



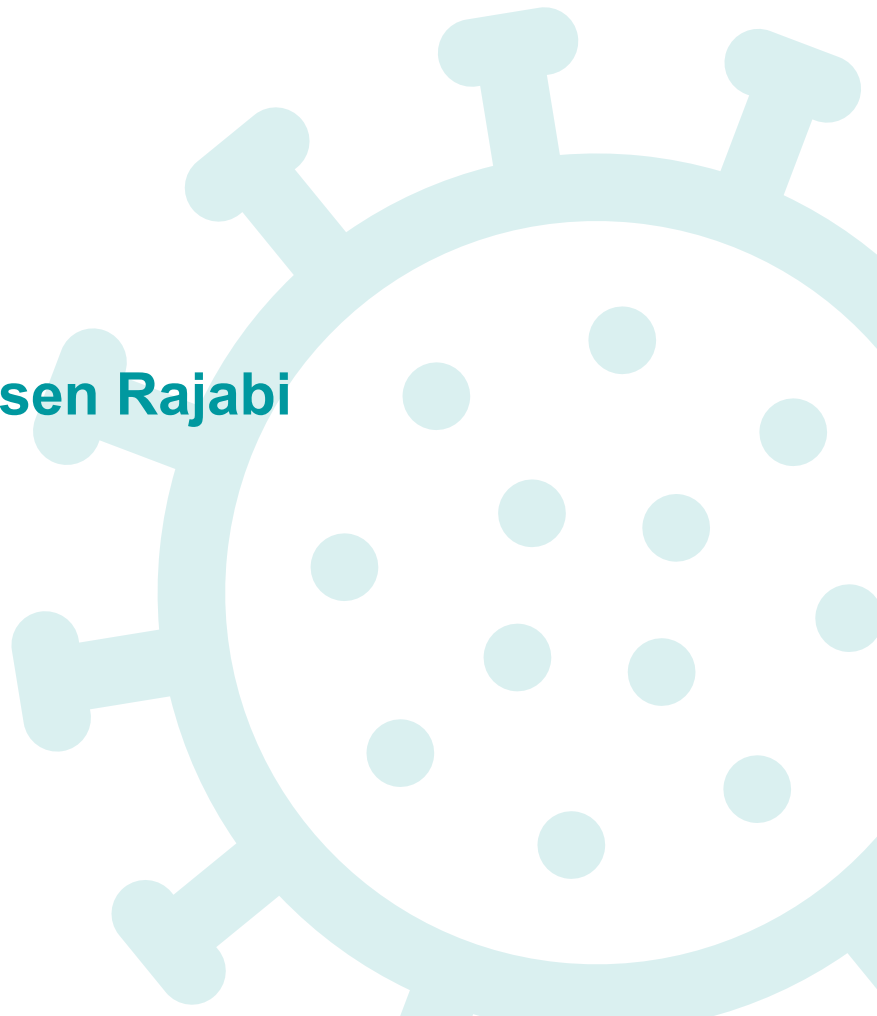
COVID-19: Supporting Parents, Adolescents
and Children during Epidemics

Report 01: Covid-19 worries, parent/carer stress and support needs, by child special educational needs and parent/carer work status

Results from the first 1100 participants in Iran

Date: 10 July 2020

Report Author: Mohsen Rajabi



The Co-SPACE Study

Background

COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to families' lives, through social distancing, school closures and lock-down. This is also a rapidly changing situation where different pressures will arise for children, young people and their families over time. While research has provided valuable information about how parents can support their children's mental health in general, we know little about what is most effective in the current, changing context.

The Co-SPACE project (Iranian study) is tracking the mental health of school-aged children and young people aged 4-18 years throughout the COVID-19 crisis. The study has full ethical and data protection approval (Young Researchers and Elite Club, IAUCTB). The findings will help identify what protects children and young people from deteriorating mental health over time, and at particular stress points. Findings will be shared directly with health and education services to inform the development and provision of effective support for children and families.

Recruitment & Sample

The study sample has been recruited through a variety of means, including social media, distribution through partner organisations, networks and charities, the media and targeted online advertising. The self-selecting nature of recruitment means that this will not be a nationally representative sample. In the present report, **76%** of all participants who completed the questionnaire were female, presumably mothers. Furthermore, over half of the sample was home-maker (**51.2%**), followed by full-time employed (**21.8%**) or part-time working (**9.5%**), and had an average income of 40 million IRR (**45%**).

For the long-term, we are aiming to have good representation across a wide range of socio-demographic and health factors (e.g., income, ethnicity, pre-existing mental/physical health difficulties) to investigate the experiences for different groups that may be particularly vulnerable during and after the pandemic.

We are keen to recruit as many families as possible to the study. Parents/carers can sign up and take part at any point:

English version: <https://cospaceoxford.com/survey>

Persian version: <https://survey.porsline.ir/s/kowxbdi/>

Further information

For further information or to request specific analyses, please contact the research team at rajabimohsen@ut.ac.ir.

