

Working families' use of child care

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Source

Sourced from Baxter, Gray, Alexander, Strazdins & Bittman (2007) “Mothers and Fathers with young children: paid employment, caring and wellbeing”, FaCSIA Social Policy Research Paper No. 30.

- **First wave of LSAC (2004)**

- **Two cohorts of children:**

- ◆ Infants, average age 9 months, N=5,103
- ◆ 4-5 year olds, average age 4yrs 9 months , N=4,973

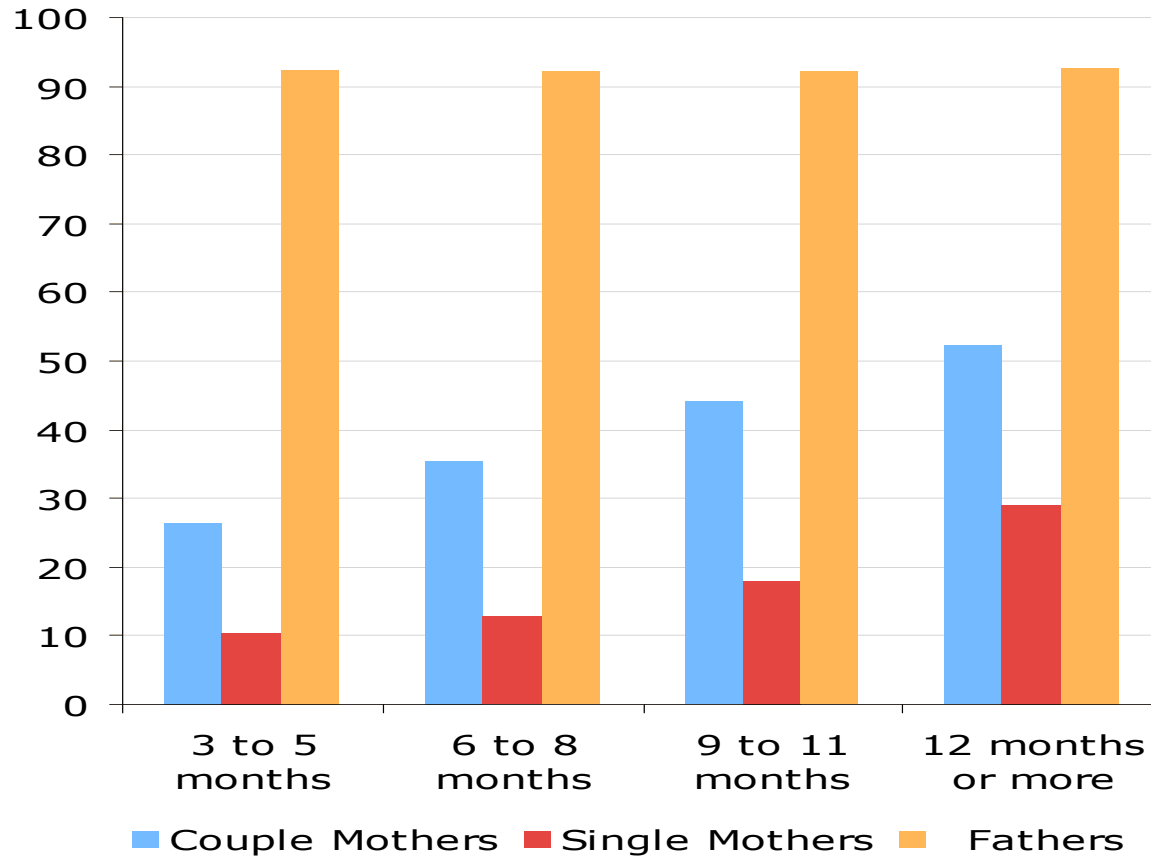
- **Analyses**

- ◆ Different child care classifications for each cohort
- ◆ Overview of types of child care and relationships with parental employment



Families and work, infants

Percentage employed by family type and age of child



- Maternal employment increases with age of child
- Couple mothers more likely to be employed than single mothers
- Fathers' employment hardly changes according to age of child - the majority are employed

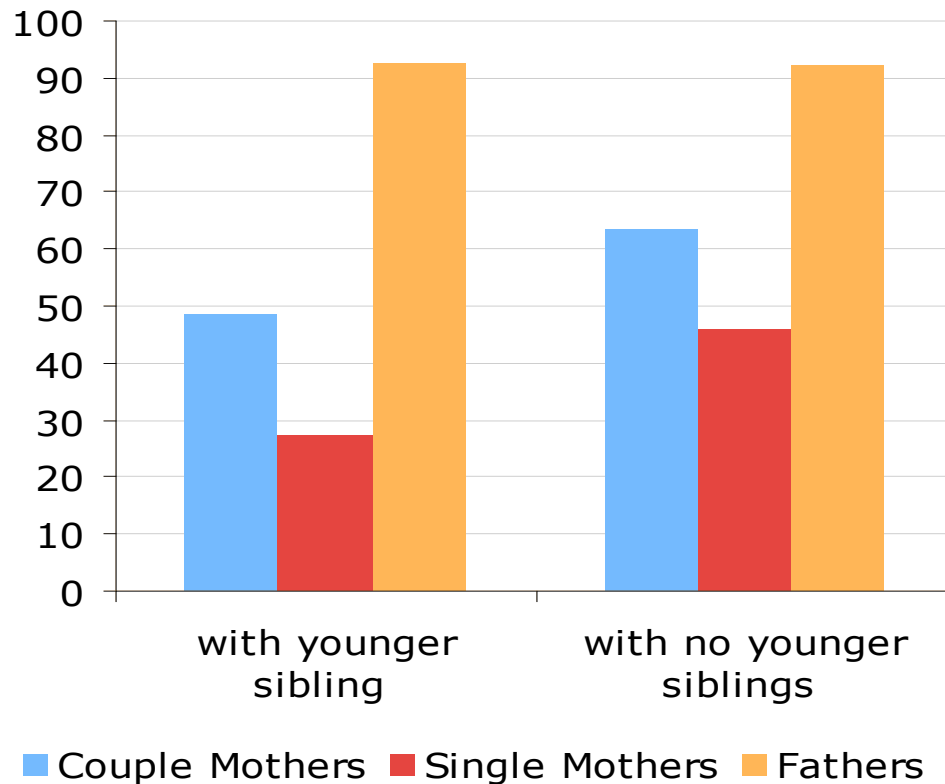


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Families and work, 4-5 year olds

Percentage employed by family type and presence of younger siblings



- **Maternal employment higher if 4-5 year old is youngest**
- **Still, couple mothers more likely to be employed than single mothers**
- **Again, fathers' employment constant - the majority are employed**

