

# 9. Employment outcomes for families and carers of NDIS participants

## 9.1 Key findings

### Box 9.1: Key findings for employment outcomes for families and carers of NDIS participants

- Increasing employment for families and carers of NDIS participants will result in benefits to both the individuals, as well as the wider Australian economy. In 2011, the Productivity Commission estimated that the NDIS could result in an additional 3.4% of carers entering the workforce, increased work capacity for carers already employed, and a \$1.5b increase to annual real GDP.
- As at 30 June 2018, the percentage of families/carers who had a paid job upon entry into the scheme is: 46% for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, 48% for families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24, and 34% for families/carers of participants aged 25 and over. These percentages are considerably lower than the 76% observed for Australians without caring responsibilities<sup>41</sup>.
- Mothers and fathers of participants aged 24 and under had the highest employment rates at baseline compared to other family members or carers who responded to the survey. Fathers were more likely to be in a paid job than mothers. For child participants, the percentage of mothers in paid work at baseline increases slightly as the child gets older, from 28% for mothers of children under one year of age to 46% for mothers of six year olds. However, between ages 6 and 11 no further increases are observed. For mothers in the general population, the percentage in a paid job increases from 31% for mothers of children under one year old to 67% for mothers of six year olds, and increases further to 75% for mothers of 11 year olds<sup>42</sup>.
- For the families and carers of participants who have been in the Scheme at least one year as at 30 June 2018, the change in employment rates between baseline and review is: +3.1% for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, +3.3% for families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24 and no change for families/carers of participants aged 25 and over.
- The percentage of families/carers working in casual employment (26%) has remained steady between baseline and review, and compares to 15% of Australians aged 25 to 64 overall. The proportion working 30 or more hours per week has risen slightly from 41% at baseline to 43% at review. By contrast, 74% of Australians aged 25 to 64 work 35 or more hours per week<sup>43</sup>.
- The most common barriers to families and carers working more were the situation with the child/family member with a disability (89%) and available jobs not having sufficient flexibility (42%). Other reported barriers included the availability of jobs, ill health of the respondent, availability and cost of childcare and after school care, and other caring responsibilities.

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<sup>41</sup> ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2015, non-carers aged 15 to 64. <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4430.0>

<sup>42</sup> Baxter J, 2013. *Employment characteristics and transitions of mothers in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Department of Social Services. Note that the population percentages use age of youngest child, whereas Scheme percentages use age of the participant, who may or may not be the youngest child. In addition, the LSAC percentages are based on longitudinal data across four waves of the study, whereas the SF percentages are cross-sectional (at baseline).

<sup>43</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2018. 6202.0 Labour force, Australia, Jun 2018.

- For the families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 who did not have a paid job at baseline, 12% had found paid employment at review. Multiple regression analysis suggests that families/carers have a higher likelihood of finding employment at review if they have access to services and supports, are motivated to work more, rate their health as good or better, are self-managing the participant's plan, or if the participant enters the Scheme through early intervention. Where the participant's streaming type is intensive or super intensive, the family member/carer is found to have a lower likelihood of finding paid work at review.
- For the families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 who were already in paid employment at baseline, 93% had successfully maintained employment at review. Multiple regression analysis shows that families/carers have a higher likelihood of maintaining their employment at review when they work more hours per week and are in a permanent job. Families/carers who are very confident or somewhat confident in supporting their child's development are also more likely to keep a paid job.

## 9.2 Employment experience of Australian carers

The families and carers of people with a disability play an invaluable role in providing help and support to the people in their care. As a result of these responsibilities, they also face a number of barriers to finding and keeping paid employment. Primary carers<sup>44</sup> in Australia experience considerably poorer employment outcomes, with a 52.2% employment to population ratio compared to 75.9% for people without caring responsibilities. Non-primary carers also have slightly worse employment experience, but to a lesser extent compared to primary carers. The statistics shown in Table 9.1 are from the 2015 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) for persons aged 15 to 64.

