



Connect Parent/Carer Survey: How are you doing?

**This survey ran from 1 April to 30 April during
the first weeks of the coronavirus COVID-19
outbreak**

Connect

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Connect is a trading name of Scottish Parent Teacher Council, Company No SC151086 and Scottish Charity No SC019168

Introduction: The Survey

About Connect:

- a membership organisation and charity for parent groups in Scotland for over 70 years
- offers a range of services including support and advice to parent groups and parents
- works with school communities and education staff
- regularly surveys parents/carers on different issues



The Survey

- The survey was launched on 1 April 2020, a week after lockdown so it is a very immediate response to the COVID19 situation
- It gives us an initial review of how parents have coped during lockdown
- The survey was designed by Connect and ran online during the first four weeks of school closures. It was distributed through our own networks and was shared multiple times on Twitter and Facebook by others
- Given the timescales involved, this should be regarded as an exploratory research programme. Connect will continue to survey parents/carers by refining this survey
- **1578 responses** – this is a very robust sample
- Parents/carers took part from **29 local authorities** (out of a possible 32)

Connect is very grateful to Scotinform for pro bono help and advice with the task of analysing the results of this survey

SCOTINFORM



Survey Overview

- **1578** responses from parents/carers

By sector:

- 109 Nursery (7%)
- 1006 Primary (64%)
- 429 Secondary (27%)
- 33 Other (2%) (multiple children at different stages; special school; college)



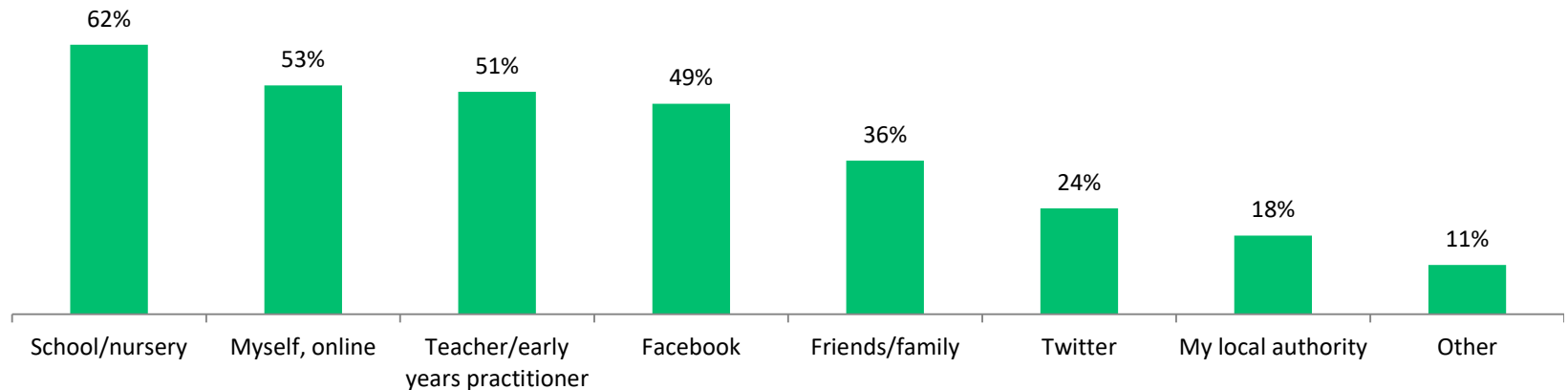
Key Findings

- 59% of parents feel they have the information and advice they need to support their children. This figure has grown over time. A third say they don't yet know what they need and 10% do not feel they have sufficient information
- Parents are getting information to support their children from a range of sources, including their child's school or nursery and their child's teacher. Over half of parents are actively sourcing such information themselves
- 59% of parents identified at least one concern or worry about the current situation. These concerns were wide-ranging and often multiple
- The areas of concern for parents include: children 'falling behind' in their learning; concerns about the health and wellbeing of their children; concerns about a lack of friendship and social interaction; parents unable to support learning due to their own work commitments; children not engaging with work at home; a lack of equipment; a lack of communication from the school/nursery
- Whilst over half of parents say that learning material is coming from teachers or schools, nearly 40% say that they are finding it themselves
- Parents are generally confident about supporting their children in terms of health and wellbeing but less confident about supporting literacy and (to a greater extent) supporting maths
- Requests for support focus on a range of measures including material to keep children occupied, useful online resources, tips on managing and planning the day, additional support for learning, clarity about expectations, consistency, IT equipment, worksheets and more



