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**The Availability of Child Care Centers, Perceived  
Search Costs and Parental Life Satisfaction**

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## **Abstract**

The supply of formal childcare has expanded in many developed countries. There is ambiguity, however, in the theory that the entry of care providers increases consumers' surplus and the welfare of households in a market with differentiated services, such as childcare. This study empirically investigates how perceived search costs and parental life satisfaction change when actual childcare availability is altered. It exploits the new panel data from Australia on the number of center-based childcare places per 100 children within a household's residential area. The results show that an increase in the availability of center-based childcare is associated with a decrease in perceived difficulty in finding 'good quality' childcare, as well as an improvement in mothers' satisfaction with the increased availability of free time. These findings imply that the local availability of center-based childcare has enhanced the subjective well-being of parents.

**JEL Codes:** J13, J22

**Keywords:** child care, entry, search, consumers' surplus, life satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

As maternal workforce participation and interest in early childhood education have increased, the supply of formal childcare has expanded. It is unclear, however, how much, if at all, this has contributed to an increase in consumers' surplus or the welfare of households with small children. Theory suggests that, in a competitive market, the entry of new firms increases consumers' surplus; however, this may not be true in a market with a differentiated service such as childcare. For example, childcare services may differ with respect to quality, proximity and flexibility, making it unlikely for them to be exactly identical products for diverse households.

In such a market, the overall effect of entry on the welfare of households is unclear. On the one hand, it has been shown that the price of service can rise with the entry of service providers (Greenhut et al., 1985 and Satterthwaite, 1979). Entry, therefore, could yield a negative effect on consumers' surplus. On the other hand, new service providers within a local market are likely to increase proximity to providers and reduce transportation costs. This might offset the negative effect of an increase in the price of service.<sup>1</sup> In addition, if new providers offer previously unavailable services with quality and flexibility, this might mitigate the cost of the search for a provider that satisfies a household's preference.<sup>2</sup> In the case of childcare, if the benefits from better matching and the proximity to service providers dominate, an increase in the availability of childcare could mitigate perceived difficulty in the search for providers. This could in turn improve households' life satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, such benefits could be particularly large in a market with few providers. For example, the emergence of the first few providers is likely to have a greater impact on the range of available service attributes (proximity, quality and flexibility) compared to the entry of, say, the 11th provider in a market.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Greenhut et al. (1985) shows that entry can increase consumers' surplus, partly through reducing the time required for consumers to use the service, including transportation costs.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Satterthwaite (1979) pointed out that, though a larger pool of providers can lead to a higher price, it could provide a potentially better match.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the experimental study by Lynch and Ariely (2000) showed that a reduction in the cost of searching for quality information produced welfare gains for customers purchasing wine.

<sup>4</sup> This holds in the address model, where households care about the distance between households' ideals for a certain service characteristic and the available service characteristic closest to it (Eaton and Lipsey, 1989).

This study provides empirical evidence on the relationship between the availability of service providers and consumers' surplus, measured by parents' perceived search costs and life satisfaction, focusing on the market for childcare. For parents with small children, the structure of the childcare market is likely to be a critical component affecting their subjective well-being.<sup>5</sup> To the author's knowledge, this is the first study which examines this relationship in the childcare market.<sup>6</sup> The aim of this paper is not to test the abovementioned pathways through which the availability of care providers might affect consumers' surplus, but rather to reveal the overall relationship, utilizing new panel data on the number of center-based childcare places per 100 children within a household's residential area. The focus on center-based care is likely to be appropriate, given the increasing interest in education-oriented services.<sup>7</sup>

My empirical strategy exploits the rapid supply growth that happened in Australia between 2001 and 2006, during which the number of center-based care places grew by 69,122, or 26 percent (AIHW, 2007).<sup>8</sup> Utilizing this variation, I estimate the community-level fixed effects model, controlling for year effects, state-level trends and a rich array of household and community characteristics. Thus, my estimates show whether a cohort of parents (with a child aged from 0 to 4 years) within a certain community exhibits outcomes different from a previous cohort within the community when it experiences a disproportionate increase in the availability of center-based care relative to the state-level average change.

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<sup>5</sup> It is plausible that relevant institutions affect one's subjective well-being. For example, young females' life satisfaction is shown to depend on policies affecting reproduction rights (Pezzini, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Several previous studies (for example, Blau (1993, 2001) and Waker (1992)) have examined some aspects of childcare supply, but not its association with perceived accessibility. Another set of studies has investigated the heterogeneity in the effect of childcare costs on maternal labor supply by the rationing of supply in settings where childcare is mainly publicly provided (Gustafsson and Stafford, 1992 and Del Boca and Del Vuri, 2007). A large number of studies in the literature have focused on the effect of the cost of childcare on childcare utilization and parental workforce participation. This is reviewed by, for example, Anderson and Levine (2000), Blau (2003), Blau and Currie (2004), and Baker, Gruber and Milligan (2008). In Australia, this issue has been studied by Cobb-Clark, Liu and Mitchell (2000), Doiron and Kalb (2005), Kalb and Lee (2008), Rammohan and Whelan (2005, 2007) and Tale (1992). As for perceived childcare accessibility, Cassells, McNamara, Lloyd, and Harding (2005) examined the distribution of this outcome as of 2002, using the household survey used in this study. In contrast, I focus on changes in parental perceptions associated with childcare centre openings.

<sup>7</sup> The data on home-based care is unavailable at the community-level; however the national-level data indicates that the growth in the supply of this type of care was relatively limited, with a 6 percent increase between 2001 and 2006 (AIHW, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> The supply of childcare has expanded mainly in the private sector (OECD, 2002). For example, between 2001 and 2004, the number of childcare places offered by private (for-profit) providers grew at the rate of 24 percent, exceeding the rate of 7 percent for community-based providers (AIHW, 2005).

The results show that increased availability of center-based care is associated with a decrease in perceived difficulty in finding ‘good quality care,’ and an improvement in mothers’ satisfaction with the amount of free time available. The results are also suggestive that these findings are not due to endogenous migration by households or endogenous entry by providers.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the next section describes the institutional settings in the childcare industry followed by an explanation of the data. Section 4 illustrates my empirical method and Section 5 discusses the results. Section 6 provides concluding remarks.

## **2. Background**

Formal childcare is broadly categorized into center-based and home-based care. Center-based care is offered at institutions such as childcare centers (Long Day Care, LDC), kindergartens and preschools.<sup>9</sup> Home-based care is provided by carers, either within their own homes or within the child’s home. In addition to these two types of formal service, informal care is given by relatives, friends and unregistered nannies. Among the two types of formal care, center-based care providers tend to emphasize learning activities and hire more qualified staff.<sup>10</sup> Positive associations are also found between children’s cognitive outcomes and the use of center-based, not home-based, childcare (Hill et al., 2002 and Loeb et al., 2004, 2007). Thus, increasing parental interest in early childhood education is likely to amplify the demand for center-based care, which is the focus of this paper.

In addition to the availability of center-based care, the level of quality can also affect the perceived difficulty in accessing childcare. One rough measure of the quality of center-based care is the share of local providers (in both LDC and kindergarten/preschools) accredited by the federal government’s Child

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<sup>9</sup> Childcare centers typically look after children who have not started school. Some kindergartens and preschools also provide a childcare service in addition to their regular educational service, for children who are to start primary school within one to two years (5-6 year-olds).

<sup>10</sup> For example, 88 percent and 87 percent of private and community-based Long Day Care (centre-based care) staff have relevant qualifications or experience, respectively. The equivalent figure is 70 percent among Family Day Care (home-based care) providers (Department of Family and Community Services, 2004).

Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) system. Under this system, providers must satisfy a set of standards to be accredited. The standards cover areas such as staff relationships with children and peers, partnerships with families, learning environments, safety, nutrition and health, and management practices (NCAC, 2006a).<sup>11</sup>

### **3. Data**

#### **3.1 The trend in supply and accreditation status of childcare providers**

The two supply-side factors, the availability and accreditation status of center-based care, are measured by the number of center-based childcare places per 100 children, and the share of accredited providers within a community defined by the Statistical Local Area (SLA), respectively.<sup>12</sup> These are based on information pertaining to the location and accreditation status histories of childcare providers, obtained from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) – the federal agency administering the CCQA system. In order to compute the availability measure, I counted the number of providers operating within each SLA for each year between 2001 and 2006 (the analysis period). The total number of providers was then multiplied by the state-level average number of childcare places per provider for children aged 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 (who were not yet old enough for preschool/kindergarten), to obtain the age-specific number of places.<sup>13</sup> The number was then further divided by the total number of children (regardless of childcare usage status) of each age. The household-specific number of childcare places was created after the supply-side measures were matched with the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (a longitudinal, nationally-representative household survey), based on a household's residential community. For example, the number for 0 year-olds was assigned to households where the youngest was aged 0, the number for 1 year-olds to households where the youngest

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix A1 for more details on the CCQA system.

<sup>12</sup> A Statistical Local Area (SLA) is a geographical area containing several Census Districts (CDs). As of 2001, there were 1353 SLAs, which contained 37,209 CDs, in Australia. An urban CD had about 220 dwellings, while the number for a rural CD depended on population density (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> The number of childcare places, rather than providers, per 100 children is used since the former better captures the availability of childcare slots relative to underlying demand. The number of childcare places is also likely to better indicate the availability of care of different quality/flexibility because one provider can offer differentiated services.

was aged 1, and so on.<sup>14</sup> The proportion of accredited providers is defined as the number of accredited providers divided by the number of providers for which accreditation status is available.<sup>15</sup>

The estimated number of childcare providers used in this study closely approximates the number of providers reported by the NCAC (2006b) to be participating in the CCQA system for the analysis period (Fig.1A). Both figures indicate an increase in the number of center-based providers, rising from 4058 in 2001 to 5043 in 2006 (the NCAC report).<sup>16</sup> Many of the providers observed in my data are located in areas covered by the HILDA Survey, where the total number rose from 2283 (59 percent of all the providers) in 2001 to 3372 (67 percent) in 2006 (Fig.1B).<sup>17</sup> This growth in the number of providers exceeded the increase in the number of children in the HILDA Survey areas, as indicated by a steady growth in the number of center-based childcare places per 100 children (Fig.1C). In particular, the household-specific (age-specific) number grew from 22 to 28 – a 22 percent increase. Also, the average accreditation rate was high during the analysis period, with an average of 95 percent of providers accredited (Fig.1D).

### **3.2 The trend in the level of perceived childcare search costs and maternal life satisfaction**

These supply-side measures are matched with information on perceived search costs provided by the sample of households with at least one child aged from 0 to 4 years, which is extracted from each wave of the HILDA Survey. If they used, or thought of using, any formal or informal types of childcare, they were asked 10 questions pertaining to search difficulty. The questions involved difficulties in finding a good

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<sup>14</sup> See Appendix A2 for more details on the definition of the supply measure.

<sup>15</sup> The denominator excludes providers that are ‘Newly Registered.’ When providers open a new centre, they register with the NCAC and participate in the assessment process. Until their accreditation status is determined, their status remains Newly Registered. Missing values in the proportion of accredited providers lead to the exclusion of less than one percent of observations in areas with no provider (31 households) or with only one centre whose accreditation status remains undetermined (16 households). This exclusion does not alter the results qualitatively.

<sup>16</sup> The number of providers used in this paper is underestimated in earlier years because the data does not include providers that once operated but closed before 2006 when the original information was collected. The deviation of my estimate from the number reported by the NCAC, however, is less than 5 percent for the analysis period. Other possible sources of the deviation of my data from the NCAC data are the differences in the definition and the timing of data collection. I include providers that are ‘Non Compliant,’ which might be excluded in the NCAC data of ‘participating services.’ I count the number of providers as of December, while the NCAC data indicate the availability as of June in each year. Also, I use the estimated number for each SLA based on the concordance between the 2006 postcode area and the 2001 SLA.