**Table 9.1 Australian employment statistics for persons aged 15 to 64, by carer status**

Employment statistics	Primary carers	Non-primary carers	Not a carer
Employment to population ratio <sup>45</sup> (%)	52.2	72.2	75.9
Labour force participation rate <sup>46</sup> (%)	56.3	77.2	80.3
Unemployment rate <sup>47</sup> (%)	7.5	6.5	5.5

## 9.3 Benefits of increased employment for the family members and carers of people with a disability

Improving opportunities to participate in employment is expected to lead to a number of benefits for the families and carers of people with a disability, including greater financial security, reduced social isolation, and higher levels of self-esteem. Additionally, employment can serve as a form of respite, allowing families and carers to take a break from their responsibilities and develop a sense of identity outside of their caring role.<sup>48</sup>

More broadly, improved employment outcomes for the families and carers of people with a disability is expected to contribute to long-term economic benefits for Australia through increased labour force participation and reduced costs of carer income supports. In 2011 the Productivity Commission<sup>49</sup> estimated that increased employment opportunities for carers as a result of the NDIS could, over time, result in:

- Approximately 7,500 more carers finding paid employment (an increase of 3.4%)
- An increase in working hours and a reduction in time off for carers already employed
- An increase to real GDP of \$1.5 billion annually

However, this estimate does not allow for the offsetting impact of a reduction in unmeasured informal care as a result of families and carers entering the workforce.

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<sup>44</sup> From ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers: a primary carer is the person who provides the most informal assistance with mobility, self-care and/or communication to a person with a disability

<sup>45</sup> Number of persons employed as a percentage of the relevant age population

<sup>46</sup> The labour force (employed plus looking for work) as a percentage of the relevant age population

<sup>47</sup> Number of persons unemployed as a percentage of the labour force

<sup>48</sup> Carers Australia. 2014. *Combining Work and Care: The Benefits to Carers and the Economy*

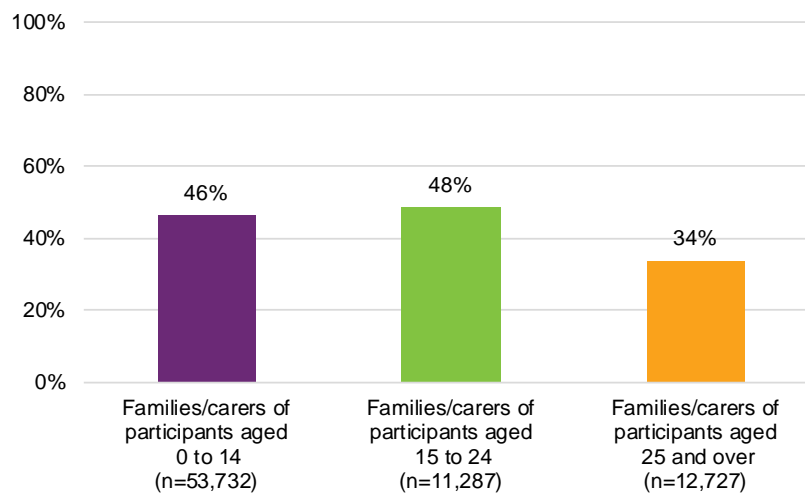
<sup>49</sup> Productivity Commission Inquiry Report. 2011. *Disability Care and Support* pp. 966-969

## 9.4 Employment experience of families/carers: baseline

### 9.4.1 Employment participation

To measure the employment status of the families and carers of NDIS participants, the SF questionnaire includes the question 'Are you currently working in a paid job?'. The response to this question at baseline is summarised in Figure 9.1.

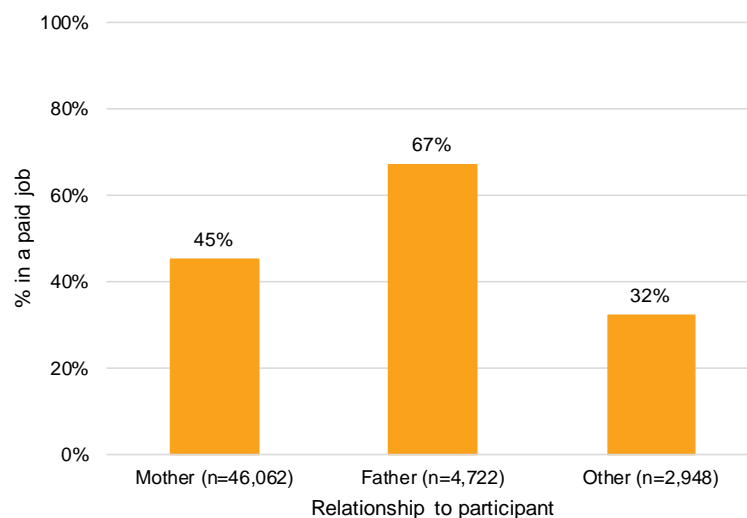
**Figure 9.1 Percentage of families and carers in a paid job at baseline**



The families and carers of participants aged 15 to 24 are the most likely to be in paid employment at baseline (48%), followed by the families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 (46%). Only 34% of families and carers of participants aged 25 and over reported that they were in paid work at baseline, which may reflect a higher proportion of respondents who have never been able to consider employment and who are close to or past retirement age.

