



Supporting parents

In this chapter we focus on supporting parents in their role as their child's primary and most important educator when it comes to the themes and topics we have explored in the Chat – from friendships, to growing up and puberty, to emotional wellbeing, to relationships, sexual health and topics that emerged as important to parents such as consent. We will identify how parents are informed about learning at nursery or school, and where we can improve communication. We will identify what would support parents as educators. In the final part of the chapter, we discuss who parents would trust to provide information, support or resources for them.

In our reporting we use the term parent to mean both parents and carers; this includes any family member with direct caring responsibility, as well as foster carers and kinship carers.

This chapter has 3 parts:

- **Home and School: Links and communication**
- **What might help parents as their child's most important educator?**
- **Who would parents trust to provide information, advice, or resources?**

Thank you to all the parents who took part in our small group chats and to those who completed our national survey.

Thanks also to colleagues across the NHS, schools and local authority services, and third sector agencies, that helped us to meet parents and for promoting the national survey.

Contents

Home and school: links and communication	5
What might help parents as their child's most important educator?	29
Who would parents trust to provide information, advice, or resources?	64

A note on our reporting:

The following terms are used when reporting on the results of the Chat national survey:

- **Almost all** means over 90% of parents who responded.
- **Most** means 75% to 90% of parents who responded.
- **A majority** means 50% to 74% of parents who responded.
- **Less than half** means 15% to 49% of parents who responded.
- **Few** means less than 15% of parents who responded.

As part of our analysis of the national survey we have looked at whether having a child with additional support needs, or having an affiliation with a religion, influences parental responses to a significant degree. Statistical significance is assessed using the Chi-square test for independence which is suitable for examining associations between variables. Where significant differences are found we report them as such throughout the chapter.

In this chapter we hear from parents discussing nursery and school-based learning. Before we report it is worth signposting to further information about nursery and school-based learning if this is of interest. Learning in nursery, primary or secondary school will come under the area called RSHP (Relationships, Sexual health and Parenthood) learning. This is part of the Health and Wellbeing Curriculum. Nurseries and schools can go to the national teaching and learning resource for lessons they can use. This is organised by the age of the learner:

- Early Level learning materials are available for nursery and P1 learning [Early Level - RSHP](#)
- First Level learning materials are available for learning in P2, P3 and P4 [First Level - RSHP](#)
- Second Level learning materials are available for learning in P5, P6 and P7 [Second Level - RSHP](#)
- In secondary school there is learning at Third/Fourth level [Third + Fourth Level - RSHP](#) for mainly S1, S2 and S3 pupils and Senior Phase learning material [Senior Phase - RSHP](#) for S4, S5 and S6.

Some learners with additional support needs (ASN) may be learning at levels different from their chronological age. There are materials to support learners with ASN here [Learners with Additional Support Needs \(ASN\) - RSHP](#) and here [Complex ASN - RSHP](#)

Teaching and learning in the denominational sector can draw on the RSHP national resource as well as materials developed and supported by the Scottish Catholic Education Service. More here [Health & Relationships | Scottish Catholic Education Service | SCES](#) and here [Equality & Inclusion Learning and Teaching | Scottish Catholic Education Service | SCES](#)

Home and school: links and communication

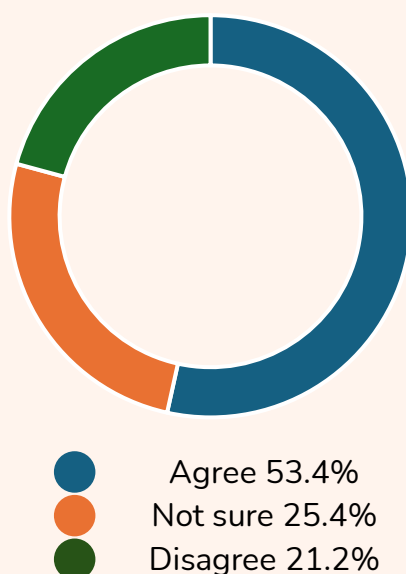
The Chat national survey offered these 7 statements for comment.

1. When it comes to this learning/these topics, my child's nursery or school is good at informing me about my child's learning.
2. I know enough about the learning my child does at school.
3. My child tells me about the learning they do at school.
4. I hear about this learning from other parents.
5. I hear about this learning on social media.
6. I want school to tell me more about this learning.
7. I want to be given the lessons that are being delivered before they happen.

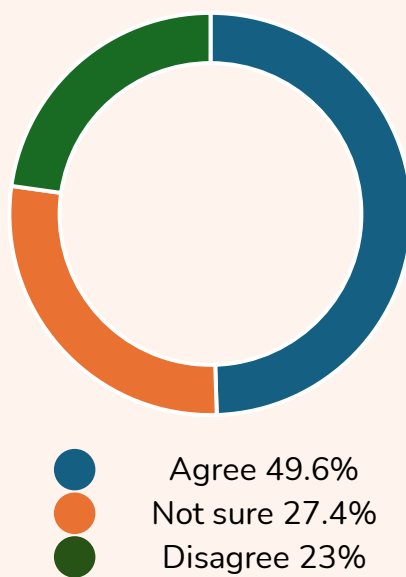
In relation to each statement parents were asked to state agree, not sure or disagree. The graphics that follow present survey findings from parents, organised by the age of their child. We can also learn from the contributions of parents in the small group chats as well as from open box responses in the national survey.

- 1. When it comes to this learning/these topics, my child's nursery or school is good at informing me about my child's learning.**

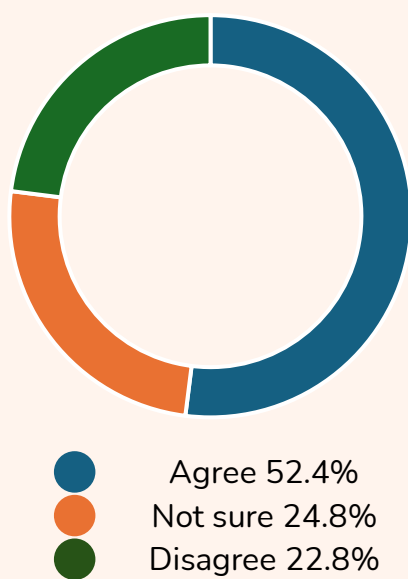
Parents of children aged 3-5 (543 responses)



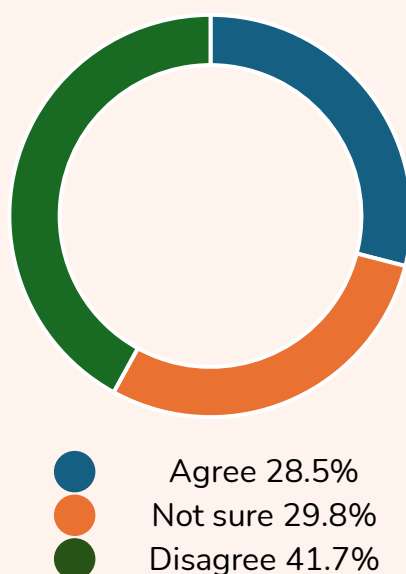
Parents of children aged 6-8 (938 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,009 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,043 responses)



As represented, we can see that for parents of children in the early years and primary school around 1 in 2 parents agree that their child's nursery or school is good at informing them about learning. These parents have reported positive experiences.

I couldn't fault the information I got from the primary school. I think they were very good at communicating and over time we moved away from the 'it was only delivered at a certain term and over one week' and it became just a subject in the school like literacy and numeracy, so I had no complaints. They did really well with it.
(Group chat 30)

My 11-year-old is fascinated by this, and the learning at school has opened up lots of conversations at home, like about bodies and puberty. And I thought with him being at a Catholic school they wouldn't do much, but they are, and the school have been good at telling us what they've been doing.
(Group chat 21)

Excellent communication with information in learning journals. Regular contact and invites into nursery. Provide the curriculum about health and wellbeing topics covered at each age.
(Survey response/parent of 3-5-year-old)

My child's school have been very good at sharing RSHP with us. They had a parent meeting as well as sending our information about it. They then sent out a table detailing what was being taught each week with links to slides and the lesson plans included. They made it very clear that we had the option to opt out of this for our children if we want to. Which we have.

(Survey response/parent of 6–8-year-old)

I asked the school to tell me when they were doing anything, so I knew I could discuss it at home. They shared the slides, you know so you can talk to your child before, in case they get a bit freaked out. So, I did that. But turned out she knew quite a lot already, children talk, some classmates have phones who find out more. These children are googling things. But anyway, if they are learning at school, I think it's good as a parent that we get in just a wee bit earlier and prepare them, so they don't feel embarrassed.

(Group chat 19)

Other parents have asked for improved communication so that they can create opportunities for learning at home, they report that it can be frustrating when what is shared is too general and lacking detail.

There are some schools that do this well. Probably those that are more confident at delivering these types of lessons. Maybe it's the schools that worry they are going to get some kind of pushback that probably avoid putting the message out. I don't think it's about a school wanting to do this badly, I think they are nervous of difficult conversations. But I'd like to see more communicating instantly, like through the school app, just headers. At home you might not want to raise it with your children, but if you know what they're doing you have a chance to bring it up. If you don't know what's going on, you can't raise it and your child probably doesn't know they can. If school give us pointers it will avoid these conversations being difficult.

(Group chat 30)

I was surprised at the parent teacher session, and I got a sheet that had RSHP on it as a subject. The thing is my child is quite quiet, and I don't know how to start the conversation and so I was pleased that they were to have this subject but I'm not sure what they are doing or if she understands. This table was like basic, I'm not being critical, but it just wasn't easy to understand what they are actually teaching. I don't have time to figure it out, I need to learn what they are learning in school.

(Group chat 10)

I think schools vary in how they react to parents asking for information. Mine's has been willing to give me information, but it's really general, which is frustrating because I was asking for specific information about what my child would be receiving, what video etc. so eventually the teacher does go through lessons with me in advance. But it's not ideal that I had to do so much digging here. All they had to do was share at the start of the year.

(Group chat 20)

Information is too general; you have to keep asking for detail. They'll say, 'oh we talk about this stuff around P5, 6 or 7'. But that's too general.

(Group chat 20)

They send out a curriculum map for the term which is great but that doesn't tell me that say this week they are learning about sexual health stuff. Unless my daughter brings it up, I wouldn't know it was happening. If I got an email saying next week, we'll be talking about this and this, so be ready, that would be really helpful. I could get my head around it, talk to my husband, and have a chat about how we bring this up. Just give us pointers to things, like a good book.

(Group chat 10)

For some parents, communication is poor. As the survey results show this is particularly so in the view of parents of young people in secondary school.

Communication about this kind of learning seems to stop with secondary school. That's my experience of having children in mainstream and in special school.

(Group chat 14)

It's hard to untangle what they are hearing from peers and what the school is actually teaching. We can't know the difference unless the school tells us what they are doing.

(Group chat 21)

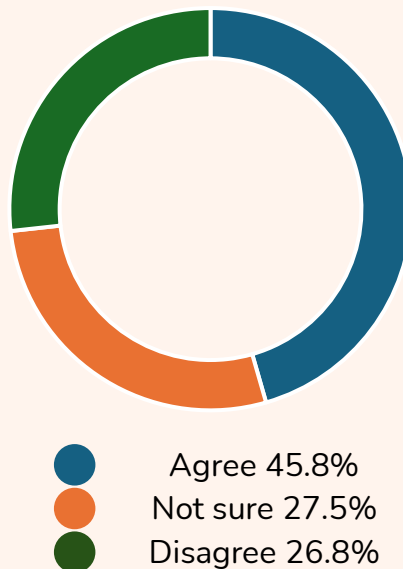
My daughter is at a Catholic school, so I knew it would be different what they taught. But when I asked it was a kind of blase attitude. They're not very forthcoming. Why can't it just be on the school website what they are delivering? So even though I thought my religious beliefs would sit better with my child being at a Catholic school they don't seem to really take our beliefs into account. So, she's still coming home with questions about things I didn't expect.

(Group chat 20)

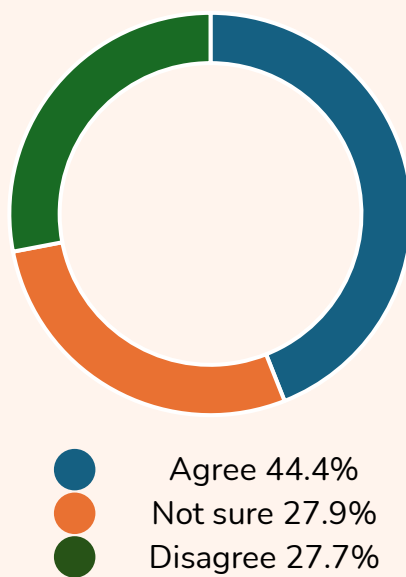
My daughter is in S3, and we got an email just last week, saying your children are about to start some relationship education, and if you want to know more just contact the school. I haven't done that yet. Someone said some schools show parents what they are teaching. But we didn't get an attachment, I guess they expect us to make the first step. I would rather just be able to go through it. It feels like a tick box.
(Group chat 29)

2. I know enough about the learning my child does at school.

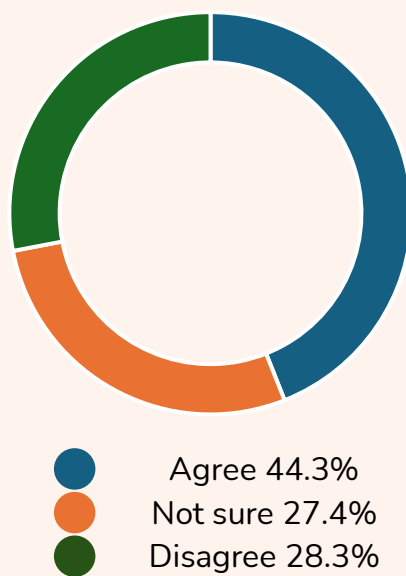
Parents of children aged 3-5 (542 responses)



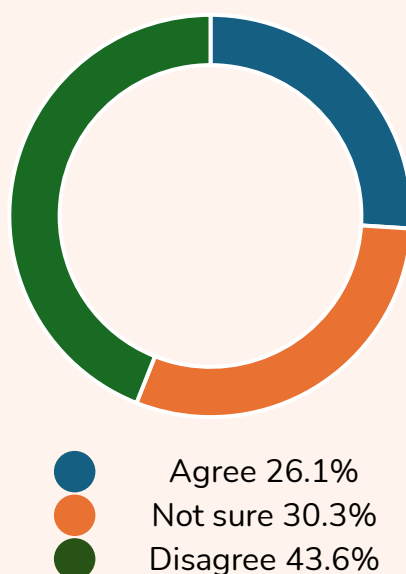
Parents of children aged 6-8 (936 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,009 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,036 responses)



Having heard about levels of satisfaction with school/home communication earlier it is not surprising that less than half of parents responding to the survey feel they know enough about learning at nursery or school. Parents (of children aged 9-12) with a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to disagree that they know enough.