<sup>17</sup> The increase in the share is due to the expansion of the areas covered by the HILDA. Within the areas covered by the 2001 HILDA, the total number increased to 2618 (52 percent of all the providers) by 2006.

match with respect to quality (such as finding ‘good quality care,’ ‘the right person to take care of your child,’ ‘a place at the childcare centre of your choice,’ and ‘care children are happy with’)<sup>18</sup> and proximity/flexibility (such as finding ‘a centre in the right location,’ ‘care for the hours you need,’ and difficulty in ‘juggling multiple childcare arrangements’).<sup>19</sup> The questions also included difficulties in dealing with the costs of childcare and finding care for specific purposes (‘care for a sick child’ and ‘care for a difficult or special-needs child’). A varying proportion of households answered the difficulty questions, but the proportion generally did not change between 2001 and 2006 (Fig.2A).<sup>20</sup> Every year, about a half of households with a child aged from 0 to 4 years answered the questions related to the quality of childcare, as well as the questions regarding the costs, location and hours of operation. On the other hand, the proportion of households answering the question related to difficulty in finding care for special-needs children, declined.<sup>21</sup> A change like this might have been accompanied by an alteration in the composition of the sample in terms of unobserved preferences for center-based care and the expectations on its availability. If this unobserved heterogeneity in a time-variant factor is correlated with availability growth, it could produce a spurious association between actual availability and perceived accessibility. This issue is addressed in the regression analysis by investigating the correlation between the supply-side factors and a household’s probability of answering the questions on childcare search costs.

When households answered the questions, they reported on a scale of 0 (not a problem at all) to 10 (very much a problem) whether they experienced difficulties. Between 2001 and 2006, the average level of difficulty in dealing with the cost of childcare increased by more than 20 percent (Fig.2B). On the other hand, for many questions related to the quality and location of care, the level of difficulty increased

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<sup>18</sup> Parents are found to overestimate the quality of care compared to trained observers (Cryer and Burchinal, 1997), and to use less than available information in assessing the quality of care (Mocan, 2007). If, however, parental ability to assess quality of care is not as good as that of trained observers, this is likely to be true for all cohorts of parents. The present analysis focuses on changes in parental evaluation associated with changes in the availability and accreditation status of childcare, not the differences between parents and trained observers.

<sup>19</sup> There were also questions regarding difficulty in ‘finding care during school holidays’ and ‘finding care with short notice.’ These, however, are not used in the analysis because the former is unlikely to be relevant for those children not yet in the school system (it will most likely reflect experiences with older siblings), while the latter was only asked during 2004-2006.

<sup>20</sup> The average of 60 percent of those who answered at least one of the questions actually used childcare, with the proportion higher for children aged 3 and 4.

<sup>21</sup> There were a few minor changes in the questionnaire between 2001 and 2002, as detailed in Appendix A3. The results excluding the 2001 data indicate weaker, but qualitatively consistent, findings.

between 2001 and 2004, and then declined thereafter. It is possible that this is related to the introduction of a new subsidy program.<sup>22</sup> The regression analysis, however, controls for year effects. Also, the results based on 2001-2004 data (not included) are qualitatively consistent with those based on 2001-2006 data. Thus, the effect of the new subsidy program, if anything, is unlikely to be driving the basic findings of this paper.

In addition to the perceived childcare search costs, I examine maternal life satisfaction for households that answered at least one of the questions pertaining to childcare search costs (parents who used or thought of using childcare) and where the mother answered one of the five questions on the level of satisfaction with the following: home, employment opportunities, financial situation, how safe she feels, whether she feels part of their local community, health, neighborhood and the amount of free time she has. About half of households with a child aged from 0 to 4 years fell in this category every year, and an almost identical set of mothers answered most of the questions on life satisfaction (Fig. 3A). Answers ranged from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied). On average, the level of satisfaction with employment, financial situation and the amount of free time improved between 2001 and 2006 (Fig.3B).

#### 4. Empirical Method

If the entry of new childcare centers eases the search for a provider, satisfying a household's preference in terms of quality, proximity and flexibility, a cohort of parents exposed to the larger pool of providers is likely to perceive less difficulty in the search for childcare, which in turn could improve maternal life satisfaction. In order to examine these possibilities, I estimate the following SLA fixed effects model:

$$Y_{ijst} = a + f(N_{ijt}) + b_1P_{jt} + b_2U_{jt} + b_3X_{ijt} + b_4A_{ijt} + S_s * T_t + u_j + e_{ijst} \quad (1)$$

The outcome variable,  $Y_{ijst}$ , indicates the level of difficulty or life satisfaction reported by a household  $i$  living in SLA  $j$  in state  $s$  in year  $t$ . The outcome is assumed to depend on some function of the household-specific number of center-based childcare places per 100 children in the SLA,  $N_{ijt}$ . In particular, a flexible specification is utilized by defining four dummy variables indicating areas where the number of places

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<sup>22</sup> The program called Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) provided an additional subsidy to further reduce the out-of-pocket childcare expenditure.

per 100 children is greater than 5 and fewer than 15 (covering 22 percent of households in the sample), greater than 15 and fewer than 25 (17 percent), greater than 25 and fewer than 45 (22 percent), and greater than 45 (15 percent). This specification is likely to be more robust against outliers compared to a linear or quadratic specification, which is important because the number of places per 100 children is highly skewed, with a very small density on the right tail.<sup>23</sup> The share of accredited providers,  $P_{jt}$ , is included as a measure of the quality of care.

Among the rest of the control variables, the SLA fixed effects,  $u_j$ , take into account possible underlying differences across different SLAs in the level of perceived difficulty. The set of dummies,  $A_{ijt}$ , is included to distinguish households in which the youngest child is of a different age. This allows parents whose child is at a different stage of development to have varying levels of perceived search costs. Also, the set of yearly state dummy variables,  $S_s * T_t$ , controls for a state-wide average change in the outcome due to, say, a perturbation in the expected level of childcare availability.<sup>24</sup> The SLA-level unemployment rate,  $U_{jt}$ , captures a possible effect of local economic conditions on perceived childcare accessibility. Household characteristics,  $X_{ijt}$ , include the numbers of children aged from 5 to 14 years, and the numbers of older members by gender (except for the parents). It also contains information regarding the mothers, such as their ages, while dummy variables indicate a household with a single mother (neither married or in a de facto relationship), a household where the mother has a self-reported long-term health condition, and the level of educational attainment of the mother within the household (high school completion, high school completion plus qualifications, a bachelor's degree or higher) (for these summary statistics, see Appendix Table 3). The error term,  $e_{ijst}$ , is allowed to be correlated within an SLA. Under this specification, the coefficients for the set of dummies indicating areas with different numbers of childcare

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<sup>23</sup> The results based on the linear and quadratic specifications (included in Appendix Tables 1 and 2) indicate little significant relationship between perceived accessibility and the actual availability of childcare. This is likely because a true relationship tends to have a non-linear decline in the level of difficulty when communities gain at least 5 places per 100 children, and a relatively limited improvement thereafter, as indicated by the results based on the set of dummies.

<sup>24</sup> Also, changes due to new childcare regulations introduced in the states of Queensland (in 2003) and New South Wales (2004) are controlled. The state governments set regulations regarding the approval of premises, construction plans, applicants and staff. For example, requirements are set based on the number of children in care, the size of rooms, the number of staff and their qualifications, and health/safety (Department of Family and Community Services, 2005). The state-specific year effect is included for the state of Victoria in addition to the two states that introduced new childcare regulations. The remaining four states and territories have too few observations to include their own year effects.

places per 100 children, inform whether a new cohort of parents reports search costs and life satisfaction differently when their community experiences a change in the actual availability and accreditation status of center-based care. The estimated relationship nets out the effects of all control variables, such as year effects, state-specific trends, effects of community-level observed and unobserved characteristics and household/mother-level characteristics.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Overall results

Before examining the results for perceived search costs, it is important to see whether the selection into answering the difficulty questions is correlated with availability growth. Table 1 shows the results of estimating eq.(1) for the dummy variable indicating a household that answers the question related to difficulty in finding care for the hours they need. They indicate that, without any controls, households are more likely to answer the question when their community acquires new childcare places ('Column 1'). This is not surprising, as the question was answered by households which used or thought of using childcare. This tendency, however, disappears when the set of dummies indicating the age of the youngest child is controlled ('Column 3'). Further controlling for an extensive list of covariates does not change the fact that the probability of answering the question is uncorrelated with availability growth. This finding generally holds for the other questions. That is, the result of applying the specification in Table 1, 'Column 7' to all questions suggests little significant association between the supply-side measures and the probability of answering each of the difficulty questions (Appendix Table 4A). These results provide an indication that, once all control variables are taken into account, there is unlikely to be compositional change in unobserved characteristics which are associated with availability growth.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> While it is possible to use the mother fixed effects model, with this model it would be difficult to disentangle the effect of a change in the availability of childcare from a possible change in the unobserved preference for center-based care and the expectation of its availability. Such an unobserved preference is likely to be modified as children become older. Thus, it is likely to be more appropriate to use the SLA fixed effects model, which compares different cohorts of parents (with a similar age structure of children) facing different levels of childcare availability. Also, the SLA fixed effects model is in line with the conventional strategy taken by recent previous studies on the effect of childcare accessibility on maternal labor supply and children's well-being (Baker, Gruber, and Milligan, 2008, Berlinski and Galiani, 2006, Cascio, 2009, Gelbach, 2002, and Schlosser, 2005). Hence, it facilitates the comparison between those studies and the present study.

<sup>26</sup> It is still possible that the composition of the group of reporting households changes without changing the overall proportion of reporting households, which I return to later.

The results for perceived search costs are shown in Table 2, applying the same specification used in Table 1, ‘Column 7’ to the sample of households answering each of the questions on perceived search costs. It indicates that availability growth is associated with a decline in perceived difficulty in finding good quality care, care for sick children and care in a good location. An increase in the number of childcare places per 100 children from less than 5 to greater than 15 is associated with about a one point reduction in the levels of the abovementioned difficulties, or 24-36 percent of their averages. A further increase in the availability measure, however, is not associated with a significant, additional mitigation in perceived difficulty. A possible explanation for these results might be that the first one or two centers to enter a community are particularly effective in alleviating the costs of searching for childcare. The results of estimating eq.(1) for maternal life satisfaction are shown in Table 3. It reveals that an increase in the availability of center-based care is also correlated with an improvement in a mother’s satisfaction with the amount of free time and satisfaction with her community involvement.<sup>27</sup> For instance, having at least 15 places per 100 children is associated with a significant 13 percent increase in a mother’s level of satisfaction with her amount of free time.

It is possible that some of these results are driven by households that move to areas with more childcare availability. If this is the case, the estimates for households that did not move during the analytical period (non-movers) are likely to show little significance. Table 4 indicates that this is true with regard to difficulty in finding childcare in a good location and satisfaction with community involvement. The outcomes for non-movers, however, provide consistent results indicating difficulties in finding good quality care, care for sick children, and satisfaction with the amount of time mothers have. These results are suggestive that the findings for the latter set of outcomes are not driven by households’ endogenous location choice.

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<sup>27</sup> The sample used for this analysis is households that answered at least one of the difficulty questions as well as the questions related to maternal life satisfaction. The results of the linear probability model indicating a household included in the sample exhibit no significant association with the supply-side variables (Appendix Table 4B).

Another possible source of bias is that childcare providers entered areas where perceived difficulty in finding childcare was declining for reasons that are unobserved in the data. If this is the case, past changes in the level of perceived difficulty and satisfaction are likely to be correlated with current changes in the number of providers. In order to examine this issue, the number of childcare centers is regressed on a list of past area characteristics, including the average level of perceived difficulty and satisfaction, average income, rental costs and demographic composition in the SLA fixed effects model.<sup>28</sup> The results shown in Table 5 indicate that childcare centers were more likely to enter into communities where the average level of difficulty in finding care for sick children was declining. These results suggest that the findings for this particular outcome might be due to the endogenous entry by care providers; however no other significant association was found.

Altogether, the results are suggestive that an increase in the availability of center-based care mitigates difficulty in finding good quality care and improves maternal satisfaction with the amount of free time available. One explanation for the significant results for these outcomes might be that new centers diversified the quality of center-based care, easing the search for a provider which a household regards to be of good quality. These are in line with the views of Satterthwaite (1979) and Eaton and Lipsey (1989). Also, an increase in the number of childcare slots in a nearby location might have contributed to a decline in the time spent on transportation (Greenhut et al., 1985), thereby expanding the amount of free time for mothers.

## **5.2 Heterogeneity by household characteristics**

The results thus far assumed homogeneous relationships between the supply-side factors and maternal life satisfaction. The relationship, however, could vary for households with different socio-economic status and demographic composition. This issue is explored by dividing the sample of non-moving households

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<sup>28</sup> Control variables also include year effects and state-specific trends. In addition, since some of the communities did not have a household answering the difficulty/satisfaction questions, dummy variables are included to indicate such communities as well. These communities are assigned zero for the level of difficulty/satisfaction. See Appendix Table 6 for details and summary statistics.

by maternal education and the existence of siblings.<sup>29</sup> This exercise also allows the examination of a compositional change in the sample of households answering the difficulty/satisfaction questions with respect to those observable characteristics. For all the subsamples, the results for the probability of answering the questions show little significant association with the supply-side variables (Appendix Tables 7A-10A). Coupled with the results in Table 1, these findings might be taken as an indication of no significant compositional change in the sample with respect to unobservable characteristics.

