal problems.

The majority (94 per cent) reported receiving all the help or advice they sought.

**Table 3.2: Types of help or advice received (N = 1,000)**

	%
Deciding what course to do	48
Finding the right course	56
Applying for courses	60
Dealing with problems or issues while on the course - relating to the course itself	58
Dealing with personal, financial, etc. problems while on the course	50

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

The sources of help and advice were very varied. The most common sources were: someone at the learning provider (74 per cent), family (58 per cent), Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) (48 per cent), friends (37 per cent), Careers Adviser (17 per cent), Sure Start Plus Adviser (14 per cent) or someone at the Benefits Office/Job Centre (11 per cent). However, others mentioned a range of different organisations or individuals providing advice or support, including Social Workers, young parent projects/groups, childcare providers, NACRO, the Red Cross, CAB, health worker, or

housing office. This again emphasises the wide range of people and organisations that provide support and advice to young parents.

Looking at just the most common sources of help and advice, there were some differences by the age of a young parent. The number of under 16 year olds is very small; however, it seems that those aged 16 or under were more likely to be accessing help and advice from family and friends compared to older participants. A similar proportion of all age groups were obtaining support from learning providers, although this was lower amongst 16 year olds. Connexions PAs were reported to be providing support to around half of those 16, 17 and 18 year olds who received any help. However, this fell to around 40 per cent amongst the under 16s and over 19s.

Twenty-nine per cent would have liked to receive some (or more) help or advice, either on accessing their course or while on the course.

### 3.4 The learning

The main reasons for deciding to do a course were related to wanting to improve their chances in the labour market (49 per cent), having the chance to do something they had always wanted to do (33 per cent), thinking that the course sounded interesting (23 per cent) and wanting a better future for their child (14 per cent). Eight per cent wanted to gain qualifications and six per cent wanted to go further (usually to higher education). A range of other reasons were reported, including being encouraged or supported into learning by a range of individuals/organisations.

The majority (95 per cent) were on a course designed to lead to qualifications. A few were on courses to help them back into learning or employment (eg E2E).

Reference has been made to a proportion of respondents dropping out of their course during the 2004/04 academic year. Almost one-fifth of the sample (18 per cent, 180 respondents) reported that they had dropped out of their course during the 2004/05 academic year. The main reasons for dropping out were it being too difficult to study and look after a child (41 of the 180 respondents), having too many personal or family problems (20 respondents), becoming pregnant again (20 respondents) and the course not being what they expected (20 respondents). Other reasons included being ill, childcare arrangements breaking down or being unsatisfactory in some way.

The short-term outcomes of those who had dropped out of their 2004/05 course did in part reflect these reasons for dropping out. Just over two-fifths (42 per cent) were at home looking after their child and not looking for work, three were ill and unable to work and three were pregnant. However, by the time this survey was conducted one-third of those who had dropped out of their course during the 2004/05 academic year were on another course. Ten per cent were in work and 11 per cent were looking for work.

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## 4 Use of Childcare

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### 4.1 Use of childcare

Four main types of childcare were used, each one by between one-fifth and a quarter of young parents (Table 4.1).

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**Table 4.1: Type of childcare used while in learning between September 2004 and July 2005**

	%
Registered childminder	26
Nursery school (not at college/school)	25
Day nursery (not at college/school)	21
Childcare provision at college/school	20
Crèche (not at college/school)	5
Child's grandparents	4
<i>Base (N = )</i>	<i>1,000</i>

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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In addition, less than one per cent used each of another relative, nursery attached to a primary school, the baby's father, a friend/neighbour, playgroup/pre-school or unregistered childminder. It should be noted that this question was asked about all childcare used while this group of young parents were studying. Some young parents used additional, often unregistered childcare (eg the child's grandparents, friends and neighbours, an unregistered childminder) on top of the formal care funded by Care to Learn.

There is a clear difference between white and black young parents in their use of registered childminders:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers are too small to look at other ethnic groups separately. However, overall, these show similar patterns of childcare use to white young parents.



