



Survey  
results

## Time for families to have their say!

Feedback report  
to Partners



In December we launched a ‘**Cumbria Together - time to have your say**’ survey

We heard from over 350 families of young children (aged 0-5 years) from all areas of the County. The spread of replies from across the county is as follows:

19%	Allerdale	9%	Eden
13%	Copeland	13%	Barrow
21%	Carlisle	25%	South Lakes

9% of respondents told us that either they or their child had additional needs.



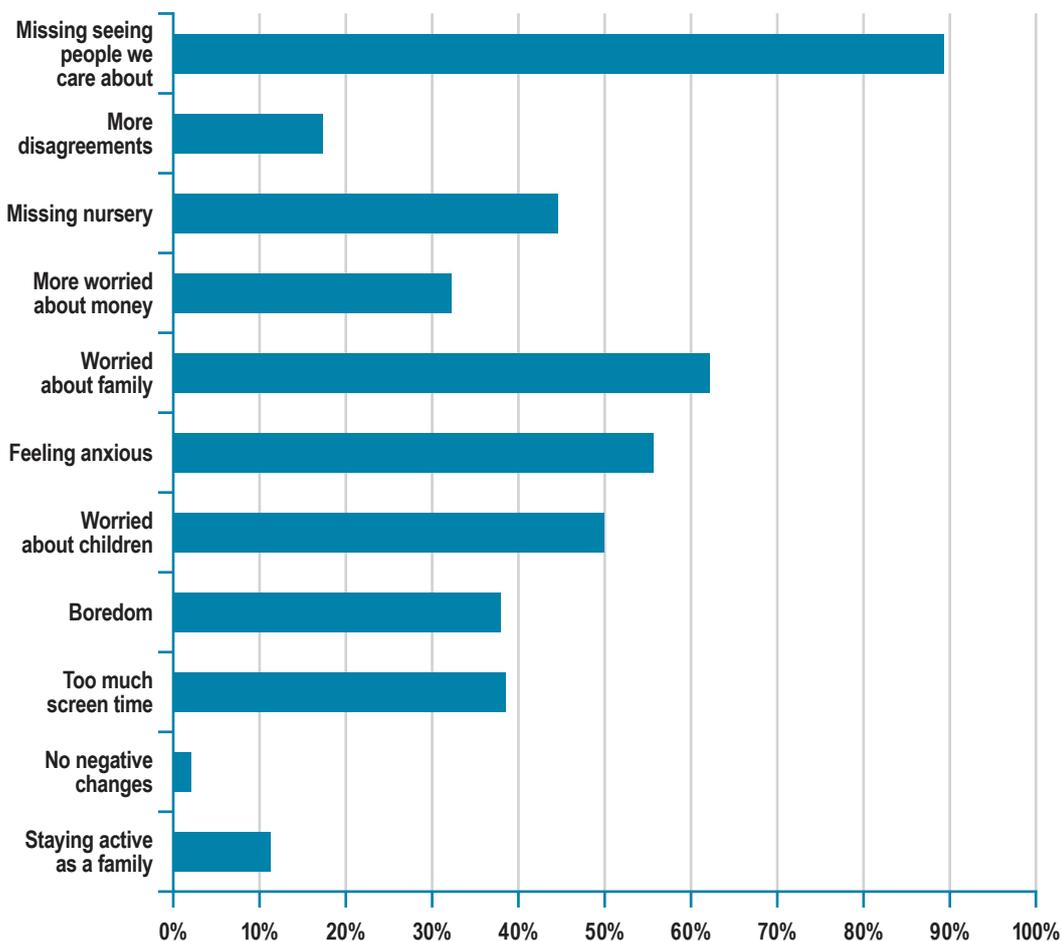


**We asked what had been good about 2020**

- About 50% of people told us they enjoyed spending more time with families and people who are important to them. They felt they spent more quality time together as a family. Approximately 60% of respondents told us that they spent more time outside.

**We asked about things that had been difficult**

The graph below shows that up to 90% of respondents missed seeing people they care about and over 60% were worried about their family and friends. They also told us that their children missed nursery, seeing their friends, going to toddler groups, baby classes and parents often felt lonely.