The results, separately estimated for educated and less-educated mothers, show that the alleviation in difficulty in finding good quality care is concentrated among less-educated mothers, who either dropped out of or finished high school education (Appendix Table 8B). It is possible that the two groups of households live in different areas, however these results hold, even when the sample is limited to areas where at least one household with an educated mother and one household with a less-educated mother live. One possible explanation might be that childcare centers within the residential community are more relevant for less-educated mothers.

Parents with older children may have searched for childcare several years ago, and their current answers might reflect how difficult it was for them back then. Alternatively, they might have conducted a new search for a younger sibling, updating their perceptions. In the latter case, these parents might be better at gathering information on new centers than first-time parents, because of their past search experience. The results, separately obtained for households with one child and the rest (having at least one more child aged from 0 to 14 years), indicate that the latter is true. That is, the results for parents with more than one child exhibit the growth in childcare availability is associated with a reduction in the difficulty in finding childcare within a good location and an increase in maternal satisfaction with the amount of free time

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<sup>29</sup> The results separately estimated for coupled and single mothers show that the results for coupled mothers are consistent with those for the whole sample. The sample size for single mothers (588 year\*households in 191 communities, with about half answering the questions) is likely to be too small to draw a firm conclusion.

available (Appendix Tables 9B, 9D, 10B and 10D).<sup>30</sup> Consistent results are obtained when the sample is restricted to areas containing both types of households.

## **6. Conclusions**

This study has examined the relationship between the local availability of childcare and consumers' surplus, measured by perceived childcare search costs and parental life satisfaction. While theory suggests that the effect of the availability of differentiated services on consumers' surplus is ambiguous, the empirical results provided in this paper demonstrate that having at least 15 center-based childcare places per 100 children is associated with a one-third reduction in difficulty in finding good quality care, and a 16 percent increase in the level of a mother's satisfaction with the amount of free time available to her. Interestingly, a further increase in the availability of center-based care is not accompanied by much improvement in perceived difficulty or satisfaction. Further evidence provides an indication that these results are not due to either endogenous migration of households or entry by providers. These findings imply that an increase in the availability of childcare, particularly the first several spaces within a local community, raises consumers' surplus or the welfare of households, through mitigating the costs associated with searching for childcare and freeing up mothers' time. Benefits are found to be concentrated among less-educated mothers and parents having older children with younger siblings.

It is worth noting the qualifications of the analysis. One is the lack of detailed measures of childcare quality. Though this study finds few significant relationships between the average accreditation status and perceived childcare accessibility, this might be because accreditation status does not capture detailed service attributes related to quality. The other is that the locations of parental workplaces are unknown, and thus the availability of childcare facilities around these locations is not controlled. Research utilizing information on these factors would provide useful evidence to further understand the link between the welfare of parents and the structure of the childcare market.

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<sup>30</sup> While the results for the difficulty in finding childcare in a good location are insignificant for the undivided sample of non-moving households, the results here indicate that a concentrated significant relationship is found for non-moving households with more than one child.

Fig.1A: Total number of childcare centers in Australia: 2001-2006

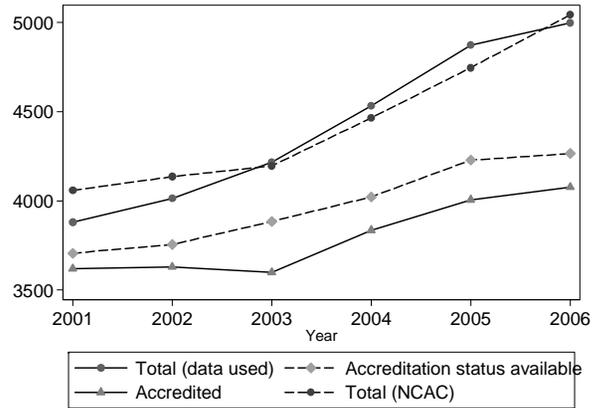


Fig.1B: Total number of childcare centers in the HILDA Survey areas: 2001-2006

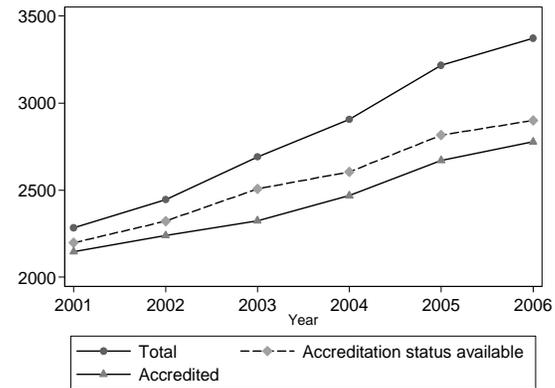


Fig.1C: Number of childcare places per 100 children: 2001-2006

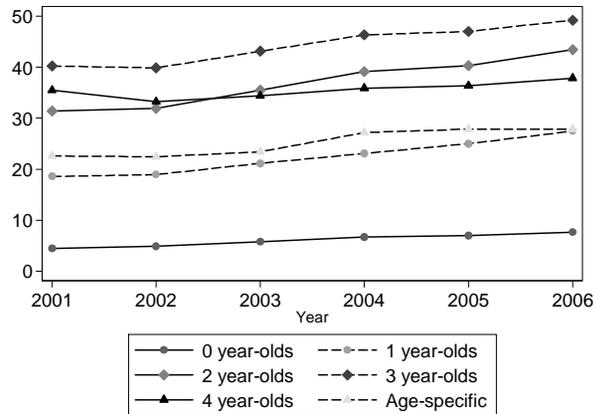
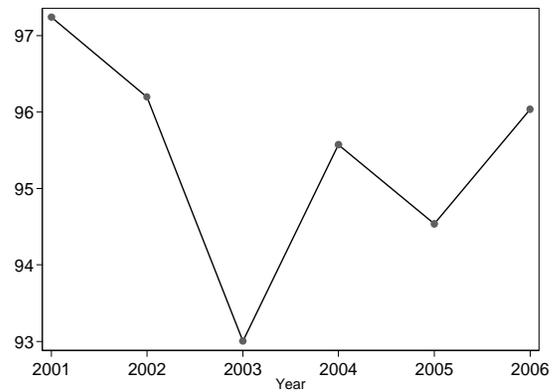


Fig.1D: Share of accredited childcare centers: 2001-2006



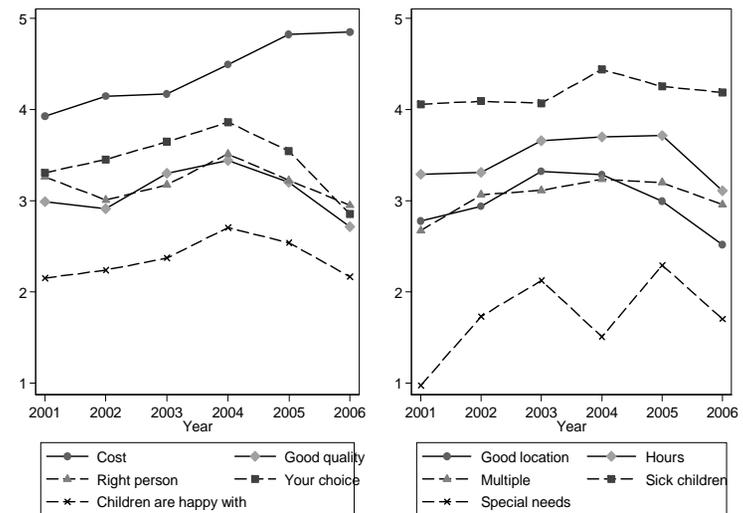
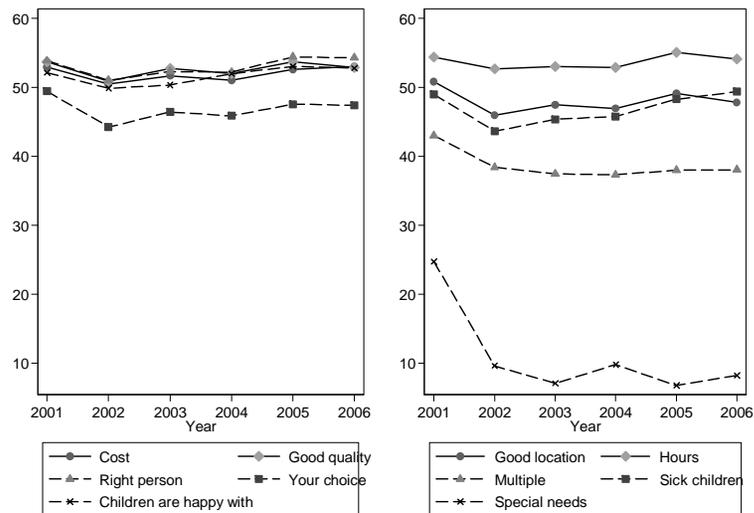
Sources: Data collected by the author from the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) website and the 2001 and 2006 Census. See Section 3.1 and Appendix 2 for details.

Notes:

- Accredited providers are those meeting the national quality criteria specified by the NCAC's Child Care Quality Assurance system. The computation of the proportion does not include services that are new and accreditation status has not been assigned.
- Fig.1A shows the total number for Australia as a whole, while Fig.1B, C, and D indicate the figures for areas covered by the HILDA Survey.

Fig.2A: Share of households with 0-4 year-olds answering childcare search costs: 2001-2006

Fig.2B: Average perceived search costs: 2001-2006



Source: The 2001-2006 HILDA Survey.

Notes:

- The sample is households with at least one child aged 0-4. If a household has either used or thought about using childcare, they answered, on a scale ranging from 0 (not a problem at all) to 10 (very much a problem), difficulties in the following:
  - dealing with the cost of childcare (cost)
  - finding good quality care (good quality)
  - finding the right person to take care of your child (right person)
  - finding a place at the child care centre of your choice (your choice)
  - finding care your (child is / children are) happy with (happy)
  - finding a child care centre in the right location (location)
  - getting care for the hours need (hours)
  - juggling multiple child care arrangements (multiple)
  - finding care for a sick child (sick children)
  - finding care for a difficult or special needs child (special needs)
- Fig.2A shows the share of households with at least one child aged 0-4 that answered each difficulty question, and Fig.2B shows the average score reported by those households.

Fig.3A: Share of households with 0-4 year-olds that answer one of the questions on childcare search costs and the questions on maternal life satisfaction: 2001-2006

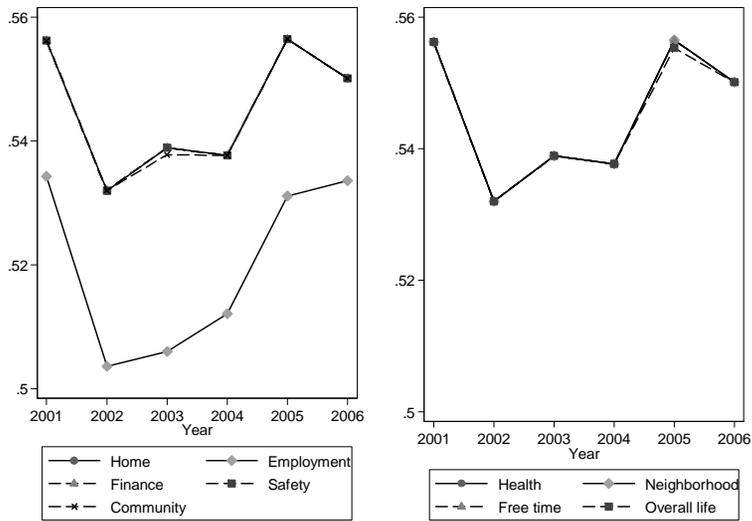
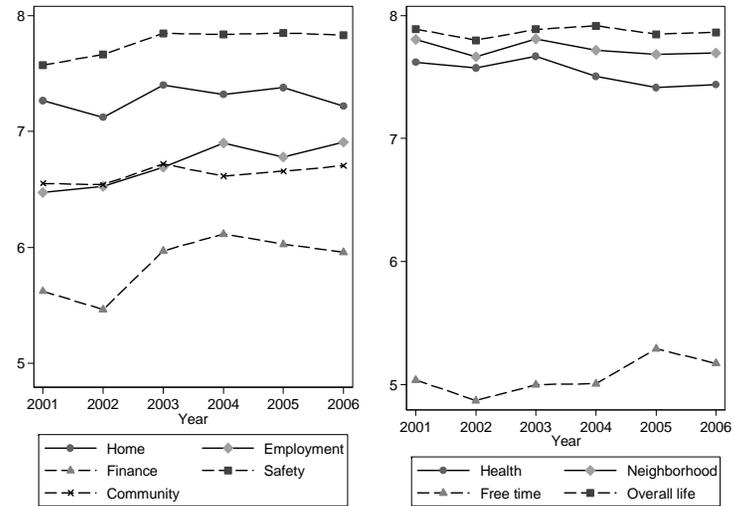


Fig.3B: Average maternal life satisfaction: 2001-2006



Source: The 2001-2006 HILDA Survey.