Multiple sources of information for parents for support

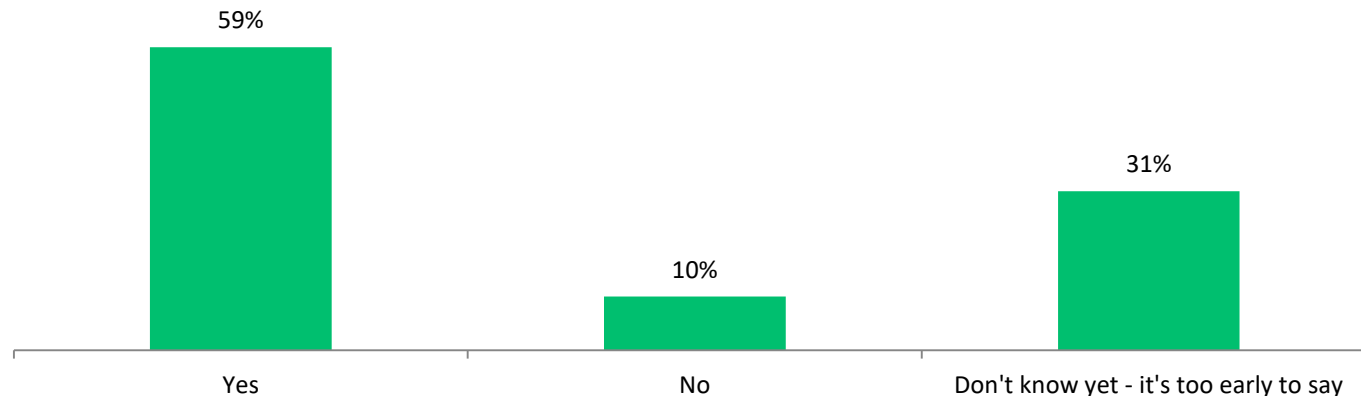
Where are you getting information and advice to support your family and your child?



Do parents/carers have the information and advice they need?

Analysis over the four week period shows: 54% had what they needed in the first week. By the fourth week, 64% said they had what they needed ie nearly 35% still do not have what they need or don't know. Unfortunately, a lack of communication from school/nursery remained in the top three most frequently mentioned 'needs' throughout the four weeks.

Do you have the information and advice you need?



Do you have the information/advice you need?

Comments (a small selection):

- Lack of equipment (printer for work sheets; laptop/tablet/internet access)
- Overload of school work
- No school work or contact from school (including one comment on 27 April)
- Additional support for learning needs (parent as well as child)
- Challenges engaging children with school work
- Seeking more information on transition, qualification coursework, school place offers

‘If you have any concerns or worries, please describe them’

- This was an open ended question at the start of the survey and as such was well placed to capture ‘top of mind’ concerns and worries from parents and carers
- A total of 931 respondents (59% of the sample) identified at least one concern or worry about the current situation
- Scotinform identified a total of 22 different categories of concern expressed by ten or more respondents, with each respondent mentioning two concerns on average. The following slides describe these in more detail



Concern that child will be 'behind' in their learning when they return to school

- This was the most frequently mentioned concern, identified by 190 parents (12% of all respondents and 20% of those who expressed concerns)
- Responses suggest that this is becoming an increasing worry over time; it was mentioned by 16% of respondents who expressed concerns in Week 1 but by Week 4 this figure had increased to 25%

 *'Implications of falling behind with academic work, having a significant impact on their future.'*

 *'I just feel she is not getting the education she needs.'*

 *'My child will be behind in their learning while others who have better circumstances from a parental perspective will be ahead.'*

 *'Worried about him falling behind with the curriculum. There's not much teaching or new learning happening.'*

 *'My S1 will have gaps in his education.'*

 *'I am concerned that my son, in S5, is now in limbo.'*

 *'I fear my child missing out on education'*

Concerns about the health and wellbeing of children

- This issue was mentioned by 148 parents (9% of all respondents and 16% of those who expressed a concern or worry)
- The proportion of concerns about this issue was slightly higher at the start of the research period but it remains the second largest concern overall
- Concerns covered mental and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as (to a lesser extent) physical health



'More concerned with the health and wellbeing implications of this rather than the disruption to their education which teachers will obviously address and compensate for next academic year.'



'This is fine in the short term but much longer I would be worried about their mental health and the psychological effects on them.'



'My child's mental health. She is very worried, anxious and confused.'



'Getting the right balance between children not falling behind, mental health and positive relationships. We found that being too focussed on home learning in the first two weeks caused stress and anxiety that had a huge impact on relationships.'

Concerns about the health and wellbeing of children

continued

- 

'I'm worried about their mental health, especially as this drags on. I'm worried they're missing their friends, and missing out on life. I'm worried that they won't do enough work, or they'll do too much work. I'm worried that they're spending far too much time watching TV. I'm worried that they're not getting enough exercise. I'm worried they're not getting enough time without me.'
- 

'Lack of physical activity. No space indoors. Limited time outside. I'm worried about a 2.5 year not getting enough physical play/movement.'
- 

'Child had been very emotional and breath holding has started again. As well as a restart in toileting issues.'
- 

'My child has dyslexia & suspected ADD. This way of working does not suit them. They are very stressed with work and general Covid stress and being a young carer. If anything happens to parents they will be responsible for sibling with learning disability. A lot for a young person to carry on their shoulders.'
- 

'My teen is refusing to leave the house as they are scared they will die.'
- 

'My daughter no longer wants to leave the house, she doesn't want to go out for walks and we struggle to get her out in the garden.'