Focus of this report

This report provides cross-sectional data from the approximately 1,100 parents/carers who have taken part, and completed the survey between 10/04/20 and 28/06/20. We aimed to report some preliminary findings from the first 1,100 participants who completed the survey¹ and this was reached on 28/06/2020 by when 1,110 parents/carers had taken part. In this report, we focus on the following outcomes:

1. Parent/carer reported child worries related to COVID-19
2. Parent/carer sources of stress
3. Support and disruptions
4. Child educational needs (SEN) and disruptions
5. Parent/carer need for support
6. Parent/carer preference for the medium of delivery of support

For questions related to sources of stress and support, we have also looked at responses for:

- a. Parents/carers whose child has special educational needs (SEN/ND)
- b. Parents/carers by different, current working status

Key findings

- Among our sample, most of parents reported that their child thought that Covid-19 was a very serious issue.
- Nearly a third of parents/carers reported that their child was worried about missing school and afraid to leave the house.
- Child's wellbeing is the most frequent source of stress for Iranian parents, followed by their child's future.
- 39.4% of children and adolescents with SEN/ND are struggling with cognitive and learning problems followed by communicating and interacting needs.

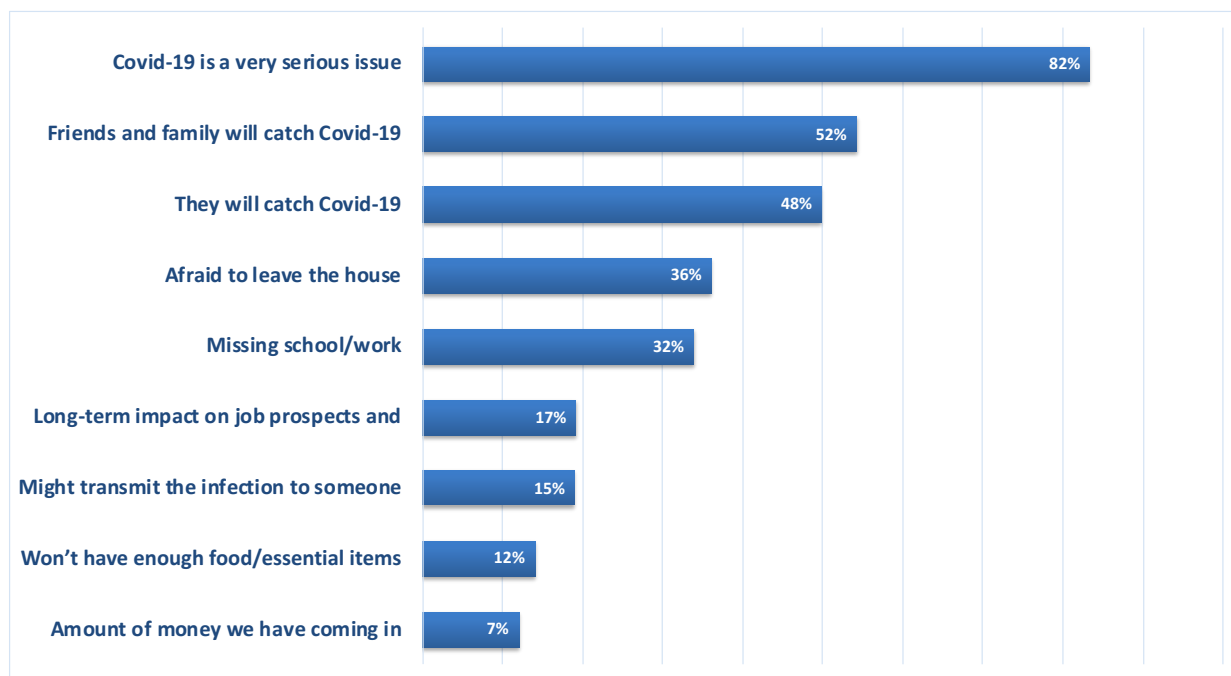
¹ "Completion" of the survey is based on participants having completed items up to and including the pre-defined main outcome measure (the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – parent reporting on child).

- **61.2% of those who were previously receiving support from services have had this stopped or postponed during the pandemic.**
- **Parents particularly want support around their child's behavioural problems, child's emotional wellbeing and educational demands.**
- **Parents of children with SEN/ND would also like support around managing their child's behaviour and emotional wellbeing.**
- **Parents/carers would value online written materials and TV programmes, while parents with children with SEN/ND would also like online support from professionals.**

Findings

1. Child worries related to Covid-19

Figure 1. Parents/carers' reports of their children's worries related to Covid-19