- 22 per cent of white young parents reported using a registered childminder, compared to 41 per cent of black young parents
- 24 per cent of white young parents were using childcare provision at their place of learning, compared to only six per cent of black young parents.

There were some differences in the type of childcare used according to the age of young parents (Table 4.2). There is not, however, a clear pattern of use by age that can be easily related, for example, to certain age groups being more likely to use childcare near their home or the age of the child. The youngest age groups (16 and under) were more likely to use grandparents than older young parents. Those aged under 16 were most likely to be using a nursery not based at their school/college, which might suggest using provision nearer their home. However, they were least likely to be using registered childminders which can also be near home. Childcare provision at school/college was most often reported by 16 year olds.

**Table 4.2: Childcare use by age (at time of interview) of young parent (column per cent - some columns will add to more than 100 per cent due to respondents reporting the use of more than one type of childcare)**

	Under 16	16	17	18	19+	All
Registered childminder	16	29	32	29	22	26
Nursery school (not at college/school)	29	13	17	24	30	25
Day nursery (not at college/school)	19	16	22	20	22	21
Childcare provision at college/school	19	28	16	20	21	20
Crèche (not at college/school)	0	9	8	5	3	5
Child's grandparents	13	12	4	3	3	4
<i>N</i> =	31	76	182	285	425	1,000

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

The main reasons for choosing the type of childcare were related to their location (ie close to home or college), it being the best of the available options and wanting someone properly trained to care for their child (Table 4.3). There were some differences between ethnic groups. In particular, black young parents emphasised wanting their childcare to be close to home – which might account for their greater propensity to use childminders. White young parents were more likely to emphasise choosing childcare near to their learning provider.

Although the exact percentages vary, the most commonly reported reasons for using their childcare are the same for all age groups. Furthermore, the order of the second column in Table 4.3 (all reasons) varies little by age group. The main difference was in those aged under 16 (although it should be remembered that there were only 31 respondents in this category). Not wanting to leave their child with a stranger, basing their choice on word of mouth/recommendation and a perception that they were being told to use that particular childcare were all reported more often by this youngest age group, compared to the rest of the sample. These reasons could help

account for the greater use of grandparents, and possibly a nursery not at their college/school, amongst this age group.

**Table 4.3: Reasons for choosing type of childcare (column per cent, N = 1,000)**

	All reasons	Most important reason (all)	White young parents (n = 695)	Black young parents (n = 222)
Close to home	29	14	12	21
Close to college	25	14	15	9
Wanted someone properly trained to look after child	19	9	8	12
Looked at options and liked this one best	19	12	13	9
Know and trust this person/these people	16	11	11	9
Like child to be near me	14	7	9	2
Transport convenient	9	1	2	1
Word of mouth/recommended	9	6	5	5
No choice/only one available	7	6	5	10
Used it before - child happy there	7	3	3	5
Don't like leaving child with strangers	7	1	1	1
Told to use this childcare	6	4	2	5
Relative/friend offered/happy to help out	5	3	4	2

Note: a range of other reasons were given by less than five per cent of respondents

Source: IES survey, 2005

Overall, these young parents had found it easy to obtain the childcare they wanted: 75 per cent reported it very easy and 18 per cent that it was fairly easy. Only seven per cent said that it had not been very easy to find the childcare they wanted. Again, there are some differences by ethnic group:

- 80 per cent of white young parents reported that it was very easy finding the childcare they wanted and 16 per cent that it was fairly easy. Four per cent reported that it was not very easy.
- 59 per cent of black young parents reported that finding the childcare they wanted was very easy and 26 per cent that it was fairly easy; 15 per cent reported that it was not very easy.

Related to the above figures, 86 per cent of white young parents reported no problems in finding childcare, compared to 72 per cent of black young parents. Younger parents were more likely to report no problems. Ninety-seven per cent of the under 16 year olds reported no problems in finding childcare (ie only one of the 31 in this age group reported a specific difficulty). This compared to 86 per cent of 16 year olds, 82 per cent of 17 year olds, and 83 per cent of both those aged 18 *and* 19 and over.

