



**FLEXIBLE CHILDCARE
SERVICES SCOTLAND**



IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025

fcss.org.uk



INTRODUCTION

Who we are, what we do & how it helps



Flexible Childcare Services Scotland is a national charity and social enterprise with numerous childcare settings and services for children and young people across Scotland.

We provide flexible early learning and school age childcare for families with children of all ages.

The flexibility of our model means that parents can book by the hour, pay as they go and use their funded entitlement flexibly as well.

We also provide a range of clubs for children with Additional Support Needs across Aberdeenshire.

Our services are primarily located in areas of high deprivation, areas where traditional childcare providers are reluctant to operate in, but also areas where we can have the greatest impact.

All of our services are designed to remove childcare as a barrier to working, studying or accessing respite.

In this report we will highlight how our services are supporting children and families, other childcare providers, and local and national economies.

OUR VISION, MISSION & VALUES



At Flexible Childcare Services Scotland, our vision is simple; to create a world where every child and family has access to the services they need to thrive.

Our Mission is to empower children, families, and communities to work, rest or learn by creating access to flexible, affordable and responsive childcare, education, children's services and wraparound support.

Developed in consultation with our board, our team and the families we support, our Values are:



People First



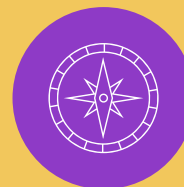
Flexible & Accessible



Nurture & Learn



Quality



Integrity

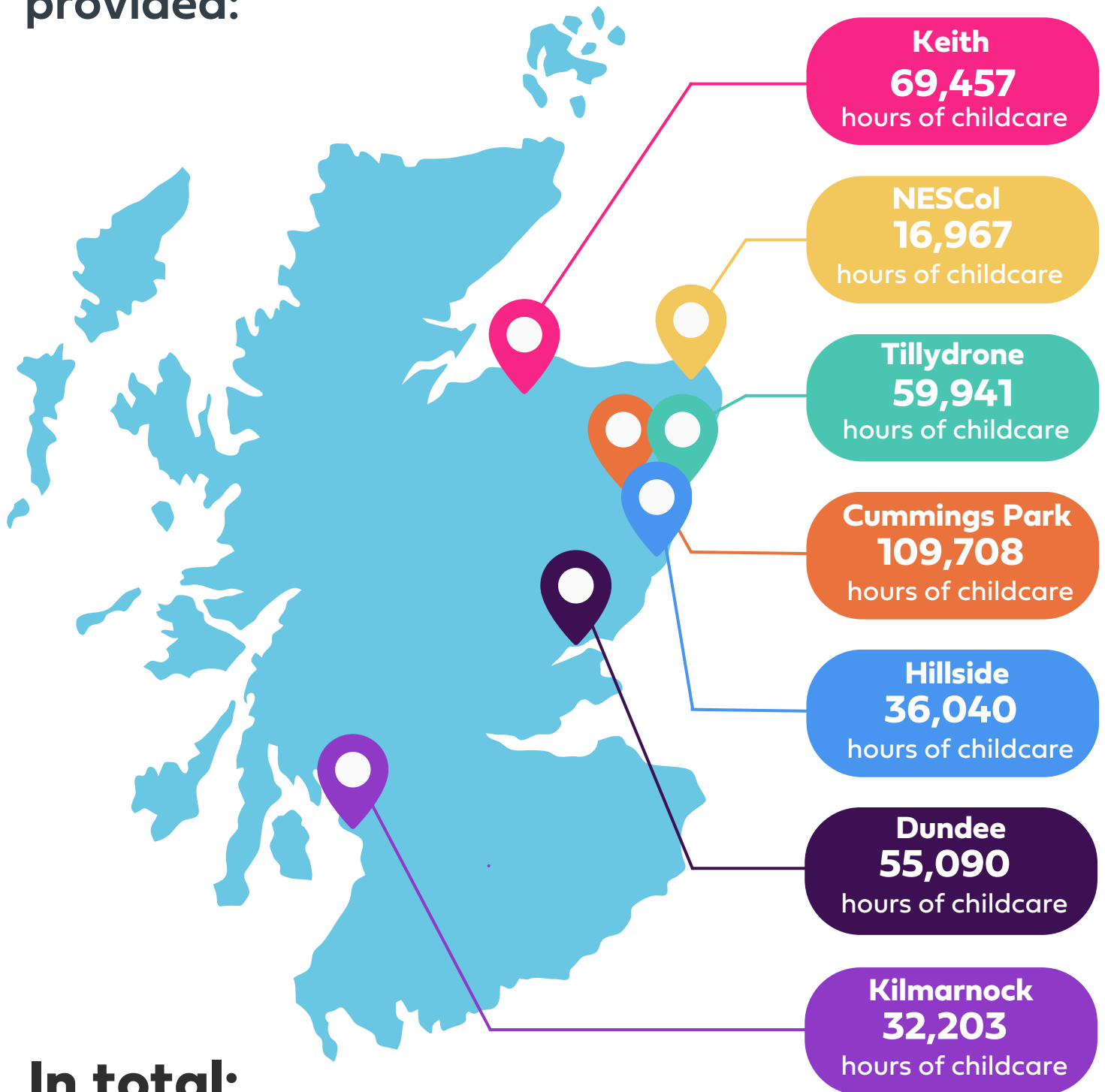


Resilience

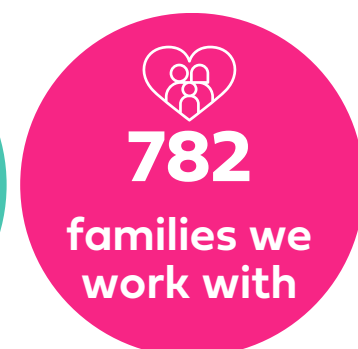
- We put People First
- We are Flexible and Accessible
- We will Nurture and Learn together
- We are committed to delivering Quality in all that we do
- We act with Integrity, doing the right thing
- We are solution focussed and Resilient

OUR IMPACT

Over the course of 2024 - 2025 our early learning and school age childcare settings provided:



In total:



WE'VE DONE THE NUMBERS

And we know that flexible childcare saves families money and helps them increase their income



IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT

We asked our parents:
if they were currently employed.