Concerns about the health and wellbeing of children

continued

-  *'Microsoft teams seems to be the only option. My daughter refuses school normally due to extreme social anxiety, so refuses to engage or post on Teams for the same reason she doesn't go to school - scared of being seen and judged by others in real life or online. I have had contact with Nurture Base staff at school but no other teachers as all contact done through Teams.'*
-  *'My son is severely autistic with complex disabilities and high care needs. He depends on strict routine with everything he does, one thing changes and his world is turned upside down. He cannot tell me as he's non verbal with learning disabilities. He doesn't associate home with school and won't do any work provided. He has severe anxiety & on meds for behavioural problems CAMHS. I'm unable to meet his needs and he self harms and hurts others. I'm very stressed and not well. I have an 8 year old daughter who attends mainstream. She is normally great but I'm unable to give her 1 on 1 as her older brother needs my attention. She is struggling with online work.'*

Concerns around friendships and social interaction

- This issue was mentioned by 129 parents (8% of all respondents and 14% of those who expressed a concern or worry)
- As with health and wellbeing, the proportion of concerns about this issue has remained fairly steady throughout the reporting period (13%, 16%, 14% and 13% respectively)
- This issue was often linked to children's health and wellbeing and parents also anticipated issues with returning to school after a long period at home



'This age brings its own social behaviour issues in regards to sharing, play, talking etc and nursery is obviously the foundation for developing good social behaviours.'



'Social distancing is having a profound effect on my daughter. Not being able to see her friends has caused much upset and confusion.'



'I am worried he is missing the connection with his peers and teachers.'



'So hard to keep the kids connected with friends and teachers.'



'Worried about the lack of social contact, especially for teenagers.'

Concerns around friendships and social interaction

continued

-  *'There has been no verbal contact with my child from the school. Online contact just isn't the same.'*
-  *'Lack of social interaction and sporting activities for children over what appears to be a very prolonged period until August.'*
-  *'Social interaction is a key part of a child's development, keeping them isolated is very difficult as they do not fully understand why they cannot interact with their friends.'*
-  *'I want to see this reflected when P1 starts next year. You cannot take a 4yr old who has been at home for 5 months with her mum and put her into full time school in a classroom she's never visited with a teacher she's never met.'*
-  *'I am also concerned about what will be put in place if there is no transition possible. Will the children keep their teacher for next year? Keep the same class so as to still have existing friendship groups?'*
-  *'We do keep up with friends using the computer but when the children return to school I'd like to see the staff given support on helping the children reintegrate into that setting.'*

Parents unable to support learning due to their own work

- This issue was mentioned by 121 parents (8% of all respondents and 13% of those who expressed a concern or worry)
- Again there is little evidence of this issue being resolved, with the proportion of concerns related to this issue being steady throughout the research period (13%)



'The content of the school work is onerous from the parental perspective. As a parent working full time I need the school work in a form that my child can do independently...I'd like to be able to support not teach.'



'Home schooling is placing a huge amount of stress on parents who are not qualified to home school and who have their own work commitments.'



'Trying to work from home and complete fairly extensive learning grids is causing a lot of worry to this mum and I am a teacher!'



'Just the juggle of trying to work from home and care for my child. It's impossible and the pressure is immense. Constant guilt about both.'



'I'm working full time on front line keyworker. Also single parent so nobody else at home. This causes huge stress with home schooling. So no home schooling is being done at the moment as I am working 12 hour days.'

Children not engaging with their work at home

- This issue was mentioned by 96 parents (6% of all respondents and 10% of those who expressed a concern or worry)
- The proportion of parental concerns related to this issue has been consistent throughout but has risen over the past week (12%, 10%, 8% and 13%)
- Our review suggests that this is a particular issue for children whose exams have been cancelled and for children with additional support needs

 *'I am a lone parent to a six year old who does not like doing home work. I have always felt it was OK because she had school. Now that's not in place I worry she will fall behind. I don't want to force her to do the work as it will put her off for life and cause battles we just don't need right now.'*

 *'I have no motivation and my child is in holiday mode. My kids are not studious and need loads of encouragement/motivation to even start to look at school work, and I feel that I am failing them every single day. I feel in a state of panic and don't know how to prioritise anything now that our routines are shattered.'*

 *'My child has additional needs, he finds it difficult to do the schoolwork out of the school setting.'*

 *'My son is autistic and has done no home schooling as in his mind school work only gets done in school. I'm concerned he is going to fall behind.'*

 *'My son (S5): lack of purpose. I hear a lot of 'what's the point' at the moment.'*