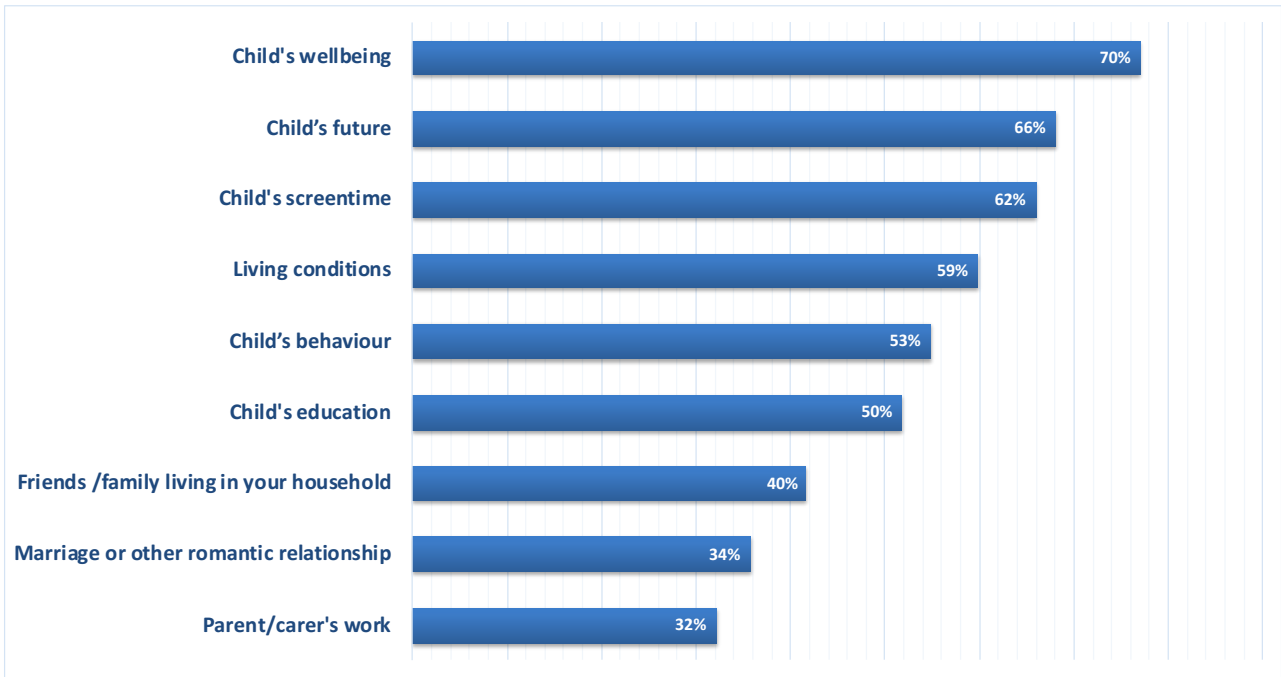


82% of parents reported that their child thought that Covid-19 was a very serious issue. Over half of the parents (52%) thought that their child was concerned about family and friends catching the virus, nearly half of parents (48%) believed their child was worried about catching the virus themselves and 36% thought that their child was afraid to leave the house. Around a third (32%) of parents thought that their child was worried about missing school/work, 17% about the long-term impact on job prospects and the economy, 15% of parents thought that their child was worried that they might transmit the infection to someone else, 12% that their child was worried that they wouldn't have enough food or other essential items, and 7% about the amount of money coming in.

2. Parent/carer sources of stress

Participants were asked about how stressed they had felt over the past week regarding a number of potential stressors, from 'not at all', 'a little', 'quite a lot' to 'a great deal'. Figures in this section present the nine most highly rated stressors for each group and show the percentage of parents/carers who indicated that the stressor had caused them significant stress (i.e., they had responded 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal').

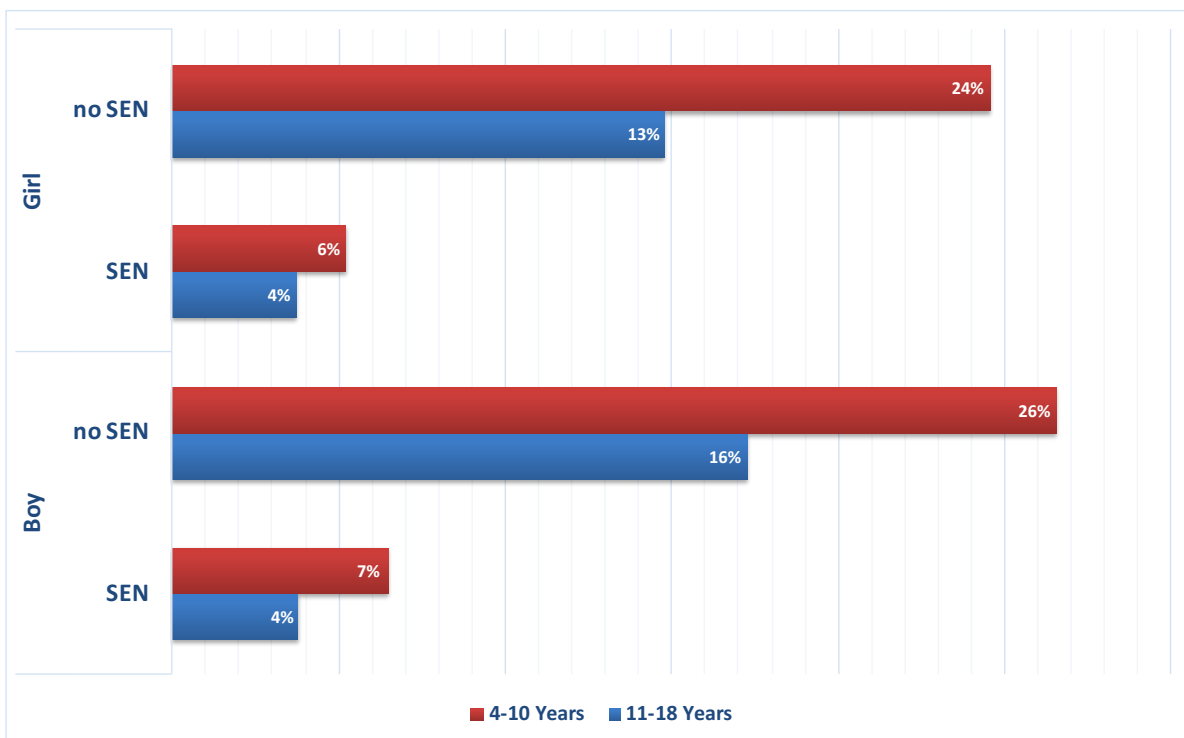
Figure 2. Parents/carers' main sources of stress