81%
said
yes

Yes ! I wouldn't be able to do my job without FCSS

Yes they have helped me stay in my job due to the flexibility

Yes I couldn't have went back to work full time otherwise

Yes, I feel as though I'm working for a purpose now rather than just to pay nursery fees

Yes because i can work more than i would've been able to before having my daughter in NESCol. Its very affordable for my family

Yes, I work 12.5hr shifts so the flexibility allows early drop off, flexible days

Yes I would have had to drop either my studies or my work to continue caring for our child without FCSS.

I am just returning to work after maternity leave and having flexible childcare means I can change the days I require childcare to suit my work. It also means I don't need to find someone to collect my child at 3pm like a traditional nursery setting.

Amazing I managed to start working part time because of FCSS!

It has allowed myself and husband to stay in full time employment

It has helped me give my best at my job as I'm not rushing as I can drop off at 7:30

I can pick up extra shifts

Yes, allowed me to go to college and then have more available hours when applying for jobs

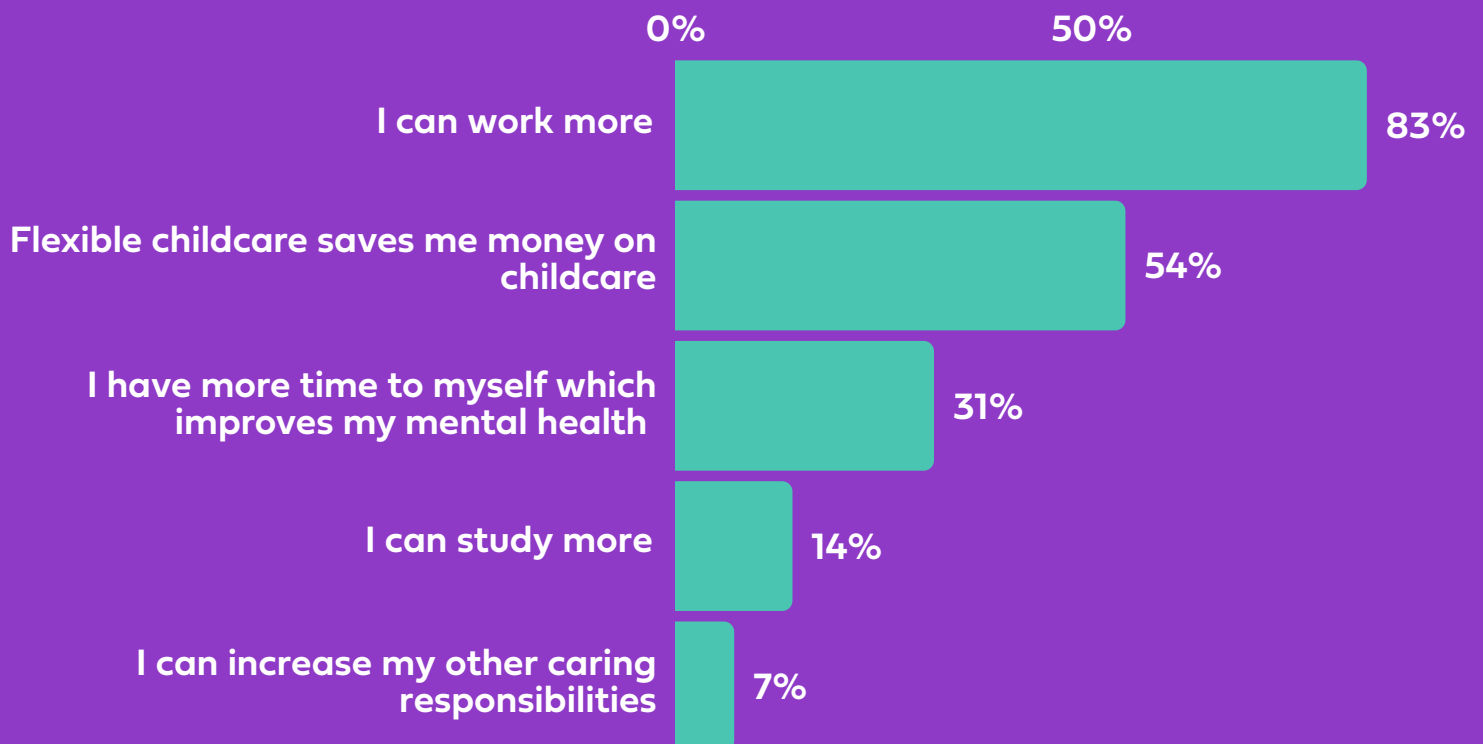
Yes able to get a promotion

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

We asked our parents:
How does having flexible childcare options
help you and your family?



83%
said
I can work
more



PARENTS TOLD US

how flexible childcare helped them:

Without Flexible childcare I wouldn't be able to go back to work

My partner works offshore so I have no support when he's away and work full time. I wouldn't be able to do this without FCSS

Massively as this means I can work all day & into the evening & my husband can pick my little boy up at dinner time.

As two full time working parents it allows us to continue working to provide for our family and have the knowledge that our children are being well cared for at the out of school club.