*I don't want to give teachers more work, but I have no idea what happens in school.
It's like a black hole.
(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)*

*Having daughters with autism means we had to do a lot of this at home, with
puberty and menstruation happening, and really needing to be understood. I'm not
aware of anything they are doing at secondary school.
(Group chat 14)*

Parents have spoken about a degree of awareness of the national teaching and learning resource for RSHP learning, but although an open resource, this is not seen as accessible, nor does it provide enough detail about approaches to learning.

The school did send a letter, and it had a link to the rsph.scot website, but I don't think many parents would necessarily go to that, it's quite lengthy.

(Group chat 24)

I know there's a website where you can see what the school is teaching. It's got a lot more information, for different stages. Thing is I don't know how they teach it.

(Group chat 15)

It would be great to know a bit more about the content of lessons on sensitive topics to be able to prepare our child for these. We would love to hear more about all the lovely learning activities that go on in school :)

(Survey response/parent 6–8-year-old)

As this parent identified, there can be different experiences regarding communication from different settings.

You get loads of information from the nursery about what they're doing, they're always asking our thoughts and making changes based on what parents say. But I have been at another nursery, and they were completely different, no communication. It should be embedded in their curriculum, in their policies, but I don't know how difficult that would be. It's hard to understand when two nurseries are both Council, but you get completely different experiences.

(Group chat 3)

Parents have identified why 'knowing enough' would help and what this could look like.

My husband has sat down with the boys and had those conversations. And at the Mosque too. But I'm not sure I have the information I need about what they are teaching at school. You get information afterwards, so we're not aware. We can do this at home, at 10 or 11 with our sons.

(Group chat 20)

We need things like weekly updates, summaries of what our children are learning. A parent session termly that could update on the curriculum. And direct links to the curriculum being taught each term.

(Group chat 5)

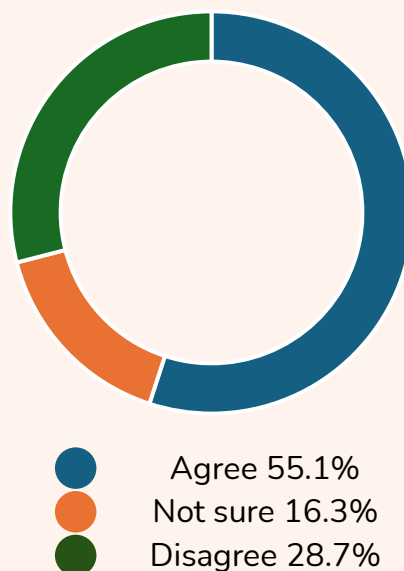
There is a specific issue in terms of how parents can engage with staff delivering RSHP learning in secondary school.

We had our first teacher parent meetings recently, but you don't get to meet the Guidance teacher, so you don't know what's happening in those classes.
(Group chat 18)

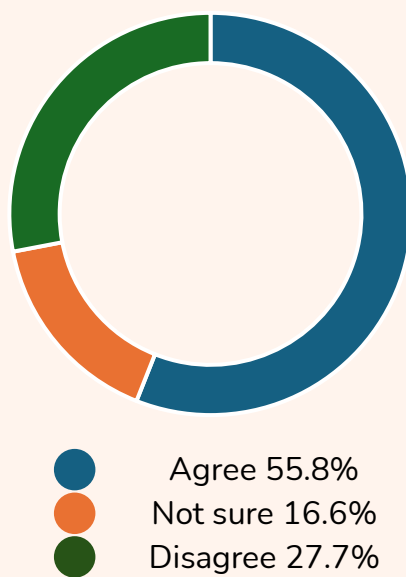
A further series of questions in *theChat* national survey asked parents about how they find out about school-based learning – this could be from their child, from other parents, or from social media. The graphics that follow present survey findings; we can also learn from the contributions of parents in the small group chats as well as from open box responses in the national survey.

3. My child tells me about the learning they do at school.

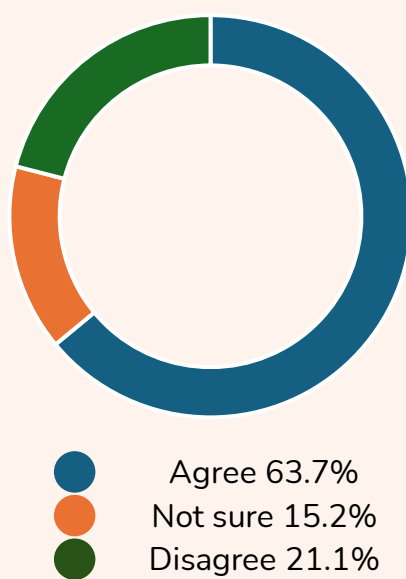
Parents of children aged 3-5 (541 responses)



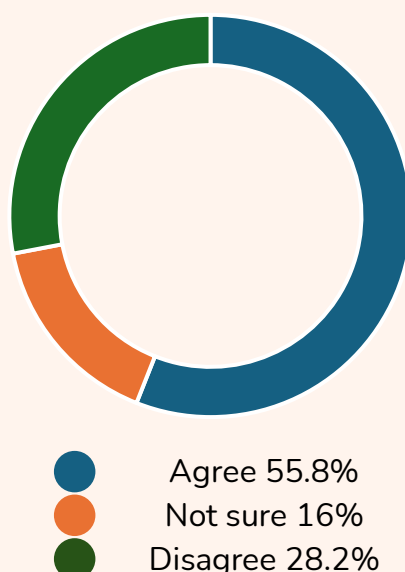
Parents of children aged 6-8 (936 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,008 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1.037 responses)



A *majority* of parents have said that their child tells them about the RSHP learning they do in school. Parents (of children aged 6-8) with a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to agree. However, this is not the case for a significant minority, and parents do not want to rely on only their child's reporting about this learning. When a child has additional support needs this can impact on how the child then talks, or does not, about this learning at school. Parents of children with additional support needs of all ages were significantly more likely to disagree with the statement offered.

I think most young children are notoriously poor at giving a thorough report of their school day, so parents definitely rely on the school sending accurate info. We get a brief line at one point to state what the children are learning, but I'd quite like more detail with these more sensitive topics. To be fair, I do feel that I could ask the school and they would provide more detail, but I'm also aware of not wanting to cause offence re their teaching, to come across as OTT, or for my concerns to be misunderstood/judged.

(Survey response/parent 3-5-year-old)

As an autistic child my son won't come home and talk about his day, about how he's got on with people, that's just not something he can do. He'll come home and talk about facts, or things that interest him, but not emotions or friends. It's hard. At best I can find out how he's doing from the teacher.

(Group chat 31)

I know nothing. My son came home one day and told me the words they have been learning for parts of their body, but that's from him, the only thing. Whereas with literacy and numeracy I would say I probably know quite a lot about what they learn, but when it comes to this stuff, I don't think we are given much information.

(Group chat 13)

We just need more feedback – from the school, not to be relying in whether our kids tell us stuff or not. It would be helpful for us to prepare our kids. If they don't the kids turn up and it's a bit overwhelming for some.

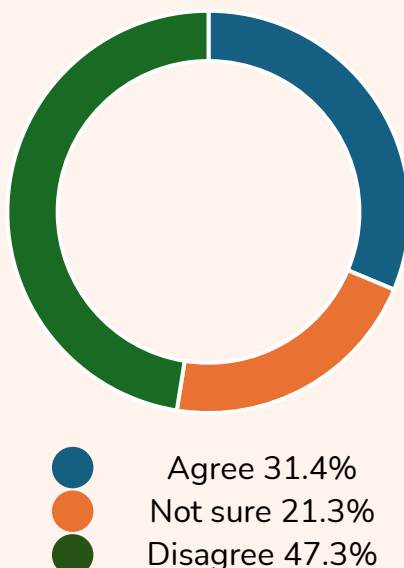
(Group chat 12)

My concern is that when young people get older it might contradict our family values and perspectives, so unless we know what they are hearing in school we can't balance with things at home.

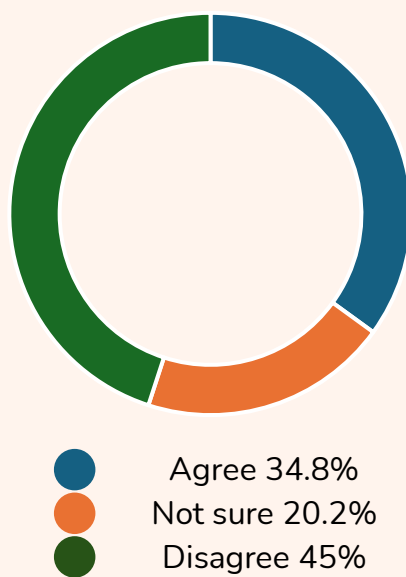
(Group chat 5)

4. I hear about this learning from other parents.

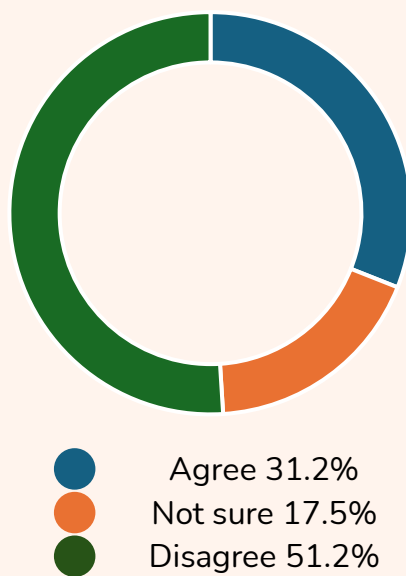
Parents of children aged 3-5 (541 responses)



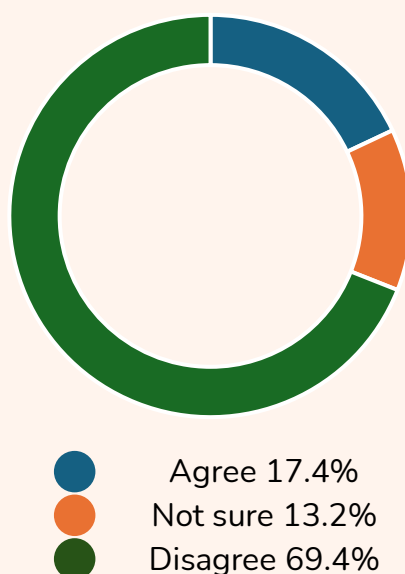
Parents of children aged 6-8 (936 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,005 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1.035 responses)



Less than half of parents of children in the early years or primary school have said that they hear about RSHP learning from other parents. The numbers of parents hearing information from other parents is lower when it comes to parents of older children – fewer than 1 in 5 of parents of 12- to 18-year-olds get information this way. Parents (of children aged 6-8 and those aged 12–18) who have a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to agree that they do hear from other parents.

Where there is a lack of communication from nursery or school, information from other parents may be an important source. However, parents can be concerned about what they hear said about RSHP learning from other parents.

Parents are left to communicate amongst each other in WhatsApp groups etc. My child keeps me informed as best as she can (age 6) but the school needs to do better.

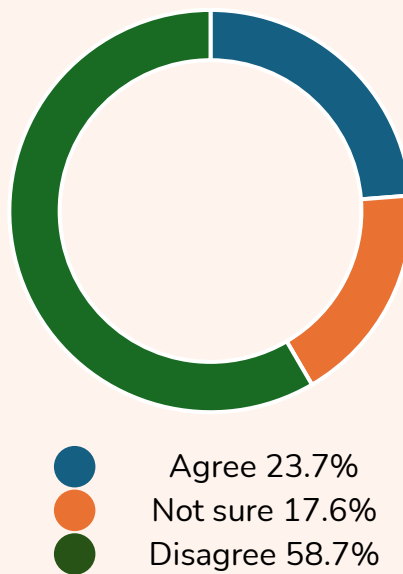
(Survey response/parent of 6–8-year-old)

Honestly, parents would love to know the support they can get from school on this. So many of the people I spoke to about coming here today are like saying they are so uncomfortable around this stuff, how to bring it up. They like school is doing it but there is also chat around this, people are unsure about the school, you know I've heard people say 'oh I've heard that when they do this in school its shocking and

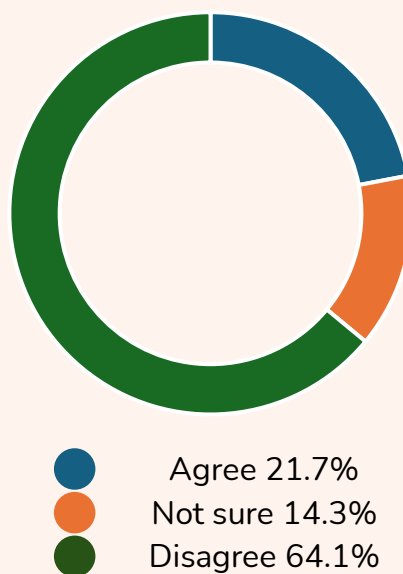
*some of the children get freaked out by it.... does anybody know...' but it's like
hearsay and that's not how it should be.
(Group chat 10)*

5. I hear about this learning on social media.

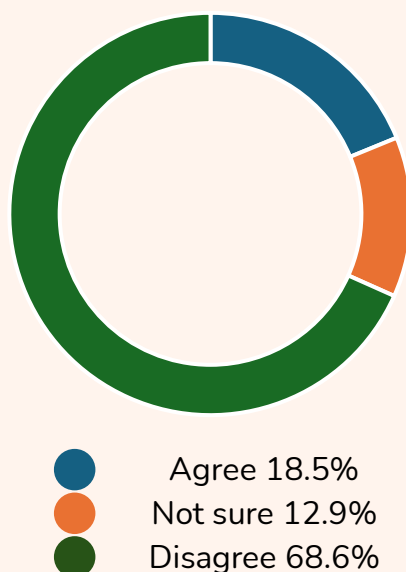
Parents of children aged 3-5 (540 responses)



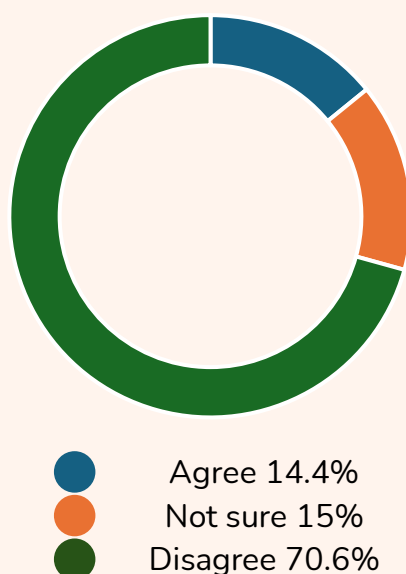
Parents of children aged 6-8 (932 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,006 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,030 responses)



Less than half of parents of children in the early years or primary school – around 1 in 5 - have said that they hear about RSHP learning via social media. This reduces for parents of young people in secondary school where few parents identify this source. Parents of children (of all ages) with a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to agree or to be not sure about getting information via social media.