Within the total sample in Iran, the child's wellbeing was the main stressor (70%) for parents, followed by their child's future (66%), child's screen-time (62%), living conditions (59%), the child's behaviour (53%), child's education (50%), friends/family living in their household (40%), romantic relationship (34%), and work (32%).

3. Child special educational needs

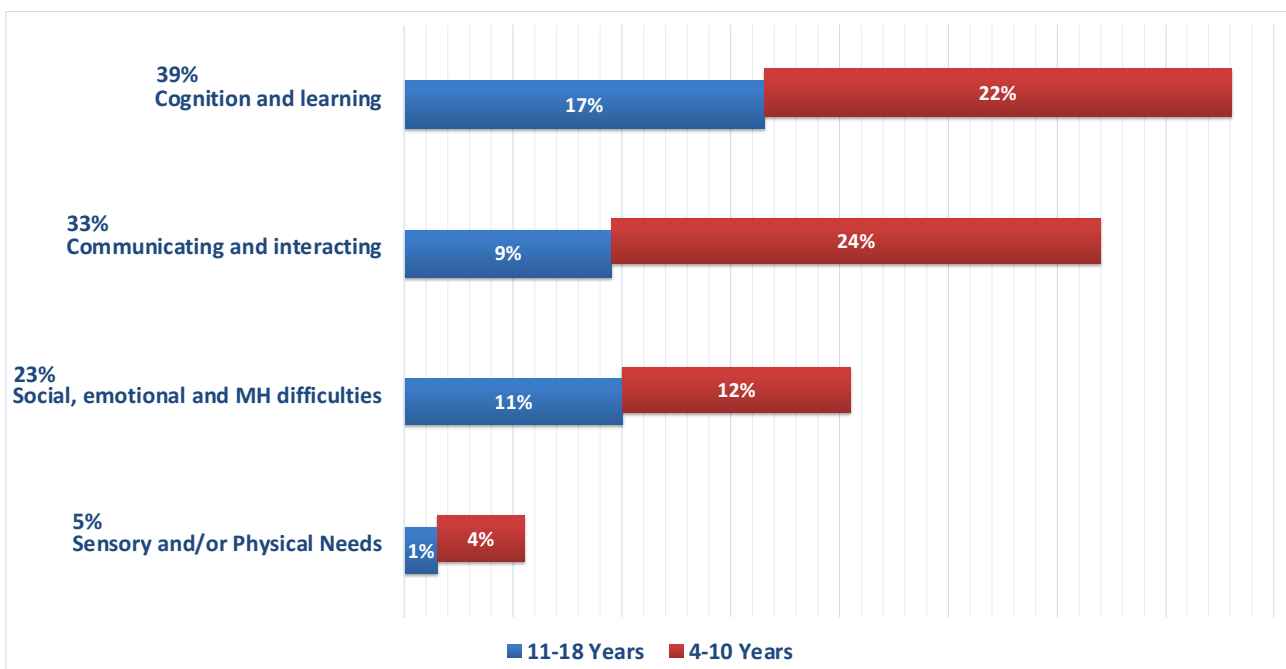
Figure 3. Parents/carers with and without a child with SEN/ND



Within the sample, 192 (17.4%) of the parents/carers reported on a child with special educational needs or a neurodevelopmental disorder (i.e., autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) (SEN/ND). In this sample, parents/cares reported that children (4-10 years) had more SEN needs compared to adolescents (11-18 years).

(a) Categorisation of Child special educational needs by age

Figure 4. Parents/carers with a child with different SEN/ND types



Data in the graph represents the percentage of parents reporting different types of SEN including cognitive and learning (39%), communicating and interacting (33%), social, emotional and mental health difficulties (23%), and sensory/physical needs (5%). Parents/carers of a child aged 4 to 10 years reported more SEN/ND compared with parents/cares of adolescents (11-18 years).