Further Concerns

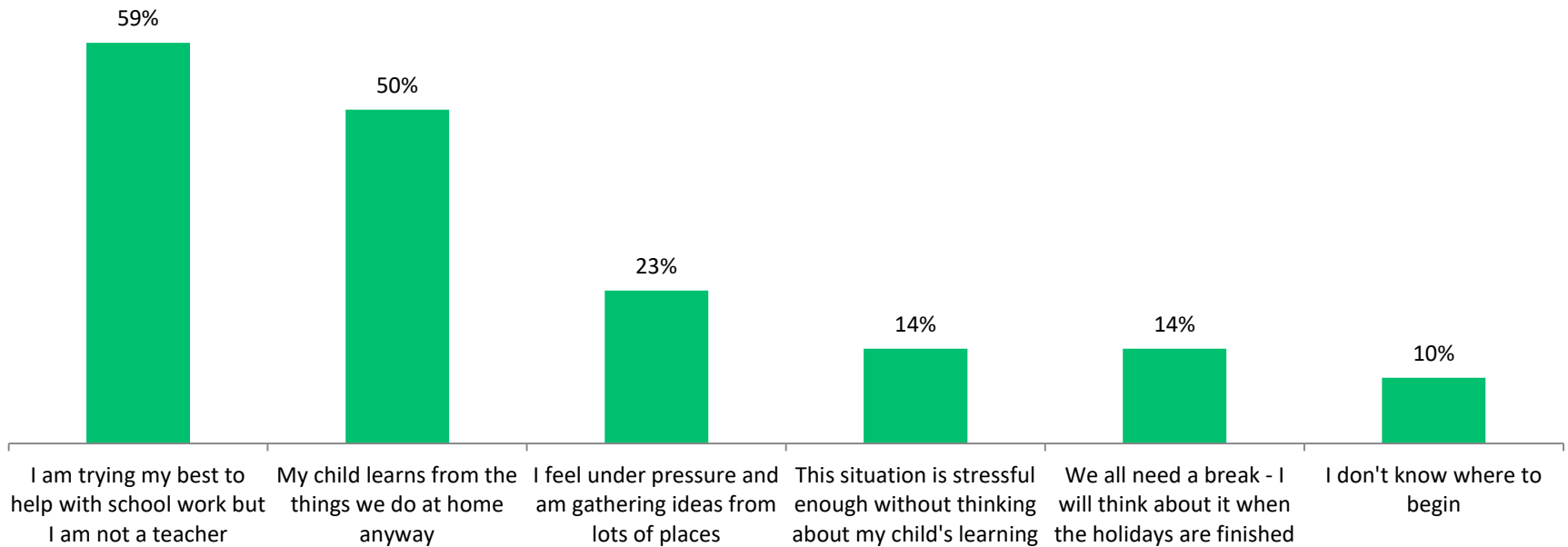
The issues identified above accounted for 10% or more of parental concerns. It should be noted that a wide range of other concerns were also identified by parents. We have reported these in full to reflect the range of issues causing concern or worry to parents at present.

- Child requires additional support for learning (84)
- Concerns about exam grades (71)
- Transition from P7 to S1 (70)
- Concerns about parents' own health and wellbeing (70)
- Concerns about how children will cope when schools reopen (69)
- School not setting enough work/work not structured properly (50)
- IT/technical issues causing barriers to learning (47)
- Parental guilt that children are not doing enough work (44)
- Awareness that parents are not teachers and concerns about the quality of 'teaching' that they can deliver (41)

Further Concerns *continued*

- No contact from the school to parents (this was particularly an issue for parents of secondary school parents, who felt unable to determine how much work had been set/what their child was supposed to be doing because the school was communicating directly with the pupils) (36 respondents)
- A lack of interaction with teachers during lessons (34)
- Too much work set by the school (30)
- Transition from nursery to Primary 1 (27)
- Concern about long-term impacts if schools are not reopened soon (26)
- A lack of work being set for pupils who should have been sitting exams (19)
- Concerns about the impact on pupils due to take exams next year (14)
- Work being set by the school but not being marked/no feedback being given (13 respondents)
- Children missing their extra-curricular activities (8)
- Transition to university or other destination after school (8)
- Concerns that schools will reopen too early (7)

What do you think about your child's learning whilst they are at home?

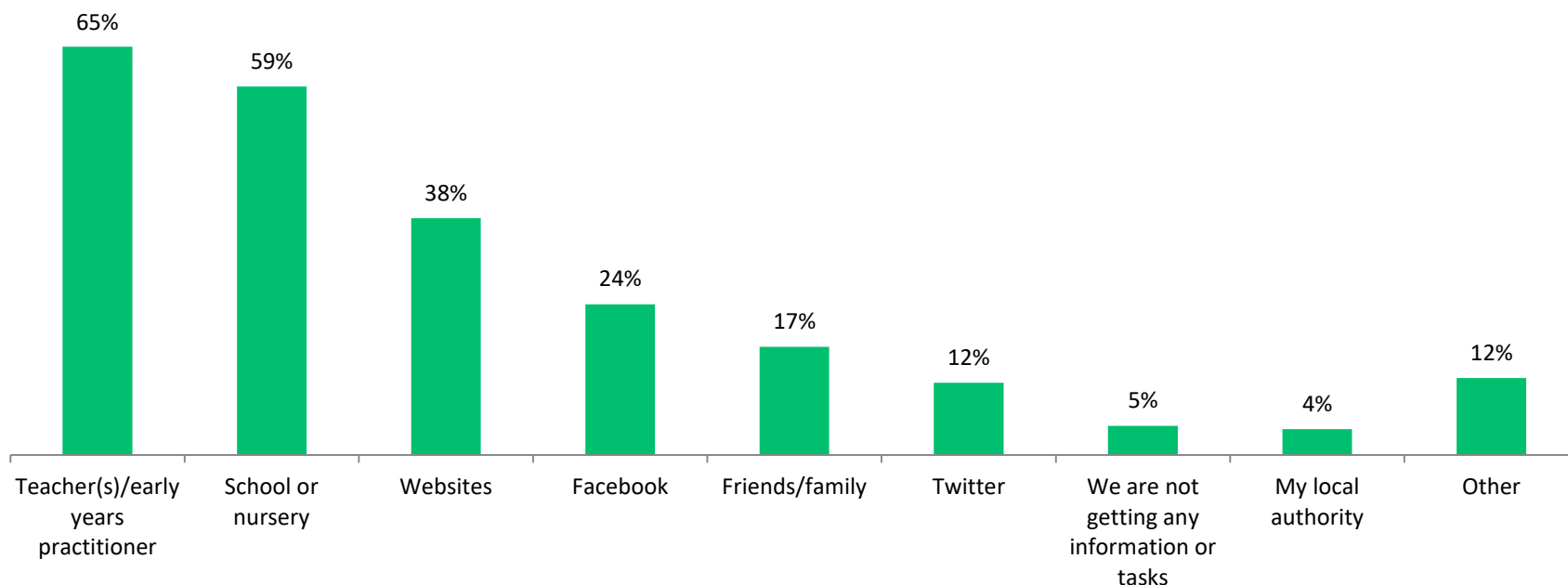


What do you think about your child's learning whilst they are at home? Comments (a small selection)