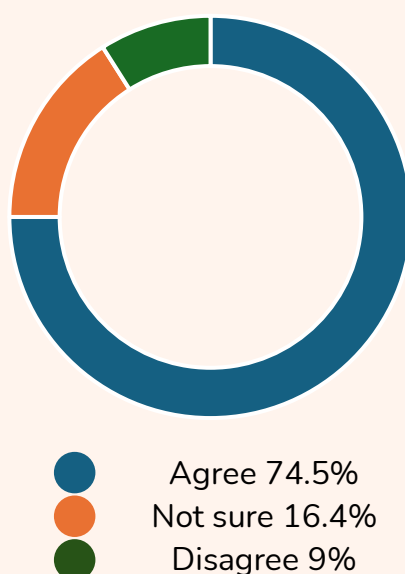
Parents have acknowledged that social media representations of RSHP learning may not be accurate or helpful, but that where there is a gap in home and school communication this can be filled by comment on social media.

It's like social media can add to that hysteria. Someone will take a snippet of the RSHP at school, and put a spotlight on it, share it, and it causes hysteria. People don't look into it themselves. I always encourage folk to look at what's online, what the schools do is there for them to see. And I encourage people, you know if you want the most accurate information about what is being taught, then ask your child's class teacher. Like, go to the sources.
(Group chat 30)

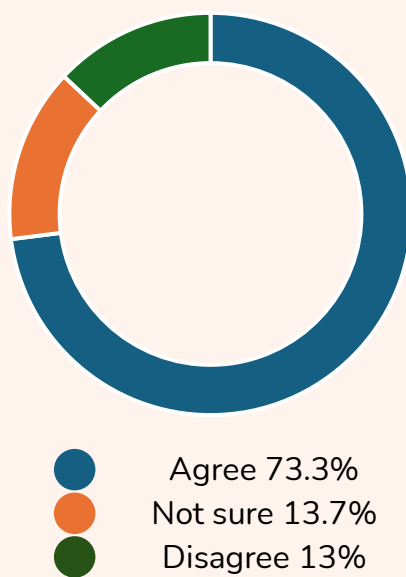
TheChat national survey asked parents what they want in terms of communication or detail about RSHP learning in nursery or school. The graphics that follow present survey findings; we can also learn from the contributions of parents in the small group chats as well as from open box responses in the national survey.

6. I want school to tell me more about this learning.

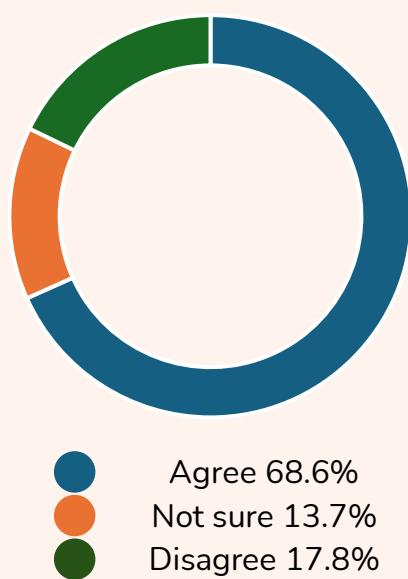
Parents of children aged 3-5 (542 responses)



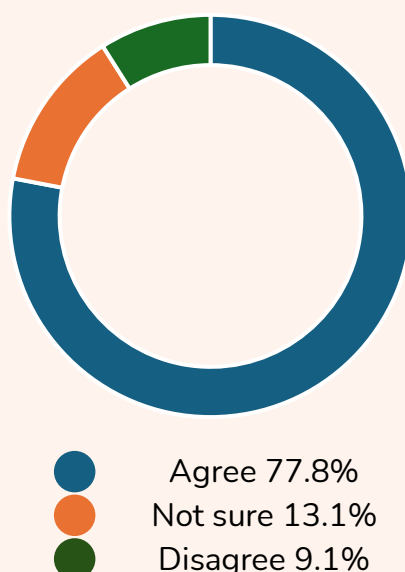
Parents of children aged 6-8 (934 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,008 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,033 responses)



Across small group chats and via the national survey a *majority* of parents of children of nursery and primary school age have expressed a wish that nursery or school tells them more about RSHP learning. Parents (of children aged 9-12) with a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to agree. Most parents of secondary school age children want school to tell them more. Better information, better communication is seen as supportive of home-based learning – and particularly so for children and young people with additional support needs.

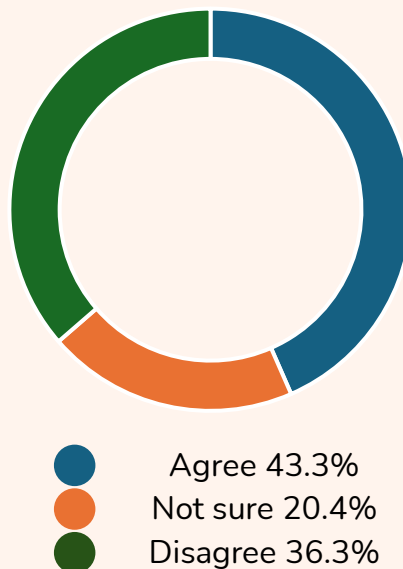
It would help if the school told you what they learn about, like a booklet or something that explains what they learn from primary all through secondary school. At primary they'd come home and say things. But you never get anything like a booklet that explains what they'll get each year – just so that you can back it up at home, discuss it with them. It depends if your child talks or not. And if you don't know it's a hard subject to broach, especially when they are neurodiverse because you have to watch how you say something to them, for them its back or white, nothing in between, so we should be liaising with schools and discussing this. There just isn't anything coming for school about how to have these discussions, my worry is that they'll get to a certain age, and we haven't explained things like boundaries, consent, they are not communicating like other young people.

(Group chat 35)

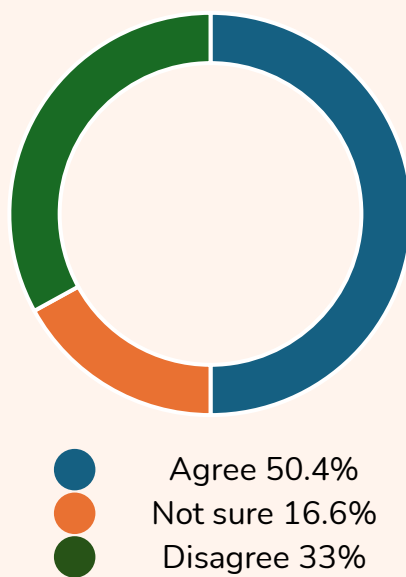
I need a lot of help to talk about this to my daughter. She's on the spectrum and wants everything in like total detail. So, I need to know what to say in detail, to properly explain things.
(Group chat 39)

7. I want to be given the lessons that are being delivered before they happen.

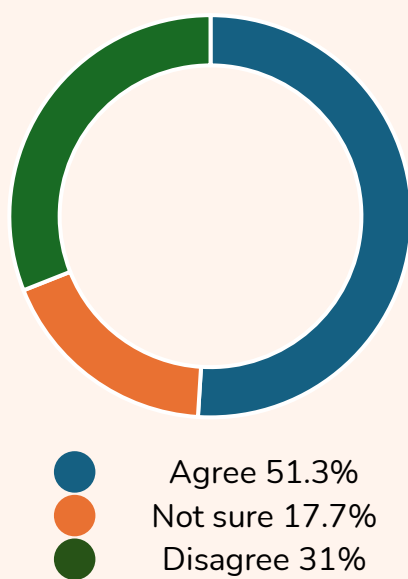
Parents of children aged 3-5 (540 responses)



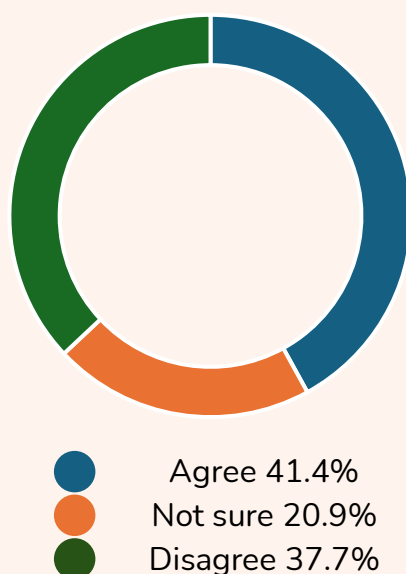
Parents of children aged 6-8 (933 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,006 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,033 responses)



While parents want to have more information about learning at nursery or school (see our earlier discussion) they do not necessarily want to be given actual lessons in advance of delivery. Parents of children in primary school are evenly split between those who agree with the proposal and those who are unsure or disagree. While less than half of parents of older young people want to see materials in advance, at 41.4% this is still a significant number of parents who want to do so. When it comes to parents with a religious affiliation, parents of children of all ages were significantly more likely to agree that they want to be given lessons before they are delivered.

I have long asked for these lessons to be demonstrated to parents before children. This would be welcome.

(Survey response/parent of 3–5-year-old)

I would prefer to see specific topics and lesson plans from the school in advance regarding RSHP content. We were informed that the class was going to be learning about these things, but at present it is at the discretion of the teacher/school just how doggedly the content is going to be followed.

More specific information would be helpful.

(Survey response/parent of 3–5-year-old)

Although I am happy with the general topics – I would be interested in the actual content/details. Much of what is written reflects what we talk about at home - but I do have concerns about whether or not when being taught at school, teachers own opinions might come into this.

(Survey response/parent of 9–12-year-old)

I find it fundamentally wrong that lessons are sometimes not issued to parents due to copyright concerns. This must stop. All lessons should be available on Teams for parental review.

(Survey response/parent of 12–18-year-old)

I found the RSHP website by searching for it online. I think it could be helpful for all parents and carers with school age children to be made aware and directed to this so that we can understand - and where appropriate, question or seek clarification on - what is being taught and support our young people's learning.

(Survey response/parent of 12–18-year-old)

Understand that the lessons for non-denominational schools are available online, not so easy to find resources for Catholic school, arguably they should be the same of course!

(Survey response/parent of 9–11-year-old)

What might help parents as their child's most important educator?

In their small group chats parents talked about the kinds of things that might support them when it comes to talking and learning at home on the broad range of themes and topics being discussed – from friendships, to growing up and puberty, to emotional wellbeing, to relationships, sexual health and topics that emerged as important to parents such as consent. Building from our small group chats, options about what might help were put to parents in the national survey.

TheChat national survey offered these 12 statements for comment.

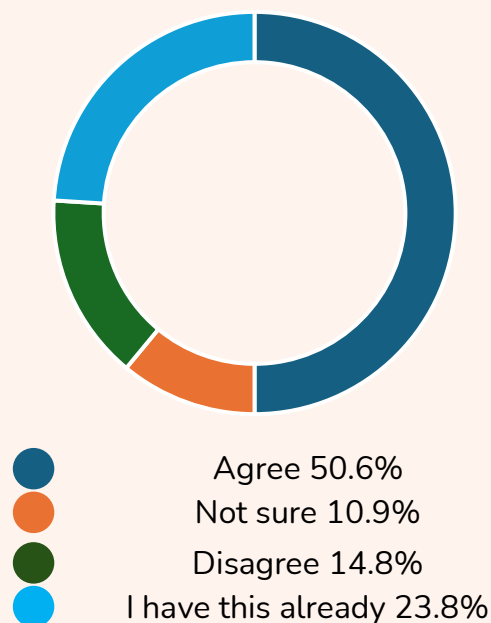
1. I would like advice and examples on what to say, or how to explain things, when my child has a question.
2. I would like some advice and information on what a child should be learning about, and by what age - helping me to understand what age is appropriate.
3. I would like information on what to do if a situation or something worrying comes up with my child.
4. I would like help so I understand how I can share a worry about my child with nursery or school.
5. I would like advice on books I can give or read with my child.
6. I would like advice on online information I can read or share with my child.
7. I would like to have a trusted person who I can approach with questions by phone.
8. I would like to have a trusted person who I can approach with questions by email or messaging.
9. I would like the opportunity to meet and talk with other parents.
10. I would like a parent online/web site that gives me information and ideas about supporting my child.
11. I would like learning for me that helps me understand the online/digital world and how to protect my child.
12. I would like nursery/school staff to be better trained to understand how additional support needs affect relationships and learning about relationships and sexual health.