4. Current support

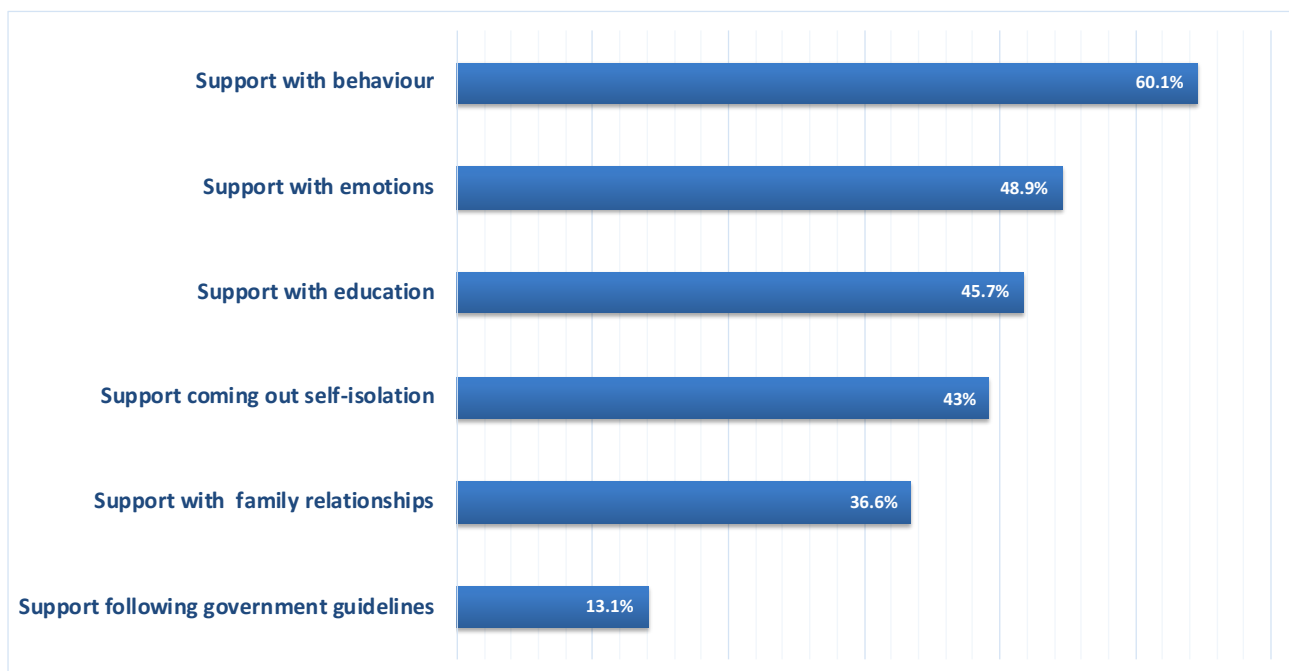
Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 8.1% of parents reported that their child was receiving support (for mental health, emotional or behavioural difficulties, support from social services or educational support). Of parents with a child with SEN/ND, 43.4% of children were receiving support.

For the vast majority, this support had been stopped or postponed due to the pandemic in Iran; 91.4% of those in the whole sample and 61.2% of those with SEN/ND who had previously been receiving support from services were no longer receiving this support.

5. Parent/carer need for support

Participants were asked if they felt they would benefit from advice, support or help in relation to their child's response to Covid-19 and/or isolation. Possible responses were 'not at all', 'yes – a bit', 'yes – a lot' and 'yes completely'. Overall, 71.8% of parents/carers felt they would benefit from advice, support or help (i.e., responded 'yes' at bit, a lot or completely).