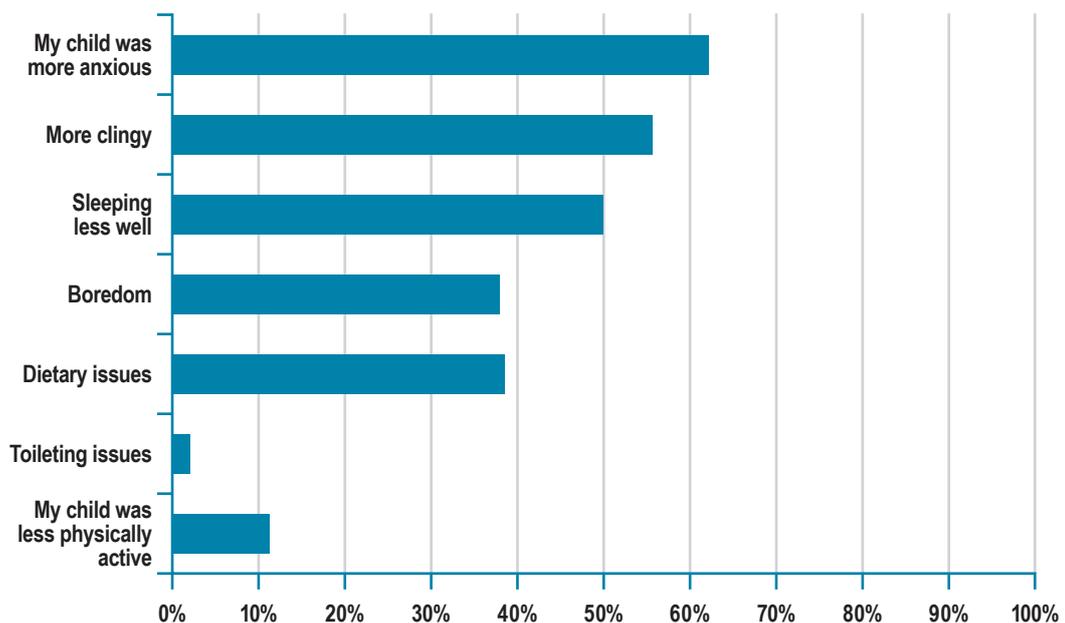


**We asked parents if there was anything that they would like to build on to support their child.**

- 38% would like to help their child become more confident
- 40% would like their child to talk and communicate more with others
- 43% would like to build on their child's independence skills so they can do more for themselves e.g. toileting, dressing.
- 43% told us they would like to help their child develop their physical skills e.g. walking, climbing, kicking a ball

**We asked what had been difficult?**

The graph below shows that over 50% of parents told us their child had become more clingy and nearly 25% that their child was more anxious. Boredom was also a major concern.



### **We asked families to tell us about things they have been able to do with their child in the local area.**

- Families have been walking, riding bikes, baking, getting to know neighbours, enjoying finding new things to do in the local neighbourhood, doing craft activities.

### **We asked them “what you have missed doing with your child the most”. They told us:**

- They have missed meeting up with other parents, going to toddler groups, going to new places, nursery, soft play, seeing grandparents and other close family members, meeting friends, swimming, normal activities like eating out and shopping, play dates, baby groups, visiting attractions, going to their classes e.g. gymnastics, swimming, family days out, going on holiday.
- They also told us they were worried about their child missing out on social activities and the effect that this would have on their child.
- Parents of babies have felt isolated, they are worried about their babies missing out on important social interactions with others and opportunities to bond with grandparents and other close relatives.

### **Over 40% of respondents told us that someone had helped them during this time and told us about the help they have valued.**

- Things that have helped have been; support from family and friends, being able to see close family and friends “virtually”, support from schools, nurseries and childminders, videos from schools and nurseries, phone calls, people bringing things when needed, financial support, visits from health visitors, neighbours sharing food, someone to talk to, being able to share worries and concerns with someone, food vouchers, food parcels, on line breast feeding support groups, community support, government furlough scheme.

### **We asked if there was anything positive they experienced in 2020 that they would like to continue?**

- The most popular themes were; spending more time together as a family, spending more time outdoors, family walks, appreciating a slower pace of life, flexible working, working from home, spending more time in the local area, being more creative.
- These are some of the comments:
  - “Making time to get out as a family every week, walking and exploring”.
  - “Through working from home and many after school activities being cancelled, we were able to slow down meaning we were all sitting together for meals more regularly”.
  - “We love spending time together at home and want this to continue. We have found our weekends are much more relaxing and we don’t need to be going off for the day when we have so much on our doorstep”.
  - “Quality but simple family time”.