- 'I am shielding and fearful for my own life'
- 'My husband and I are also key workers so are trying to juggle jobs and childcare'
- 'I feel there is a lot to do and we are being pulled in different directions. Social media also adding to the feeling of not getting it right'
- 'My child in S1 has been set tasks for nearly all of his subjects and has work to keep him busy every day; my child in S4, soon to be S5, has had nothing really' *(as at 30 April)*
- 'It is extremely difficult'
- 'Would be better to have the tasks to do a day before so I can plan ahead'
- 'More help needs to be provided with IT' *(as at 29 April)*

Where is information for children's learning coming from?

Most information is coming from teachers/schools; however, many parents are also finding sources themselves



Sources of 'Other' information for learning

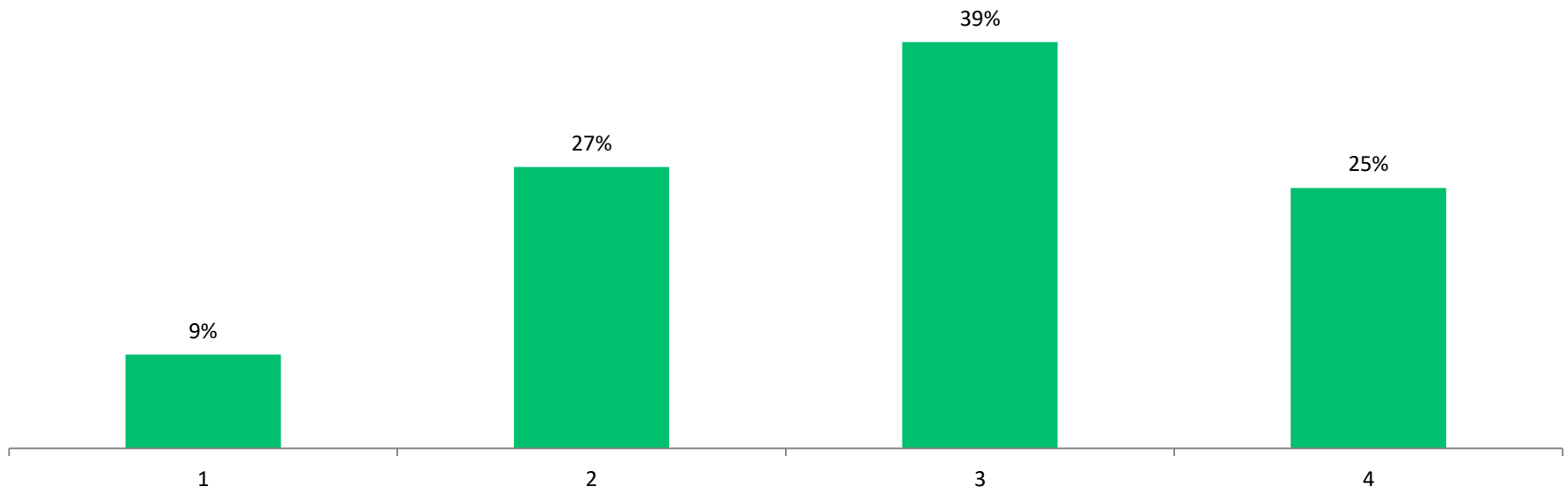
These responses indicate very varied sources of information to support children's learning. Of particular note are the multiple platforms and many different apps used within same school/local authority. This is identified as a source of stress for parents in other questions.

- GLOW
- TV/radio (including BBC Bitesize)
- Websites, including school websites
- Books
- Own ideas (including helping at home to build responsibility)
- Google Classroom
- Microsoft Teams
- Out of school activity clubs (gym, Beavers)
- Various apps including Seesaw, Show My Homework etc