Figure 5. Parents/carers' reported need for support around specific areas

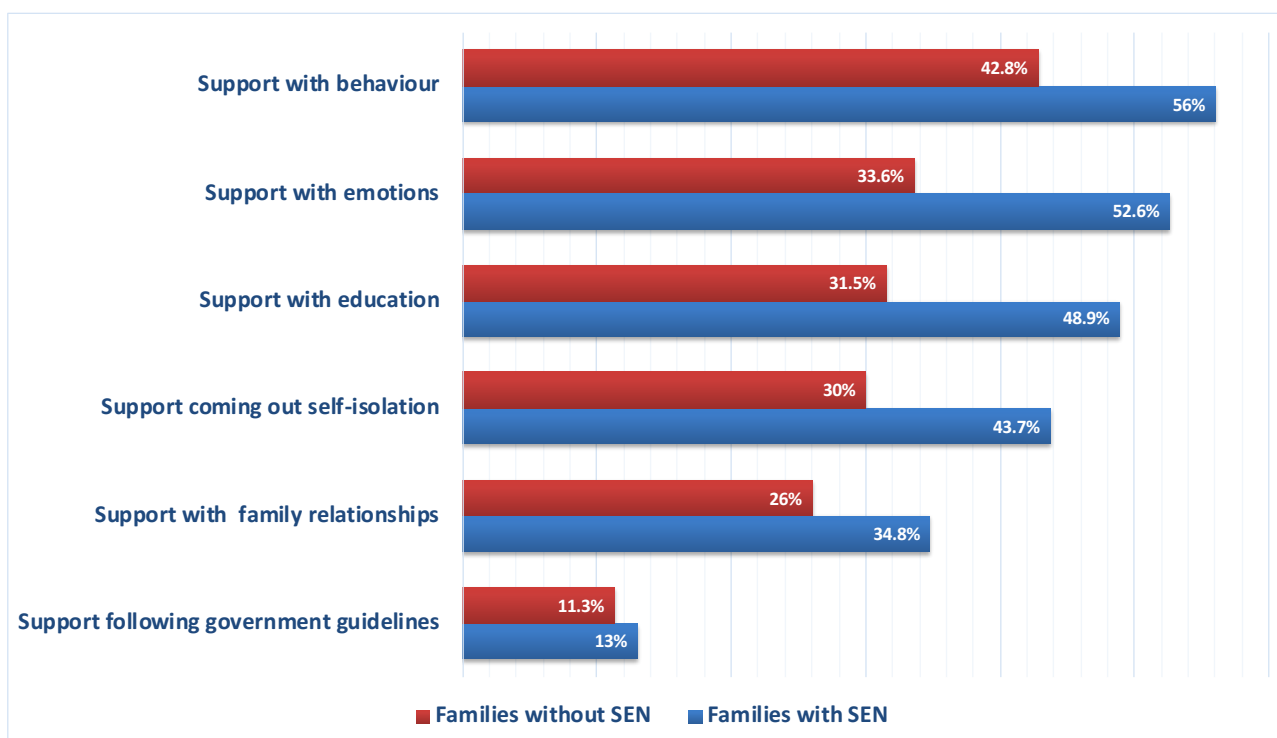


Parents/carers were asked what areas they would like help with. 60.1% felt they would benefit from support around managing their child(ren)'s behaviour, 48.9% from support around managing their child(ren)'s emotions, 45.7% from support around managing their child(ren)'s educational demands, 43.0% from support around their child(ren) coming out of self-isolation, 36.6% from support around managing family relationships and 13.1% from support around ensuring that their child followed government guidelines (e.g., handwashing, staying at home).

(a) Child special educational needs

The vast majority (78.2%) of parents/carers of children with SEN/ND felt they would benefit from support during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran.

Figure 6. Need for support around specific areas for parents/carers reporting on a child with SEN/ND