Notes:

- Individuals answered the level of satisfaction with different aspects of life in a scale of 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied).
- The aspects of life cover ‘the home in which you live (home)’, ‘your employment opportunities (employment)’, ‘your financial situation (finance)’, ‘how safe you feel (safety)’, ‘feeling part of your local community (community)’, ‘your health (health)’, ‘the neighborhood in which you live (neighborhood)’, and ‘the amount of free time you have (free time).’ Then, individuals answered the following question: ‘all things considered, how satisfied are you with your life?’
- If a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and also answered the questions on the mother’s satisfaction with different aspects of her life, the household is included in the analysis of the level of maternal life satisfaction.
- Fig.3A shows the share of households with at least one child aged 0-4 that answered at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and also answered the questions on maternal life satisfaction. Fig.3B shows the average score reported by those households.

Table 1 Correlates of the incidence of answering the question on difficulty in finding childcare for hours a household needs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

Outcome = 1 if a household answers the question on difficulty in finding care for hours they need	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1 if the number of center-based places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:							
greater than 5 and less than 15	0.062 [0.013]**	0.063 [0.009]***	-0.022 [0.458]	-0.013 [0.653]	-0.014 [0.639]	-0.013 [0.669]	-0.014 [0.644]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.151 [0.000]***	0.157 [0.000]***	-0.01 [0.799]	-0.001 [0.989]	-0.001 [0.975]	0 [0.992]	0.001 [0.987]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.227 [0.000]***	0.233 [0.000]***	0.026 [0.556]	0.035 [0.417]	0.034 [0.430]	0.036 [0.419]	0.035 [0.440]
greater than 45	0.246 [0.000]***	0.25 [0.000]***	0.012 [0.822]	0.022 [0.669]	0.021 [0.691]	0.023 [0.676]	0.023 [0.676]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.014 [0.875]	0.007 [0.941]	-0.01 [0.908]	-0.006 [0.950]	-0.006 [0.945]	-0.011 [0.906]	-0.014 [0.884]
Dummies for maternal education		x	x	x	x	x	x
Dummies for the age of the youngest child			x	x	x	x	x
Number of other household members by age and gender				x	x	x	x
Other maternal characteristics					x	x	x
SLA-level unemployment rate, year effects						x	x
Year*state effects							x
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	19.39	24.72	19.95	22.34	18.88	14.61	10.34

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- Dummies for maternal education classify mothers into four groups: high school dropouts, high school graduates, high school graduates with a qualification, and college/graduate school graduates.
- Dummies for the age of the youngest child are included for households where the youngest is aged 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Number of household members is included for individuals aged 5-14, men aged 15 and above (except for parents) and women aged 15 and above (except for parents).
- Other maternal characteristics include her age, marital status, and the existence of self-reported long-term health problem.
- See Appendix Table 3 for the summary statistics of the covariates.
- The state-specific trend is included for the largest three states: New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland.
- Results for the other questions on childcare search costs show a similar pattern (Appendix Table 4A).

Table 2 Correlates of the level of perceived childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	4.38	3.08	3.19	3.44	2.35	3.45	3.01	4.17	1.47	2.96
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.45	3.40	3.45	3.80	3.04	3.48	3.27	3.95	3.03	3.58
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.315 [0.308]	-0.496 [0.115]	-0.221 [0.477]	-0.09 [0.822]	-0.226 [0.374]	-0.379 [0.225]	-0.452 [0.209]	-0.706 [0.053]*	0.061 [0.959]	-0.395 [0.288]
greater than 15 and less than 25	-0.543 [0.210]	-0.908 [0.021]**	-0.562 [0.164]	-0.724 [0.145]	-0.73 [0.032]**	-0.341 [0.424]	-0.583 [0.214]	-1.004 [0.046]**	0.405 [0.733]	-1.076 [0.031]**
greater than 25 and less than 45	-0.402 [0.389]	-0.959 [0.028]**	-0.482 [0.277]	-0.757 [0.198]	-0.554 [0.180]	-0.624 [0.207]	-1.131 [0.031]**	-0.985 [0.076]*	0.166 [0.906]	-0.926 [0.104]
greater than 45	-0.629 [0.267]	-1.083 [0.038]**	-0.511 [0.339]	-0.915 [0.170]	-0.659 [0.170]	-0.475 [0.411]	-0.874 [0.152]	-0.636 [0.348]	0.72 [0.720]	-1.066 [0.095]*
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.355 [0.717]	0.344 [0.686]	0.258 [0.796]	-1.029 [0.424]	-0.579 [0.558]	0.44 [0.642]	-1.068 [0.298]	0.451 [0.715]	-1.468 [0.746]	-1.106 [0.268]
Observations	2881	2918	2936	2606	2862	2974	2154	2599	642	2664
Number of SLAs	492	491	492	484	489	493	437	475	275	486
F-stat	2.01	3.16	2.06	3.51	1.8	2.04	2.07	2.02	1.09	2.18

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations use the specification shown in 'Column 7' in Table 1.
- The sample is households with a child aged 0-4 that answered the respective question on childcare search costs.

Table 3 Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
[A] Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ- ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.20	7.00	5.81	7.66	6.59	7.46	7.69	4.85	7.75
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.20	2.29	2.30	1.84	2.14	1.84	1.93	2.71	1.45
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
	0.187	0.35	0.303	0.098	0.349	0.226	-0.002	0.473	0.208
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.368]	[0.078]*	[0.163]	[0.545]	[0.061]*	[0.211]	[0.990]	[0.097]*	[0.121]
	0.439	0.419	0.462	0.04	0.455	0.344	-0.046	0.643	0.237
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.114]	[0.120]	[0.137]	[0.857]	[0.068]*	[0.116]	[0.822]	[0.071]*	[0.190]
	0.487	0.263	0.293	-0.049	0.208	0.289	-0.087	0.766	0.33
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.131]	[0.393]	[0.410]	[0.848]	[0.471]	[0.282]	[0.715]	[0.057]*	[0.122]
	0.441	0.43	0.243	-0.066	0.367	0.259	0.022	0.473	0.318
greater than 45	[0.262]	[0.244]	[0.556]	[0.828]	[0.264]	[0.399]	[0.938]	[0.330]	[0.196]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.376	0.343	0.17	0.18	0.695	0.312	0.24	0.022	0.293
	[0.694]	[0.576]	[0.756]	[0.743]	[0.121]	[0.524]	[0.569]	[0.974]	[0.386]
Observations	3022	2883	3022	3022	3021	3022	3022	3022	3021
Number of SLAs	495	488	495	495	495	495	495	495	495
F-stat	1.46	3.27	4.45	3.17	2.3	3.53	1.24	2.47	2.78

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations use the specification shown in 'Column 7' in Table 1.
- The sample is households with a child aged 0-4 that answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and where the mother answered the question on life satisfaction.

Table 4 Correlates of the level of perceived childcare search costs and maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model  
The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	The level of difficulty related to finding:			The level of maternal satisfaction with:		
	Good quality care	Care for sick children	Care at a good location	Employment	Community	The amount of free time
Mean of the outcome variable	2.85	4.11	2.75	2.75	6.76	4.87
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.34	3.94	3.49	3.49	2.08	2.69
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:						
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.642 [0.097]*	-1.172 [0.006]***	-0.298 [0.492]	0.411 [0.095]*	0.216 [0.328]	0.691 [0.051]*
greater than 15 and less than 25	-1.006 [0.043]**	-1.553 [0.007]***	-0.829 [0.164]	0.467 [0.161]	0.348 [0.277]	0.756 [0.074]*
greater than 25 and less than 45	-1.052 [0.054]*	-1.377 [0.034]**	-0.539 [0.426]	0.138 [0.718]	0.021 [0.953]	0.761 [0.112]
greater than 45	-1.183 [0.068]*	-1.116 [0.152]	-0.564 [0.462]	0.272 [0.548]	0.306 [0.473]	0.573 [0.318]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.312 [0.780]	-0.094 [0.950]	-0.605 [0.643]	-0.23 [0.709]	1.025 [0.062]*	-0.021 [0.981]
Observations	2006	1801	1817	1981	2075	2076
Number of SLAs	330	320	326	331	335	335
F-stat	2.43	1.72	1.58	2.2	1.94	1.82

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations use the specification shown in 'Column 7' in Table 1.
- See the notes for Tables 2 and 3 for the definition of the sample.
- The results for selected outcomes are shown. Other outcomes show little significance (Appendix Tables 5B and 5D). The incidence of answering the questions on childcare search costs and the incidence of answering maternal life satisfaction (together with one of the questions on childcare search costs) are not associated with the supply-side variables (Appendix Tables 5A and 5B).

Table 5 Correlates of the number of childcare providers (SLA-level fixed effects model, unit of observation = SLA)

	(1)	(2)
Outcome = Number of childcare centers	1 if an SLA has at least one household answering the question in the previous year	The average level of the answer to the question in the previous year
<u>Questions on childcare search costs related to:</u>		
Cost	0.064 [0.246]	-0.005 [0.017]
Good Quality	0.163 [0.172]	-0.023 [0.023]
Right Persons	-0.108 [0.224]	0.022 [0.018]
Your choice	0.183 [0.202]	0.012 [0.015]
Happy	-0.114 [0.289]	0.014 [0.016]
Hours	0.065 [0.323]	-0.009 [0.018]
Multiple	-0.036 [0.096]	0.005 [0.013]
Sick	0.087 [0.110]	-0.019 [0.011]*
Special needs	-0.135 [0.118]	0.023 [0.023]
Location	-0.115 [0.194]	-0.01 [0.016]
<u>Questions on maternal life satisfaction:</u>		
Home	-0.02 [0.311]	-0.025 [0.020]
Employment	0.095 [0.145]	-0.008 [0.016]
Finance		0.004 [0.021]
Safety		0.023 [0.025]
Community		0.016 [0.022]
Health		-0.015 [0.022]
Neighborhood		-0.01 [0.019]
Free time		-0.008 [0.014]
Overall Life		-0.002 [0.028]
Observations (SLAs)	1981 (592)	
F-stat	7.08	

Sources: The data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); Australian Property Monitor data; 2001-06 Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia; the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2001-2006 HILDA Survey.

Notes:

- Standard errors in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- Selected coefficients are shown from one regression, where the number of childcare centers is regressed on the set of dummies indicating a community (SLA) where at least one household answered each of the questions on childcare search costs and maternal life satisfaction in the previous year ('Column 1') and the SLA-level average of childcare search costs and maternal life satisfaction in the previous year ('Column 2').
- The dummy variables indicating SLAs which have at least one household answering the question on maternal life satisfaction regarding finance, safety, community, health, neighborhood, free time, and overall life are not included because they are collinear with the dummy variable indicating SLAs which have at least one household answering the question on maternal life satisfaction regarding home.
- In addition to the variables shown, the regression equation also controls for proxies for rental costs, proxies for wage costs and demographic characteristics in the previous year.
- Rental cost proxies are the set of dummies indicating communities with at least one commercial property transaction for three types of commercial property (offices, shops, and industries) as well as the set of interaction terms between the dummy and the median commercial property value. The median residential property value is controlled as well. This information is extracted from Australian Property Monitor data.
- Wage cost proxy, the average annual gross earned income, is extracted from the 2001-06 Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia.
- Demographic characteristics include total population; the share of individuals aged 0-2, 3-4, 5-9, 10-19, and 20-49; as well as the share of indigenous population, population born outside the country, and population speaking non-English language at home.
- The median per capita weekly gross household income is also included.
- The demographic characteristics and the median per capita household income are based on the interpolation from the 2001 and 2006 Census.