### **We then asked if they had any worries about the long-term impact of COVID 19 on their child and family and these were the main worries**

- The impact on social and emotional development.
- Lack of social interaction.
- Wary of meeting people.
- Financial worries.
- Worried about family members catching COVID.
- Missing out on time with close family members.
- Worried about attachment issues.
- Mental health and wellbeing worries.
- Worried children and babies have missed vital stages in their development that they can never get back.
- Worried about missing education and if they will catch up.
- Worried about children becoming obsessive about germs, cleaning their hands etc.
- Worried about the future.
  - “The time lost with family, all the social interaction and experiences and the transition to being with someone other than me and my husband”.
  - “I worry that my youngest is going to struggle with other people as we haven't really seen anyone during lockdown”.
  - “I worry my daughter will always be scared of germs. From masks, antibac gel and hand washing that she has had to deal with most days”.
  - “I worry that my child will have attachment issues when a parent is not nearby”.
  - “Financial as unable to work when my child was not at school so picking the pieces up from lockdown”.

### **Transition**

Just over 30% of families told us they had a child starting reception class in September 2020.

- Approximately 88% of families told us their child was either prepared or very well prepared for starting school, including receiving all the information they needed, and they knew what to expect in the first couple of weeks.
- Approximately 86% of parents felt the school was ready for their child starting, including meeting their child, talking to the parents and they had a good understanding of their child's strengths and needs.

We asked what had worked well to help the transition and the common themes were; attending the nursery or pre-school attached to the school meant the school was familiar and this helped transitions, children getting to meet the teachers before they start, attending settling in days, knowing there were good COVID measures in place to keep everyone safe, good communication either direct or on line, using zoom for parents evening, settling in and getting to know you chats etc. home visits, staggered start times.

We then asked “In your experience what would have made starting school better for your child? What could have made the change from home, nursery or childminder to school easier”

The vast majority of parents told us that it would have been better if their child could have visited the school, attended settling in sessions, stay and play sessions, more time to meet their teachers etc but most appreciated that this couldn't happen as normal because of COVID.



## Our planned response to the survey

- Launch a speech, language and communication initiative for families and communities.
- Encourage more early years settings sign up to the 'Healthy Families Cumbria Pledge' to help families to stay healthy and happy.
- We will support our early years settings by providing training around the issues that you have raised.
- Re-start support groups for families with babies and small children through Children's Centres - as soon as Covid- 19 restrictions allow.
- Promote online and digital support groups for families with young children throughout the pandemic.
- Promote financial support and advice through local Citizen's Advice Bureaus and Focus Family Area Officers - **Focus.Family@cumbria.gov.uk**
- Extend the food voucher scheme to February half term and the Easter holidays.
- Work with Active Cumbria to develop and promote local walking opportunities for families.
- Work with Active Cumbria and Cumbria County Council's Family Learning Team to promote the Active Start programme to support physical development and increase physical activity levels.
- Work with everyone who is in contact with early years children from pregnancy onwards to help your child be ready to learn as part of a 'Cumbria Together: Steps to Independence' approach; this will include transition to nursery or school.
- Work with communities to develop 'Child and Family' hub centres across the county where families can drop in for advice post-Covid.
- Plan to extend the Solihull online training offer to help you to support your child's emotional development.

Specific activities families have done in their local area.

**Allerdale**

- Walks along the river Cocker.
- Walks along the promenade.
- Paddling in the sea.
- Walks in Hall park and riding on the cycle track.
- Walks in Vulcans park.
- Walks in Curwen park.
- Exploring the coast.
- Walking to the fort

**Copeland**

- Walks around the cliffs.
- Picnics on the beach.
- Playing on the beach.
- Walks around Whitehaven harbour.
- Walks at St Bees.

**Carlisle**

- Walks in Gelt woods, Watch tree, Wetheral, Fingland Rigg, Engine Lonning.
- Hammonds pond.
- Kingmoor nature reserve.
- Keenen park, Harraby.

**Eden**

- Visits to Talkin tarn.
- Walks round town.
- Walks round Lowther.

**Barrow**

- Spent time on Walney beach.
- Walks at the coast road, beach walks, huts, nature reserve.
- Local woods in Dalton.
- Bike rides around Barrow docks.
- Abbots wood. Mill wood, Sea wood, How Tun wood, Conishead priory.
- Red river walk.
- Barrow park.

**South Lakes**

- Walks in Grizedale forest.
- Sizergh Castle wild trail.
- Bardsea beach.
- Hoad monument.
- Sea wood.