Before we found flexible childcare we were struggling to pay typical nursery fees. Paying only for the hours we need has really improved our financial situation and overall wellbeing.

I work shifts and set childcare doesn't work for me so the flexibility saves money so we don't pay for nursery when we aren't needing it

I can collect her at any time to help save money which is allowed by flexible. Also, having her in NESCol i can work more days making sure i can make more money to spend on her childhood and memories.

I wouldn't have been able to go back to work as quickly without these services they have given me the opportunity to take care of my family financially and also have the odd couple of hours to my self which improves my mental health

Navigating autism, adhd, working and studying part-time - all on a low income - has been extraordinarily difficult with a toddler in the mix. My mental health was really tanking before we found the service and could buy a few hours here and there throughout the week where I could breath a bit easier.

It has made a huge difference to us. We have been struggling financially, and having the flexible support means that my son is getting looked after so that I am able to work. Since I work from 4-7pm each weekday, the flexible childcare means we can just have our son there when we need it rather than having to pay for full days / half days like at other nurseries which would not be financially viable for us.

I work full time and I'm doing a masters degree. When I'm off work over holidays, I can still use the service the odd day to make sure my child is socialising and staying in a routine whilst having a break for myself. It also saves me a significant amount of money each year whilst not making me feel guilty that I need to put him in when I'm off simply because I'm paying for it already.



IMPACT ON INCOME

We asked our parents:
Have our services helped you to increase your household income, and by how much?

100%
said
yes



My partner starting working too after enrolment of our child with your nursery

I personally only make around £10k a year and I would estimate that would drop around 20% without this cover. Additionally my wife would have to work a lot less to help me and that is our primary source of income so would likely cost us a good 5k a year

I went for a promotion at work as I was confident I could manage the additional workload with the support of flexible childcare

Allowed me to get full time employment

Up to £2,000

65%

£2,000-£5,000

14%

£5,000+

21%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

IMPACT ON INCOME



We estimate that in 2021/22 families who used our flexible ELC services increased their income by more than **£800k** / year.

In 2022/23 this had increased by 24% equating to more than **£1m** / year and in 2023/24 a further increase of 89% resulting in **£1.92m** each year.

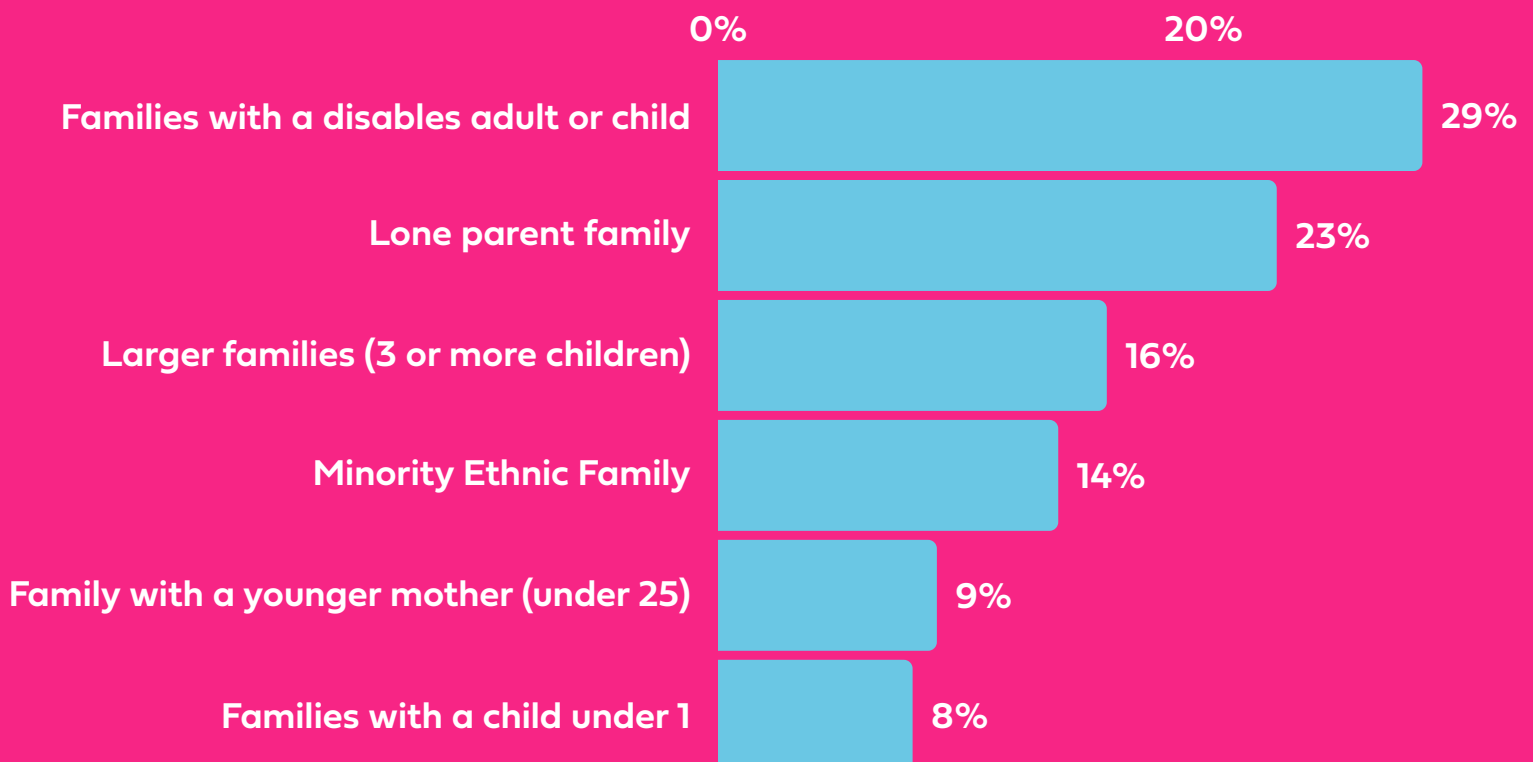
In 2024/25 this figure increased by a further 11% meaning that our flexible childcare model has helped families to increase their income by more than **£2.13m**.