As with the statements in the earlier section of this chapter, parents were asked to state agree, not sure or disagree. A further option for parents in this set of survey questions was *I have this already*. It is helpful to reflect on these results as they indicate the degree to which parents are already resourced to support their child.

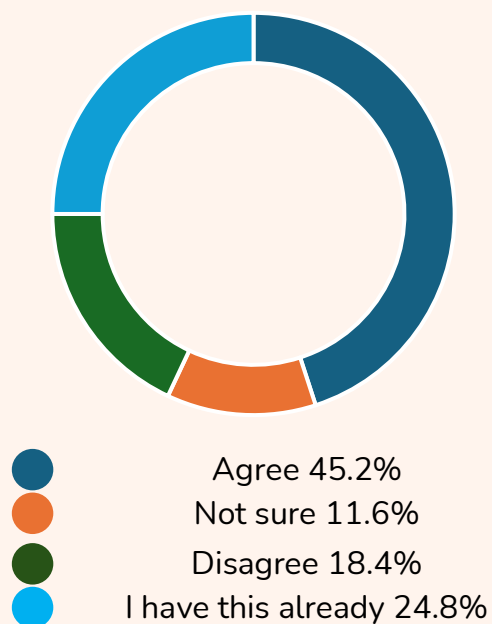
The graphics that follow present survey findings from parents, organised by the age of their child. We can also learn from the contributions of parents in the small group chats as well as from open box responses in the national survey.

1. I would like advice and examples on what to say, or how to explain things, when my child has a question.

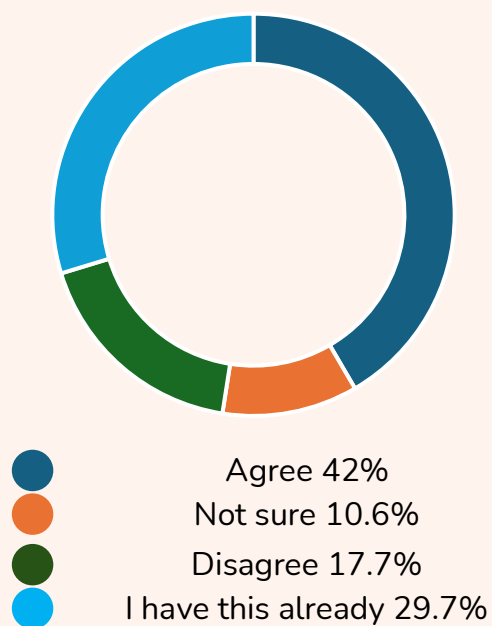
Parents of children aged 3-5 (542 responses)



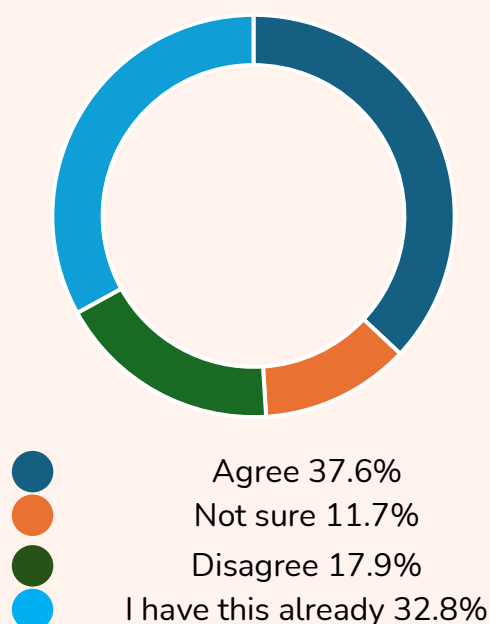
Parents of children aged 6-8 (940 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,004 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,045 responses)



Looking across responses, while half of parents of children in the early years have responded positively to the suggestion that they are given advice and examples on what to say, or how to explain things following a child's question, less than half of parents of other ages have agreed.

There is some variation of response from our groups of interest. Parents of 9-12 and 12-18 years old who have an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree. Parents (of children aged 6-8 or 9-12 years old) with a religious affiliation were significantly less likely to agree with the suggestion, and more likely to report they have this already.

Parents that would like this support talked about being worried about saying 'the wrong thing' and that having a 'script' would support discussion,

I'd like the words to say, like how to explain things. Without messing it up. And how to explain things to their age.

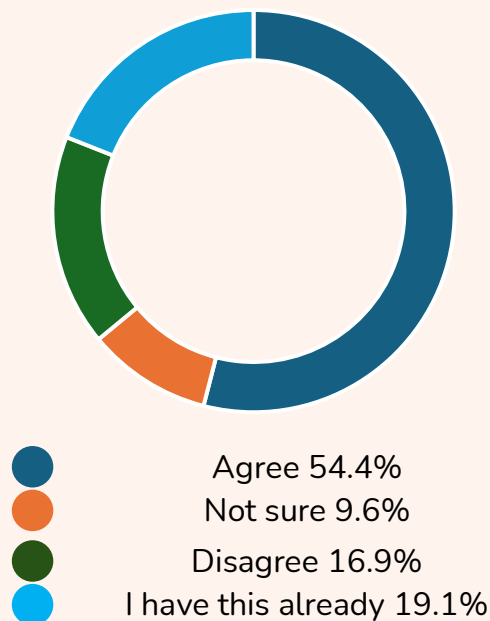
(Group chat 26)

It's like I know the answer when he asks a question, but I don't know the words to use to answer him, at the age he's at.

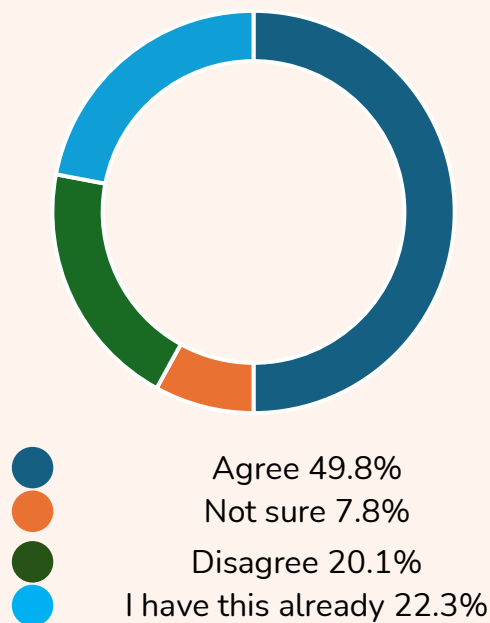
(Group chat 26)

2. I would like some advice and information on what a child should be learning about, and by what age - helping me to understand what age is appropriate.

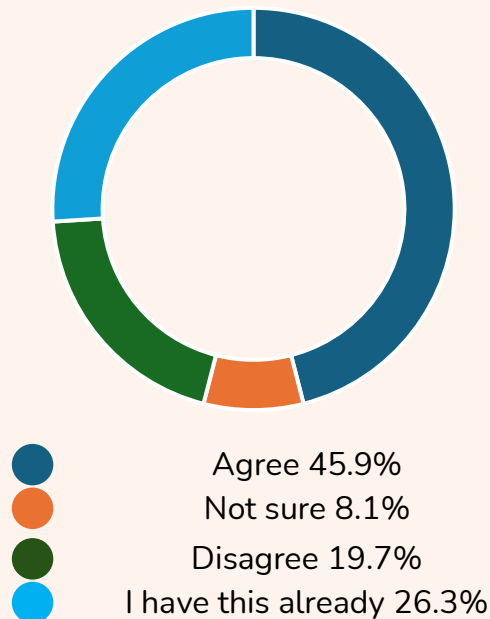
Parents of children aged 3-5 (539 responses)



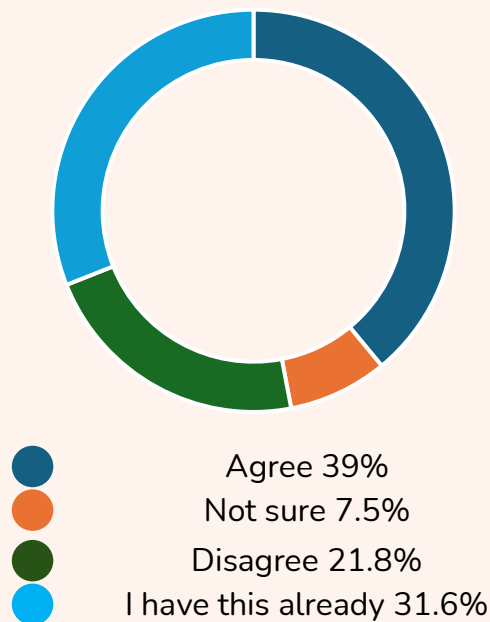
Parents of children aged 6-8 (940 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,002 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,035 responses)



Approximately 1 in 2 parents of early years and primary school age children would like such support; parents of older children less so and they are also more likely to report that they *have this already*.

There is some variation of response from our groups of interest. Parents (of children of nursery and primary school age) with a religious affiliation were significantly less

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likely to agree with the suggestion, while more report they have this already. Parents of children aged 9-12 years old who have an additional support need, were significantly more likely to agree.

From our group chats we have learned that parents are concerned about age appropriateness in terms of both learning at home and learning at school.

I would like some guidance from the school on what I should be teaching my child about these things. I worry you might be teaching them things they are emotionally too young for. Or that I'm not teaching them things they should know by a certain age.

(Group chat 36)

I'd like to have ages when they should be learning about or knowing stuff. Like the right age for me to be saying stuff to him. I know I think I know when he's ready but is there a time that's best for learning about these things. Some help on that would be good.

(Group chat 2)

I will explain that the man gives the woman a seed, but then it's the further questions. Like can I give you a seed? I'm not sure about managing that. If I could have a script, for a 5-year-old, an 8-year-old.... That's what we need.

(Group chat 5)

A script to help respond to questions would be helpful. This would help us feel we can know how far to go, to keep conversations focused. So, like the kind of language that is helpful and inclusive and will support their learning. One of the hardest things talking about this kind of stuff is just checking your words as you go, you don't want to shut things down, but you can feel you are missing key things to say.

(Group chat 7)

Are there resources out there that would help us think about the right level to be supporting our children's learning?

(Group chat 7)

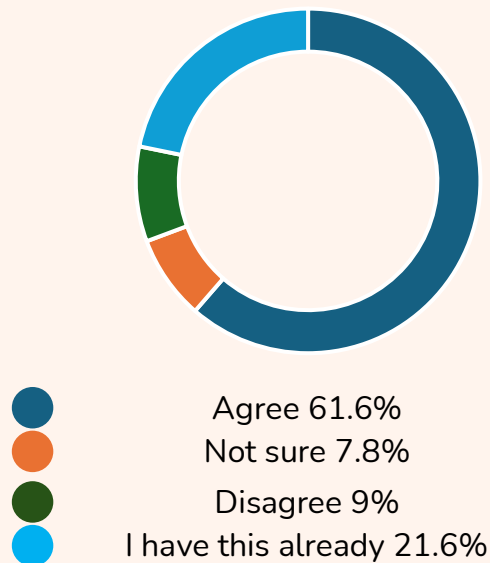
I'd like to know what they should know by what age, like a checklist. You know when the health visitor comes when they are little there are things that they should be able to do that are ticked off. Well, could we know what they are supposed to know and do by when on this kind of area?

(Group chat 13)

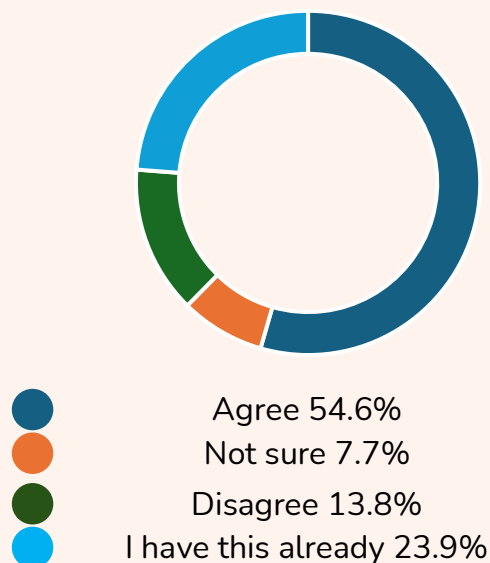
The topic of what is age-appropriate and when learning might be right for individual children is discussed in more detail in [Spotlight Issue: What is age appropriate?](#)

3. I would like information on what to do if a situation or something worrying comes up with my child.

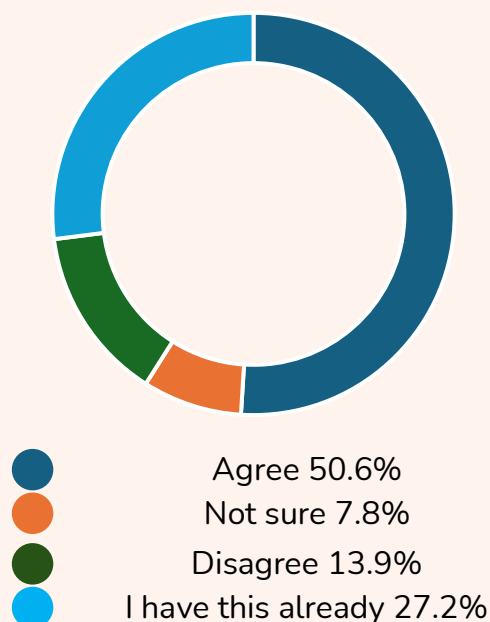
Parents of children aged 3-5 (536 responses)



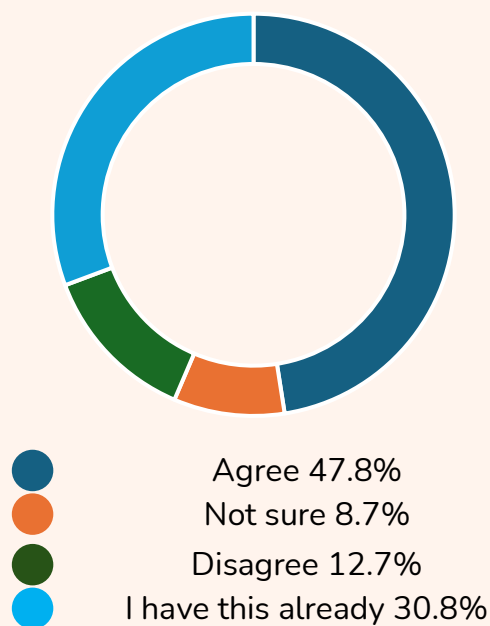
Parents of children aged 6-8 (936 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (1,001 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,030 responses)



A *majority* of parents of children of nursery or primary school age agree that they would like information on what to do if a situation or something worrying comes up with their child. This is lower for parents of older young people- although still 1 in 2 - who are also more likely to respond that they have this already.

