All in this together? The impact of the lockdown on how families spend their time

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The Covid-19 pandemic is changing dramatically how families with children spend their time

- Closure of schools and childcare facilities means many families are now the main provider of care and education for their children
- Parents may have lost their jobs permanently or stopped work temporarily
- Many other parents are adjusting to working from home
- The challenges imposed by this crisis and the ways families respond to them may have long-lasting impacts on future inequalities in child and adult outcomes
- There is the risk that these inequalities reinforce existing ones
Aims of the IFS-IoE study of family time use in England

• Document how the crisis is affecting the daily lives of families
  – How are children dealing with having to spend all their days at home?
  – How are parents dealing with the increase in demand for their time?

• Study how these effects differ across and within families, and how they interact with existing inequalities
  – How are different schools supporting home learning?
  – Are fathers and mothers shouldering the additional burden equally?
  – How does this vary by their employment status and earnings?

• Examine the long-run implications of these immediate effects

• Inform what/how policy can mitigate potential adverse consequences
IFS-IoE time-use survey

- Online survey of a random sample of just under 5,000 parents living with school-age children in England between 29th of April and 15th of May.

- Ensured sample represents population diversity in terms of gender, education, region, marital status, work status and the jobs they did.

- Data collected:
  - Time-use diary of activities done by surveyed parent in each hour of a normal, term-time weekday.
  - Surveyed parent report of activities done by partner and one child.
  - Home-learning activities children are doing and the resources available to them.
  - Employment and earnings of respondent and partner before and during lockdown.

- Focus on opposite gender partnerships.
Children and Education
How are children spending their time during lock-down?

![Graph showing time spent on different activities during lock-down for primary and secondary school children.]

- **Primary school**
  - Learning or reading: 4.7 hours
  - On-screen leisure: 3.8 hours
  - Off-screen leisure: 4.3 hours

- **Secondary school**
  - Learning: 4.3 hours
  - On-screen leisure: 5.4 hours
  - Off-screen leisure: 2.8 hours
Are there differences in learning time by SES?

Children from better off families spend more time on home-learning activities.

![Bar chart showing learning time by SES and school level.](image)

- **Primary school**
  - Overall
  - Poorest (quintile 1)
  - Middle (quintile 3)
  - Richest (quintile 5)

- **Secondary school**
  - Overall
  - Poorest (quintile 1)
  - Middle (quintile 3)
  - Richest (quintile 5)

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What are children doing during “learning time”?
Children from better off families also have access to potentially higher quality home-learning opportunities.
What are schools doing to support children’s home-learning?

- Online classes
- Online videochat
- Online chat
- Online platform
- Home learning packs
Would parents send their kids back to school given the choice?

- **Primary school**
  - Poorest (Quintile 1): 29%
  - Middle (Quintile 3): 36%
  - Richest (Quintile 5): 55%

- **Secondary school**
  - Poorest (Quintile 1): 31%
  - Middle (Quintile 3): 52%
  - Richest (Quintile 5): 50%
Parents in opposite gender partnerships
Meanwhile, how are parents coping and why does this matter?

• The way that couples divide newly added burden of childcare and other household responsibilities and paid work during this crisis could have long term effects

• If mothers are more likely to step back from paid work during this crisis and more likely to pick up more of the domestic responsibilities, they could face a long-run hit to their earnings prospects.
  • This risks reversing some of the progress that has been made on closing the gender wage gap.
  • This could have detrimental long term impacts

• On the other hand, previous evidence suggests that fathers who pick up more household responsibilities (like childcare) for a limited period of time may do a greater share of them in the longer term
How do mothers and fathers currently spend their time?
Mothers are more likely to have lost or furloughed their job since lockdown

Fiscal Studies Workshop - England Analysis

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Mothers who are working have greatly reduced their hours and more of them are interrupted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 April</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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Despite this, whether women are working or not, they participate in more housework and childcare.
What about if one parent is no longer working?
Next steps in this research

• So far we have answered some key questions on how lockdown is effecting children, mothers and fathers differently

Far more we can do:

• Additional information in survey such as questions on gender norms and implicit bias tests to help unpack drivers of key decisions.

• Look at single parents and same-sex couples

• With over 2000 of these households we are able to link this survey to the National Pupil Database which will help us understand how at home-learning has impacted outcomes

• We will follow up with all households and see how they have adapted over time and include questions on stress and wellbeing
Summary of key findings

Children and education

- Richest households are spending more time on educational activities
- Poorer households have access to less school and at home resources

Parents in opposite gender partnerships

- Mothers are more likely to be out of work or reducing their hours
- Mothers do more childcare and housework in most types of households
- Fathers have increased the amount of domestic work dramatically