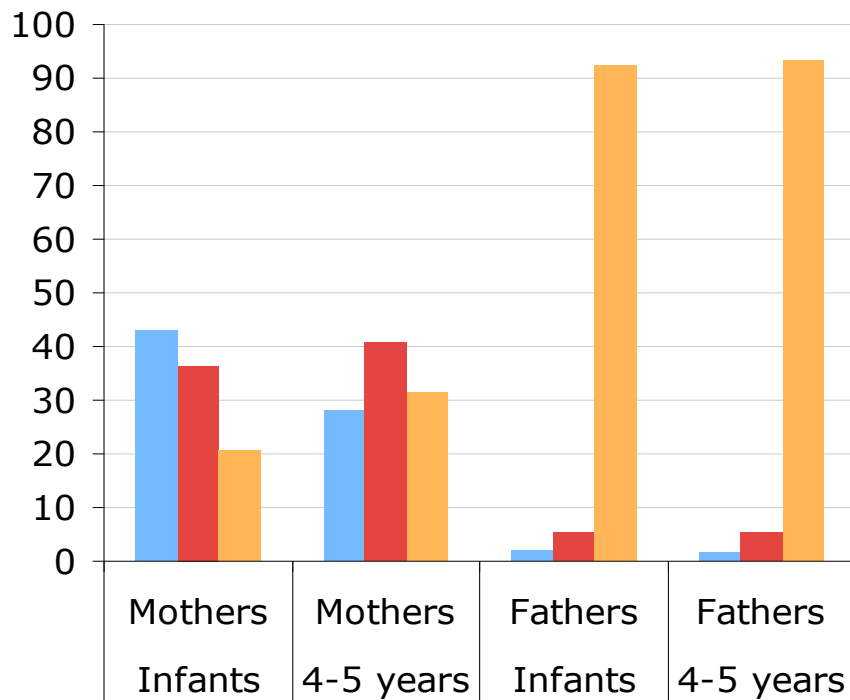


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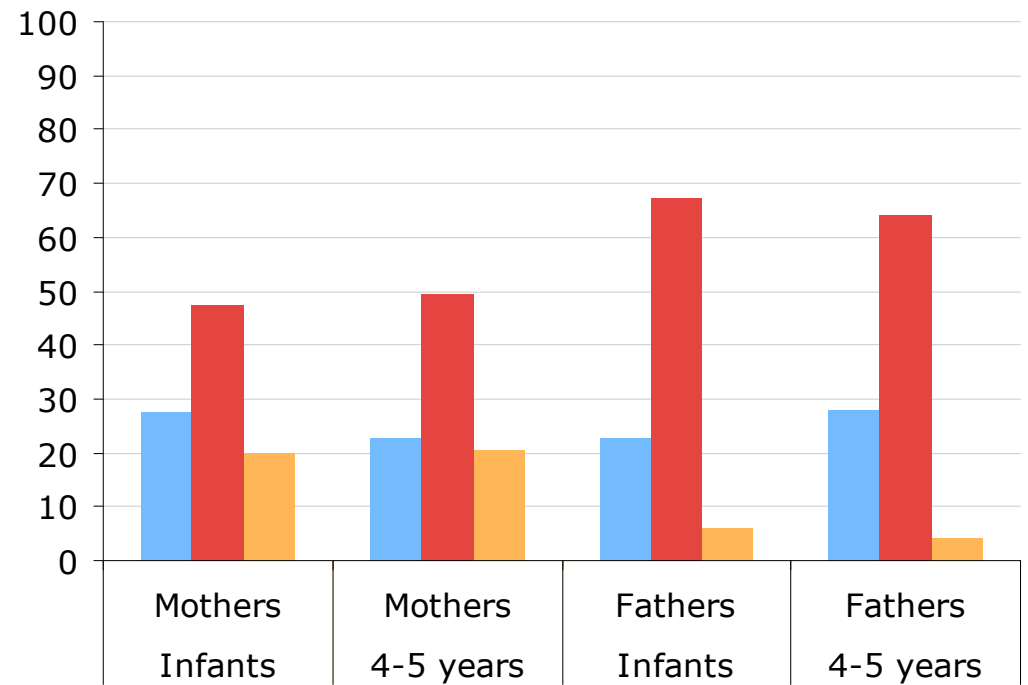
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Job characteristics

Hours worked (% of employed)



Job contract (% of employed)



■ 1 to 15 hours ■ 16 to 34 ■ 35 or more

■ Self-employed ■ Permanent / ongoing ■ Casual employment



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Defining working families

		Infants		4-5 year olds	
		N	%	N	%
Single	Not employed	385	8%	403	8%
	Employed	91	2%	289	6%
Couple	Neither employed	238	5%	185	4%
	One employed	2,555	50%	1,712	34%
	Both employed	1,834	36%	2,384	48%
Total		5,103	100%	4,973	100%

Working families are defined as **employed single parents** and **both-employed couple parents**



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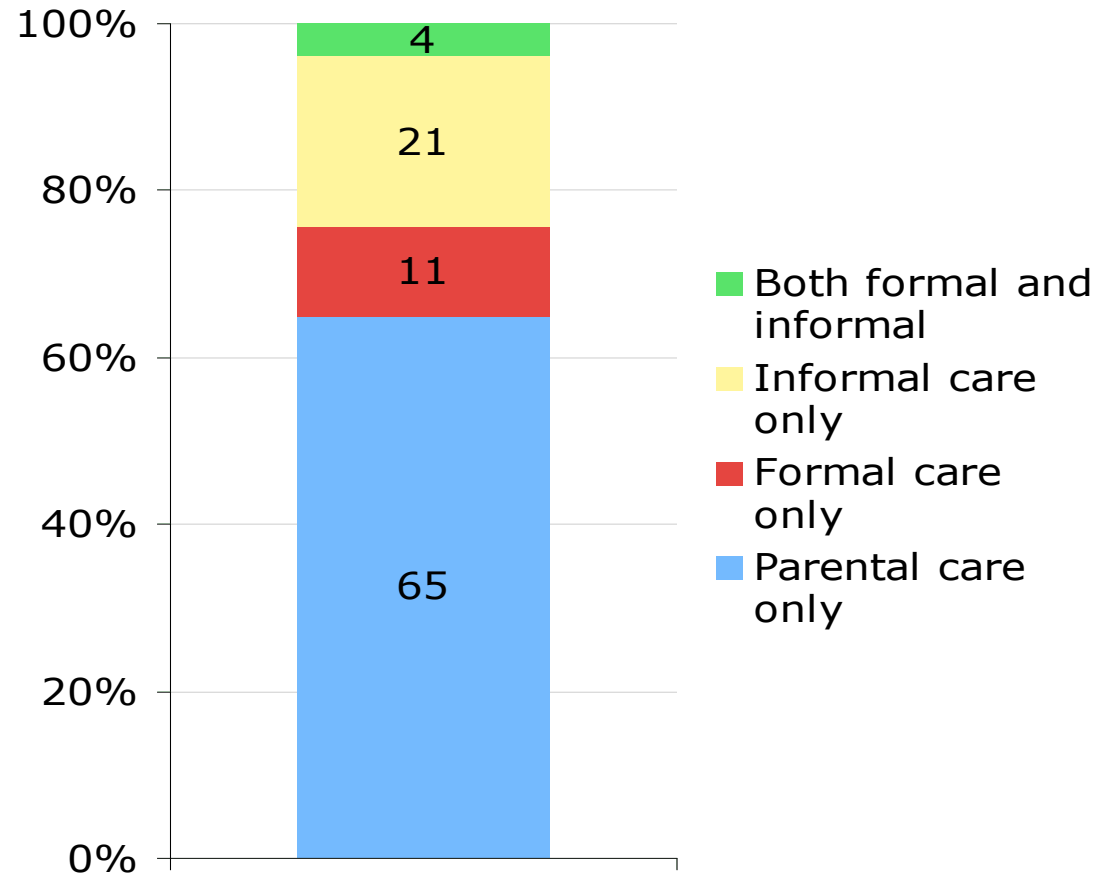
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Child care patterns in families with infants