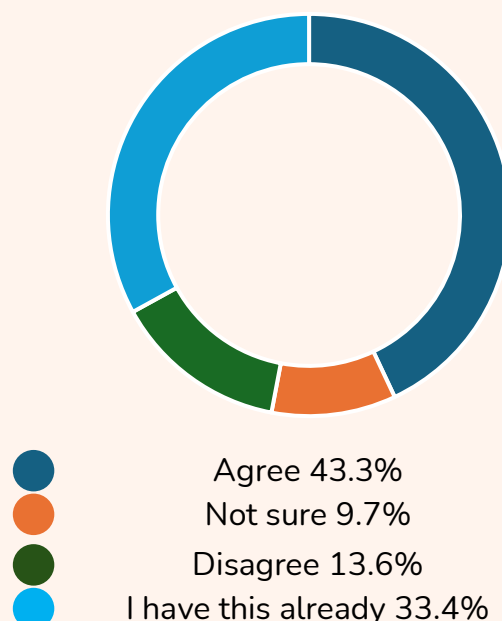
There is some variation of response from our groups of interest. Parents (of children aged 6-8 years old) with a religious affiliation were significantly less likely to agree with the suggestion, while more report they have this already. Parents of children aged 9-12 years old who have an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree.

This parent would like (and use support) but is unsure about what school can or would want to offer.

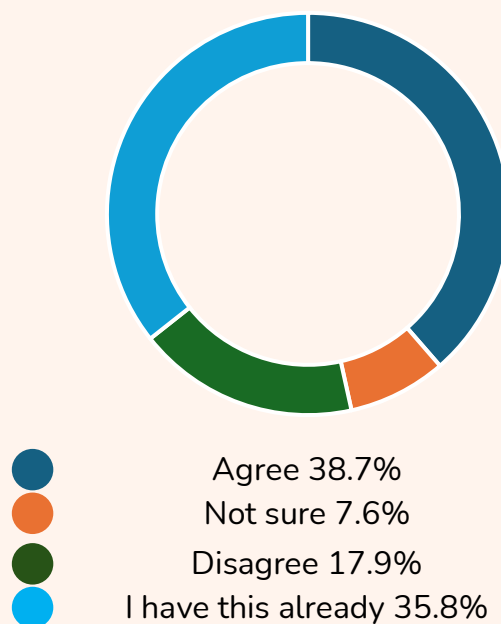
Maybe things like 'what to do if you see things happening', like what to do if you see online bullying on your child's phone. Or if you see inappropriate content, what to do. Like how as a parent we could or should share things with the school. You don't want to be a time waster, but I don't know what school can help with, what they can't help with.
(Group chat 18)

4. I would like help so I understand how I can share a worry about my child with nursery or school.

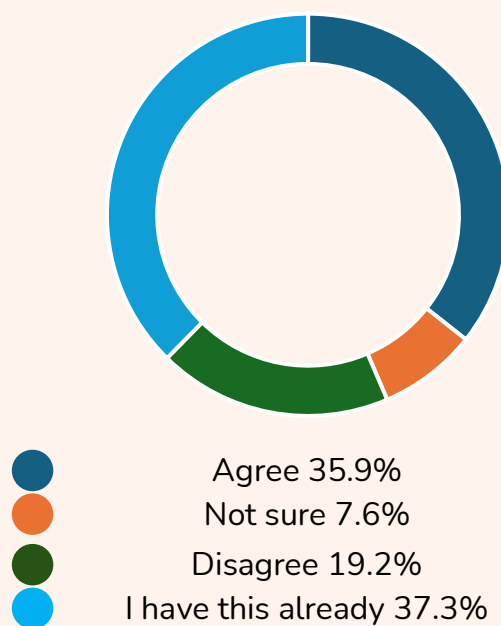
Parents of children aged 3-5 (536 responses)



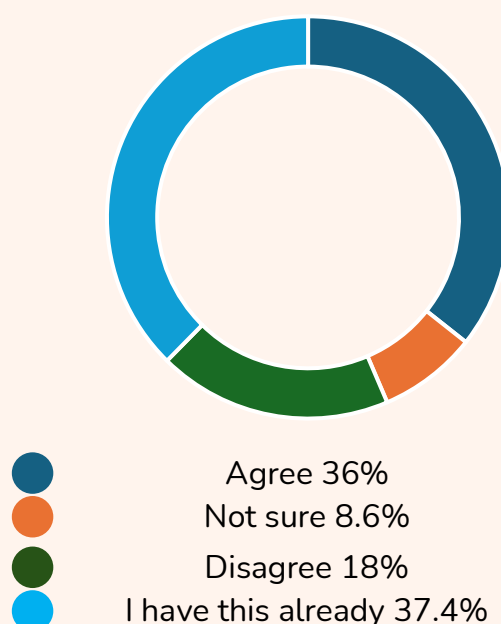
Parents of children aged 6-8 (935 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (995 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1.027responses)



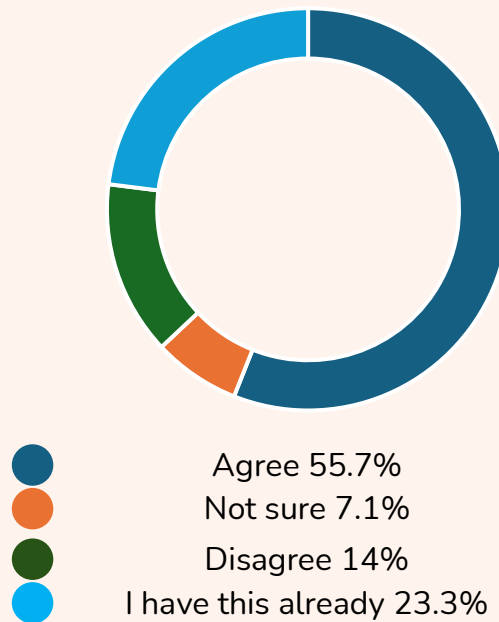
Developing the earlier suggestion about general information on what to do if a situation or something worrying comes up with their child, this statement asked parents to consider whether they needed to better understand how to share a worry with nursery or school. Less than half of parents would like help to understand this. Around 1 in 3 parents reported they have this already. This parent reminds us that sharing worries or asking for help must be built on respect and trust.

I feel my child's school depute to have a condescending mannerism when dealing with parents' enquiries, making it very off putting to approach. I would be reluctant to share confidential information with them in regard to my child should I feel this was necessary.

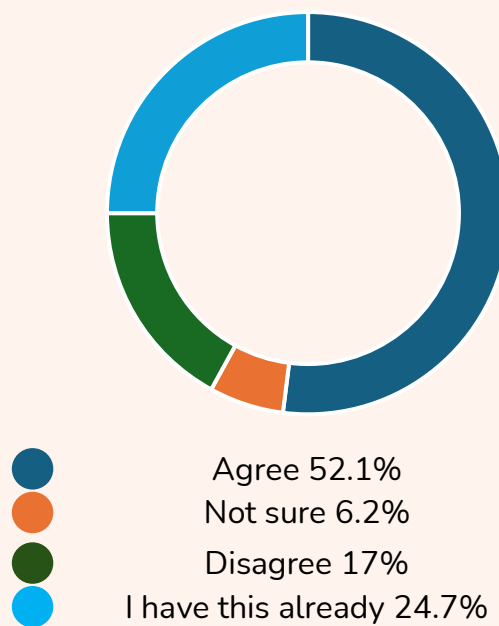
(Survey response/parent of 3-5-year-old)

5. I would like advice on books I can give or read with my child.

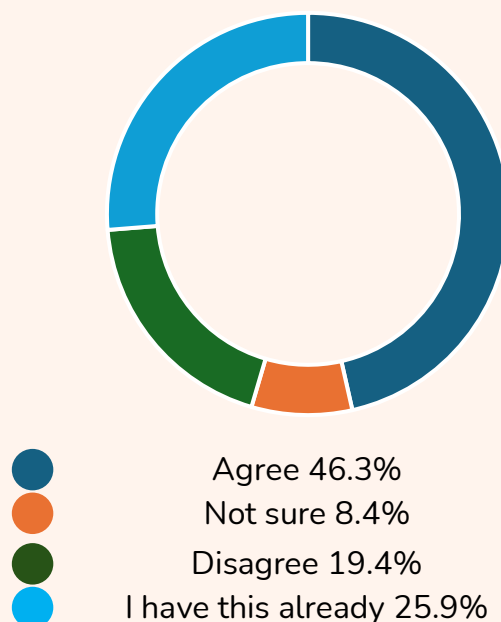
Parents of children aged 3-5 (537 responses)



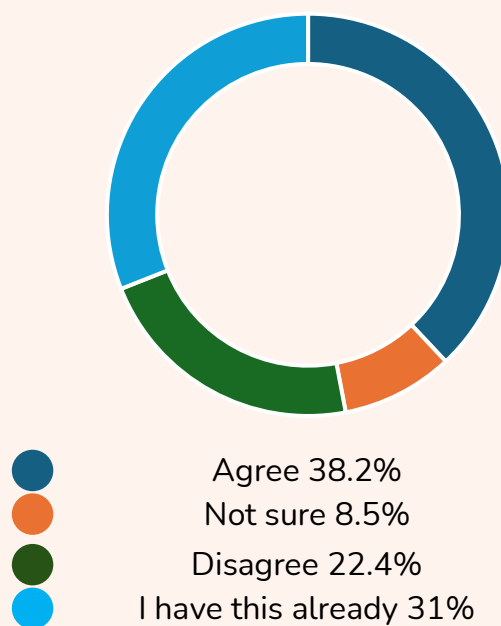
Parents of children aged 6-8 (931 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (997 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,027 responses)



Across our small group chats there were many conversations about the value of books for children and young people of all ages. This is reflected in the approximately 1 in 4 parents who have such a resource already. The younger the child, the more likely parents are to report that they would like advice on books to give or read with their child.

*Books help you navigate situations.
(Group chat 4)*

There is some variation of response from our groups of interest. Parents (of children aged 6-8 years old) with a religious affiliation were significantly less likely to agree with the suggestion, while more report they have this already. Parents of children aged 9-12 years old with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree.

Parents have suggested that there is a role for nursery or school to provide a RSHP learning themed book for reading at home.

*See if I had a book I could sit and read with him, like sent home, because we like to read together, then I could say like read the book first, then sit with him and read. And then if he doesn't want to ask questions the first time that's fine. Then if he does ask, we can go back to the book. And that gives me an idea about what I'm going to say. Just a simple book. And then he's not just learning at school.
(Group chat 38)*

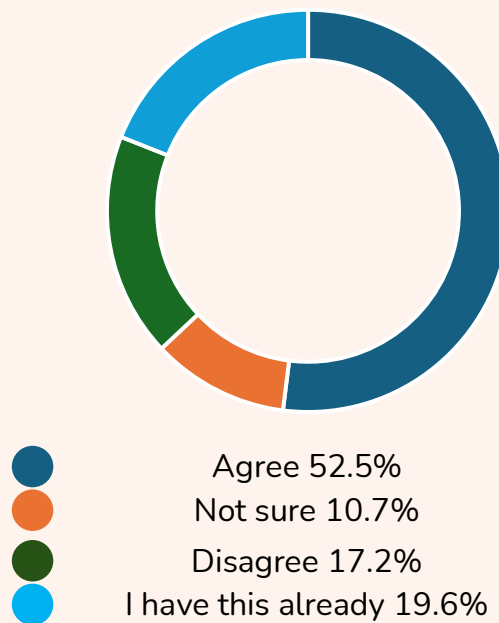
*I started off with books, gentle stuff at the start about personal hygiene, then progressing to spots and bras and periods. She would look through things herself. And of course, that thing about talking in the car, a good place to chat, so I would bring things up, prompt it a wee bit. It's like you can use a book as a prompt, leave it with them, then check in with what they know or what questions they have.
(Group chat 19)*

*I need information, not just a basic letter. You know we get a reading book home every Friday, why don't we get a book that we could go through with them and use that to chat at home.
(Group chat 24)*

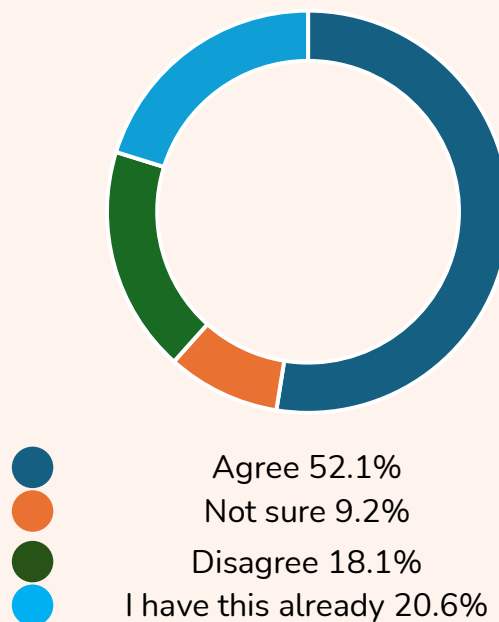
*Books for kids are really helpful. Now, I do read what I buy properly, because I still have to be happy with what it says, but you can get good things that explains things, basics.
(Group chat 9)*

