

Children who long to see more of mum: Six in ten want extra time with their parents

- **Research shows parents are struggling to find time to give their full attention to their children**
- **Figure rises to three quarters in London and the South**
- **But parents spend more time with their children than their parents spent with them**

By Laura Clark

Distracted: Long hours means six in ten children feel they don't see enough of their mother or father. Children are growing up wishing they could spend more time with their parents, a survey suggests.

Six in ten youngsters thought their parents spend too much time away from the family. One in eight parents admitted they give their children their full attention only 'once or twice a week'.

The most hard-pressed said they are never able to focus just on their child. The Family and Parenting Institute, which commissioned the survey, said the findings showed the extent to which pressures on parents' time affect family life.

The charity said British parents work longer hours than those in most European countries and is adding to their workload due to economic uncertainty.

The survey findings were released to coincide with Parents' Week, which starts today. Research firm Childwise interviewed 255 children aged six to ten and one parent of each child. It found that 59 per cent of youngsters wished they could spend more time with their mother or father – rising to three-quarters in London and the south of England.

Only four in ten (42 per cent) wanted to spend more time with their friends and even fewer, seven per cent, wanted to do more with their siblings.

When parents were asked how much time they spent with their children, just over half (52 per cent) said they were able to give their child their full attention at least once every day. But 13 per cent of parents could devote their full attention only 'once or twice a week' and two per cent never could. Parents of the oldest children, ten-year-olds, were most likely to admit being unable to give their full attention to their child more than once or twice weekly.

One in five (18 per cent) said this was the level of one-to-one interaction with their children. Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of parents believed that the quality of time spent with children was more important than the actual amount.



Bedtime story: But 13 per cent of parents admit they can only give their children their full attention once or twice a week

Despite these findings, the survey suggested that parents today spend more time with their children than their own mothers and fathers did.

Dr Katherine Rake, chief executive of the Family and Parenting Institute, said: 'Evidence shows children need dedicated time with their parents if they are to realise their potential.

'It is often the simple things that make a lasting impression on children.' She called for parents to be given greater flexible working rights.