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## Appendix

### A1: The quality assessment system<sup>31</sup>

Though accreditation is not mandatory, providers generally opt to have it because accreditation is linked to eligibility for federal subsidies, allowing providers to offer reduced fees. Accredited providers also have an incentive to keep this status because the loss of accreditation status could lead to the cancellation of the provider's approval for subsidy purposes, and thus to an increase in the fee level for families using the providers.

Once registered, a provider must submit a self-evaluation report, called a Self-Study Report (SSR), within one and half years. The assessment process then involves a further survey (Validation Survey, VS) filled in by the director, staff and families prior to a visit from Validators who assess the provider with a Validation Report (VR). The providers may comment on the validation visit. These materials are then assessed by Moderators. Ratings from the SSR, VS, VR, and Moderator's evaluation are entered into a computer which calculates a composite Quality Profile of the provider. This indicates whether their practice is unsatisfactory, satisfactory, of a good quality or of an high quality. The National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) accredits a provider if it achieves a rating of satisfactory or higher on all areas of assessment.

A provider cannot be accredited if it has not undertaken the necessary actions required in the assessment process (Non-Compliant);<sup>32</sup> has not met the standards required under the system (Non-Accredited) or has serious problems related to licensing or child protection, as confirmed by relevant authorities (Accreditation Withdrawn).<sup>33</sup> Non-compliant status, Accreditation Withdrawn status and a repeated or particularly problematic Non-Accredited status are reported to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs which can suspend or cancel the provider's approval for subsidy purposes. Alternatively, the other form of sanction, additional conditions for approval, can be applied for.

During the analysis period, 95 percent of providers that underwent an accreditation process were accredited. Among providers that were not accredited, 87 percent of them received 'Not Accredited' status, 12 percent received 'Non-compliant' status, while less than 1 percent had their 'Accreditation withdrawn' (based on the data collected from the website of the NCAC by the author).

### A2: The measure of the supply of center-based care

The state-level average numbers of childcare places per provider were obtained from the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Census for Child Care Services (collected by Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs). The total number of children was extracted from the 2001 and 2006 Census (collected by Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS) for each area defined by the 2006 Statistical Local Area (SLA). The relevant concordance files (provided by ABS) were used to convert the number of children and the number of providers from the 2006-SLA-level information and the 2006-postcode-level information, respectively, to the 2001-SLA-level information.

### A3: The questionnaire on perceived difficulty

The HILDA Survey asked, 'At any time in the last 12 months have you used, or thought about using, any of these forms of childcare so that you (or your partner) could undertake paid work?' and listed the following types of childcare: Family Day Care, Long Day Care, any other care at a Child Care Centre; Outside of School Hour Care or Vacation Care; someone paid to come to your home to care for your child; someone paid to care for your child in their home; a friend, relative or neighbor caring for your child for free or for payment in kind.

In 2001, the questionnaire on childcare search costs was answered by up to two persons who took 'primary responsibility for organizing any childcare' within the household. In the later years, however,

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<sup>31</sup> The information in this Appendix is based on NCAC (2006a).

<sup>32</sup> This includes paying registration fees, submitting their Self-Study Reports and allowing a Validator to conduct a validation visit/spot check.

<sup>33</sup> Providers could also receive this status if other issues are reported to the NCAC as a written complaint, but providers do not adequately respond to the NCAC within 8 weeks of its initial correspondence.

the questionnaire was answered by only one person within the household with the ability to answer questions pertaining to 'childcare arrangements' and 'the costs involved.' Also, the 2001 questionnaire asked, 'At any time in the last 12 months have you used, or thought about using, any of these forms of childcare so that you can (both) undertake paid work?' instead of '...so that you (or your partner) could undertake work?'

Appendix Table 1A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

Linear specification										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community in a household's residential community	-0.056 [0.730]	-0.055 [0.740]	-0.065 [0.692]	-0.198 [0.278]	-0.107 [0.524]	-0.064 [0.701]	-0.138 [0.538]	-0.118 [0.509]	-0.131 [0.274]	-0.134 [0.454]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.016 [0.870]	0.002 [0.979]	-0.014 [0.875]	-0.075 [0.432]	0 [0.999]	-0.012 [0.898]	-0.004 [0.958]	0.024 [0.797]	-0.009 [0.862]	-0.076 [0.415]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	10.71	10.71	10.17	11.27	10.76	11.18	6.56	11.04	4.4	10.24

Appendix Table 1B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

Linear specification										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community in a household's residential community	0.003 [0.468]	-0.001 [0.834]	-0.001 [0.895]	-0.005 [0.500]	-0.001 [0.831]	-0.007 [0.184]	-0.003 [0.608]	0.008 [0.178]	0.01 [0.214]	-0.006 [0.183]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.354 [0.717]	0.331 [0.694]	0.246 [0.805]	-1.031 [0.422]	-0.6 [0.544]	0.446 [0.636]	-1.059 [0.300]	0.53 [0.665]	-1.588 [0.721]	-1.12 [0.261]
Observations	2881	2918	2936	2606	2862	2974	2154	2599	642	2664
Number of SLAs	492	491	492	484	489	493	437	475	275	486
F-stat	2.16	3.17	2.06	3.47	1.74	2.19	1.9	2.19	1.23	2.17

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 1C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model Linear specification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community in a household's residential community	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.068 [0.690]	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.061 [0.715]	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.06 [0.718]	-0.059 [0.724]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.005 [0.954]	-0.005 [0.955]	0.005 [0.954]	0.005 [0.954]	0.007 [0.942]	0.005 [0.954]	0.005 [0.954]	0.005 [0.954]	0.004 [0.964]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	11.8	12.61	11.8	11.8	11.78	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.8

Appendix Table 1D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community	0.407 [0.659]	-0.032 [0.969]	-0.301 [0.762]	0.747 [0.379]	-0.4 [0.645]	-0.306 [0.722]	-0.859 [0.335]	0.69 [0.710]	0.346 [0.747]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.375 [0.696]	0.353 [0.568]	0.172 [0.755]	0.185 [0.733]	0.71 [0.114]	0.312 [0.528]	0.242 [0.568]	0.008 [0.991]	0.292 [0.387]
Observations	3022	2883	3022	3022	3021	3022	3022	3022	3021
Number of SLAs	495	488	495	495	495	495	495	495	495
F-stat	1.45	3.28	4.58	3.46	2.24	3.45	1.26	2.28	2.42

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 2A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

Quadratic specification										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community	0.001 [0.556]	0.001 [0.411]	0.001 [0.511]	0.001 [0.175]	0.001 [0.400]	0.001 [0.569]	0 [0.699]	0 [0.706]	0.002 [0.005]***	0.001 [0.361]
(Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community)^2	0 [0.804]	0 [0.548]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.289]	0 [0.530]	0 [0.721]	0 [0.543]	0 [0.807]	0 [0.004]***	0 [0.479]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.013 [0.889]	0.005 [0.961]	-0.012 [0.894]	-0.071 [0.463]	0.003 [0.978]	-0.01 [0.915]	-0.002 [0.982]	0.026 [0.780]	-0.005 [0.916]	-0.073 [0.436]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	10.39	10.29	9.87	10.71	10.4	10.8	6.63	10.85	4.36	9.76

Appendix Table 2B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model

Quadratic specification										
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community	-0.002 [0.829]	-0.008 [0.356]	-0.009 [0.325]	-0.022 [0.053]*	-0.003 [0.729]	-0.006 [0.517]	-0.006 [0.586]	0.003 [0.784]	-0.008 [0.794]	-0.011 [0.308]
(Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community)^2	0 [0.294]	0 [0.189]	0 [0.161]	0 [0.014]**	0 [0.761]	0 [0.859]	0 [0.814]	0 [0.466]	0 [0.527]	0 [0.528]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.349 [0.721]	0.321 [0.704]	0.236 [0.813]	-1.074 [0.405]	-0.601 [0.543]	0.448 [0.635]	-1.067 [0.296]	0.527 [0.666]	-1.67 [0.709]	-1.13 [0.258]
Observations	2881	2918	2936	2606	2862	2974	2154	2599	642	2664
Number of SLAs	492	491	492	484	489	493	437	475	275	486
F-stat	2.56	3.16	2.2	3.61	1.69	2.14	1.85	2.35	1.42	2.19

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 2C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model Quadratic specification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community	0 [0.667]	0 [0.953]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.696]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.667]	0 [0.683]
(Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community)^2	0 [0.834]	0 [0.918]	0 [0.834]	0 [0.834]	0 [0.862]	0 [0.834]	0 [0.834]	0 [0.834]	0 [0.848]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.007 [0.938]	-0.004 [0.967]	0.007 [0.938]	0.007 [0.938]	0.008 [0.927]	0.007 [0.938]	0.007 [0.938]	0.007 [0.938]	0.006 [0.948]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	11.48	12.49	11.48	11.48	11.48	11.48	11.48	11.48	11.49

Appendix Table 2D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification Quadratic specification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community	0.002 [0.751]	-0.004 [0.528]	-0.003 [0.643]	-0.002 [0.760]	-0.003 [0.637]	-0.001 [0.762]	0.001 [0.816]	0 [0.998]	0.003 [0.398]
(Number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community)^2	0 [0.931]	0 [0.673]	0 [0.680]	0 [0.510]	0 [0.670]	0 [0.976]	0 [0.276]	0 [0.637]	0 [0.177]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.373 [0.697]	0.345 [0.576]	0.169 [0.759]	0.18 [0.742]	0.708 [0.114]	0.311 [0.530]	0.246 [0.559]	0.001 [0.999]	0.293 [0.386]
Observations	3022	2883	3022	3022	3021	3022	3022	3022	3021
Number of SLAs	495	488	495	495	495	495	495	495	495
F-stat	1.48	3.26	4.43	3.32	2.25	4.04	1.46	2.22	2.87

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 3: Summary statistics for covariates used in the household-level regressions

	Mean	SD
<i>Household-level control variables</i>		
1 if the youngest child is aged 1	0.21	0.41
1 if the youngest child is aged 2	0.18	0.39
1 if the youngest child is aged 3	0.16	0.36
1 if the youngest child is aged 4	0.15	0.35
Number of children aged 5-14	0.74	0.97
Number of female household members aged 15 and above	0.08	0.33
Number of male household members aged 15 and above	0.09	0.33
Age of the mother	32.33	5.87
1 if the mother is not married or in a de facto relationship	0.18	0.39
1 if the mother reports that she has a long-term health problem	0.11	0.31
1 if the mother completed a Bachelor's degree or higher	0.26	0.44
1 if the mother completed high school and holds a qualification	0.24	0.43
1 if the mother completed high school but does not hold a qualification	0.20	0.40
Number of year * households	5541	
<i>SLA-level control variables</i>		
1 if the unemployment rate is available for the area	0.96	0.19
1{the unemployment rate is available for the area} * the unemployment rate (%)	5.68	3.12
<i>SLA-level childcare variables</i>		
Number of centre-based care places per 100 children in a household's residential community	25.45	29.81
1 if the number of centre-based care places per 100 children is between 5 and 15	0.24	0.36
1 if the number of centre-based care places per 100 children is between 15 and 25	0.17	0.32
1 if the number of centre-based care places per 100 children is between 25 and 45	0.20	0.33
1 if the number of centre-based care places per 100 children is greater than 45	0.17	0.33
Share of accredited childcare centers	0.95	0.11
Number of year * SLAs	2283	

Sources: Household-level variables are from the 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; the SLA-level childcare variables are based on the data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), the 2001 and 2006 Census, and the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; the SLA-level variables are from the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes: Educated mothers are defined as those who hold a qualification or a Bachelor's or higher degree. Less educated mothers' highest educational attainment is high school or below.