The main difficulties reported were there being too few places available locally (six per cent of white and 14 per cent of black young parents), childcare being too expensive (two and five per cent respectively) and not enough information/help (one and five per cent respectively). There was little difference in the problems reported by the age of the respondent. The only young parent under 16 reporting a difficulty said that there were long waiting lists.

Young parents in London were more likely to be using childminders compared to those living in other areas (around a half, compared to one-fifth in other areas). They were less likely to be using childcare provision at their school/college. Young parents in the capital were more likely to report wanting to use childcare close to home. There is an interaction with ethnicity here – in that there were far higher proportions of black young parents in London. However, it is difficult to explore whether this is a London or ethnicity effect from these data. It is possible that the logistics of travelling in London make taking their child to childcare provision at their place of learning less popular than in other areas. It is also possible that young black parents prefer to use childcare in their own community.

Almost 90 per cent of these young parents were either very or fairly satisfied with the childcare they were using. Young black parents were less likely to report being very satisfied, compared to young white parents. However there was no difference in the proportions of each reporting that they were not satisfied (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Overall satisfaction with the childcare used (column per cent)**

	All	White young parents	Black young parents
Very satisfied	76	81	65
Fairly satisfied	13	11	19
Satisfied	5	4	6
Not very satisfied	4	3	5
Not at all satisfied	2	1	4

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

Similar proportions of all age groups reported being very or fairly satisfied with their childcare. However, the youngest (under 16) were more likely to report being fairly rather than very satisfied compared to other age groups. Two-thirds of this age group were very satisfied and 19 per cent fairly satisfied with their childcare.

The main reasons given for being very or fairly satisfied or satisfied were:

- good service/do a good job/great with kids
- child(ren) enjoy going/like it
- friendly/helpful/caring staff
- child(ren) learning/developing.

The main reasons for being not very or not at all satisfied were closely related (mostly the opposite of the above):

- dissatisfaction with the quality of childcare provided
- unfriendly/unhelpful staff
- child(ren) didn't enjoy/like it
- poor communication/didn't listen to us.

The numbers do become quite small when looking at the reasons for being satisfied or dissatisfied with their childhood by ethnicity. However, a few points do emerge. Looking at the reasons for being satisfied, black and white young parents were equally likely to comment that their childcare provider gave a good service, the children enjoyed going there and that they were learning and developing. The main difference was that white young parents were more likely to report that the staff were friendly, helpful and caring. Amongst those not satisfied with their childcare, black young parents were more likely than white young parents to say that a reason for this was that staff were unfriendly or unhelpful. It is not possible to explore this further using these data, but this pattern could be cultural or related to the types of childcare these young parents had access to. White young parents were more likely to report dissatisfaction with their childcare due to it being poor quality or the children not enjoying it. Perhaps surprisingly, given the comments on childcare staff, poor communication and staff not listening were reported as a reason for dissatisfaction by similar proportions of both white and black respondents.

Young parents living in London were slightly less likely to report that they were very satisfied with their childcare (just under two-thirds, compared to over three-quarters being satisfied elsewhere). They were more likely to be not very satisfied (one-tenth, compared to three per cent). Similar proportions across areas reported the other categories. However, the reasons for satisfaction/dissatisfaction with childcare showed little variation by area.

Respondents were asked whether they had asked their childcare provider for any help or advice on a range of topics (Table 4.5). Two-fifths had asked for some help or advice. This was mostly related to their child – health, development, nutrition and diet. However, a few had asked for help on other issues.

The youngest (aged under 16) were slightly more likely to have asked their childcare provider for some help or advice (52 per cent had not asked for any). The majority (97 per cent of those who had sought help or advice) reported receiving all the help and advice they asked of their childcare provider.

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**Table 4.5: Help and advice asked of childcare providers**

	%
None	60
Child development	26
Nutrition and diet	22
Your child's health	18
Managing child behaviour	16
Appropriate play activities	14
Parenting skills	9
The course	3
Money problems	2
Budgeting and/or housekeeping	2
Housing	1

*Source: IES survey, 2005*

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## 5 Conclusions

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Care to Learn funding has been very important in helping young parents return to, or remain in, learning – 88 per cent reported that they would not have gone on a course without this support.