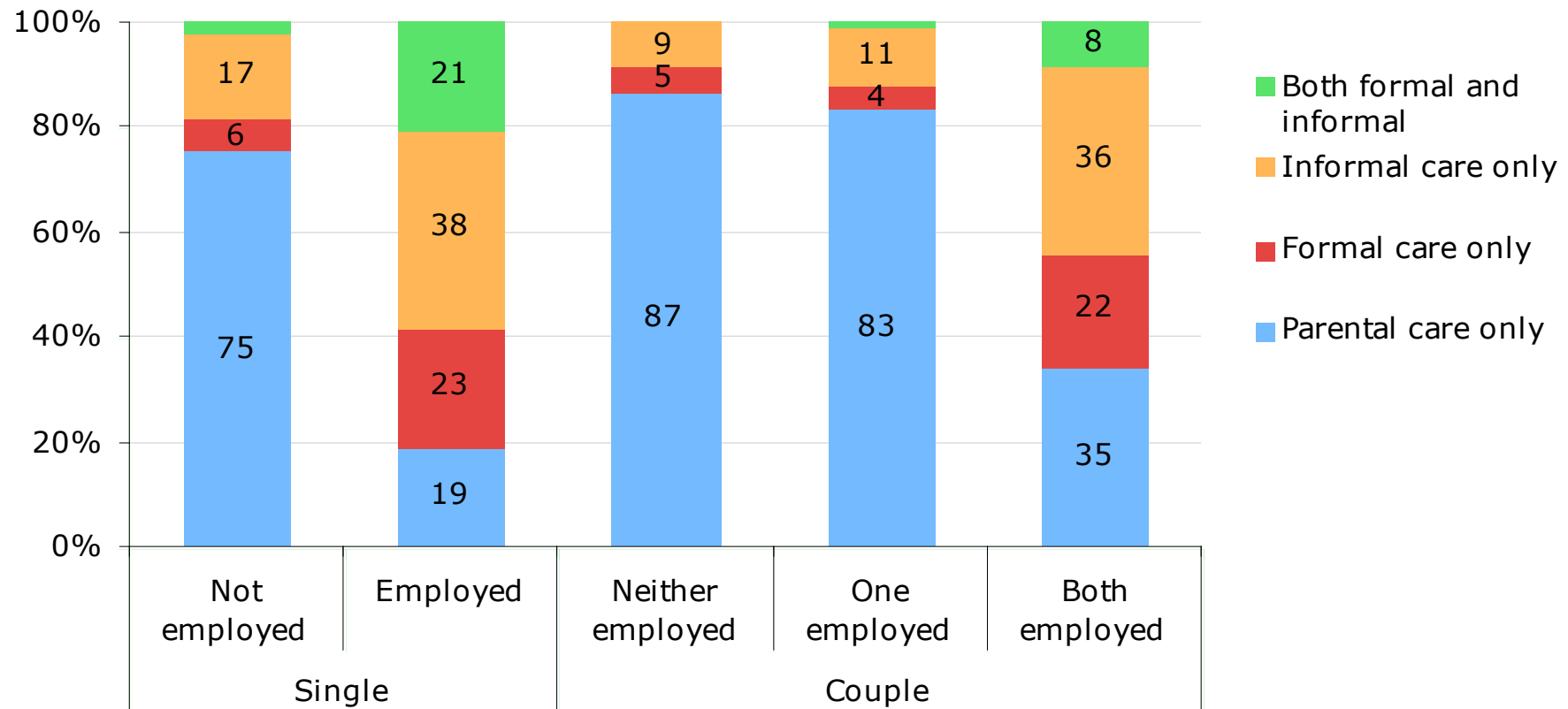
... in the previous month

Child care categories, infants

Parental care only	No regular child care arrangement.
Formal care only	Day care centre, family day care, occasional care.
Informal care only	Grandparent, other relative, nanny, child's parent living elsewhere, other person, gym leisure or community centre, mobile care unit.
Both formal and informal care	A combination of formal and informal care.



Child care and parental employment



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How do dual working couple families manage if they use parental care only? Is it sharing the care?

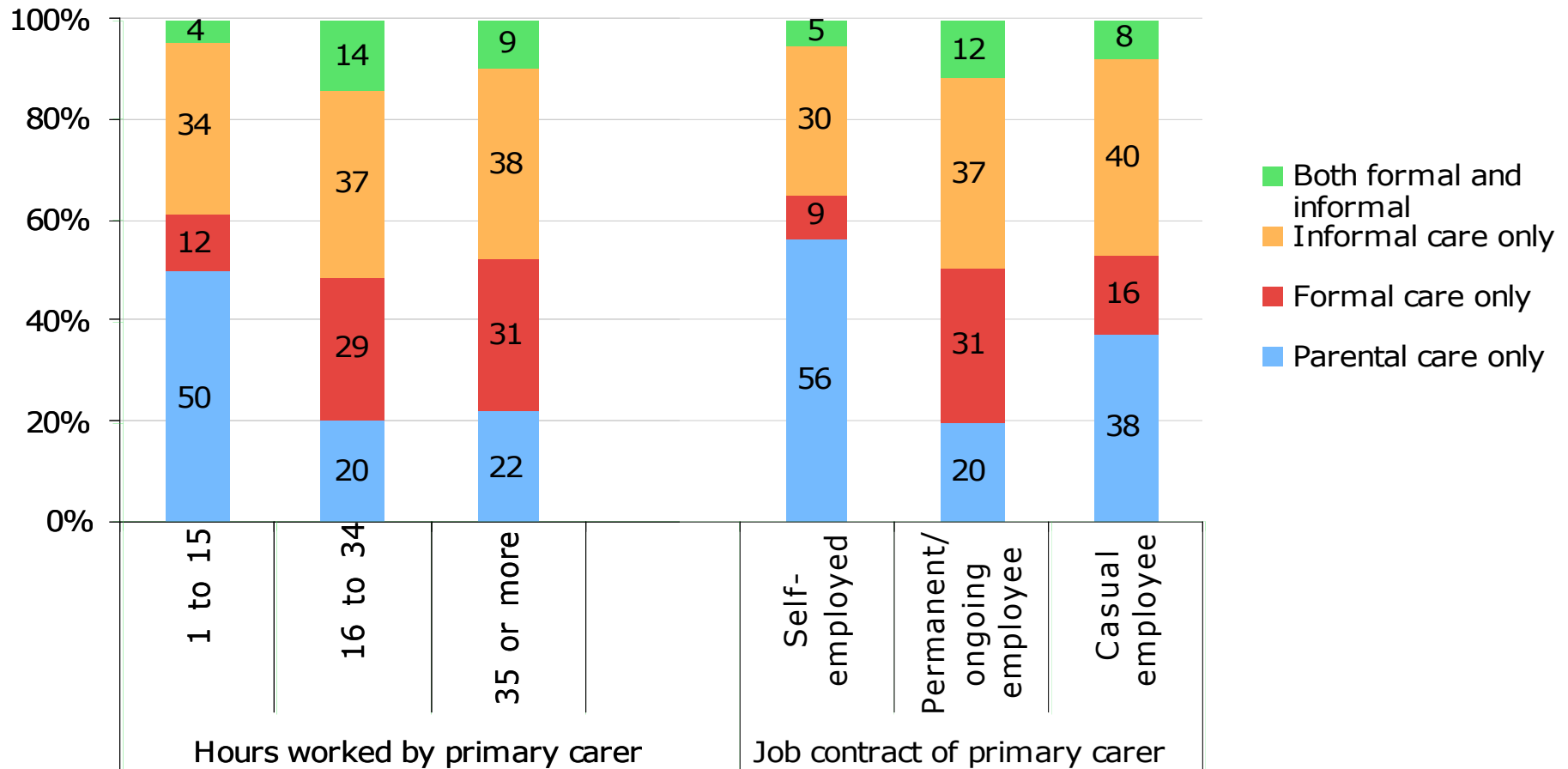
“Are there any regular times during the week when [partner] takes care of [child] while you are not there (for example to go to work or do the shopping)?

Not just casual sharing of care that parents do for each other.

Dual-working couples; no care used	Primary carer's job type			
	Self-employed	Permanent	Casual	Total
Partner provides care (%)	42	62	62	52
Mean hours worked by primary carer				
Partner provides no care	13	22	11	16
Partner provides care	13	20	9	14
Mean hours partner provides care (if provides care)	7	18	11	12



Child care and job characteristics, working families, infant cohort



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Child care and other work and family characteristics (working families)

Greater use of parental care only:

- ◆ Shorter hours
- ◆ Self-employed
- ◆ Works weekends
- ◆ Works evenings
- ◆ Children are younger
- ◆ More children in the family
- ◆ Couple families
- ◆ Lower parental income
- ◆ Lower education

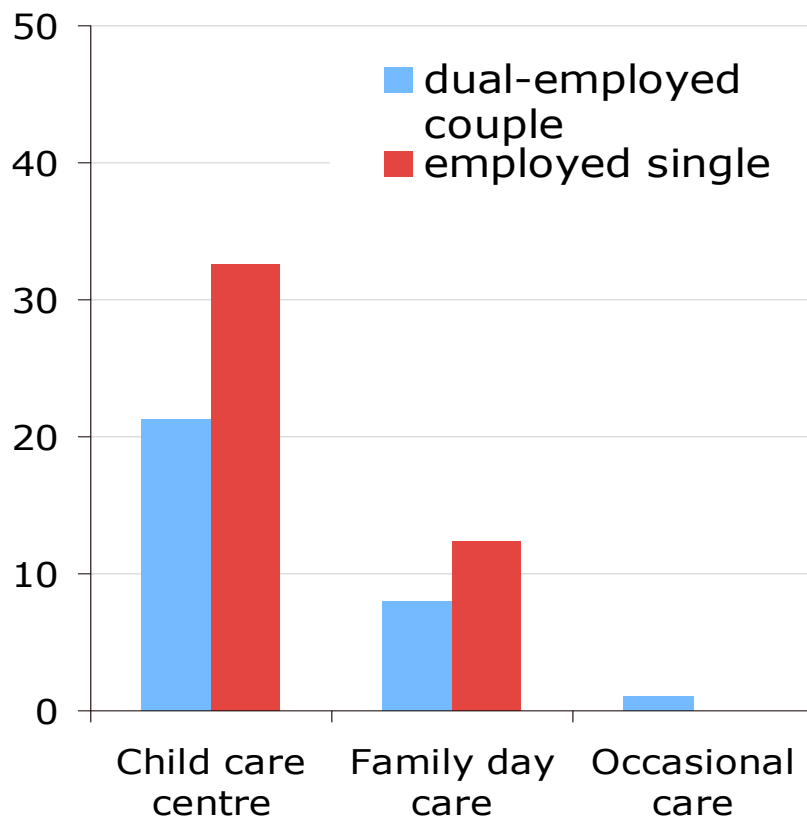
Greater use of formal versus informal care when:

- ◆ Shorter hours
- ◆ Self-employed
- ◆ Children are younger

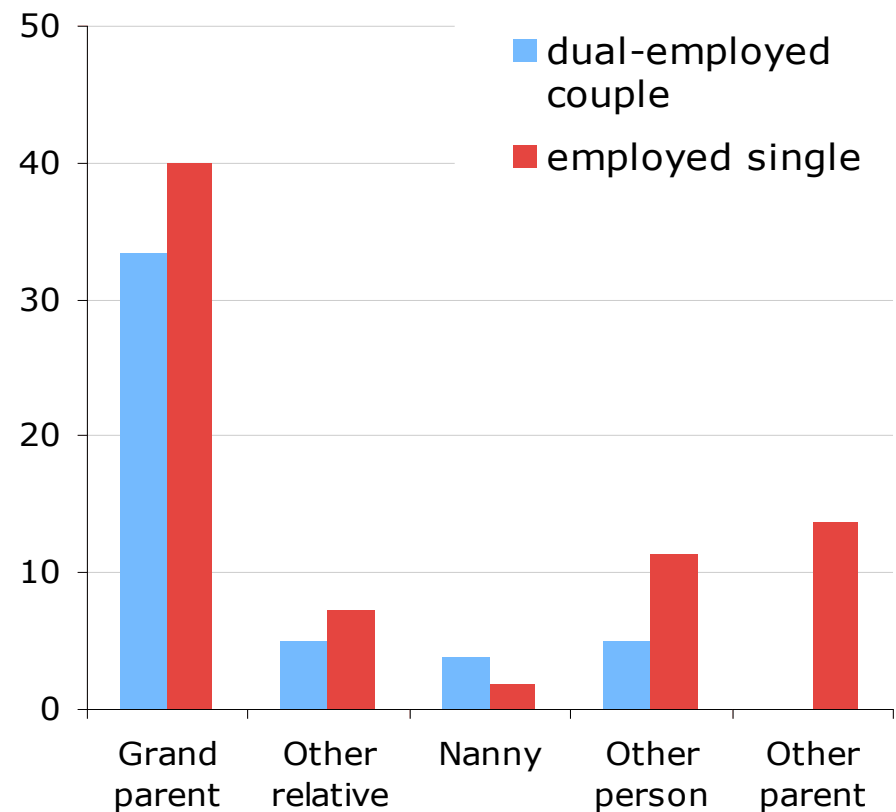


Detailed types of care, working families by family type, infant cohort

Formal care

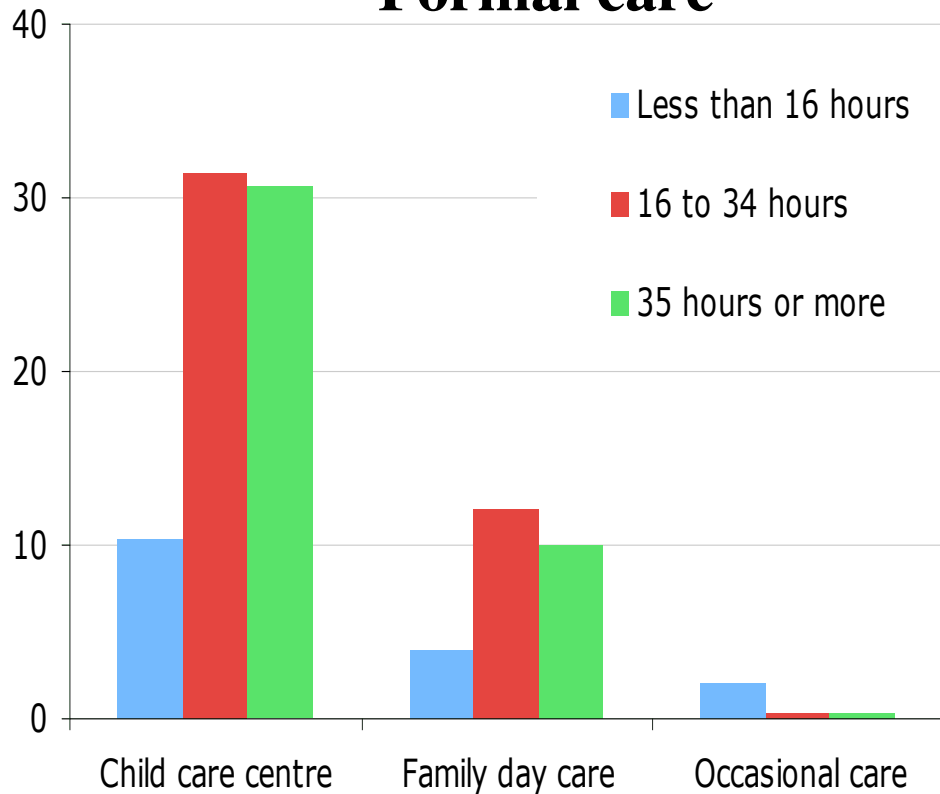


Informal care

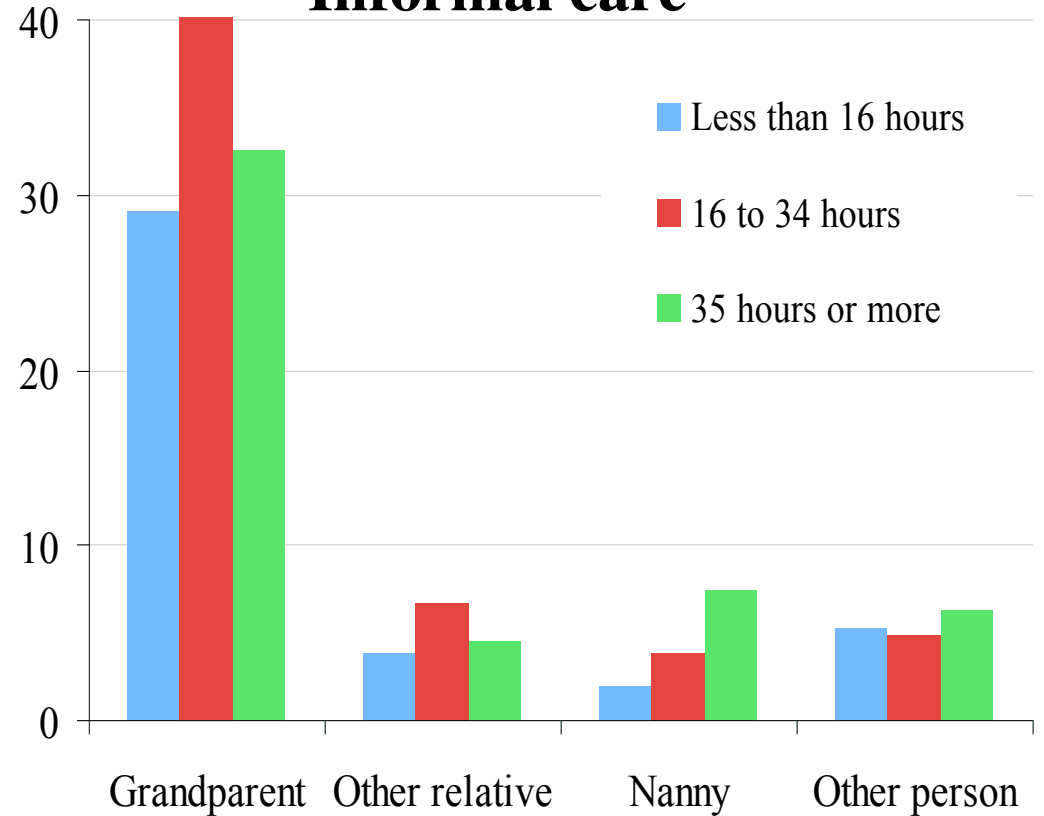


Detailed types of care, working families by primary carer hours, infant cohort

Formal care



Informal care



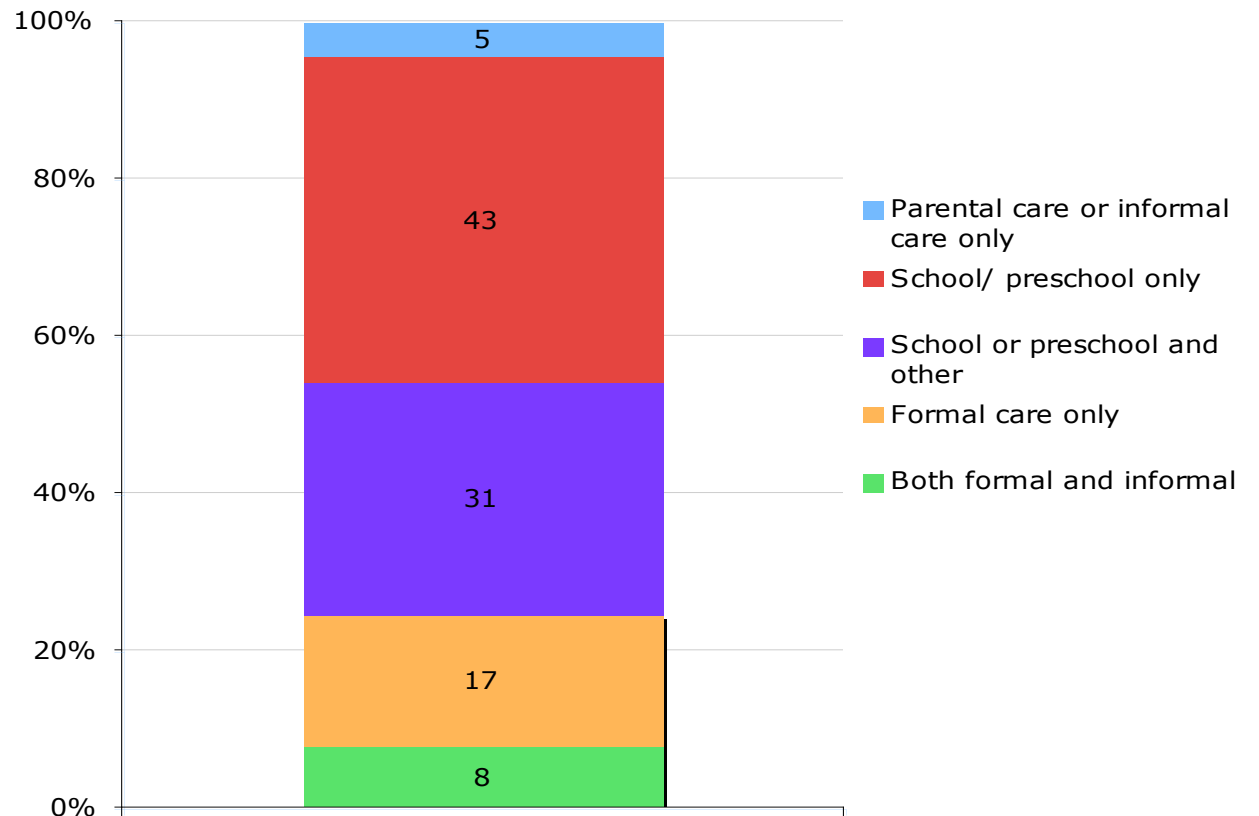
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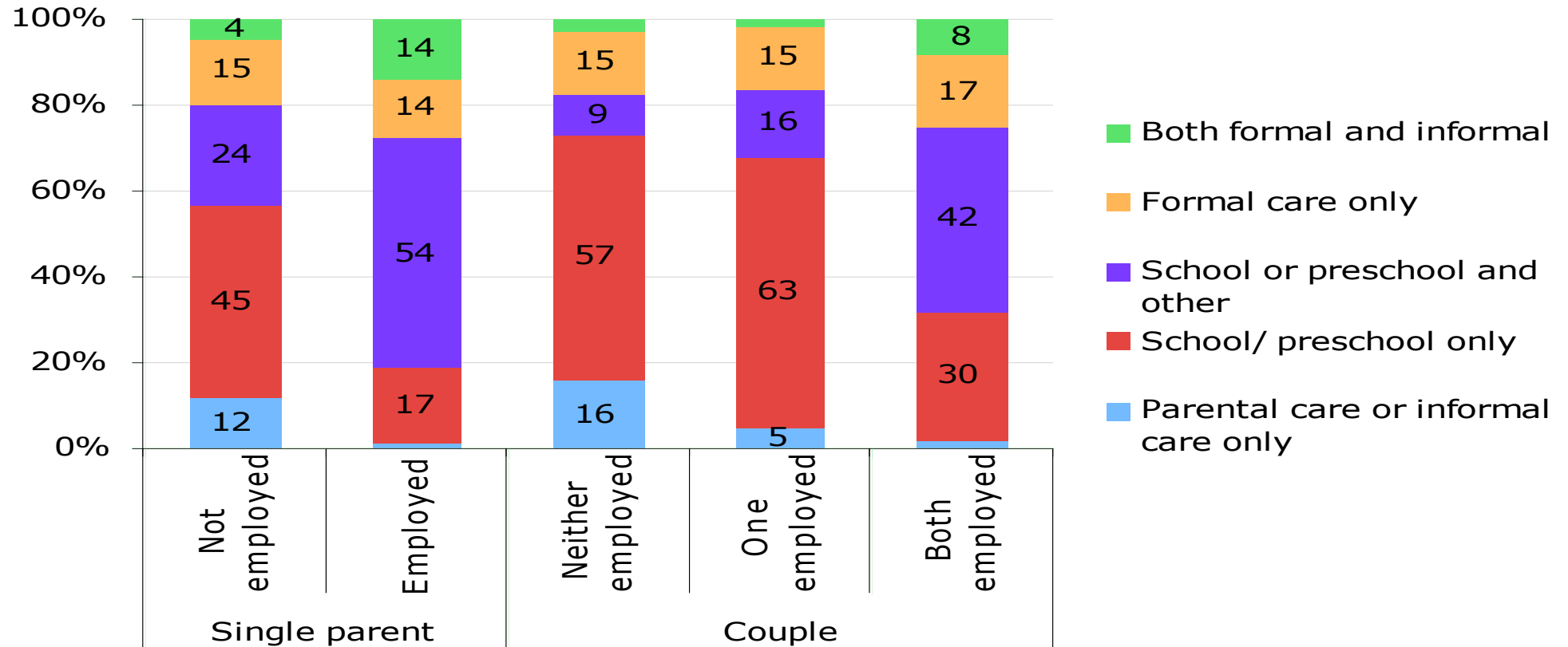
**Child care (and early
education) patterns in
families of 4-5 year olds**

Child care use and early education, 4-5 year olds

Parental care only	No regular child care arrangement.
Informal care only	No school/preschool. Grandparent, other relative, nanny, child's parent living elsewhere, other person, gym leisure or community centre, mobile care unit.
School/preschool only	Attends pre-year 1 in school or preschool, but no regular child care arrangements outside school or preschool.
School/preschool and other care	Attends pre-year 1 school or preschool, and also has regular child care arrangements outside school or preschool.
Formal care only	No school/preschool. Day care centre, family day care, occasional care.
Both formal and informal care	No school/preschool. A combination of formal and informal care.