6. I would like advice on online information I can read or share with my child.

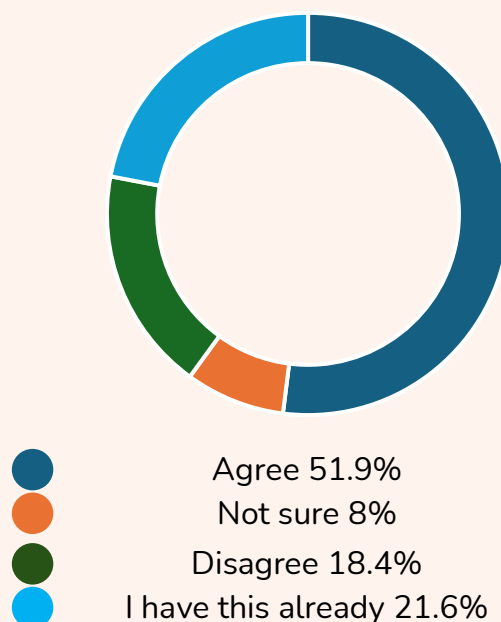
Parents of children aged 3-5 (535 responses)



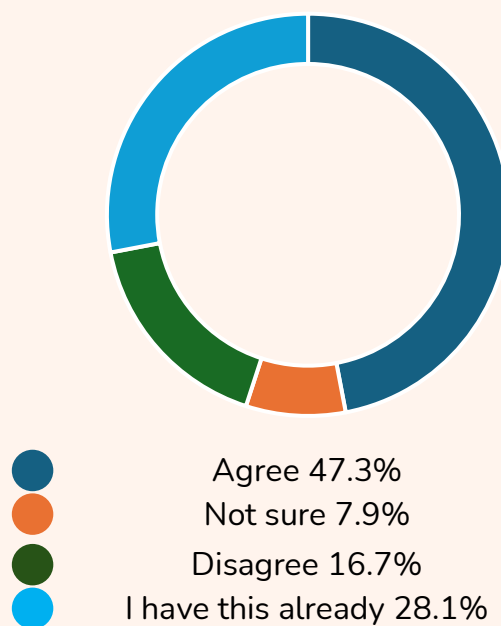
Parents of children aged 6-8 (935 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (998 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,025 responses)



As well as books, parents were asked whether they would like access to online information to read or share with their child. Around 1 in 2 parents looking across all ages would find this supportive. Where this connects with school-based learning that would be helpful.

I think if we just had some stuff online, like wee videos to watch with them, explaining things, the biology. So that when you're having the chat you can show them pictures.

(Group chat 26)

It would be good to have things to show them, how things work, like what to do when you have your period. Some kids won't have that at home. Maybe have teenagers online explaining things, so kids look up to them.

(Group chat 26)

I'd like to be able to do more in line with what schools are doing, so give us information. What are they teaching? Leaflets or guides so we can follow up at home. We could have links to videos or websites they are using, so we can look for ourselves.

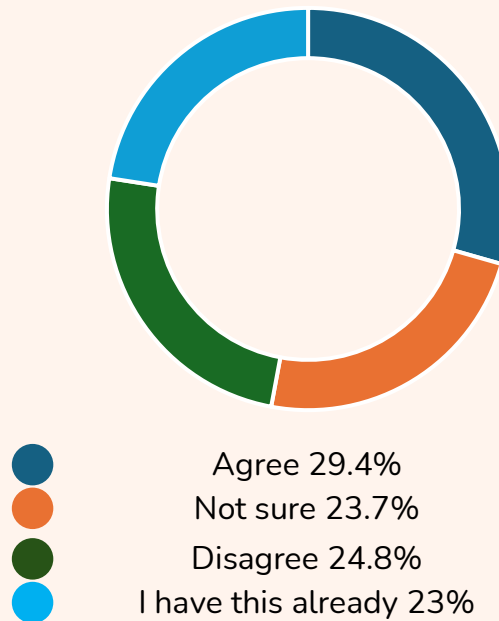
(Group chat 15)

There is some variation of response from our groups of interest. Parents (of children aged 6-8 and 9-12 years old) with a religious affiliation were significantly less likely to agree with the suggestion, while more report they have this already. Parents of children aged 9-12 years old with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree.

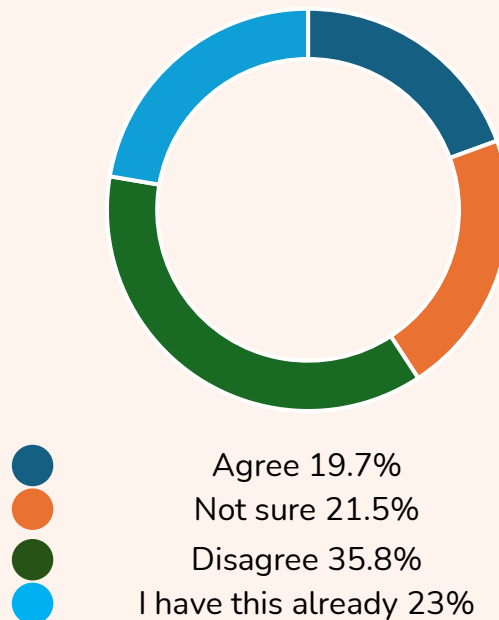
The next options about support for parents asked about contacting a trusted person with regards to RSHP learning by phone or by email/messaging.

7. I would like to have a trusted person who I can approach with questions by phone.

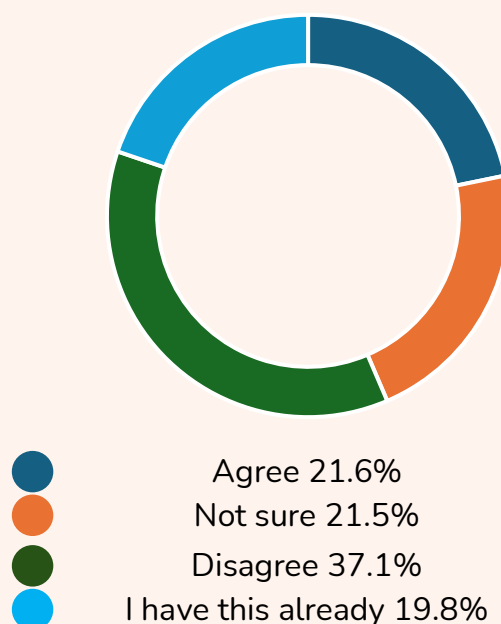
Parents of children aged 3-5 (535 responses)



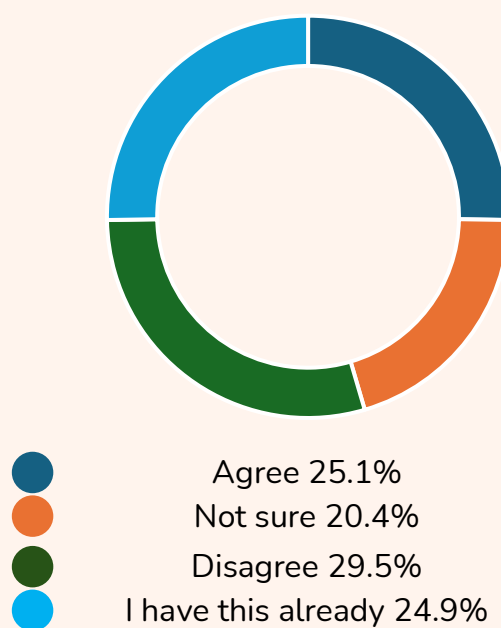
Parents of children aged 6-8 (927 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (995 responses)

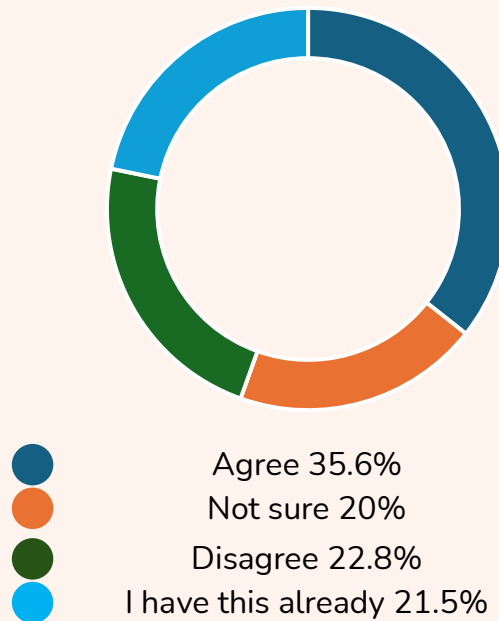


Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,019 responses)

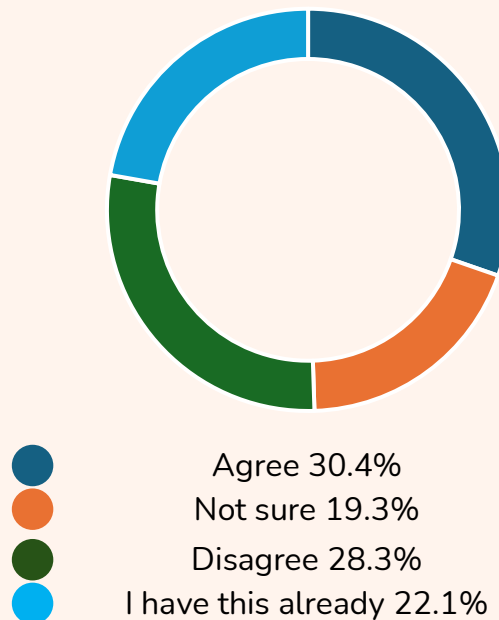


8. I would like to have a trusted person who I can approach with questions by email or messaging.

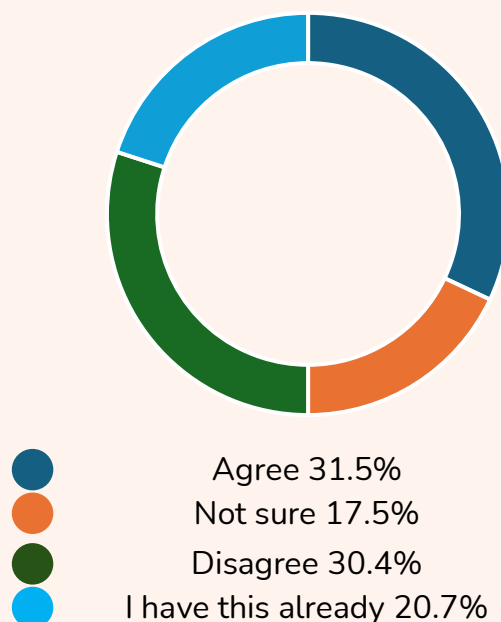
Parents of children aged 3-5 (534 responses)



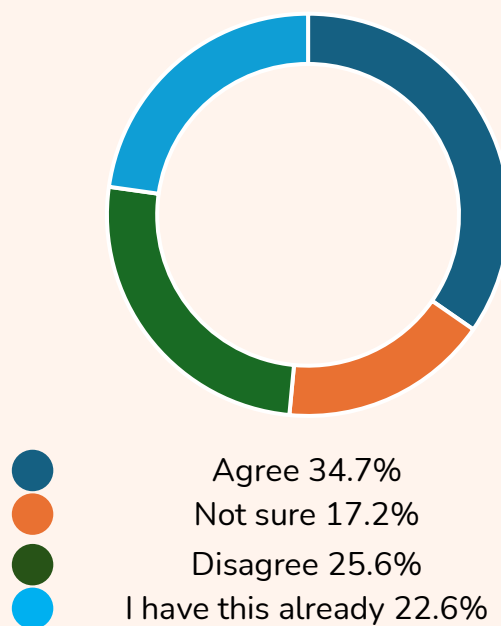
Parents of children aged 6-8 (929 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (995 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,024 responses)



Responses are fairly evenly spread across the options provided – with more of a preference for contact via email or messaging rather than telephone contact. Parents have talked about good experiences of school contact and worries about asking questions or sharing worries.

My son's current teacher has been excellent. She stated at the start of the RSHP info session 'we have a contract with you (parents) and will not teach anything to your children we have not shown to you here tonight. If our child asks us something, we haven't agreed on we will say 'you need to ask your parent' as your trust in us is paramount' THIS is the way to do it.

(Survey response/parent of 9–11-year-old)

Workshops on being a parent. More help from organisations. You know to help us learn knowledge about being a parent. To have that, and not be worried that asking for that means we might lose our kid.

(Group chat 23)

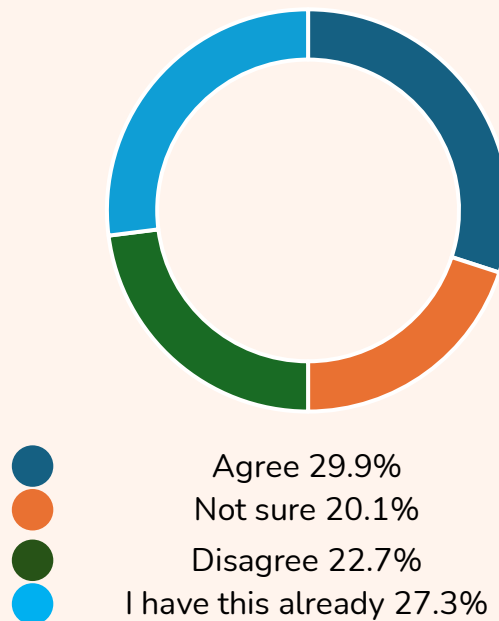
The matter of trust between parents and teachers is explored in more depth in Spotlight Issue: Trust as a basis for home school relationships.

There is some variation of response from our groups of interest when it comes to approaching a trusted person by phone. Parents (of children aged 12-18) with a religious affiliation were significantly more likely to agree. Parents of children aged 9-12 and 12-18 with an additional support need were also significantly more likely to agree.