Seventy per cent of this sample of young parents were continuing their learning following the 2004/05 academic year on which this survey was based. Almost half of these were on a different course in 2005/06 and while a small proportion had dropped out of their original course and returned to some other form of learning, all were progressing with their learning. For example, at the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year, 39 per cent of the sample had no qualifications; this had fallen to 20 per cent by the beginning of the following academic year. There was evidence of progression, with five per cent of those still in learning (three per cent of the whole sample) having moved on to study at university. Others had progressed from school to further education. These data suggest that Care to Learn funding was important in supporting these young parents in continuing and progressing their learning.

Six per cent were in employment at the time of the survey and nearly half of these reported that the course they had studied had helped them obtain their job. Two-fifths said that the job they had was better than any job they had held previously. Fifteen per cent were staying at home to look after their child. However, for a number, this was a temporary situation and they reported that they were looking for, or waiting to start a new course.

Where problems were reported with childcare, these were largely to do with a lack of places and expense. There is some evidence that preference for local (that is, near to home) and on-site (at the place of learning) childcare provision is preferred to different extents by different communities. While young people from black and ethnic minority groups tend to prefer childcare near home, young white parents prefer childcare at their place of study. Those supporting Care to Learn at both a national and local level have taken a number of measures to improve the access of young parents to childcare. In many local areas, the local co-ordinators continue to work with local childcare providers. However, this is largely an area outside their range of

influence. The government has a national childcare strategy which aims to improve the availability and accessibility of childcare for all parents, and it is hoped that this will also help in meeting the needs of young parents.

Respondents reported a misguided belief that Care to Learn funding would not cover all their learning needs, in particular, that home study and examinations were not covered. It seems that some did not realise that these (in particular, childcare for home study), could be funded through Care to Learn. Similarly, some young parents had not accessed Care to Learn funding for travel. In some cases, this was because the maximum allowance was used to cover the costs of childcare. However, it seems that some young parents did not know that Care to Learn funding could be used to pay travel costs between their home and the childcare. This suggests that the advice young parents receive from professionals working with them is not always completely accurate. There is a need to reinforce the information provided to those who advise young parents locally.

The wider advice, information and support provided to young parents alongside the Care to Learn funding remains crucial. Three-quarters of respondents had received some sort of help or advice, whether in relation to selecting and accessing a course, or dealing with problems related to their course. Fifty per cent had received some support in dealing with personal problems. This support was provided by a wide range of individuals and organisations – emphasising the varied networks that support young parents. More support was wanted by around three-tenths of respondents suggesting that there is still a strong demand. Other aspects of the Care to Learn evaluation show that in many local areas significant efforts are being put into improving and expanding the advice and support networks available to young parents.

Nearly one-fifth of these young parents had dropped out of the course they undertook during 2004/05. The majority of these cited personal problems, inability to cope with the demands of studying combined with bringing up a young child, or their childcare being unsatisfactory or unreliable as reasons for dropping out. However, it is noteworthy that many returned to study, perhaps on a different topic that suited them better or once various personal problems had been resolved. This reinforces the need for on-going support for teenage parents. It is inevitable that a proportion will drop out. However, what is important is maintaining the contact that enables them, especially those who are less motivated or perhaps have more problems, to return to learning at a later stage. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, significant efforts are being put into developing the support and advice networks available to young parents in many areas, and the points made in this paragraph further reinforces the importance of this.

This report looks at the impact of Care to Learn for just one cohort of recipients and only over one year. It shows that the funding and related support are very important to young parents remaining in, or returning to, learning. Furthermore, Care to Learn

had enabled many of these young parents to progress in terms of obtaining qualifications and enhancing their ability to enter and compete effectively in the labour market. The data also show that others were still at a very early stage in obtaining qualifications, and this was not just for the youngest in the sample. A proportion of young people will always change course as they decide their first choice does not suit them or to decide another career option. For young parents there are many intervening factors, for example, the suitability of childcare arrangements, juggling studying and being a parent – this survey therefore shows a high level of progression amongst a cohort of young parents.