Appendix Table 4A: Correlates of the incidence of answering the questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:		Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.47	0.52	0.54	0.39	0.47	0.12	0.48
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.32	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
	-0.008	-0.009	-0.001	0	-0.004	-0.014	-0.006	0.007	0.008	-0.002
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.789]	[0.781]	[0.974]	[0.990]	[0.890]	[0.644]	[0.820]	[0.811]	[0.642]	[0.937]
	0.008	0.006	0.013	0.01	0.02	0.001	-0.018	0.019	0.024	-0.005
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.835]	[0.886]	[0.738]	[0.803]	[0.621]	[0.987]	[0.635]	[0.625]	[0.324]	[0.892]
	0.034	0.043	0.05	0.037	0.051	0.035	0.008	0.056	0.066	0.019
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.468]	[0.347]	[0.281]	[0.414]	[0.282]	[0.440]	[0.856]	[0.217]	[0.027]**	[0.674]
	0.027	0.04	0.046	0.072	0.056	0.023	-0.014	0.052	0.054	0.043
greater than 45	[0.632]	[0.476]	[0.408]	[0.186]	[0.327]	[0.676]	[0.815]	[0.350]	[0.108]	[0.440]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.017	0.001	-0.015	-0.073	0	-0.014	-0.003	0.026	-0.008	-0.074
	[0.860]	[0.989]	[0.873]	[0.450]	[0.999]	[0.884]	[0.967]	[0.786]	[0.883]	[0.426]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	9.85	9.86	9.42	10.32	9.92	10.34	6.23	10.14	4.28	9.41

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 4B: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and he question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.55	0.52	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:									
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.008 [0.804]	0.005 [0.869]	-0.008 [0.804]	-0.008 [0.804]	-0.007 [0.817]	-0.008 [0.804]	-0.008 [0.804]	-0.008 [0.804]	-0.007 [0.813]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.012 [0.759]	0.024 [0.532]	0.012 [0.759]	0.012 [0.759]	0.013 [0.741]	0.012 [0.759]	0.012 [0.759]	0.012 [0.759]	0.013 [0.752]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.036 [0.436]	0.039 [0.377]	0.036 [0.436]	0.036 [0.436]	0.037 [0.425]	0.036 [0.436]	0.036 [0.436]	0.036 [0.436]	0.037 [0.429]
greater than 45	0.03 [0.601]	0.034 [0.524]	0.03 [0.601]	0.03 [0.601]	0.029 [0.603]	0.03 [0.601]	0.03 [0.601]	0.03 [0.601]	0.03 [0.598]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.004 [0.964]	-0.005 [0.958]	0.004 [0.964]	0.004 [0.964]	0.005 [0.952]	0.004 [0.964]	0.004 [0.964]	0.004 [0.964]	0.003 [0.974]
Observations	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541	5541
Number of SLAs	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
F-stat	10.88	11.7	10.88	10.88	10.86	10.88	10.88	10.88	10.88

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 5A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.47	0.51	0.53	0.40	0.47	0.12	0.48
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.32	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.001 [0.980]	-0.006 [0.866]	0.005 [0.891]	0.006 [0.853]	0.007 [0.854]	-0.007 [0.839]	-0.011 [0.721]	0.005 [0.880]	0.007 [0.758]	-0.008 [0.820]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.043 [0.341]	0.042 [0.370]	0.051 [0.258]	0.036 [0.426]	0.059 [0.210]	0.035 [0.444]	0.023 [0.594]	0.035 [0.433]	0.026 [0.375]	0.011 [0.801]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.044 [0.403]	0.054 [0.299]	0.05 [0.338]	0.046 [0.379]	0.066 [0.230]	0.04 [0.431]	0.05 [0.303]	0.056 [0.282]	0.066 [0.060]*	0.013 [0.807]
greater than 45	0.045 [0.461]	0.066 [0.272]	0.053 [0.385]	0.083 [0.177]	0.084 [0.187]	0.036 [0.552]	0.051 [0.392]	0.058 [0.344]	0.052 [0.168]	0.037 [0.541]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.051 [0.664]	-0.019 [0.877]	-0.03 [0.798]	-0.125 [0.306]	-0.061 [0.614]	-0.034 [0.785]	-0.009 [0.923]	0.088 [0.488]	0.005 [0.934]	-0.117 [0.322]
Observations	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818
Number of SLAs	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399
F-stat	8.87	9.23	9.34	9.13	8.93	9.37	5.91	9.63	3.88	8.34

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 5B: Correlates of the level of perceived childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	4.19	2.85	2.96	3.23	2.20	3.32	2.94	4.11	1.29	2.75
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.43	3.34	3.42	3.76	2.98	3.47	3.22	3.94	2.89	3.49
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.639 [0.113]	-0.642 [0.097]*	-0.461 [0.233]	0.047 [0.924]	-0.253 [0.439]	-0.704 [0.070]*	-0.485 [0.242]	-1.172 [0.006]***	0.163 [0.901]	-0.298 [0.492]
greater than 15 and less than 25	-0.86 [0.122]	-1.006 [0.043]**	-0.808 [0.103]	-0.396 [0.524]	-0.459 [0.275]	-0.739 [0.182]	-0.379 [0.507]	-1.553 [0.007]***	0.202 [0.887]	-0.829 [0.164]
greater than 25 and less than 45	-0.573 [0.347]	-1.052 [0.054]*	-0.821 [0.140]	-0.116 [0.872]	-0.324 [0.516]	-0.937 [0.134]	-0.934 [0.125]	-1.377 [0.034]**	-0.112 [0.945]	-0.539 [0.426]
greater than 45	-0.588 [0.418]	-1.183 [0.068]*	-0.833 [0.219]	-0.251 [0.757]	-0.411 [0.490]	-0.881 [0.231]	-0.838 [0.242]	-1.116 [0.152]	-0.085 [0.969]	-0.564 [0.462]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.09 [0.942]	0.312 [0.780]	-0.472 [0.710]	-0.906 [0.605]	-1.215 [0.290]	0.439 [0.714]	-1.876 [0.122]	-0.094 [0.950]	-2.761 [0.605]	-0.605 [0.643]
Observations	1970	2006	2017	1783	1964	2039	1515	1801	456	1817
Number of SLAs	332	330	333	324	330	333	301	320	211	326
F-stat	2.06	2.43	1.21	2.01	1.96	1.33	1.75	1.72	0.88	1.58

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 5C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.54	0.52	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
greater than 5 and less than 15	0.006 [0.872]	0.016 [0.643]	0.006 [0.872]	0.006 [0.872]	0.007 [0.845]	0.006 [0.872]	0.006 [0.872]	0.006 [0.872]	0.006 [0.857]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.055 [0.226]	0.07 [0.116]	0.055 [0.226]	0.055 [0.226]	0.057 [0.207]	0.055 [0.226]	0.055 [0.226]	0.055 [0.226]	0.055 [0.221]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.049 [0.356]	0.052 [0.296]	0.049 [0.356]	0.049 [0.356]	0.051 [0.336]	0.049 [0.356]	0.049 [0.356]	0.049 [0.356]	0.05 [0.348]
greater than 45	0.05 [0.410]	0.054 [0.347]	0.05 [0.410]	0.05 [0.410]	0.051 [0.405]	0.05 [0.410]	0.05 [0.410]	0.05 [0.410]	0.051 [0.405]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.002 [0.984]	-0.019 [0.869]	0.002 [0.984]	0.002 [0.984]	0.004 [0.972]	0.002 [0.984]	0.002 [0.984]	0.002 [0.984]	0 [1.000]
Observations	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818	3818
Number of SLAs	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399	399
F-stat	9.86	9.46	9.86	9.86	9.86	9.86	9.86	9.86	9.87

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 5D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of households that did not move

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ- ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.33	7.02	5.91	7.72	6.76	7.54	7.81	4.87	7.83
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.14	2.33	2.29	1.80	2.08	1.79	1.83	2.69	1.41
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
	0.238	0.411	0.33	0.262	0.216	0.178	-0.003	0.691	0.207
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.365]	[0.095]*	[0.202]	[0.190]	[0.328]	[0.414]	[0.986]	[0.051]*	[0.195]
	0.518	0.467	0.426	0.11	0.348	0.243	-0.106	0.756	0.171
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.131]	[0.161]	[0.235]	[0.680]	[0.277]	[0.369]	[0.654]	[0.074]*	[0.421]
	0.606	0.138	0.156	-0.021	0.021	0.097	-0.198	0.761	0.183
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.130]	[0.718]	[0.698]	[0.945]	[0.953]	[0.761]	[0.462]	[0.112]	[0.476]
	0.492	0.272	0.26	-0.124	0.306	0.097	-0.098	0.573	0.202
greater than 45	[0.329]	[0.548]	[0.581]	[0.729]	[0.473]	[0.788]	[0.773]	[0.318]	[0.496]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.305	-0.23	0.33	0.054	1.025	0.266	-0.082	-0.021	0.348
	[0.719]	[0.709]	[0.657]	[0.915]	[0.062]*	[0.644]	[0.852]	[0.981]	[0.393]
Observations	2076	1981	2076	2076	2075	2076	2076	2076	2075
Number of SLAs	335	331	335	335	335	335	335	335	335
F-stat	1.24	2.2	2.93	2.45	1.94	2.94	1.33	1.82	2.76

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 6: Summary statistics for covariates used in the community (SLA)-level regressions

	Mean	SD
<u>Outcome variable</u>		
Number of childcare centers	7.39	10.74
<u>Rental cost proxies (previous year)</u>		
1{At least ten housing sales}	0.99	0.11
1{At least ten housing sales} *ln[median housing price (\$)]	3.15	3.07
1{at least ten industry property sales}	0.10	0.30
Median industry property price per square meter (\$1000) * 1{at least ten industry property sales}	31.63	155.27
1{at least ten commercial property sales}	0.33	0.47
Median commercial property price per square meter (\$1000) * 1{at least ten commercial property sales}	211.32	990.98
1{at least ten retail property sales}	0.02	0.13
Median retail property price per square meter (\$1000) * 1{at least ten retail property sales}	9.26	82.78
<u>Wage cost proxies (previous year)</u>		
1{At least one individual reports wage income for tax purposes}	0.77	0.42
1{At least one individual reports wage income for tax purposes} * average annual gross earned income (\$1000)	27.15	15.64
<u>Area characteristics (previous year)</u>		
Median per capita weekly gross household income (\$1000)	0.58	0.27
Total population (1,000 persons)	31.49	34.44
Shares of population by age group (0-2)	0.04	0.01
Shares of population by age group (3-4)	0.03	0.01
Shares of population by age group (5-9)	0.07	0.01
Shares of population by age group (10-19)	0.14	0.02
Shares of population by age group (20-49)	0.42	0.06
Shares of Indigenous population	0.02	0.03
Shares of population born outside the country	0.19	0.10
Shares of population speaking non-English language at home	0.11	0.12
<u>1 if at least one household answered the difficulty question in the previous year related to:</u>		
Cost	0.60	0.49
Good Quality	0.60	0.49
Right Persons	0.61	0.49
Your choice	0.56	0.50
Happy	0.60	0.49
Hours	0.61	0.49
Multiple	0.50	0.50
Sick	0.56	0.50
Special needs	0.19	0.40
Location	0.58	0.49

Appendix Table 6 continued: Summary statistics for covariates used in the community (SLA)-level regressions

	Mean	SD
<u>1 {at least one household answered the difficulty question in the previous year} * the average difficulty level</u>		
Cost	2.50	3.02
Good Quality	1.98	2.82
Right Persons	2.02	2.81
Your choice	2.11	3.13
Happy	1.48	2.41
Hours	2.19	2.93
Multiple	1.53	2.54
Sick	2.37	3.27
Special needs	0.33	1.54
Location	1.82	2.89
<u>1 if at least one household answered the satisfaction question in the previous year related to:</u>		
Home	0.81	0.39
Employ-ment	0.77	0.42
<u>1 {at least one household answered the satisfaction question in the previous year} * the average satisfaction level</u>		
Home	5.94	3.24
Employ-ment	5.11	3.28
Finance	4.75	2.84
Safety	6.33	3.32
Community	5.40	3.06
Health	6.14	3.27
Neighbor-hood	6.30	3.36
Free time	4.12	2.77
Overall Life	6.37	3.28

Sources: The number of childcare providers is from the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); rental cost proxies are from Australian Property Monitor data; wage cost proxies are from 2001-06 Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia; area characteristics are based on the interpolation from the 2001 and 2006 Census; the information on childcare search costs and life satisfaction is from the 2001-2006 HILDA Survey.