Parental confidence in supporting learning

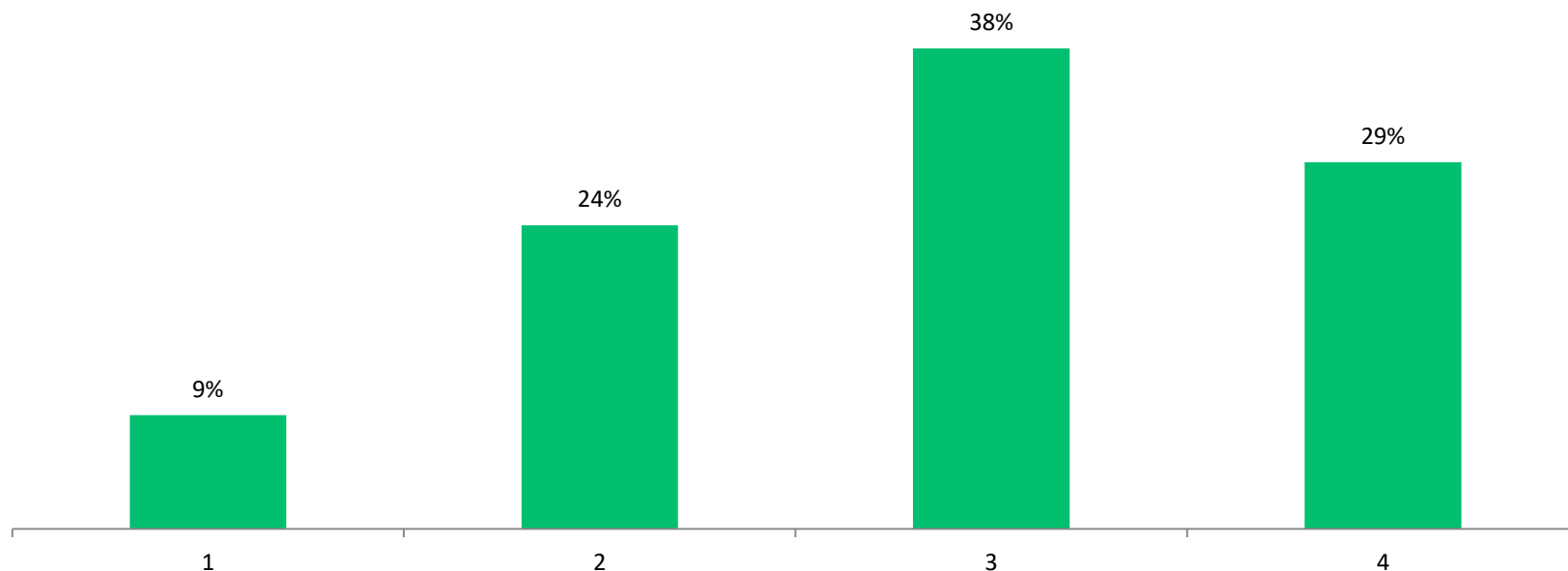
Parents were asked to rate their confidence in supporting learning at home in different areas on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being very confident and 1 being not confident.

The mean scores (out of a maximum of 4) for supporting learning in general were **2.80** (25% very confident)



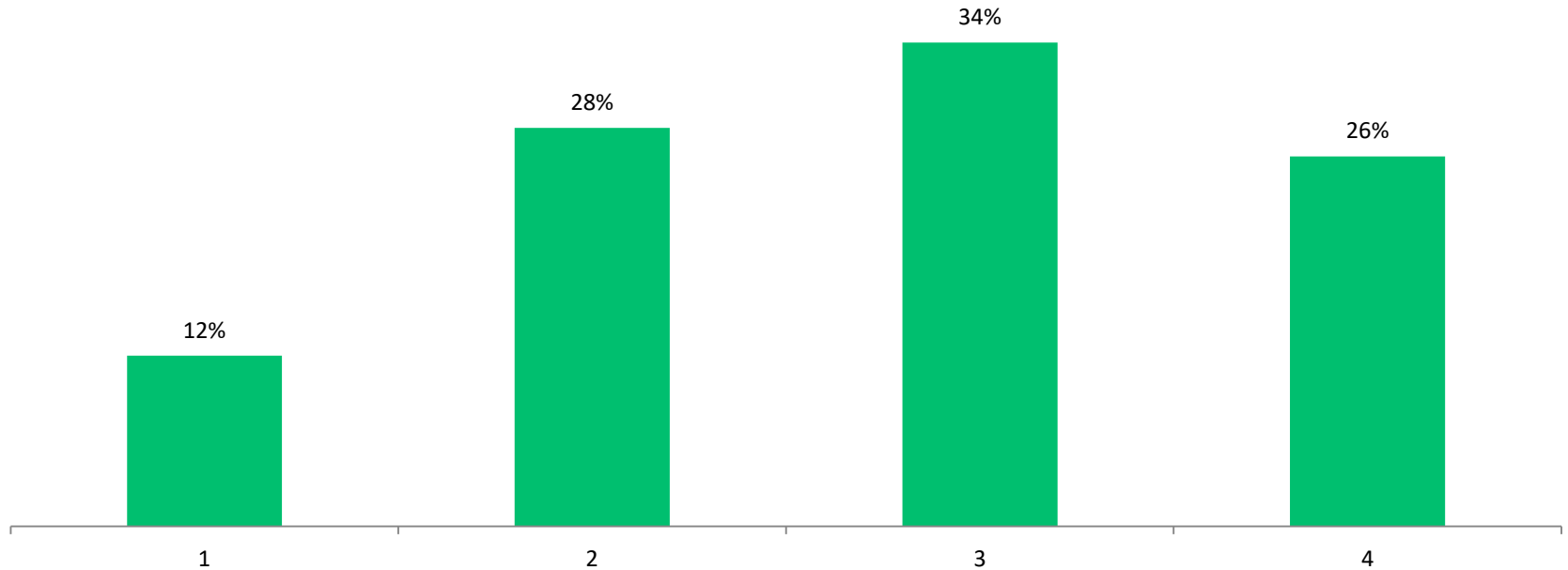
Parental confidence in supporting reading, writing & language

The mean scores (out of a maximum of 4) for supporting reading, writing and language learning were **2.87** (29% very confident)