IMPACT ON PRIORITY GROUPS

We asked our parents:
if they were one of the Scottish Government's
6 priority family types who are at higher risk
of child poverty.

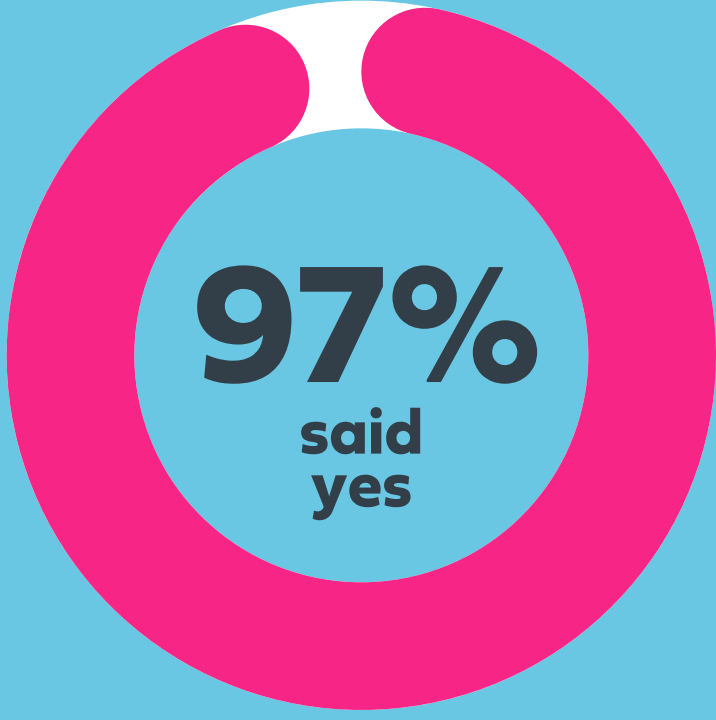
63%
said
they were



IMPACT ON QUALITY

We asked our parents:

Do you feel that flexible childcare gives you the quality of care that you want for your child(ren)?



97%
said
yes



My son is looked after very well, he is always happy going to nursery and I can tell the really do care about him and he loves his teachers

Allows familiar setting where they can make friends but also works round shifts

He's learned so much and his social skills are miles ahead of his milestones

There's a big range of different learning opportunities

Most staff are friendly and always put my little brother needs first

My daughter loves nursery and the staff that look after her. Always happy to come

They have been intentional in tailoring their care to the child's specific needs and interests, centring them as an autonomous individual.

The staff are amazing. They have wonderful bonds with the children and show that they truly care

My child is very happy and always comes home excited to say what they got up to today

The care our girl receives is great her needs are always met and she is happy with the ladies caring for her

The nursery is child led which is amazing for this age as children's attention spans are so short and it means our children have their independence

In the ever evolving world, flexibility is key as parents are more often than not trying to juggle both work and appointments daily

It gives a better quality of life - we're not rigid in what we do

It's a good nursery with great staff who care about the children there

IMPACT FOR OTHERS

We asked our parents:

Would you encourage other childcare providers to offer flexible booking options?

97%
said
yes



Who doesn't like flexibility in their day to day lives?

To allow people more options fitting there circumstances and proximity to home/work

It works perfectly for working parents

Most people don't work 9-3 so require wrap around care

It helps greatly when work schedules are different to nursery hours

The traditional route for childcare is not compatible with modern working and living. The traditional route of non flexible childcare costs the service users more money which is not cost effective in a cost of living crisis

I love the values flexible have and the reasons behind what they do

Definitely. It is great! Allows working parents to work or study.

I have no idea of the systemic constraints or why they don't but I can't see scenarios where it would not be better for our communities broadly to offer parents additional support as it is needed.

It's helped me not need to spend extra when it's not needed

Not everyone works the same hours every day so the option to book as you go is so very helpful

It's really helpful for lots of different shift patterns and takes pressure of parents when needing to work but not the same patterns every week. The care and service provided is of a good standard and have recommended to some of my friends already

It fits in so much better with work

OUR IMPACT WITH ASN

As well as our early learning & school age childcare services we also provide specialist support services for children and young people with ASN across Aberdeenshire. Over the course of 2024 - 2025 we have provided:



29,761

hours of
childcare



196

children
supported



191

families we
work with

I can spend time doing activities with my other two children that is difficult to do while caring for my daughter with special needs

Allows me to work longer on certain days and provide different activities for my toddler at weekends

Fantastic service - staff are great with my child and very knowledgeable about him. Provide lots of fun activities to do

Gives my son a chance to socialise & me to work or have a rest

I would recommend services. All staff are approachable and caring who look after my son

Opportunity to spend 1 on 1 time with other child. Enables my child with ASN to socialise with other children, especially important in holidays when they would otherwise only be with me.

My daughter needs this club as much as i need it for her. There aren't much clubs at all that are suitable for her to attend.

