



ROYAL FOUNDATION

Centre for
Early Childhood

Centre unveils findings of new research into public perceptions of early childhood development



Early Childhood Roundtable

[Events](#), [Research](#)

- Nine in ten agree the early years are important in shaping a person’s future life but less than a fifth recognise the unique importance of the 0-5 period
- Seven in ten think the early years should be more of a priority for society
- Majority of public recognise a person’s future mental health and wellbeing most likely to be affected by their early childhood

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- Community support networks found to be crucial for parents
- Parents more likely to seek support for child’s physical wellbeing than social and emotional development

The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood has today unveiled the findings of new research into early childhood development, as The Duchess of Cambridge and the Centre host a roundtable with the early years sector, Ministers and senior civil servants to discuss the results and the broader importance of early childhood development to society.

Conducted by Ipsos UK on behalf of The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, the research comes two years after The Duchess's landmark survey – '5 Big Questions on the Under-Fives' – which attracted the largest ever response to a public survey of its kind with over 500,000 responses in one month, sparking a national conversation on the early years.

The research published today delves even deeper into public perceptions of early childhood, focusing on three key areas: the prioritisation of the early years, the link between the first five years of life and lifelong outcomes for mental health and wellbeing and the support parents seek when raising young children.

Key findings in detail:

1. **A societal issue:** There is near unanimous agreement (91%) that the early years are important in shaping a person's future life, but only 17% recognise the unique importance of the 0 – 5 period relative to other age brackets. That being said seven in ten (70%) believe it should be more of a priority for society as a whole.
2. **Mental health and wellbeing:** Over half (55%) of the public recognise a person's future mental health and wellbeing is most likely to be affected by their development in the early years, followed by their ability to make and maintain relationships (51%) and their future happiness (40%).
3. **Communities of support:** Informal sources of support are key support mechanisms for parents, with more than a half of parents of children 0-5 (56%) citing family or friends as key sources of information on emotional and social development.
4. **Information and advice:** Parents are more likely to seek out information and advice on key aspects of their child's physical wellbeing (for example 35% on nutrition, 34% vaccinations, 33% on health) than they are on their social (21%) and emotional development (23%).

Speaking about the research, The Duchess of Cambridge said:

“Our experiences in early childhood fundamentally impact our whole life and set the foundation for how we go on to thrive as individuals, with one another, as a community and as a society.

The findings published today present us with a huge opportunity and demonstrate there is real appetite from the public to bring this issue up all of our agendas. There is more we can all do – every member of society can play a key role, whether that is directly with a child or by investing in the adults around them – the parents, the carers, the early years workforce and more.

If we come together to raise the importance of early childhood development, we'll soon see that healthy, happy individuals make for a healthier, happier world. Which is why every second we spend with a child, is an investment in our collective future."

Kelly Beaver MBE, Chief Executive of Ipsos UK and Ireland, said:

"Although the majority of us agree that the experiences people have in childhood can have a significant impact on their future, a minority of Briton's recognise the unique importance of the first five years of a child's life.

These formative years are crucial in the emotional, social and physical development of every child and this critical new research, for The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, provides the opportunity for society to ignite a discussion about how parents and children can be better supported during this period."

Building on these findings, The Duchess and The Centre for Early Childhood hosted a roundtable at the Royal Institution attended by representatives from the early years sector; the Secretary of State for Health, Sajid Javid; the Minister for Families, Will Quince; and officials from the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education. Together, they discussed the findings of the research published today, and the huge opportunity that there is to shape the future of our society by focusing on the importance of early childhood to lifelong outcomes.

The full survey findings can be found [here](#).

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16/6/2022

Centre unveils findings of new research into public perceptions of early childhood development

The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood has unveiled the findings of new research into early childhood development.

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11/5/2022

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge join a Roots of Empathy session at St. John's Primary School

The Duke and Duchess today visited St John's Primary School in Port Glasgow where they sat in on a Roots of Empathy session and engaged with co-ordinators and participants of the programme.

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23/3/2022

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visit Shortwood Teachers' College

As part of their Caribbean tour, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge today met with young students and early years professionals at Shortwood Teachers' College.

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