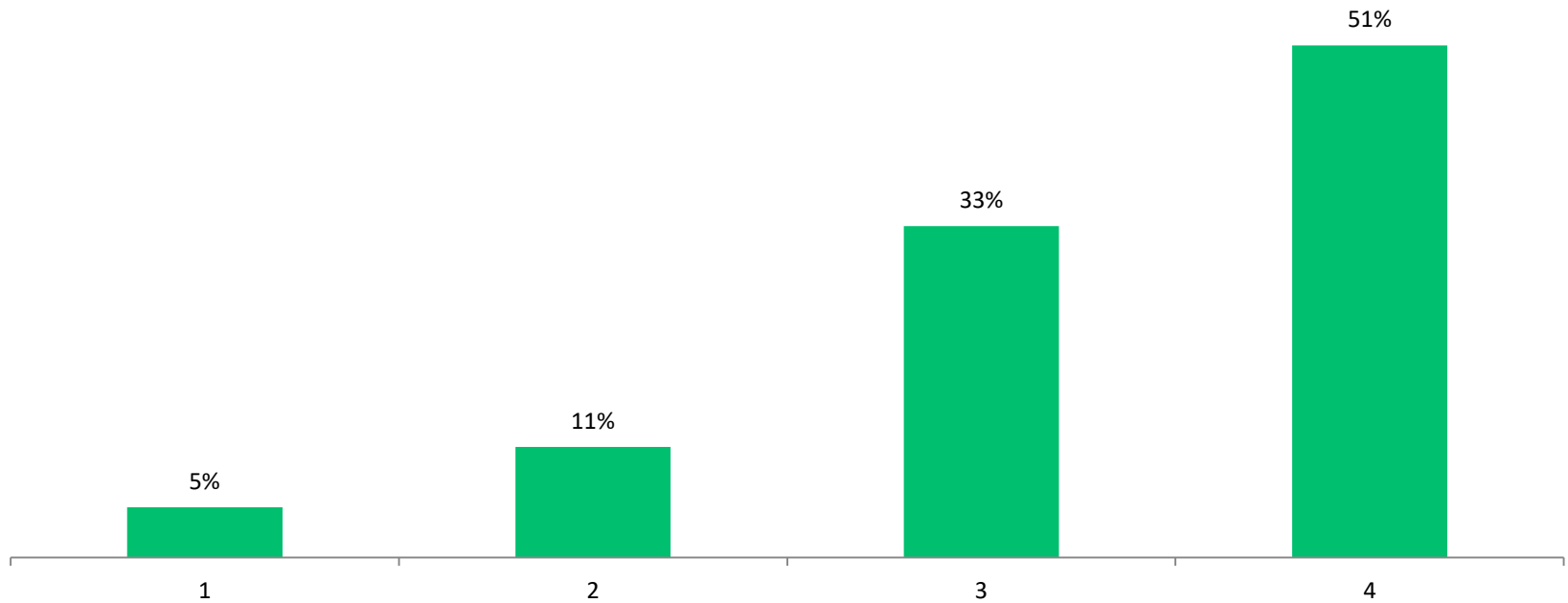
Parental confidence in supporting learning in maths

The mean scores (out of a maximum of 4) for supporting learning in maths were **2.74** (26% very confident)



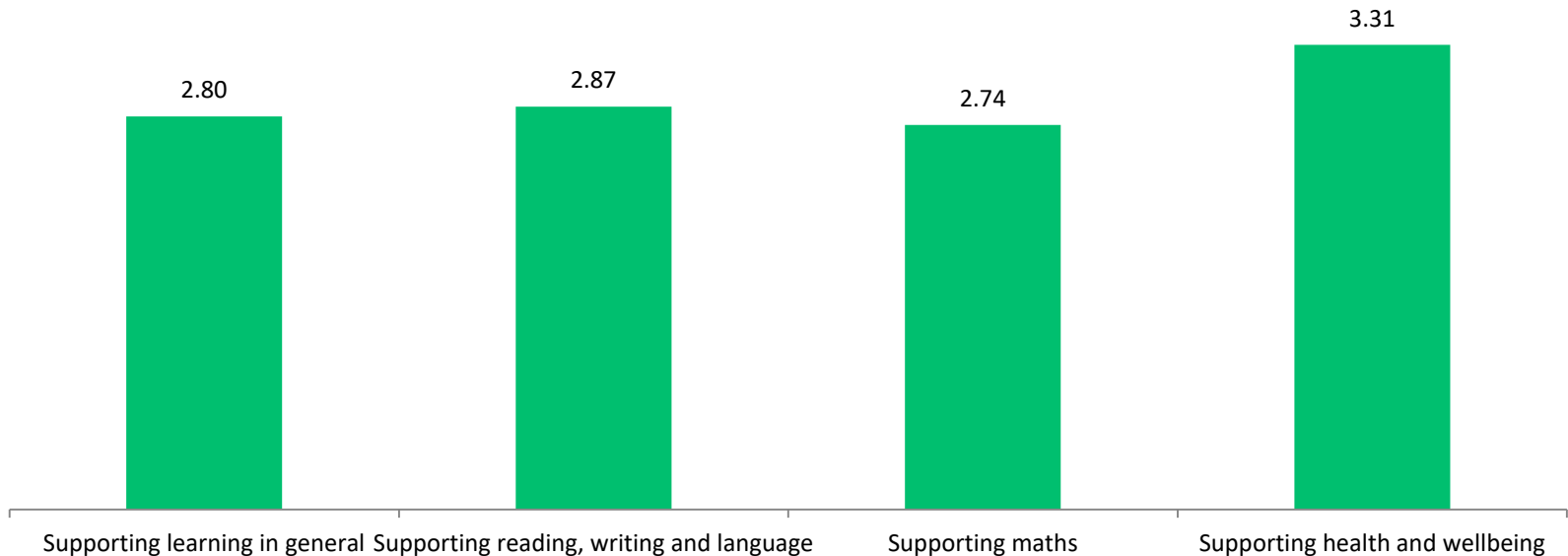
Parental confidence in supporting their child's health & wellbeing