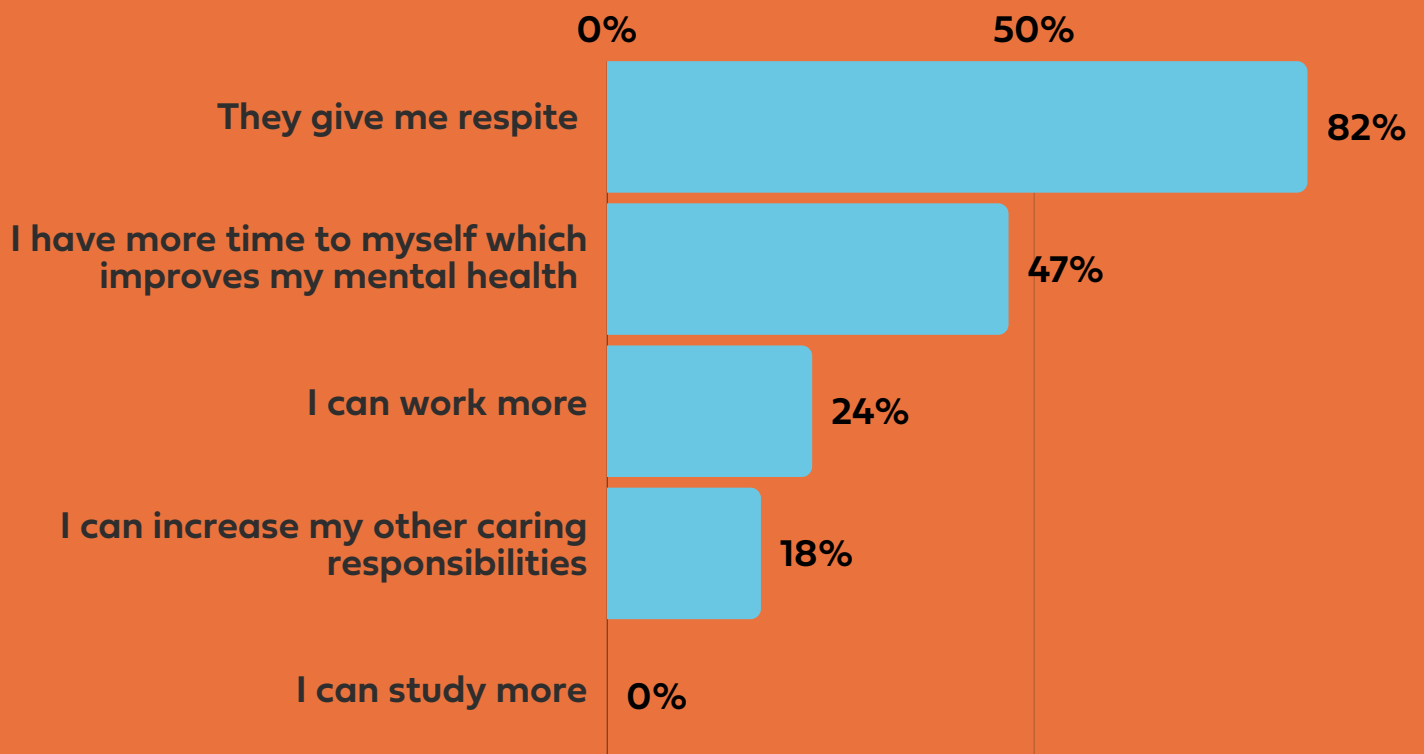
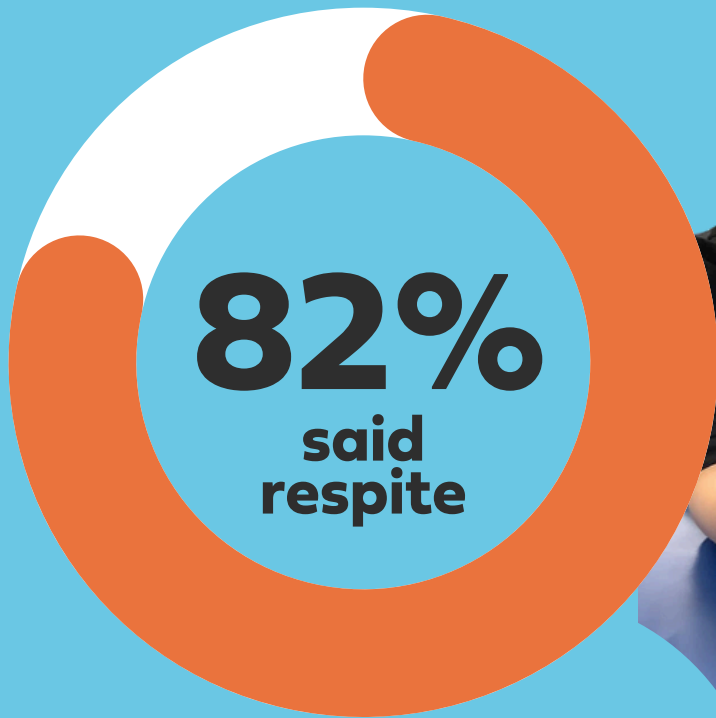
Gives me time to spend with my eldest daughter

Gives me more time to spend with my other child



IMPACT ON FAMILIES

We asked parents who use our ASN Groups:
How do our services help you and your family?



RECOMMENDATIONS

We asked our parents:
Would you recommend our services?



94%
said
yes

Yes i always recommend flexible to anyone as they are great for working parents

Yes the Cummings park setting had really helped my child grow and learn! They are all fantastic!

I can't fault the service provided. The team care for our children highly and provide an excellent service. My child adores his key worker and talks about her consistently, even after only been at the group for a few hours weekly.

Absolutely. I'm very impressed by the team, their care for the children and blown away at how affordable it is compared to other options. It has been a real life saver.