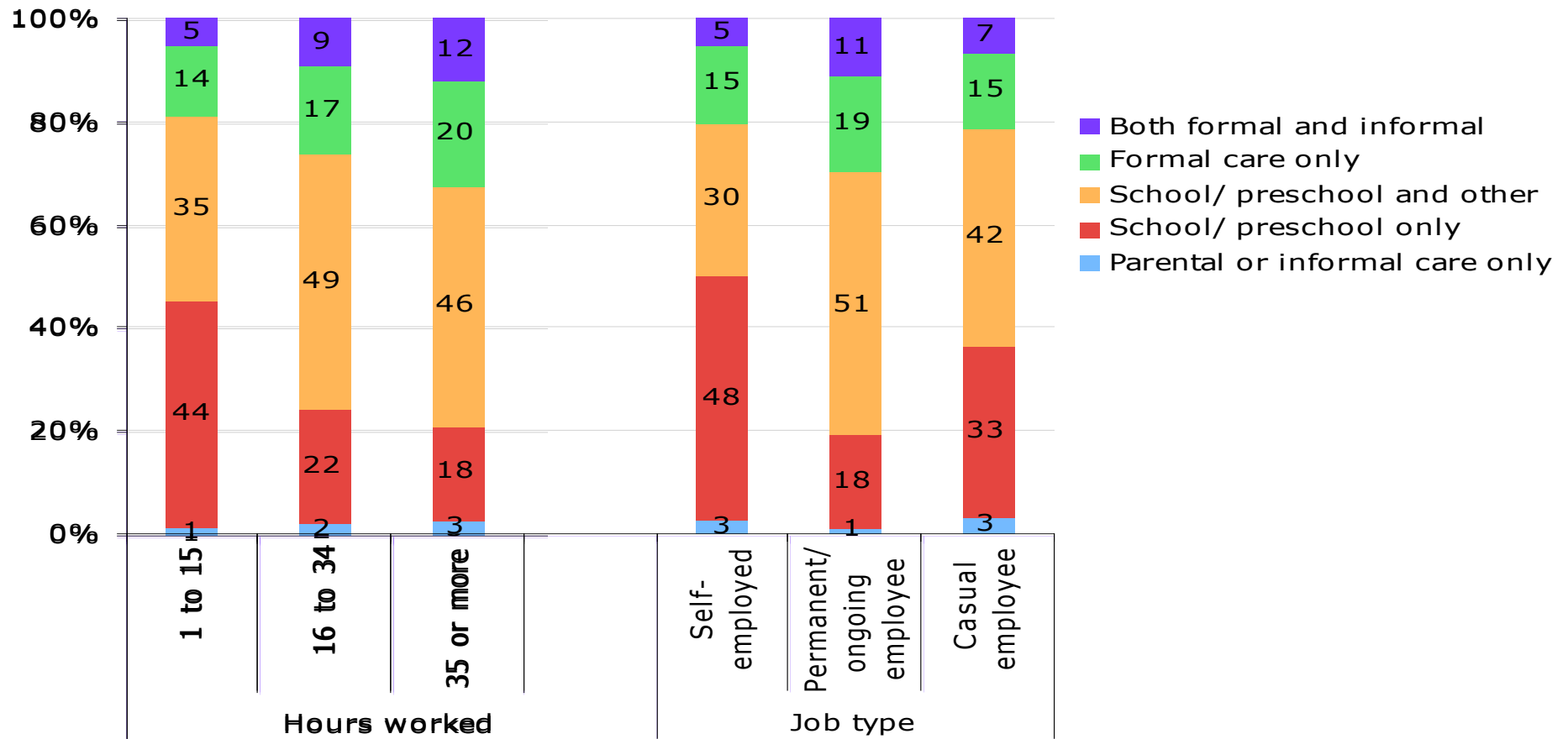
Child care, early education and parental employment, 4-5 year olds



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Child care and job characteristics, working families, 4-5 year olds



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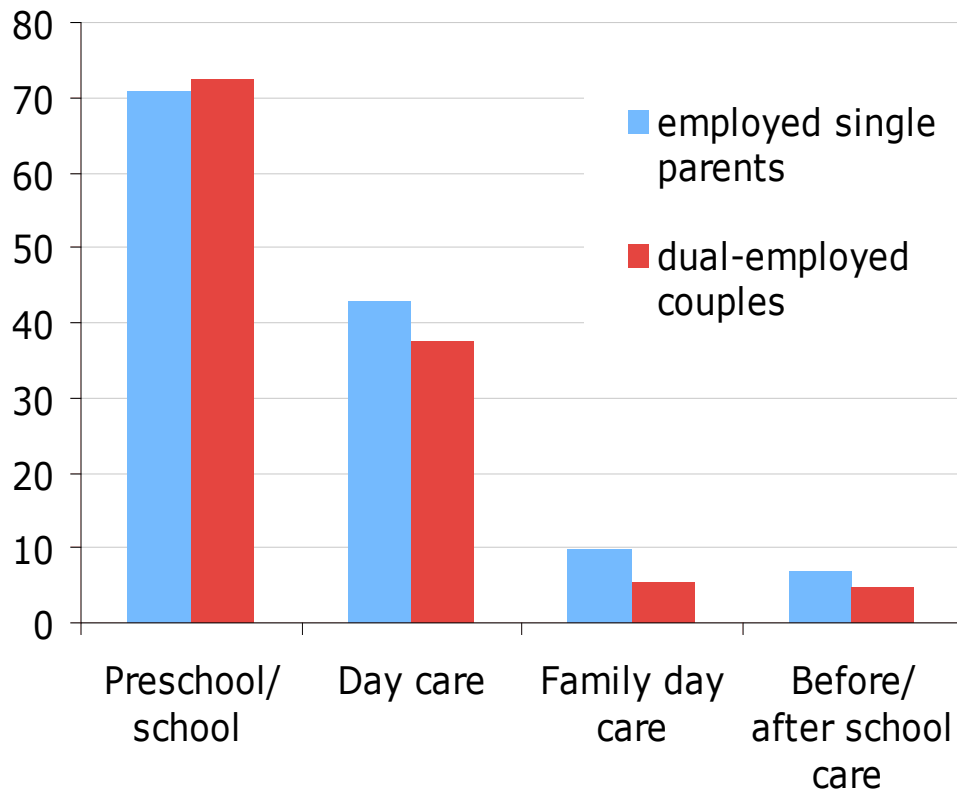
School/ preschool only versus other combinations - other results

- **More likely just school/preschool**
 - ◆ Dual-employed couple
 - ◆ Shorter hours
 - ◆ Self-employed
 - ◆ Work weekends