Appendix Table 7A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with an educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:		Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.61	0.62	0.62	0.55	0.61	0.63	0.47	0.56	0.13	0.56
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.48	0.50	0.50	0.34	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	0.021 [0.670]	0.027 [0.602]	0.028 [0.592]	0.027 [0.585]	0.043 [0.409]	0.022 [0.645]	0.019 [0.655]	0.008 [0.863]	0.01 [0.781]	0.005 [0.929]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.044 [0.540]	0.057 [0.451]	0.046 [0.523]	0.019 [0.794]	0.08 [0.289]	0.042 [0.543]	-0.019 [0.743]	0.022 [0.743]	-0.009 [0.859]	-0.024 [0.740]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.081 [0.296]	0.113 [0.165]	0.086 [0.287]	0.048 [0.528]	0.128 [0.118]	0.099 [0.192]	0.062 [0.363]	0.089 [0.239]	0.054 [0.396]	0.014 [0.856]
greater than 45	0.123 [0.180]	0.166 [0.082]*	0.126 [0.192]	0.146 [0.110]	0.189 [0.048]**	0.128 [0.155]	0.087 [0.275]	0.126 [0.149]	0.022 [0.738]	0.088 [0.335]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.089 [0.631]	-0.086 [0.650]	-0.114 [0.541]	-0.309 [0.101]	-0.137 [0.460]	-0.125 [0.520]	-0.053 [0.720]	-0.01 [0.953]	0.009 [0.935]	-0.292 [0.124]
Observations	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919
Number of SLAs	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
F-stat	4.85	4.87	4.28	4.49	4.85	4.92	4.7	5.66	2.56	4.42

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 7B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with an educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	4.41	3.10	3.21	3.47	2.40	3.63	3.17	4.39	1.17	2.99
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.33	3.39	3.42	3.80	3.01	3.48	3.26	3.95	2.79	3.55
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.601 [0.225]	-0.148 [0.780]	-0.076 [0.889]	0.977 [0.170]	-0.078 [0.859]	-0.703 [0.190]	-0.265 [0.622]	-0.885 [0.139]		0.101 [0.851]
greater than 15 and less than 25	-1.126 [0.119]	-0.74 [0.306]	-0.438 [0.536]	0.494 [0.594]	-0.347 [0.595]	-0.814 [0.325]	0.173 [0.807]	-1.433 [0.077]*		-0.713 [0.397]
greater than 25 and less than 45	-0.574 [0.462]	-0.142 [0.850]	0.032 [0.967]	1.048 [0.312]	0.429 [0.570]	-1.041 [0.247]	-0.594 [0.446]	-1.168 [0.182]		-0.127 [0.893]
greater than 45	-0.224 [0.804]	-0.409 [0.624]	-0.06 [0.946]	1.203 [0.316]	0.428 [0.628]	-0.821 [0.425]	-0.533 [0.573]	-0.594 [0.575]		0.222 [0.829]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.87 [0.628]	1.924 [0.173]	0.725 [0.664]	-0.773 [0.763]	0.117 [0.941]	1.175 [0.421]	-0.78 [0.588]	0.418 [0.799]		0.04 [0.981]
Observations	1167	1190	1192	1062	1164	1207	901	1083		1080
Number of SLAs	253	251	254	243	252	254	220	243		244
F-stat	2.32	1.32	0.61	1.86	1.28	1.18	1.27	1.61		1.6

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 7C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

The sample of non-moving households with an educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.64	0.62	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.036
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.491]	[0.490]	[0.491]	[0.491]	[0.491]	[0.491]	[0.491]	[0.491]	[0.474]
	0.072	0.087	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.073
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.315]	[0.235]	[0.315]	[0.315]	[0.315]	[0.315]	[0.315]	[0.315]	[0.307]
	0.105	0.127	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.107
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.189]	[0.110]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.189]	[0.181]
	0.148	0.181	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.149
greater than 45	[0.116]	[0.052]*	[0.116]	[0.116]	[0.116]	[0.116]	[0.116]	[0.116]	[0.113]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.068	-0.077	-0.068	-0.068	-0.068	-0.068	-0.068	-0.068	-0.073
	[0.721]	[0.683]	[0.721]	[0.721]	[0.721]	[0.721]	[0.721]	[0.721]	[0.702]
Observations	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919	1919
Number of SLAs	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
F-stat	4.89	5.12	4.89	4.89	4.89	4.89	4.89	4.89	4.92

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 7D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with an educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ- ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.35	6.97	5.90	7.73	6.47	7.40	7.70	5.42	7.82
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.06	2.32	2.28	1.72	2.07	1.84	1.84	2.67	1.39
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
	0.301	0.126	0.373	0.362	0.287	-0.198	0	0.384	0.102
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.392]	[0.683]	[0.233]	[0.141]	[0.286]	[0.462]	[0.999]	[0.379]	[0.633]
	0.679	0.207	0.524	0.298	0.575	0.06	0.179	0.444	0.301
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.173]	[0.604]	[0.235]	[0.382]	[0.134]	[0.858]	[0.488]	[0.450]	[0.262]
	0.605	-0.135	0.091	0.213	0.289	-0.07	0.184	0.327	0.063
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.297]	[0.767]	[0.849]	[0.582]	[0.543]	[0.856]	[0.577]	[0.625]	[0.847]
	0.426	-0.082	0.153	0.211	0.959	-0.057	0.425	0.009	0.154
greater than 45	[0.561]	[0.878]	[0.783]	[0.652]	[0.055]*	[0.895]	[0.320]	[0.991]	[0.683]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.13	0.032	0.141	0.146	0.968	-0.354	0.114	0.686	0.385
	[0.885]	[0.968]	[0.888]	[0.852]	[0.324]	[0.647]	[0.837]	[0.664]	[0.371]
Observations	1230	1196	1230	1230	1230	1230	1230	1230	1229
Number of SLAs	255	252	255	255	255	255	255	255	255
F-stat	1.23	1.64	1.83	1.57	1.89	2.13	1.21	0.85	2.39

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 8A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with a less educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.38	0.42	0.44	0.32	0.38	0.10	0.39
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.49	0.50	0.50	0.49	0.49	0.50	0.47	0.49	0.31	0.49
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.061 [0.247]	-0.076 [0.128]	-0.065 [0.200]	-0.057 [0.242]	-0.066 [0.195]	-0.079 [0.130]	-0.057 [0.245]	-0.042 [0.412]	-0.016 [0.595]	-0.055 [0.274]
greater than 15 and less than 25	-0.01 [0.885]	-0.032 [0.634]	-0.007 [0.914]	-0.02 [0.756]	-0.006 [0.926]	-0.03 [0.654]	0.006 [0.928]	-0.009 [0.898]	0.029 [0.455]	-0.022 [0.739]
greater than 25 and less than 45	-0.024 [0.758]	-0.047 [0.541]	-0.03 [0.695]	-0.026 [0.742]	-0.022 [0.782]	-0.05 [0.522]	0.011 [0.885]	-0.018 [0.821]	0.047 [0.253]	-0.046 [0.564]
greater than 45	-0.057 [0.523]	-0.073 [0.408]	-0.06 [0.498]	-0.052 [0.560]	-0.039 [0.666]	-0.085 [0.334]	0.008 [0.937]	-0.026 [0.770]	0.043 [0.395]	-0.073 [0.423]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.016 [0.899]	0.059 [0.604]	0.066 [0.562]	0.044 [0.708]	0.032 [0.776]	0.071 [0.530]	0.077 [0.506]	0.19 [0.175]	0.052 [0.469]	0.063 [0.582]
Observations	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899
Number of SLAs	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303
F-stat	3.91	3.68	3.89	5.01	4.11	3.9	2.65	4.1	2.26	4.53

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 8B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with a less educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	3.86	2.49	2.59	2.88	1.90	2.87	2.59	3.69	1.45	2.40
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.54	3.24	3.38	3.66	2.91	3.40	3.14	3.90	3.01	3.36
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:										
	-0.526	-0.945	-1.304	-1.48	-0.241	-0.622	-0.158	-0.512	-0.764	-0.925
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.488]	[0.185]	[0.089]*	[0.173]	[0.717]	[0.428]	[0.832]	[0.555]	[0.676]	[0.284]
	-0.73	-1.143	-1.661	-1.643	-0.525	-0.691	-0.473	-0.263	1.641	-1.221
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.452]	[0.202]	[0.059]*	[0.219]	[0.462]	[0.474]	[0.673]	[0.811]	[0.540]	[0.245]
	-0.514	-1.867	-2.176	-2.053	-1.047	-0.734	-0.646	-0.284	0.155	-1.359
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.635]	[0.064]*	[0.028]**	[0.152]	[0.204]	[0.523]	[0.559]	[0.828]	[0.944]	[0.256]
	-0.621	-2.007	-2.435	-2.966	-1.491	-1.243	-0.67	-0.251	-1.633	-2.086
greater than 45	[0.613]	[0.109]	[0.048]**	[0.085]*	[0.122]	[0.368]	[0.622]	[0.859]	[0.661]	[0.147]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	1	-0.837	-1.781	0.112	-2.741	0.065	-3.404	0.727	-10.174	-1.333
	[0.567]	[0.614]	[0.346]	[0.970]	[0.111]	[0.977]	[0.153]	[0.811]	[0.260]	[0.488]
Observations	803	816	825	721	800	832	614	718	199	737
Number of SLAs	232	233	235	220	230	235	201	218	123	224
F-stat	1.45	1.59	1.17	1.66	1.32	0.63	1.69	1.1	99999.99	1.11

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 8C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

The sample of non-moving households with a less educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.45	0.41	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.49	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
greater than 5 and less than 15	-0.066 [0.200]	0.033 [0.469]	-0.066 [0.200]						
greater than 15 and less than 25	-0.022 [0.740]	0.004 [0.948]	-0.022 [0.740]						
greater than 25 and less than 45	-0.046 [0.552]	-0.039 [0.580]	-0.046 [0.552]						
greater than 45	-0.079 [0.369]	-0.082 [0.305]	-0.079 [0.369]						
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	0.084 [0.462]	0.052 [0.650]	0.084 [0.462]						
Observations	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899	1899
Number of SLAs	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303
F-stat	3.99	3.78	3.99	3.99	3.99	3.99	3.99	3.99	3.99

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 8D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with a less educated mother

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ- ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.35	6.97	5.90	7.73	6.47	7.40	7.70	5.42	7.82
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.06	2.32	2.28	1.72	2.07	1.84	1.84	2.67	1.39
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children in a household's residential community is:									
	0.197	0.604	-0.014	0.167	0.512	0.594	-0.282	0.933	0.14
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.671]	[0.199]	[0.973]	[0.666]	[0.207]	[0.076]*	[0.428]	[0.208]	[0.601]
	0.445	0.922	0.207	-0.002	0.54	0.65	-0.578	1.052	0.03
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.390]	[0.155]	[0.698]	[0.997]	[0.289]	[0.107]	[0.197]	[0.162]	[0.930]
	0.537	0.231	0.105	-0.278	0.232	0.492	-0.719	1.326	0.272
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.393]	[0.751]	[0.866]	[0.656]	[0.677]	[0.311]	[0.151]	[0.130]	[0.461]
	0.766	0.758	0.17	-0.349	0.025	0.546	-0.766	1.316	0.331
greater than 45	[0.299]	[0.366]	[0.817]	[0.616]	[0.975]	[0.347]	[0.230]	[0.212]	[0.483]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.563	-0.84	1.008	0.317	1.506	0.919	-0.087	-0.752	0.19
	[0.712]	[0.512]	[0.408]	[0.712]	[0.041]**	[0.350]	[0.906]	[0.479]	[0.771]
Observations	846	785	846	846	845	846	846	846	846
Number of SLAs	236	228	236	236	235	236	236	236	236
F-stat	1.21	2.31	4.22	1.44	1.52	1.75	1.09	1.3	1.62

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 9A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with more than one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.46	0.51	0.53	0.45	0.47	0.12	0.48
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.33	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:										
	-0.014	-0.018	-0.012	-0.014	-0.011	-0.02	-0.03	-0.035	0.008	-0.031
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.753]	[0.686]	[0.778]	[0.758]	[0.806]	[0.653]	[0.503]	[0.437]	[0.796]	[0.497]
	0.012	0.016	0.013	0.005	0.002	-0.003	-0.003	-0.029	0.036	-0.021
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.836]	[0.777]	[0.816]	[0.929]	[0.969]	[0.958]	[0.952]	[0.617]	[0.351]	[0.724]
	0.017	0.037	0.031	0.013	0.014	0.015	-0.004	0	0.057	-0.025
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.814]	[0.593]	[0.652]	[0.856]	[0.839]	[0.829]	[0.950]	[0.998]	[0.204]	[0.726]
	0.011	0.042	0.022	0.057	0.025	-0.003	-0.018	-0.019	0.04	-0.002
greater than 45	[0.886]	[0.584]	[0.771]	[0.465]	[0.751]	[0.974]	[0.810]	[0.808]	[0.403]	[0.983]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.076	-0.029	-0.041	-0.137	-0.063	-0.038	0.008	0.035	0.077	-0.125
	[0.532]	[0.816]	[0.733]	[0.290]	[0.619]	[0.769]	[0.951]	[0.809]	[0.281]	[0.318]
Observations	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598
Number of SLAs	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334
F-stat	7.3	6.61	6.59	5.81	6.47	6.72	5.26	6.04	3.26	4.96