I would really highly recommend your services! There is no other nursery around in our area. It's been a life saver, I'm glad I heard about it, it is very sad it is closing, devastating for all the families who's little ones still need proper nursery. As other nurseries only offer 4h a day that is not enough for working or studying parents.

We highly recommend FCSS! Fraser has been there over 2 years now and we'll continue to use them when he's not in at the big nursery. His language and speech skills are ahead of others his age as well as his numeracy and counting. Social skills are hugely important to a developing child and we think Fraser has advanced leaps and bounds just by attending and participating at FCSS!

Yes. My child loves breakfast, after school and holiday clubs. Mixing with children of all ages amongst other things has improved his confidence greatly

Yes I would highly recommend FCCS Cummings park. The staff are amazing with the children and always go above and beyond for them and the management are always helpful and therefore providing any information needed

I would! My child loves the nursery and the range of activities it provides make me feel that he spends good quality time and not just basic care.

PARENTS TOLD US

why they would recommend our services

Absolutely. I'm very impressed by the team, their care for the children and blown away at how affordable it is compared to other options. It has been a real life saver.

Yes absolutely! Great nursery with great staff and love the idea of it being flexible! Doing shift work, this works best for our family as we can choose times/dates suitable.

Absolutely would recommend your service. We were able to choose days and times that suited us and our child. Our child has flourished immensely attending your service and I have already recommended to others looking for similar childcare options

Yes definitely it's a great service and my children are thriving here especially my son who was shy before but now has made friends and talking more there

Would absolutely recommend the team at NESCol. All the ladies have helped my son immensely in his 3 years of attending this setting. So sad to see the funding for their setting being pulled, they absolutely go above and beyond to make sure our children are cared for.

Definitely I would recommend your services to other partners. My daughter loves your nursery. I love the flexibility and the fact that I pay only for the hours I booked

I highly rate FCSS Keith to many parents due to their respectfulness to the children and the kindness they show.

My child has come on amazingly being there, if there's ever an issue they deal with it accordingly and gently with my child. My child adores the girls there.

Would definitely recommend! My daughter has thrived & came right out her shell into her own person since starting. Helped her speech come along also.

I would recommend to other parents. The staff at Keith are so good with my son. He's enjoys it and I get time to myself.

Yes , FCSS Cumming Park nursery has funded places which makes it possible for my child to attend nursery as she is 2 and the school do not accept 2 year olds at their nursery , this gives me vital time to myself as a single mother of 3 children with no support it's vital and it means my child gets to learn skills and play with other children

Yes I would recommend the services to everyone. When we found flexible childcare we were overwhelmed trying to pay typical nursery fees during a cost of living crisis just after I had been on statutory maternity pay for 9 months. It really has made such a difference for us.

Absolutely would recommend. Good nursery where (teachers) putting lot of work and energy in children's, I feel quite save leaving my child in nursery- as they have interesting things what they teach to children's, and my child loves nursery.



WRAPAROUND SUPPORT

Our services go beyond childcare. We also support families with food, clothing and external professional support

Food Larder

In Fintry Mains, thanks to our partnership with FairShare, we distributed

219 trays of food and drinks!

This included fresh fruit and vegetables, cupboard staples such as flour, pasta and rice and even luxury items like marmalade! YUM!



Getting extra vegetables and my child chooses the vegetables

We use the food larder. It has helped my son to expand the range of foods that he eats and try things he wouldn't normally choose and we wouldn't normally buy.

Health Visitor

Thanks to a new partnership, our Cummings Park Nursery, now hosts a health visitor on site at their early learning and childcare setting in the Northfield area of Aberdeen ensuring that families have access to the advice and support they need, when they need it.

Having access to our health visitor at nursery has helped massively with any questions

It's helped me a lot with health visitor giving me support and guidance.

Hadn't had a health care visit since child was 6 weeks so was great to get one when enrolled

Spoke with health visitor team regarding toilet training and received great advice

It's great having the Health Visitor around the nursery as she then gets to see the children in the setting and observes to see if they need anymore additional help and she's great at getting to it straight away if they do need the extra support. The food larder and clothes exchange is a brilliant idea too for helping everyone who may need the help! Such a great idea!

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Although our purpose is social, we are very conscious of our environmental impact



'Rag Bag' Recycling

We are proud members of the 'Rag Bag' recycling scheme. The scheme increases awareness about textile recycling and by increasing recycling rates we can help the environment by ensuring less material goes to landfill.

4 of our ELC settings have collection banks within their buildings and over the course of 2024/25 we collected

995kgs of textiles and clothing

which otherwise would have been sent to landfill.



Clothes redistribution

Each year we run numerous clothes and costume swap initiatives where parents can trade or donate seasonal clothes and costumes to alleviate the financial strain on families and ensure that all children can take part in the seasonal festivities.

In October 2024, Jackie Dunbar MSP raised a motion in Scottish Parliament to celebrate the initiative. [Read more](#)



Better than new

Within our settings we are very conscious about the resources we buy and how they will be used by the children we support.