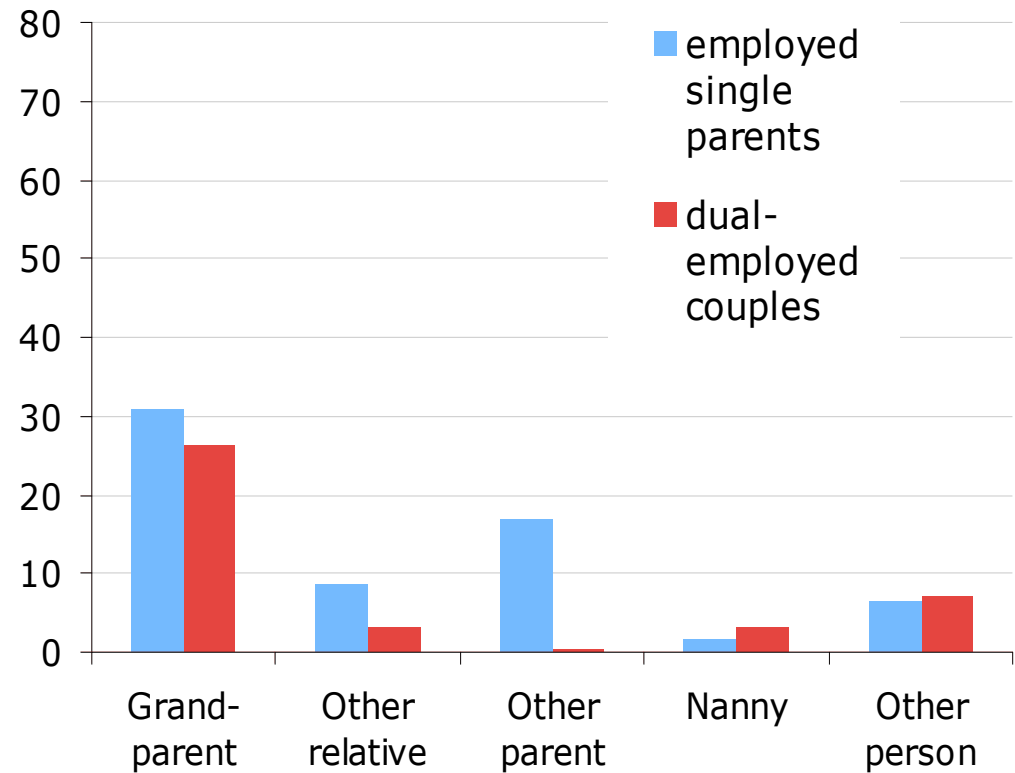


Detailed types of care and family type, working families, 4-5 years

Formal care / early education



Informal care

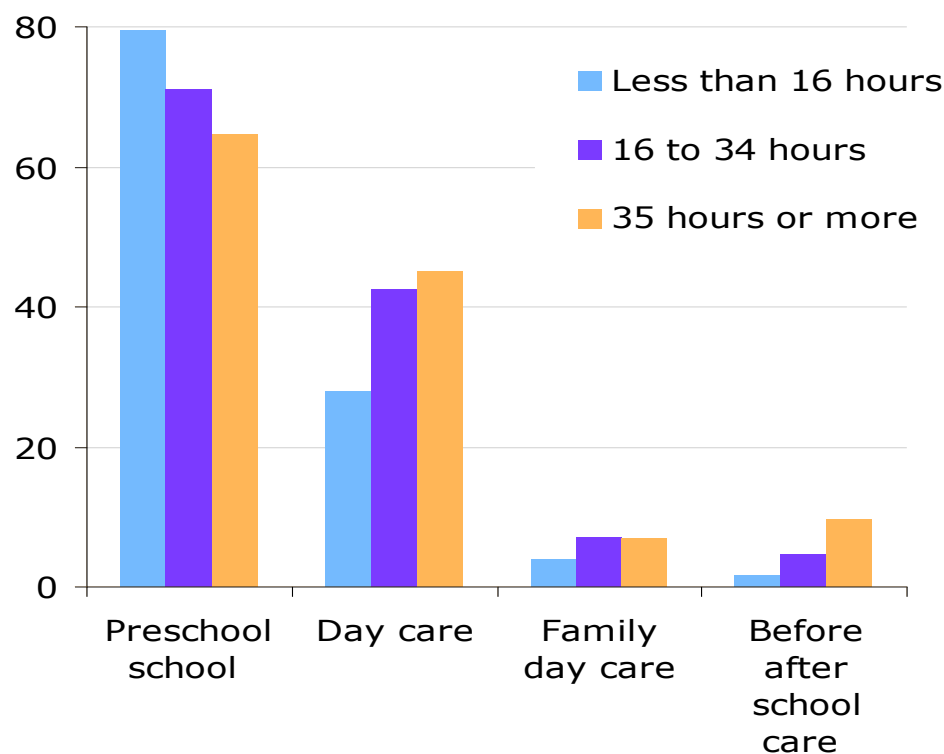


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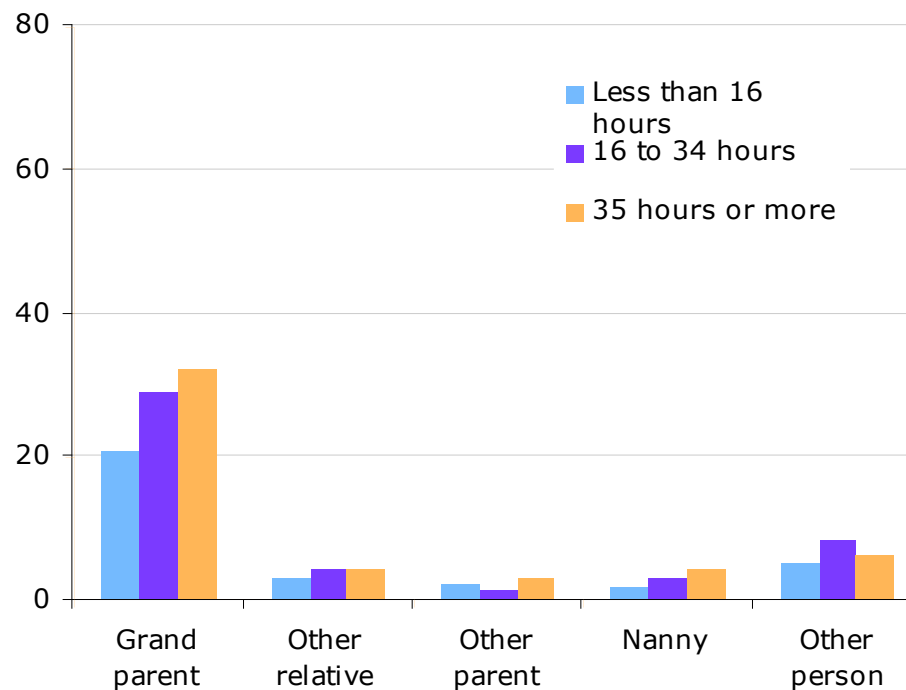
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Detailed types of care and primary carer hours, working families, 4-5 year olds

Formal care and early education



Informal care



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Key findings (infants)

- Working families had higher use of non-parental care than families with a parent not in paid employment
- Non-parental care use was higher for single parent families
- A significant number of working families could manage without non-parental care
 - ◆ especially if the primary carer worked short part-time hours



Key findings (4-5 year olds)

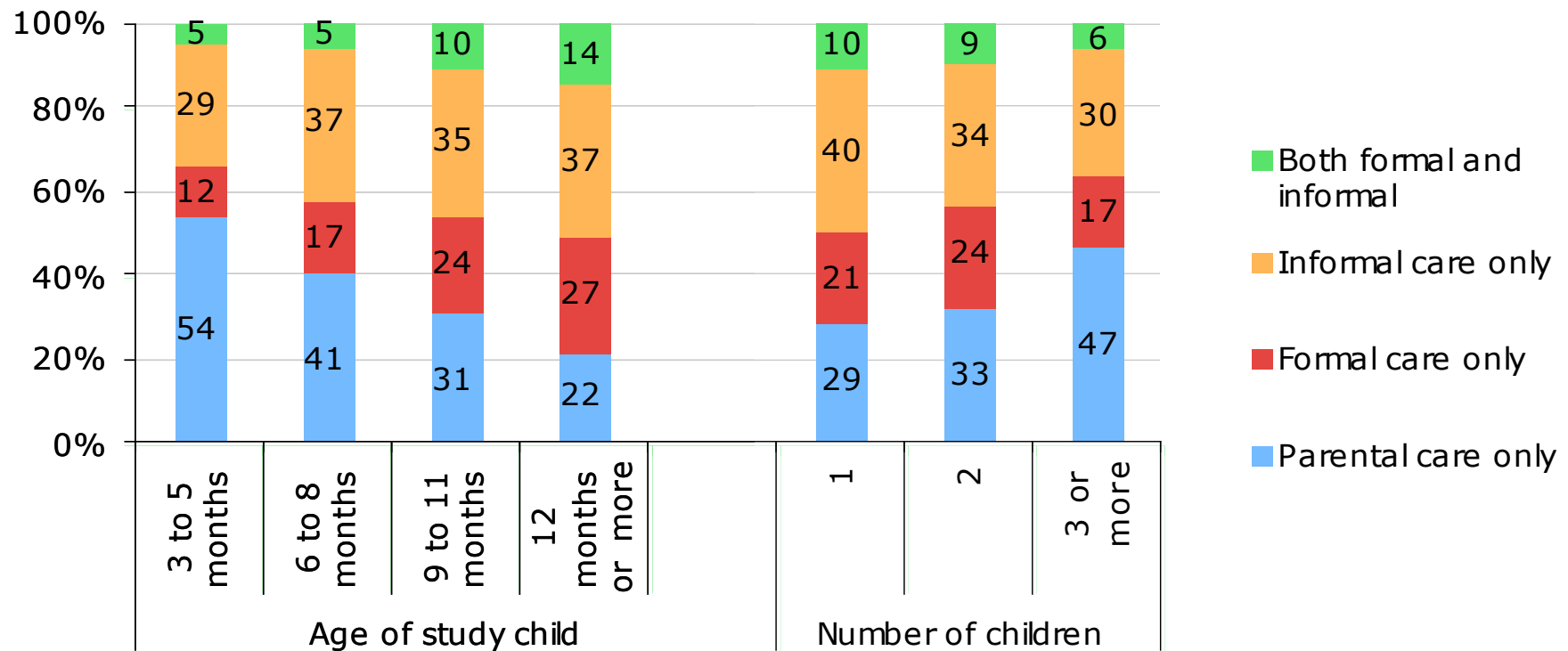
- **Need to also consider early education attendance as well as child care**
- **Very few children in parental care or informal care only**
- **Working families more likely than others to combine child care with early education.**
- **Parental employment characteristics make a difference to these arrangements**



For more information

Baxter, Gray, Alexander, Strazdins & Bittman
(2007) "Mothers and Fathers with young
children: paid employment, caring and
wellbeing", FaCSIA Social Policy Research
Paper No. 30.