The mean scores (out of a maximum of 4) for supporting health and wellbeing were **3.31** (51% very confident)

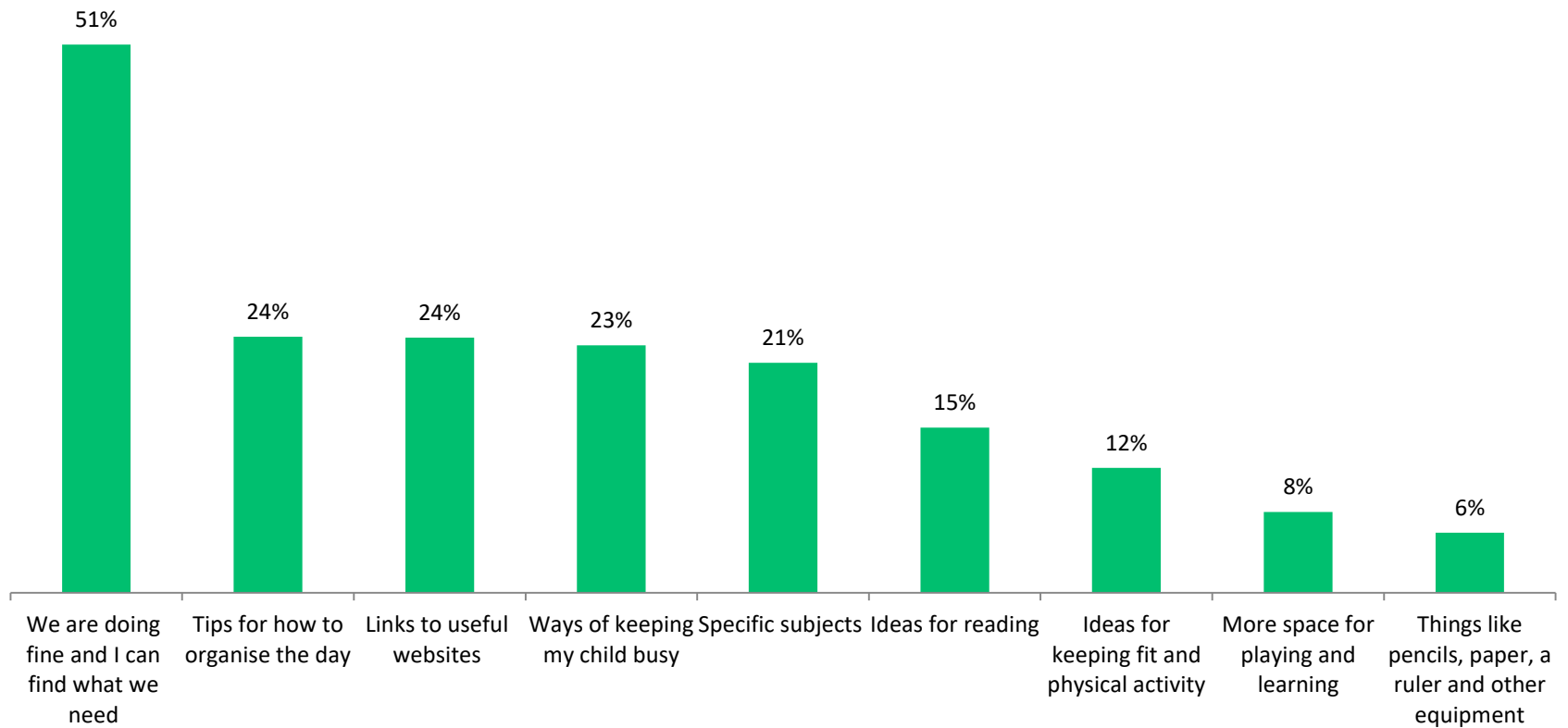


Parental confidence in supporting their child: Summary

- The results show parents are more confident at supporting their child's health and wellbeing than they are supporting learning in general
- Maths confidence is lower than confidence in supporting reading and literacy
- Parents of secondary school children are slightly less confident in supporting learning generally and in supporting maths than parents of primary school children



What information/equipment do you need?



What information/equipment do you need? 'Other' responses

Themes from 'Other' responses included:

- contact from the school/teacher
- consistency across the school (workload, online platforms used/work sheets, expectations)
- mental health/emotional support for parent or child/young person
- specific equipment: tablet, printer, printer ink, digital access, books
- work sheets/work books
- online 'live' teaching
- Gaelic resources/help with modern languages
- internet access
- daily plans/structured learning plans/clear weekly plans
- information for parents on work set for secondary school pupils
- learning support/support strategies
- ideas on how to motivate my child
- information in plain language
- guidance on what is expected
- reassurance that children and young people will be supported in the future





We are very grateful to all the parents and carers who took part in this survey, sharing their experiences, worries and fears

Please contact us by email for more information about this survey and the follow-up surveys we are running

Media enquiries: 07799 416 360

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