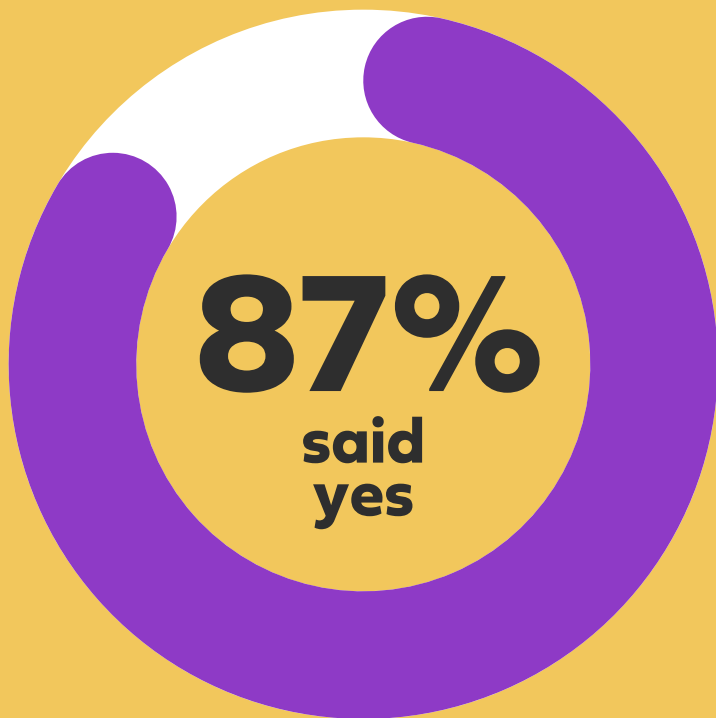
In recent years we have adopted an approach developed by our friends at the [Curiosity Approach](#) – using calm and natural play spaces and loose parts to create a rich learning environment where children harness their imagination to create their own learning experiences.

To achieve this, we are reusing, repairing and reimagining existing materials, giving them a new lease of life.

IMPACT ON OUR TEAM

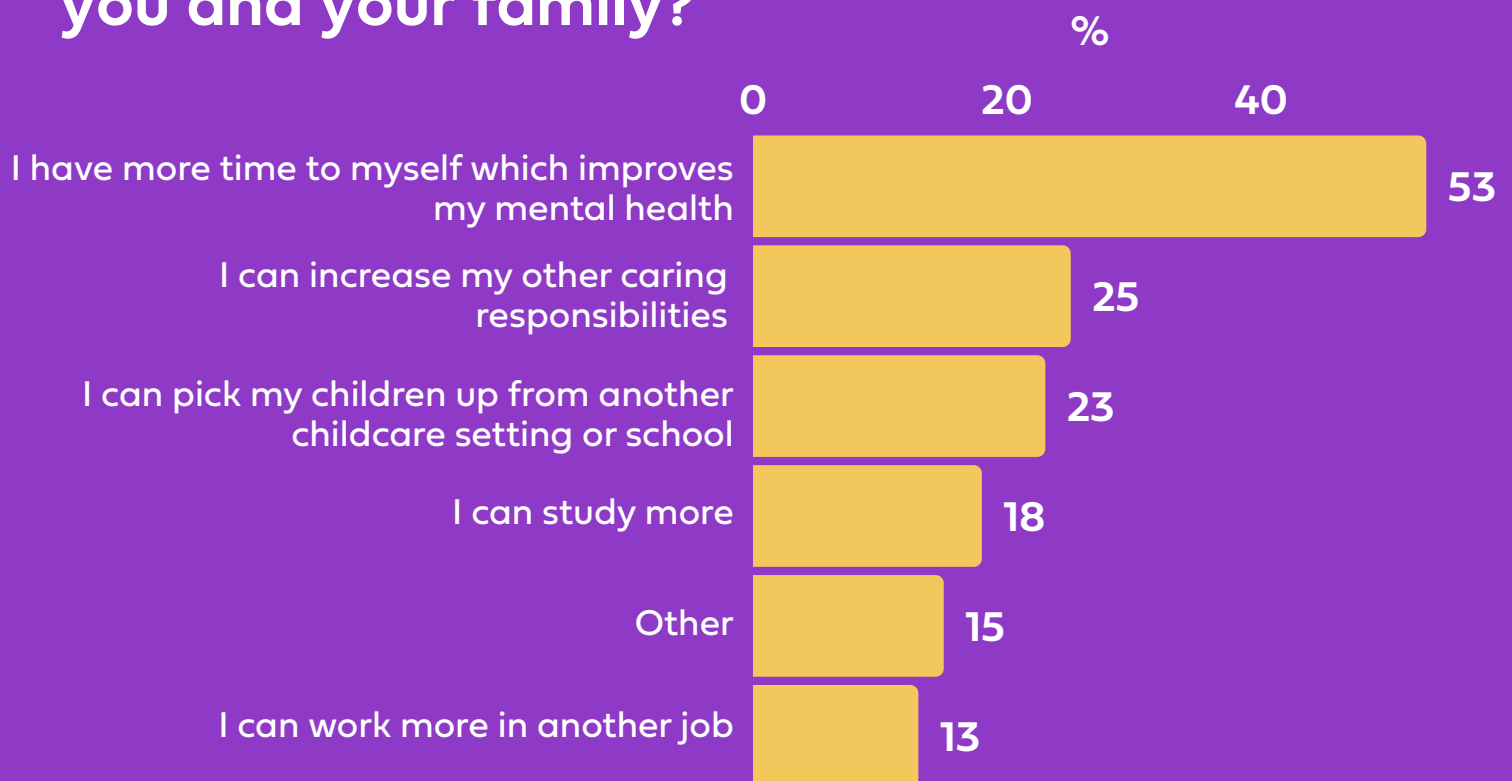
We asked our team:

Do you have a flexible working pattern?



We asked our team:

How does a flexible working pattern help you and your family?



OUR TEAM TOLD US

their favourite thing about working at FCSS

The children - working in the ASN groups is such a privilege and watching the children develop and become more confident is a honour

I love how welcoming all the staff were when i first started, i haven't looked back since i started nearly 3 years ago!