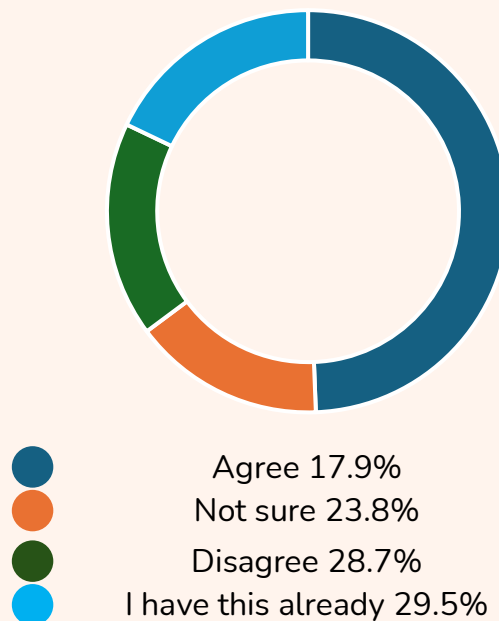
There is also some variation of response from our groups of interest when it comes to approaching a trusted person by email or messaging. Parents of children aged 6-8 and 9-12 with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree. Parents (of children aged 9-12) with a religious affiliation were also significantly more likely to agree.

9. I would like the opportunity to meet and talk with other parents.

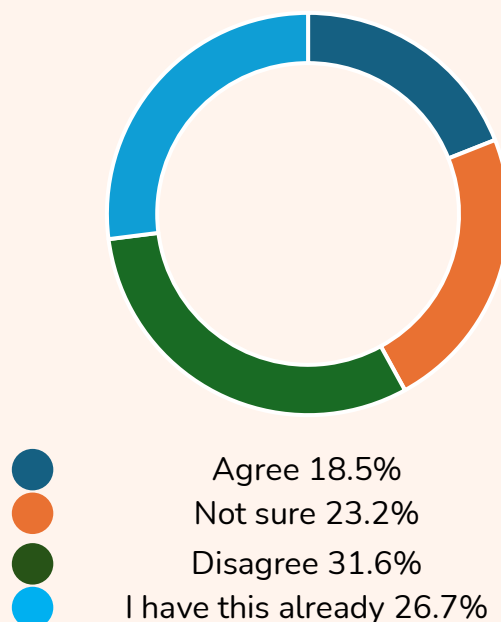
Parents of children aged 3-5 (532 responses)



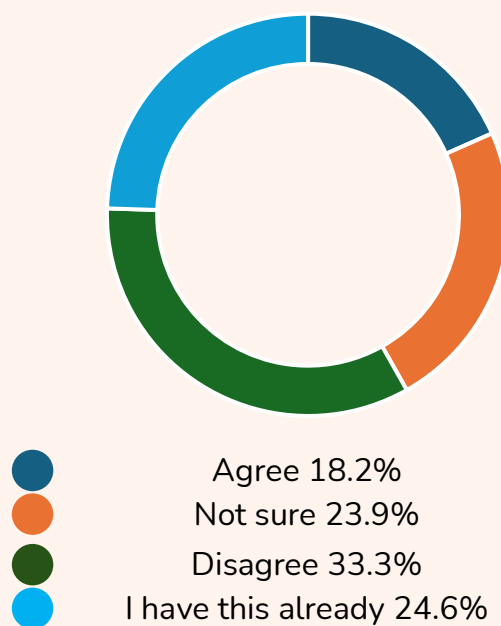
Parents of children aged 6-8 (931 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (996 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,023 responses)



In the small group chats parents talked about the value of meeting other parents – of course they had come to a small parent group chat. When we put the proposal that parents might like to meet and talk with other parents in the survey it was a minority of parents who agree with the idea; it was of particular interest to parents

of younger children. It is also affirming that 1 in 4 parents have responded that they have this opportunity already.

The school could have a group for parents and teach parents how to talk to their kids about this stuff. Some parents don't feel comfortable and just need a confidence boost. Sometimes a group is all it takes. It would benefit people being comfortable to talk to their kids. What I've experienced, well, I think talking to kids from a young age is very important.

(Group chat 38)

I feel like learning at school gets lost after the move to secondary school. And parents have fewer opportunities to get together, so we lose our support and the kinds of chats we had with other parents when our children were wee.

(Group chat 19)

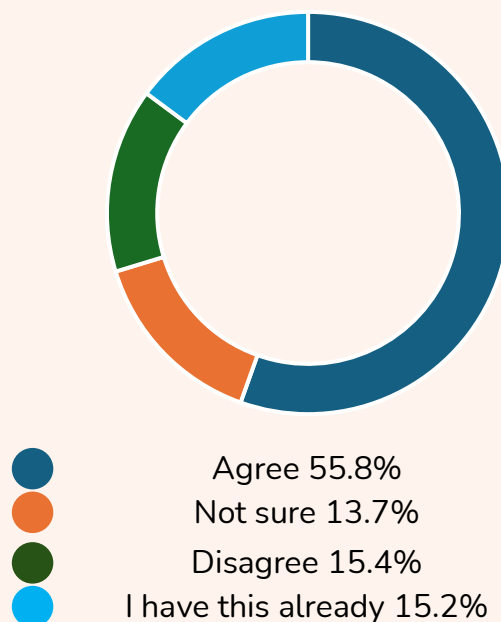
I think you learn about how to understand your child's emotions by speaking to other parents. And witnessing it with your own child. But speaking with friends at playgroup has helped. Sometimes you just have to reassure other parents, so they don't worry when their child has a meltdown.

(Group chat 27)

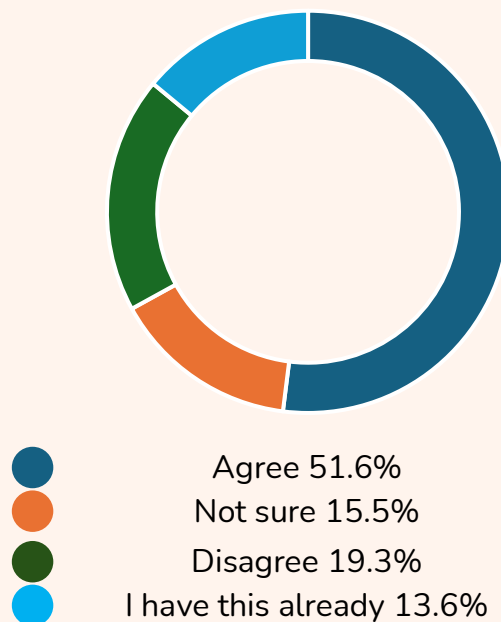
There is some variation of response from our groups of interest when it comes to opportunities to meet other parents. Parents of children aged 9 to 12 and 12 to 18 with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree. Parents (of children of nursery and primary school age) with a religious affiliation were also significantly more likely to agree.

10. I would like a parent online/web site that gives me information and ideas about supporting my child.

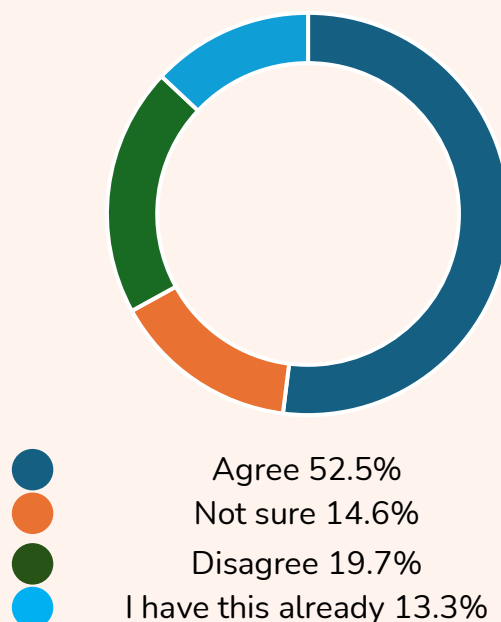
Parents of children aged 3-5 (534 responses)



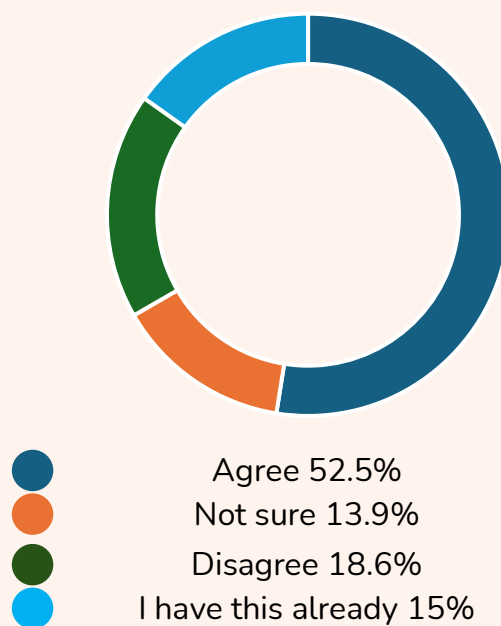
Parents of children aged 6-8 (931 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (996 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,021 responses)



A *majority* of parents of children of all ages support the proposal that there could be a parent online/web site that gives them information and ideas about supporting their child. The characteristics of such a resource have been identified by parents.

I done my own research on books and bought some. But maybe a resource, a website that is easy. Child friendly too, so you can sit down with them. But factual, what they need for their actual age.

(Group chat 32)

We need like a toolkit. We know the ages and stages of our children better than anyone. We know what level of understanding our child has. So, something we can go to. The school could know about it and share it with parents.

(Group chat 21)

When kids ask you things you don't always know the answer. But you don't want to just look it up on the internet. It needs to be a reliable source, inclusive, comprehensive.

(Group chat 4)

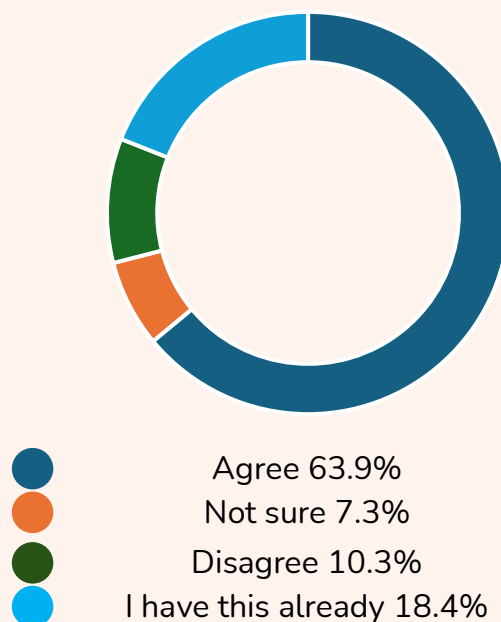
I'd like a bank of safe audio-visual material, that's tested and safe. I've tried books but its animation that is powerful. You know its within their currency of learning. So, something that has different topics. Not just social stories.

(Group chat 24)

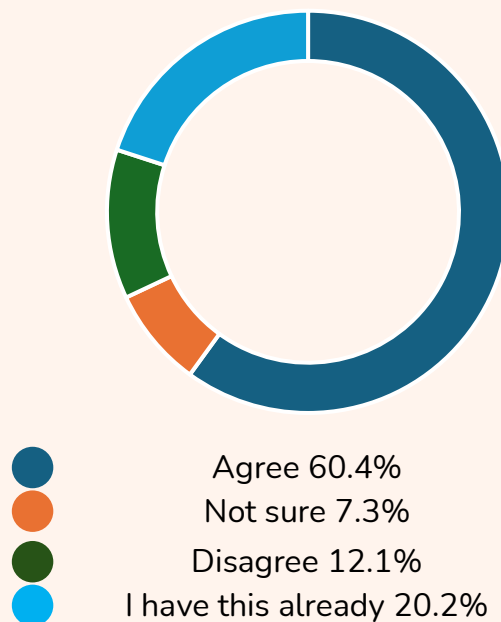
There is some variation of response from our groups of interest when it comes to access to online support. Parents (of children aged 6-8) with a religious affiliation were significantly less likely to agree with the suggestion. Parents of children aged 9-12 with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree.

11. I would like learning for me that helps me understand the online/digital world and how to protect my child.

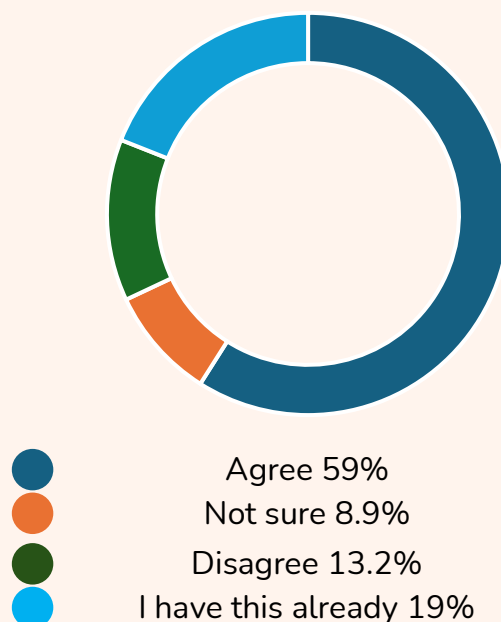
Parents of children aged 3-5 (532 responses)



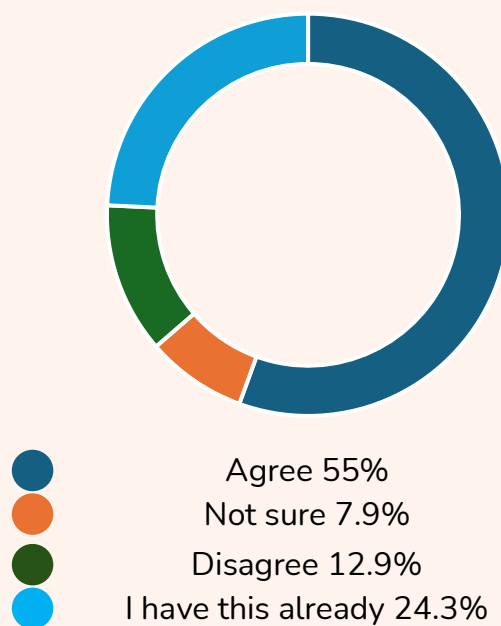
Parents of children aged 6-8 (929 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (992 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,018 responses)



In Spotlight Issue: Digital Lives we explore how parents understand and support their child in the online environment. When it comes to what parents might benefit from in terms of support, a *majority* of parents would like opportunities to learning and understand the online/digital world so that they can best protect their child.