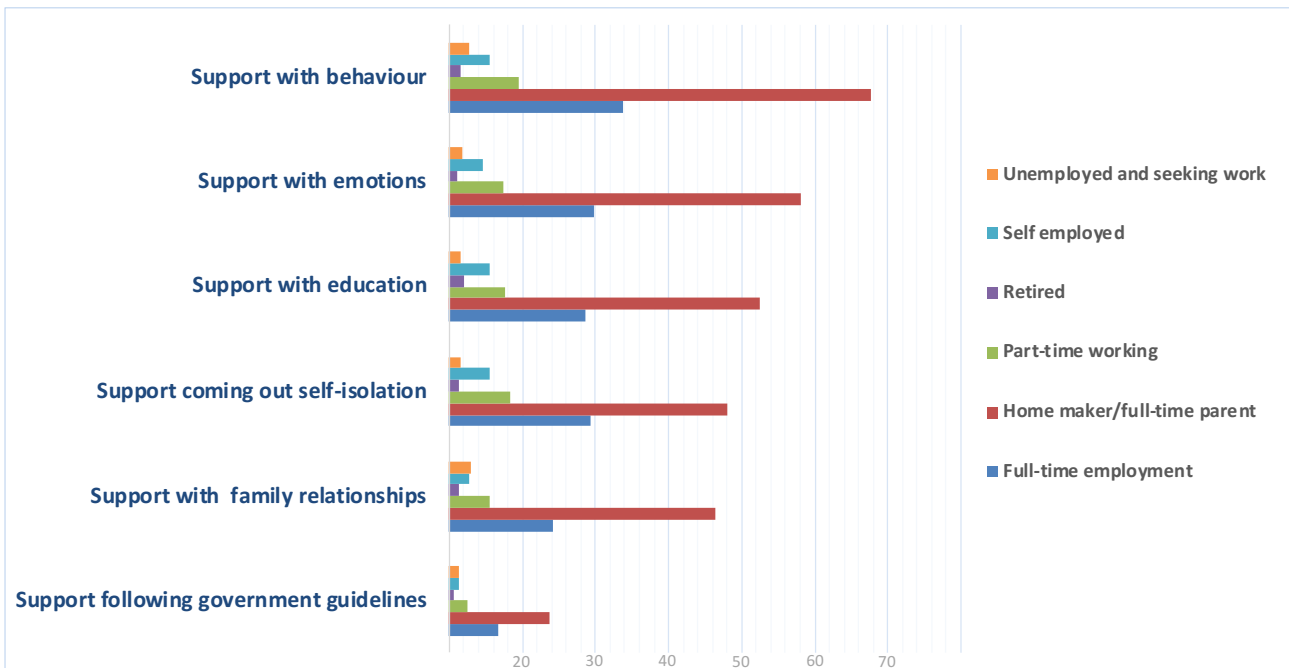


Of the parents/carers of children with SEN/ND, 56.0% felt they would benefit from support around managing their child(ren)'s behaviour, 52.2% from support around managing their child(ren)'s emotions, 48.9% from support around managing their child(ren)'s educational demands, 43.7% from support around their child(ren) coming out of self-isolation, 34.8% from support around managing family relationships and 13% from support around ensuring that their child followed government guidelines (e.g., handwashing, staying at home).

(b) Parent/carer working status

Participants were asked to indicate their work status. Possible responses were 'unemployed', 'self-employed', 'retired', 'part-time working', 'full-time employed' and 'home-maker'. Overall, 51.2% of parents/carers reported their work status as home-maker, followed by full-time employed (21.8%) and part-time working (9.5%).

Figure 7. Need for support around specific areas for parents/carers by work status

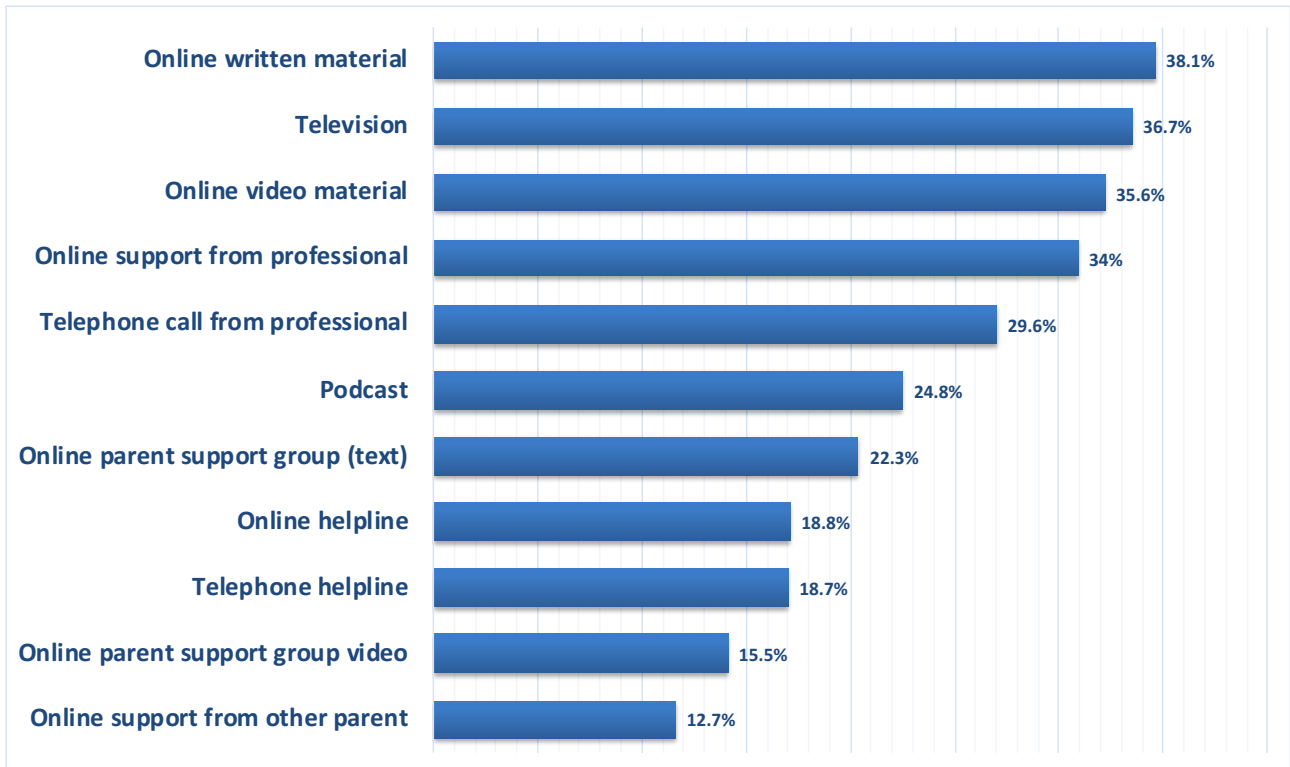


All groups felt that the area that wanted most support/advice around was around managing their child(ren)’s behaviour, followed by support around managing their child(ren)’s emotions, support around managing their child(ren)’s education, then support around coming out of self-isolation, support around managing family relationships and then support around ensuring that their child(ren) followed government guidelines.