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 9B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with more than one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	4.37	2.69	2.85	2.92	2.15	3.25	3.19	4.23	1.38	2.54
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.43	3.27	3.36	3.65	2.94	3.46	3.28	3.97	3.03	3.41
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:										
	-0.722	-0.464	-0.261	0.051	-0.368	-0.182	-0.396	-0.845	0.403	-0.507
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.142]	[0.316]	[0.619]	[0.926]	[0.365]	[0.729]	[0.440]	[0.141]	[0.824]	[0.319]
	-0.838	-0.632	-0.686	-0.671	-0.466	-0.459	-0.141	-1.226	0.196	-1.285
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.191]	[0.260]	[0.284]	[0.355]	[0.374]	[0.509]	[0.832]	[0.073]*	[0.908]	[0.068]*
	-0.987	-1.025	-1.132	-1.173	-0.942	-0.762	-1.025	-1.363	-0.484	-1.192
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.158]	[0.127]	[0.134]	[0.156]	[0.131]	[0.353]	[0.163]	[0.086]*	[0.828]	[0.132]
	-1.204	-1.13	-0.989	-1.345	-0.901	-0.912	-0.992	-1.255	-0.799	-1.096
greater than 45	[0.142]	[0.142]	[0.262]	[0.142]	[0.216]	[0.323]	[0.239]	[0.199]	[0.779]	[0.211]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.254	-1.222	-1.223	-2.8	-1.721	0.367	-3.331	0.406	-5.896	-2.959
	[0.851]	[0.401]	[0.436]	[0.174]	[0.258]	[0.815]	[0.035]**	[0.831]	[0.477]	[0.041]**
Observations	1339	1350	1348	1208	1331	1370	1174	1227	318	1236
Number of SLAs	276	275	277	268	276	278	260	267	163	272
F-stat	2.47	1.42	1.05	2.09	2.3	1.12	1.87	2.22	99999.99	1.88

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 9C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

The sample of non-moving households with more than one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.53	0.51	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:									
	-0.015	0.004	-0.015	-0.015	-0.015	-0.015	-0.015	-0.015	-0.014
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.745]	[0.922]	[0.745]	[0.745]	[0.745]	[0.745]	[0.745]	[0.745]	[0.758]
	0.009	0.018	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.01
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.868]	[0.740]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.859]
	0.022	0.015	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.023
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.754]	[0.817]	[0.754]	[0.754]	[0.754]	[0.754]	[0.754]	[0.754]	[0.742]
	0.013	0.002	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013
greater than 45	[0.868]	[0.980]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.868]	[0.863]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.003	-0.014	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.007
	[0.979]	[0.908]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.955]
Observations	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598	2598
Number of SLAs	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334	334
F-stat	7.13	6.42	7.13	7.13	7.13	7.13	7.13	7.13	7.07

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 9D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with more than one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ- ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.35	6.97	5.90	7.73	6.47	7.40	7.70	5.42	7.82
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.06	2.32	2.28	1.72	2.07	1.84	1.84	2.67	1.39
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:									
greater than 5 and less than 15	0.259 [0.471]	0.553 [0.135]	0.031 [0.929]	0.224 [0.374]	0.278 [0.350]	0.237 [0.393]	-0.094 [0.717]	0.969 [0.019]**	0.123 [0.593]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.52 [0.254]	0.766 [0.094]*	0.225 [0.633]	0.18 [0.598]	0.573 [0.170]	0.38 [0.250]	-0.135 [0.666]	1.45 [0.003]***	0.158 [0.580]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.597 [0.266]	0.475 [0.379]	0.184 [0.734]	0.211 [0.590]	0.498 [0.292]	0.337 [0.413]	-0.377 [0.330]	1.577 [0.003]***	0.17 [0.632]
greater than 45	0.538 [0.412]	0.707 [0.250]	0.436 [0.461]	0.16 [0.738]	0.726 [0.200]	0.262 [0.554]	-0.136 [0.778]	1.354 [0.045]**	0.292 [0.468]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.935 [0.348]	0.171 [0.824]	0.101 [0.911]	0.192 [0.749]	0.669 [0.358]	0.225 [0.724]	-0.567 [0.295]	0.253 [0.810]	0.211 [0.643]
Observations	1386	1315	1386	1386	1386	1386	1386	1386	1385
Number of SLAs	278	273	278	278	278	278	278	278	278
F-stat	0.97	1.39	1.49	1.43	2.04	1.79	1.03	2.01	1.88

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 10A: Correlates of the incidence of answering questions on childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with only one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered the question on difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	0.52	0.54	0.55	0.47	0.52	0.55	0.28	0.47	0.11	0.48
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.45	0.50	0.32	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:										
	0.022	0.031	0.056	0.046	0.057	0.037	0.001	0.097	0.02	0.034
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.766]	[0.674]	[0.467]	[0.480]	[0.430]	[0.609]	[0.989]	[0.144]	[0.633]	[0.616]
	0.049	0.054	0.095	0.06	0.14	0.083	0.044	0.147	0.01	0.031
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.657]	[0.627]	[0.393]	[0.526]	[0.200]	[0.461]	[0.609]	[0.142]	[0.875]	[0.740]
	0.051	0.067	0.085	0.094	0.149	0.091	0.144	0.16	0.102	0.065
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.657]	[0.569]	[0.465]	[0.359]	[0.187]	[0.431]	[0.172]	[0.146]	[0.210]	[0.523]
	0.061	0.106	0.105	0.109	0.174	0.112	0.211	0.211	0.077	0.085
greater than 45	[0.659]	[0.435]	[0.433]	[0.368]	[0.189]	[0.399]	[0.079]*	[0.099]*	[0.416]	[0.483]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.022	0.013	0.003	-0.217	-0.078	-0.048	-0.19	0.083	-0.089	-0.18
	[0.926]	[0.954]	[0.988]	[0.300]	[0.706]	[0.827]	[0.299]	[0.748]	[0.481]	[0.399]
Observations	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220
Number of SLAs	310	310	310	310	310	310	310	310	310	310
F-stat	5.68	6.15	6.62	5.43	8.05	6.79	3.21	6.96	2.46	4.93

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 10B: Correlates of the level of childcare search costs (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with only one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Outcome = the level of difficulty related to:	Cost	Good Quality	Right Persons	Your choice	Happy	Hours	Multiple	Sick	Special needs	Location
Mean of the outcome variable	3.81	3.20	3.17	3.89	2.29	3.45	2.06	3.86	1.10	3.18
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	3.41	3.46	3.51	3.89	3.08	3.48	2.84	3.87	2.54	3.60
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:										
greater than 5 and less than 15	1.152 [0.240]	-0.585 [0.516]	-0.807 [0.374]	1.298 [0.264]	0.379 [0.619]	-0.813 [0.320]	-0.91 [0.548]	-1.359 [0.263]	-3.471 [0.824]	1.095 [0.293]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.858 [0.510]	-1.185 [0.373]	-0.766 [0.549]	1.58 [0.277]	-0.117 [0.916]	0.09 [0.939]	-0.548 [0.819]	-0.655 [0.705]	-2.513 [0.894]	1.024 [0.490]
greater than 25 and less than 45	2.221 [0.113]	-0.558 [0.672]	-0.18 [0.893]	3.024 [0.060]*	1.039 [0.360]	-0.446 [0.727]	-0.5 [0.831]	0.11 [0.952]	-0.552 [0.974]	1.831 [0.290]
greater than 45	2.424 [0.125]	-0.769 [0.648]	-0.709 [0.666]	3.101 [0.081]*	0.201 [0.884]	0.236 [0.877]	-0.285 [0.913]	0.715 [0.731]	5.89 [0.707]	1.733 [0.345]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-1.764 [0.495]	1.561 [0.328]	-0.177 [0.931]	2.657 [0.515]	-2.767 [0.105]	-1.367 [0.560]	-2.711 [0.250]	-2.736 [0.236]	-1.257 [0.906]	3.772 [0.227]
Observations	631	656	669	575	633	669	341	574	138	581
Number of SLAs	227	233	235	220	231	235	169	218	101	221
F-stat	0.8	1.36	0.94	1.32	1.31	1.42	1.48	1.42	99999.99	1.73

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 10C: Correlates of the incidence of answering at least one of the questions on childcare search costs and answering the maternal life satisfaction questions (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification

The sample of non-moving households with only one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = 1 if a household answered one of the questions on childcare search costs and the question on satisfaction with:									
	Home	Employment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighborhood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	0.57	0.55	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:									
	0.06	0.054	0.06	0.06	0.062	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
greater than 5 and less than 15	[0.427]	[0.477]	[0.427]	[0.427]	[0.410]	[0.427]	[0.427]	[0.427]	[0.427]
	0.117	0.163	0.117	0.117	0.125	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117
greater than 15 and less than 25	[0.283]	[0.135]	[0.283]	[0.283]	[0.249]	[0.283]	[0.283]	[0.283]	[0.283]
	0.104	0.118	0.104	0.104	0.11	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104
greater than 25 and less than 45	[0.363]	[0.302]	[0.363]	[0.363]	[0.332]	[0.363]	[0.363]	[0.363]	[0.363]
	0.136	0.168	0.136	0.136	0.139	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136
greater than 45	[0.308]	[0.199]	[0.308]	[0.308]	[0.294]	[0.308]	[0.308]	[0.308]	[0.308]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	-0.006	-0.049	-0.006	-0.006	0.006	-0.006	-0.006	-0.006	-0.006
	[0.979]	[0.832]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]	[0.979]
Observations	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220	1220
Number of SLAs	310	310	310	310	310	310	310	310	310
F-stat	7.62	6.61	7.62	7.62	7.68	7.62	7.62	7.62	7.62

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*), 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.

Appendix Table 10D: Correlates of the level of maternal life satisfaction (2001 through 2006): SLA Fixed effects model with non linear specification  
The sample of non-moving households with only one child

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome = the level of satisfaction with:	Home	Employ-ment	Finance	Safety	Community	Health	Neighbor- hood	Free time	Overall Life
Mean of the outcome variable	7.35	6.97	5.90	7.73	6.47	7.40	7.70	5.42	7.82
Std. Dev. of the outcome variable	2.06	2.32	2.28	1.72	2.07	1.84	1.84	2.67	1.39
1 if the number of childcare centre places per 100 children aged 0-4 in a household's residential community is:									
greater than 5 and less than 15	0.148 [0.734]	-0.087 [0.875]	-0.033 [0.941]	0.619 [0.077]*	0.051 [0.913]	-0.078 [0.871]	0.173 [0.717]	0.097 [0.891]	-0.075 [0.790]
greater than 15 and less than 25	0.07 [0.908]	-0.366 [0.670]	-0.063 [0.920]	0.254 [0.606]	-0.399 [0.511]	-0.16 [0.798]	0.084 [0.897]	-0.706 [0.416]	-0.302 [0.449]
greater than 25 and less than 45	0.325 [0.635]	-0.917 [0.353]	-0.755 [0.276]	-0.039 [0.944]	-1.235 [0.060]*	-0.385 [0.612]	0.03 [0.967]	-0.98 [0.325]	-0.276 [0.567]
greater than 45	-0.089 [0.927]	-1.194 [0.288]	-1.468 [0.067]*	-0.329 [0.627]	-0.762 [0.336]	-0.401 [0.669]	0.015 [0.985]	-1.286 [0.241]	-0.597 [0.320]
% of accredited childcare centers in a household's residential community	1.066 [0.489]	-0.539 [0.741]	2.008 [0.245]	-0.458 [0.620]	2.085 [0.207]	0.045 [0.976]	1.58 [0.194]	0.938 [0.651]	0.483 [0.533]
Observations	690	666	690	690	689	690	690	690	690
Number of SLAs	237	235	237	237	236	237	237	237	237
F-stat	1.51	1.25	2.49	3.25	1.91	1.21	1.93	1.28	2.57

Sources: 2001-2006 HILDA Survey; data the author collected from the website of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC); the 2001 and 2006 Census; the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Child Care Census; and the Small Area Labour Markets data.

Notes:

- P-values in the brackets. The error term is allowed to be correlated at the Statistical Local Area (SLA)-level. The coefficients are significantly different from zero at 1% (\*\*\*) , 5% (\*\*), and 10% level (\*).
- All the regression equations control for community (Statistical Local Area, SLA) fixed effects, year effects, and year\*state effects for the largest three states. Also controlled are household- and SLA-level observable characteristics, whose summary statistics are shown in Appendix Table 3.