Parents of children aged 9-12 with an additional support need were significantly more likely to agree.

Although I feel somewhat confident about this area, I would welcome some additional resources, especially ones that are suitable for a 14-year-old with literacy issues/mild learning difficulties.

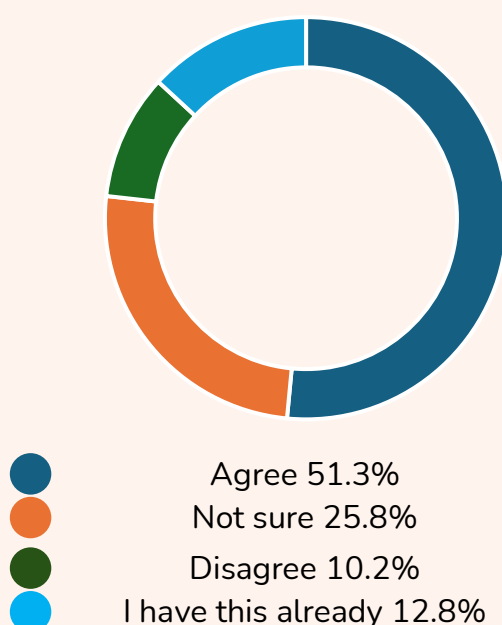
(Survey response/parent of 12–18-year-old)

I'd like internet security advice – apps and games – how to interact online, so help and info on boundaries on what's acceptable and what is not. How are schools supporting this? What are they doing?

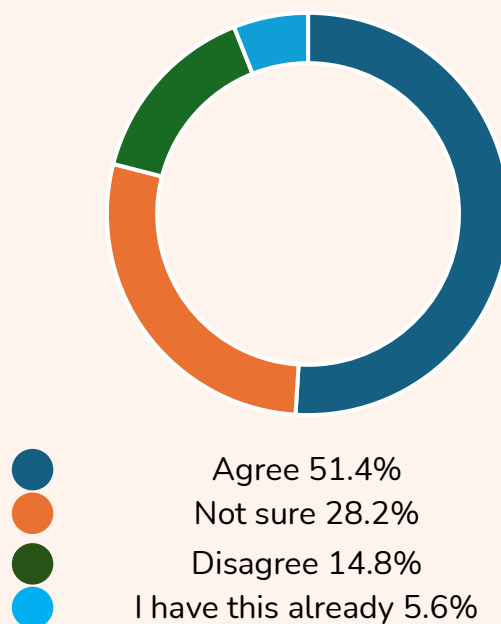
(Group chat 7)

12. I would like nursery/school staff to be better trained to understand how additional support needs affect relationships and learning about relationships and sexual health.

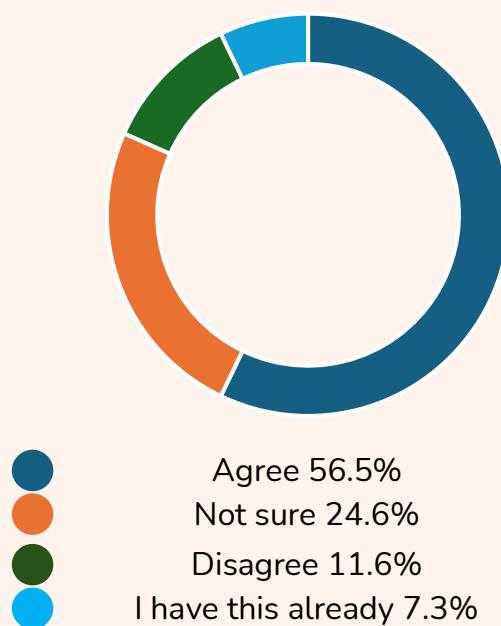
Parents of children aged 3-5 (532 responses)



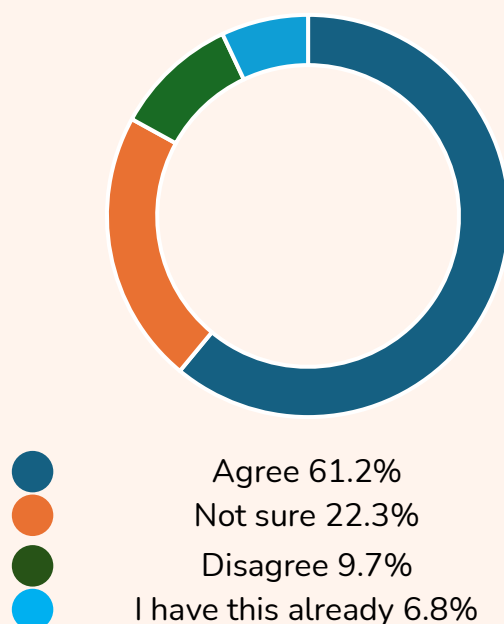
Parents of children aged 6-8 (926 responses)



Parents of children aged 9-12 (991 responses)



Parents of children aged 12-18 (1,021 responses)



Across reporting we have shared the views of parents of children with additional support needs/disabilities. In [Spotlight Issue: Children and young people with Additional Support Needs](#) we explore this in more depth, but in short, a *majority* of parents would like nursery and school staff to be better trained to understand how additional support needs affect relationships and learning about relationships and sexual health. Parents of children with additional support needs across all ages were significantly more likely to agree with this statement. These quotes capture why this is the case.

Difficult in our family as our kids are adopted and our daughter has ambivalent attachment, meaning she actively seeks out unknown adults and seeks to ingratiate herself to them. Other adults think she is being nice and try to encourage this. Not as much understanding as there could be among teaching staff of attachment issues, but appreciate it is difficult to comprehend unless you are living it.
(Survey response/parent of 9–12-year-old)

He's autistic and requires more 1-to-1 support. There is no additional learning staff currently to provide him with this. So, he gets 30mins a few times a week with his teacher. I think this is because he is quiet and would get more focused support if he was seen as 'disruptive'.
(Survey response/parent of 6–8-year-old)

I did ask for help, and the OT and the autism outreach teacher helped me prepare, used a social story, but even with all that we were still taken back by the actual responses from my daughter. I could have been better prepared and supported by people.

(Group chat 35)

I need help that helps me to explain their vulnerability to them, things they can be duped into doing online. So, it starts with their vulnerability, them wanting to please people and be accepted. And if they struggle to be accepted, they think they can make friends.

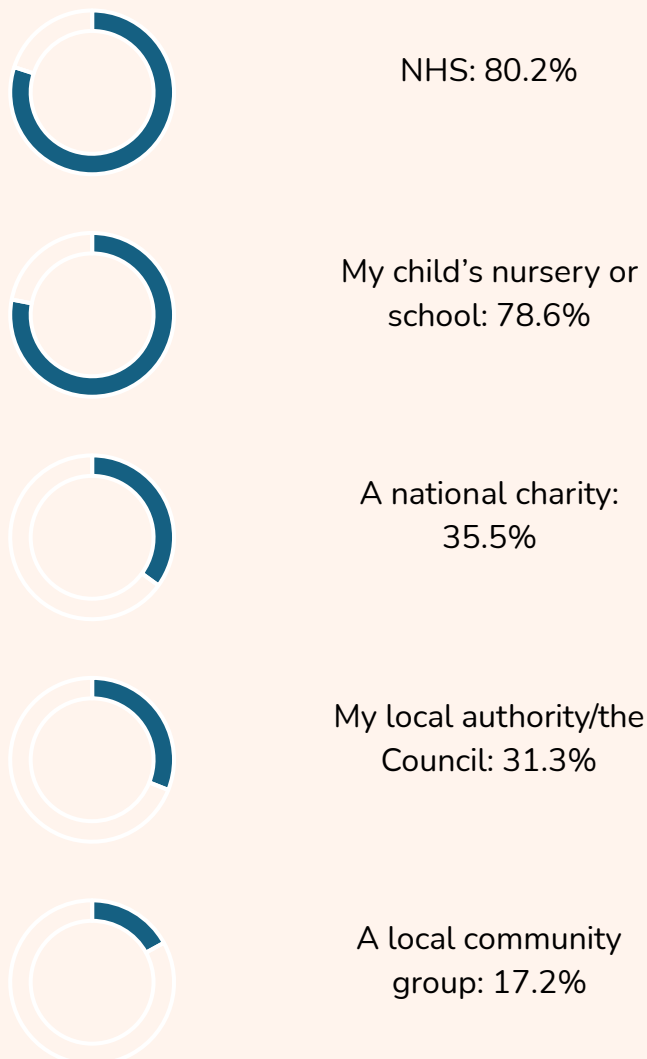
(Group chat 33)

Who would parents trust to provide information, advice, or resources?

We have looked at what parents have told us when it comes to the kinds of things that might support them as parents. In our small group chats, parents also discussed who they would trust as a provider of this information, advice or support. The range of possible sources or providers of support were then put to parents in the national survey. The graphics that follow present survey findings, organised by the age of the child. We can also learn from the contributions of parents in the small group chats as well as from open box responses in the survey.

Who would you trust to provide information, advice or resources?

Parents of children aged 3–5 (523 responses)





A faith-based
organisation: 13.4%

Who would you trust to provide information, advice or resources?

Parents of children aged 6–8 (896 responses)



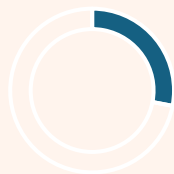
NHS: 79.4%



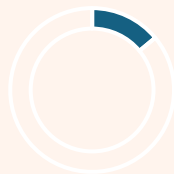
My child's school:
70.8%



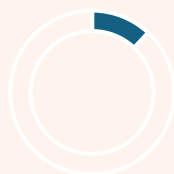
A national charity:
36.2%



My local authority/the
Council: 28.2%



A local community
group: 13.6%



A faith-based
organisation: 11.7%

Who would you trust to provide information, advice or resources?

Parents of children aged 9–12 (959 responses)



NHS: 79.6%



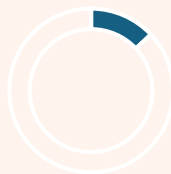
My child's school:
68.9%



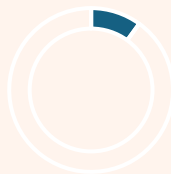
A national charity:
35.8%



My local authority/the
Council: 29.7%



A local community
group: 12.8%



A faith-based
organisation: 10.1%

Who would you trust to provide information, advice or resources?

Parents of children aged 12–18 (996 responses)



NHS: 82%



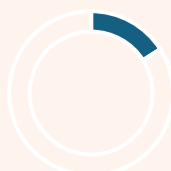
My child's school:
62.3%



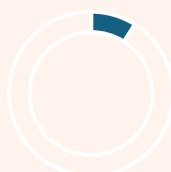
A national charity:
42.8%



My local authority/the
Council: 30.4%



A local community
group: 16.2%



A faith-based
organisation: 8.9%

As the graphic representations show *most* parents identified the NHS as the most trusted source of information, advice or resources. For parents the child's nursery or school was identified as the next most trusted source, particularly so for parents of children in the early years, less so (although still a *majority* of parents) for children in secondary school. For around 1 in 3 parents a national charity would be a trusted source. While other sources were less likely to be chosen as a preference for

parents, this nonetheless does identify that local Councils, local community groups and faith-based organisations have a role to play for some families.

In small group chats and via the survey parents have identified the characteristics that a trusted source would have.

Anyone with no ulterior motive, someone who is not pushing a particular ideology/religious standpoint, someone who has no financial interest in the giving of certain information. I trust very few people or organisations to be truly agenda free.
(Survey response/parent of 9–11-year-old)

You've got to be careful looking for information or stuff online. Unless its NHS or someone like NSPCC I'd take it with a pinch of salt.
(Group chat 22)

I'm a real believer in having trust in the people who have studied and developed the curriculum, I put my faith in that, people who are paid to lead us in what we should be doing as much as the other way round. I know my own thoughts, but I don't know latest research. We are part of a generation that was schooled very differently, so we are learning too.
(Group chat 7)

Someone trained in online safety. Also, someone trained and with actually experience of ADHD and autism.
(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)

When children are young, parents have reported they feel more connected to information and support, but this might not be available as children grow through the primary school years.

My health visitor is amazing with advice or questions I have.
(Survey response/parent of 3–5-year-old)

My mum and also the mother and baby group I go to.
(Survey response/parent of 3–5-year-old)

After like the health visitor service stops is there such a thing as a school nurse or further support if needed? Or further support via NHS or similar? (Group chat 7)

In discussing sources of information, advice and support the topic of sex/gender is flagged as having an influence on parental views. (For more see the [Spotlight Issue: Sex/Gender](#))

Given current cultural discourse, I select my sources carefully. Other parents, material feminists, trusted school staff, recommended books.

(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)

Currently none of the above. I trust my family and friends to support and give advice. I am confident to approach NHS etc if help is needed. Very concerned about gender ideology in schools NHS CAMHS Social Work etc to be able to trust orgs like this completely nowadays.

(Survey response/parent of 9-11-year-old)

We must also acknowledge that some parents have expressed no trust in any of the main sources offered and have identified the importance of their own family and friends or individual professionals who provide them with support. (For more see the [Spotlight Issue: Trust](#))

Friends and family. The collective memory. This is what community is for.

(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)

I find other parents to be the best source of advice.

(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)

I use books, and trusted friends and family members. I use selected resources from the NHS or school/nursery, but I don't have a blanket trust in any resources they provided, preferring to use my own judgement.

(Survey response/parent of 3-5-year-old)

I am a confident parent and trust my own instincts regarding what is appropriate for my child. I have a circle of friends of other mums, and we support each other and discuss these issues. I feel this is more valuable than any formal support. In fact, I'm concerned that some parents then don't trust their own instincts and receive bad advice from formal support systems.

(Survey response/parent of 12-18-year-old)

Other mums.

(Survey response/parent of 6-8-year-old)