6. Parent/carer preference for delivery of support

If participants indicated they would benefit from advice, support or help in relation to their child’s response to Covid-19 and/or isolation, they were then asked how they would like to receive this help. Options provided were: online written materials, online videos, television programmes, podcasts, telephone helpline, online helpline, personalised online support from another parent, personalised online support from a professional, personalised telephone call from a professional, online parent support group (text) or online parent support group (video). In the whole sample, 88.7% of parents/cares reported they would benefit from advice, support or help and 11.3% of parents wouldn't receive any advice, support or help.

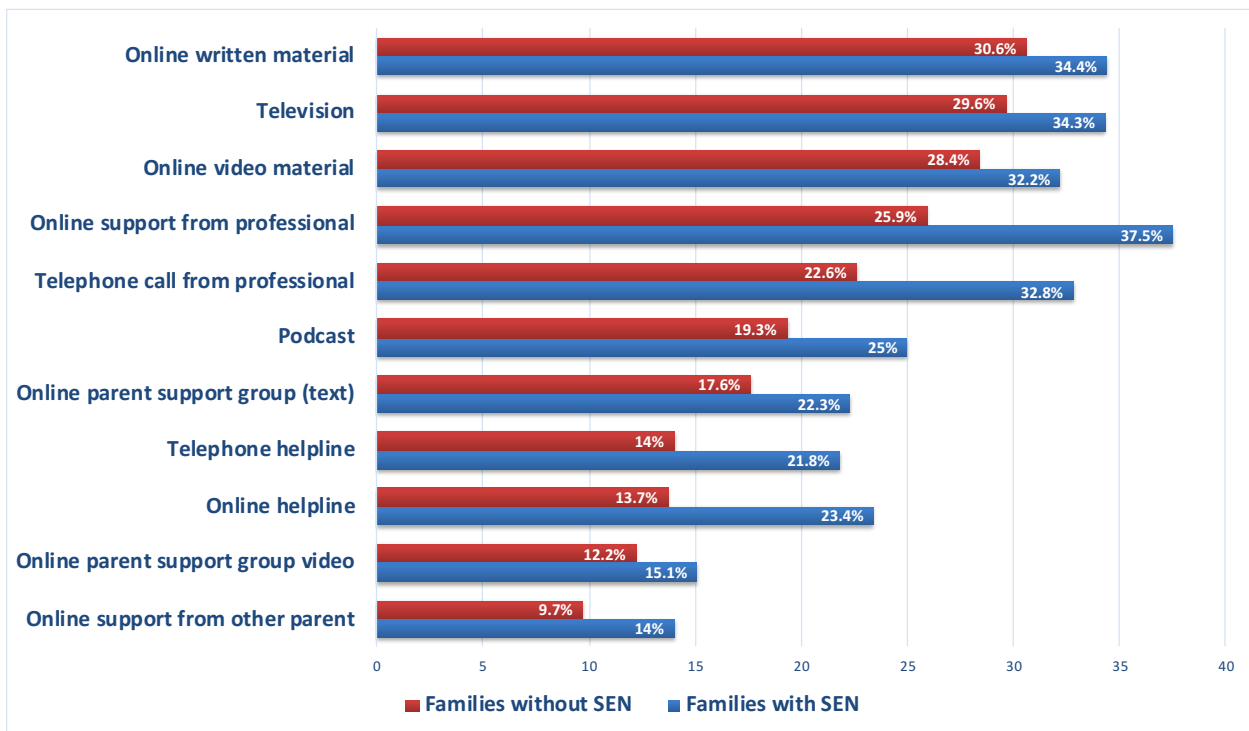
Figure 8. Parents/carers' preference for how support should be delivered



The most popular ways to receive this advice/support were through online written materials (38.1%), TV programmes (36.7%), online videos (35.6%), personalised online support from a professional (34%), telephone call from a professional (26.9%), podcast (24.8%), online parent support group text (22.3%), online helpline (18.8%), telephone helpline (18.7%), online parent support group video (15.5%) and online support from other parent (12.7%).

(a) Child special educational needs

Figure 9. Preferences for how support should be delivered for parents/carers reporting on a child with SEN/ND



For parents/carers of a child with SEN/ND, the most popular ways to receive this advice/support were through online support form a professional (37.5%), online written materials (34.4%), TV programmes (34.3%), telephone call from a professional (32.8%), and online videos (32.2%).

Appendix A

Participants' demographics

		Number of Observations	%
Parent/cares	Parents	1067	97
	Cares	33	3
Gender	Female	817	74.3
	Male	283	25.7
	Other	0	0
Work Status	Full-time employed	225	21.8
	Part-time employed	98	9.5
	Home-maker/full-time parent	527	51.2
	Not working	27	2.4
Annual Household Income	Very low	135	12
	Low	276	25
	Moderate	506	46
	High	100	9
	Very high	11	1
	Prefer not to say	72	7
Child Age	Child (aged 4-10 years)	704	64
	Adolescents (aged 11-18 years)	396	36
Child Gender	Female	556	50.5
	Male	554	49.5
	Other	0	0