The values and what we are aiming to do

Giving the children opportunities to develop and watching them do it

My team and how we provide a great level of care for our children and families

If has improved my mental health I began to think childcare wasn't for me anymore but since joining FCSS I have been able to work in a setting that supports each other

The children seeing them grow and thrive and being happy and enjoying themselves

Having a good manger who leads and inspires me to work harder and give my all and is supportive to us as members of her team

Getting to create a nurturing environment for the children alongside a great bunch of colleagues

Working with children with ASN its been my dream career since i was a teenager

The amazing team and children we support. I also appreciate the flexible working schedule

Flexibility and always enjoy the company of the children

My favourite thing is coming in and being greeted by all the children

Knowing that what I do, genuinely helps my colleagues and the organisation as a whole

The children, environment and management

All being one big family and supporting the families to our best potential

The bonds with the children and parents

My favourite thing about working in the Cummings park setting in particular is how supportive the staff and management team are I would be able to do it without them x

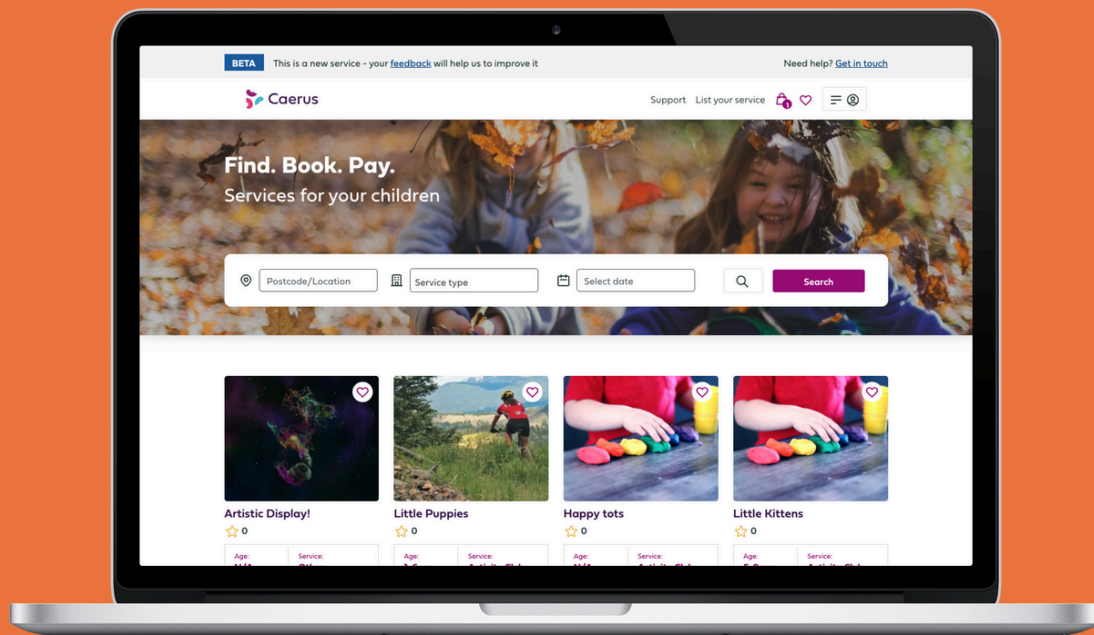
The children and working with them on a day to day basis

The children by far. The helpful and supportive staff team also

How understanding and flexible management are for being there for my own child as well as others

I love seeing the children thrive





Caerus is a trading subsidiary to FCSS and gives early learning and school age childcare providers and children's activity and club providers a robust childcare management solution that will help them to increase bookings and drive efficiencies in their organisation.

The software gives parents a secure platform to find book and pay for the childcare and activities they need.

It also provides valuable data to local and national policy makers helping them make changes to local and national supply.

Parents told us:

I think it's a great thing to have because I often forget dates from the newsletter and maybe forget to check the posters in the room...so its great to go in and check what's on to sign up to

Overall the process was not difficult at all. It was signposted well and I received the authentication email almost immediately

I would certainly use this to book any activities for my child

In March 2024, we began a collaboration with the Tech Army, a Scottish charity that mobilises skilled volunteers from the tech community to drive positive impact.

Our initial project focused on enhancing our system and improving the user experience.

We are now successfully concluding our first project together and are preparing to enter an exciting new phase of development in partnership with the Tech Army.

WITH THANKS

The impacts of our services are only possible due to our fantastic team who have once again demonstrated incredible dedication over the last year - thank you!

Also to our funders: Catalyst for Impact, the Robertson Trust, Changing Ideas Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Aberdeen City Council, Centre for Social Justice, The Northwood Foundation, Dundee Festive Fund, Murdoch Forrest, Hubub Foundation, The Rank Foundation, STV Appeal, Tesco Stronger Starts and many others who know the value of our work.

We would also like to thank Local Authorities across Scotland who support our work; Dundee City Council, East Ayrshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council.

To our Board of Trustees and other volunteers, thank you for your guidance, your commitment and the time that you all provide to ensure the success of our organisation.

Finally to the children & families we support each day, thank you for your trust, we will continue to work hard so that it remains.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This report clearly demonstrates the positive outcomes delivered for children and families using FCSS services. We have a proven, and fully costed model. We know it works and know there is need for more of it.

We are delivering change for good, creating flourishing families, in thriving communities, right here, right now. With your help we can do more!

Find out more in our 5 Year Strategic Plan and Blueprint for Scale documents.

Strategic Plan

Find out how we plan to increase our impact to ensure that more families are able to access flexible childcare and reach better outcomes:

[Download Now](#)

Blueprint for Scale

We've developed a Blueprint for Scale and are seeking partnerships with local authorities and other relevant bodies to allow us to scale our model:

[Download Now](#)

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Flexible Childcare Services Scotland is a registered charity in Scotland.
Scottish Charity Number: SC049318