Child care and child or family characteristics, working families, infant cohort

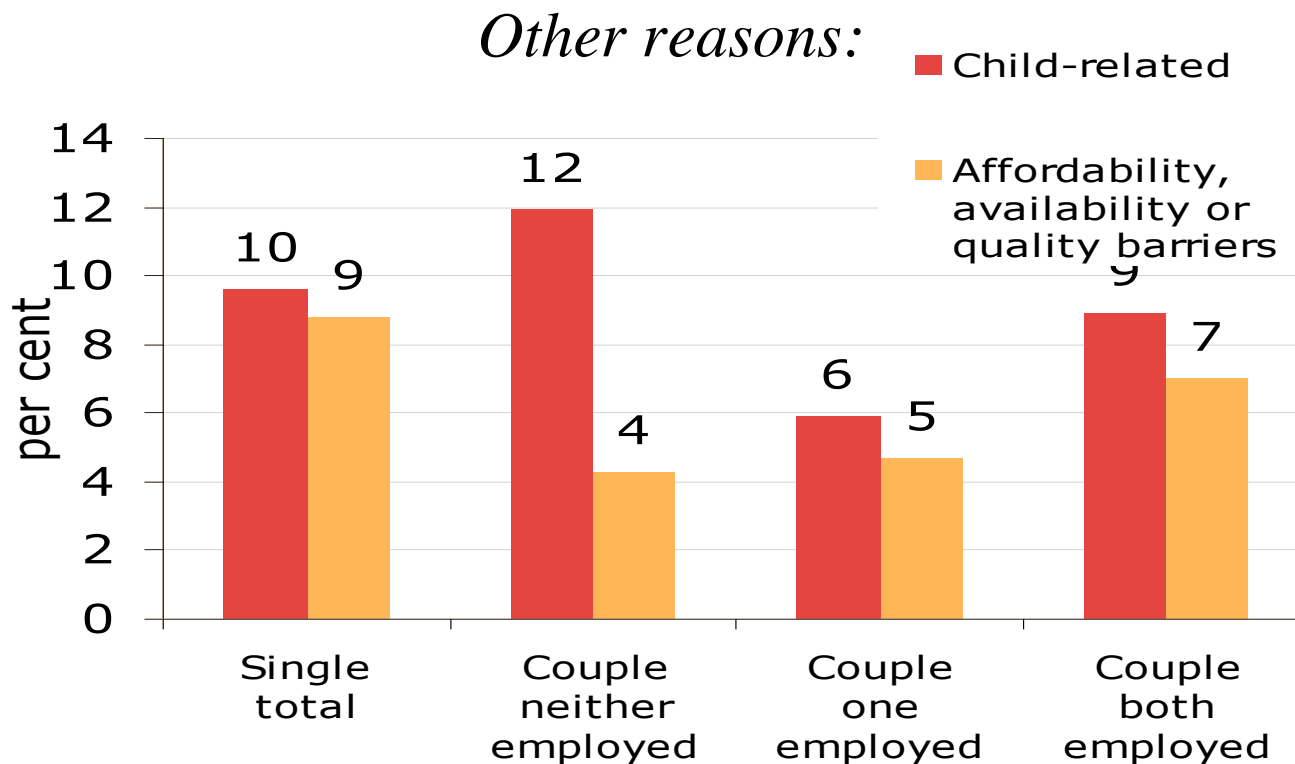


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Main reason not using child care, infants not using care

“No need” the main reason given (>80%)



Child-related: child has disability or special needs, would be unsettled in care, does not suit our culture/ ethnic beliefs, do not want child cared for by strangers, child is too young, other: not good for child

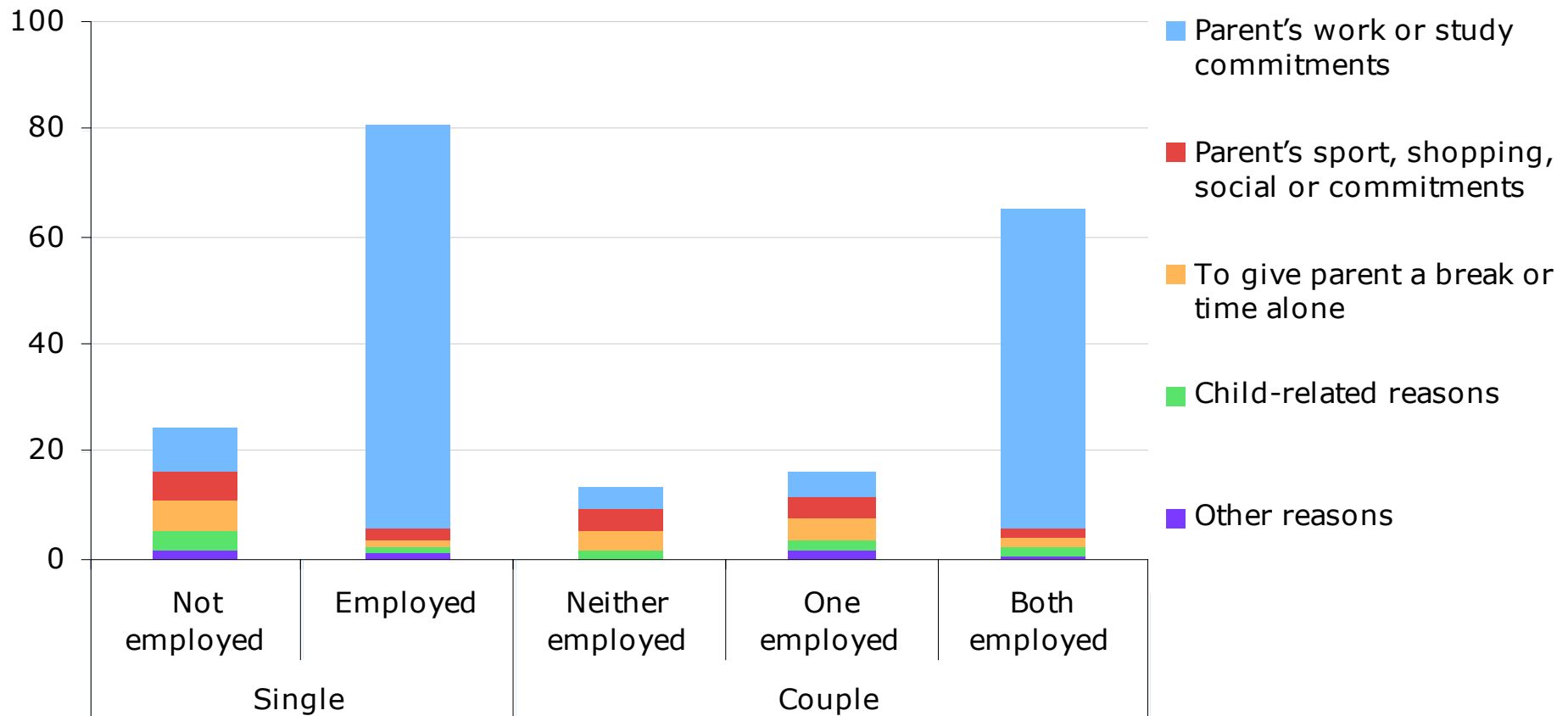
Affordability, availability or quality barriers: problems with getting child care places, not available locally, transport problems, can't afford it: cost too high, concerned with quality of care, other: accessibility or affordability and other: quality/program issues



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Reasons for care, infants using child care



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