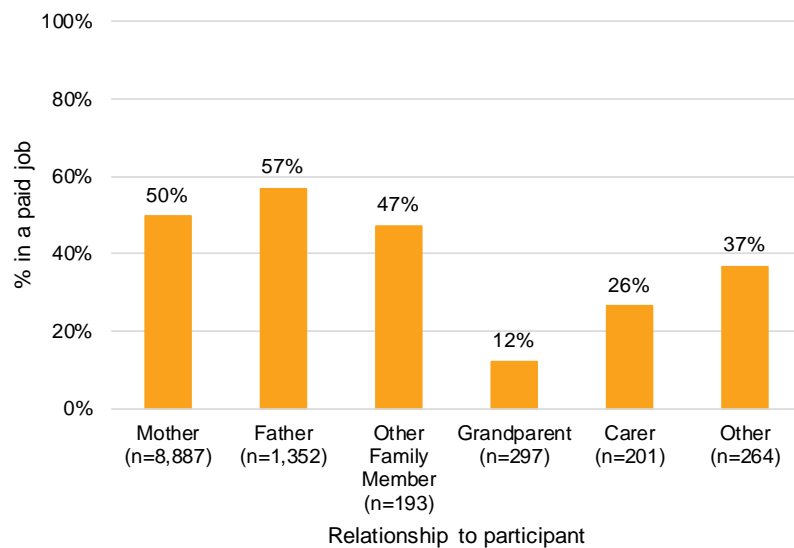
The SF questionnaire also asks respondents 'What is your relationship to the participant?', with different response options for each version of the questionnaire. The following three figures show the percentage of families and carers in paid work at baseline, by their answer to this question.

**Figure 9.2 Percentage of families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14 in a paid job at baseline, by relationship to participant**



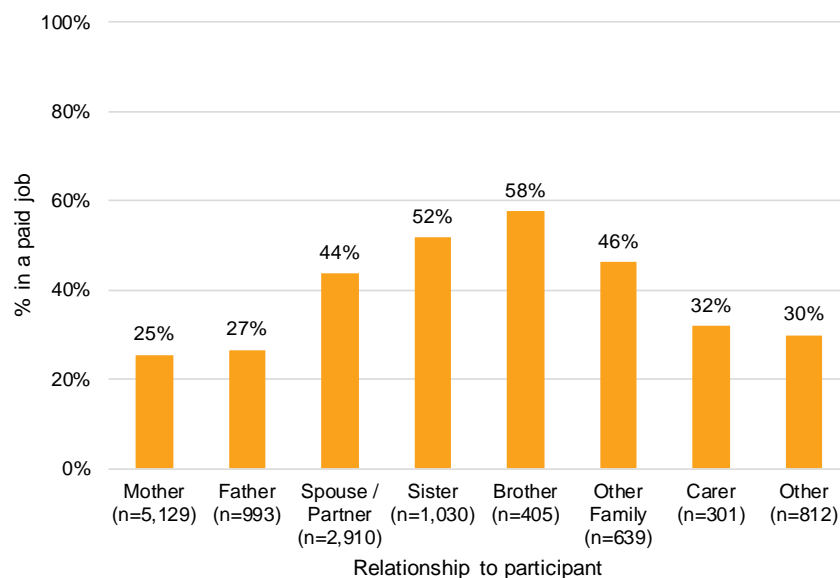
For the families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, the large majority of respondents (86%) are the participant's mother. Mothers report lower rates of paid employment at baseline compared to fathers (45% vs 67%), but are more likely to be employed than respondents in the 'other' category (32%). There is a free text field in the SF questionnaire for those who respond 'other' to specify their relationship to the participants, with common responses being grandparents and foster carers.

**Figure 9.3 Percentage of families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24 in a paid job at baseline, by relationship to participant**



For families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24, mother is again the most commonly reported relationship (79% of respondents). However, the differential in baseline employment rates between mothers and fathers is less pronounced compared to the younger participant cohort (50% for mothers and 57% for fathers). As expected based on their older age, grandparents have the lowest rates of paid employment at baseline (12%).

**Figure 9.4 Percentage of families/carers of participants aged 25 and over in a paid job at baseline, by relationship to participant**



The mother and spouse/partner are the main relationships reported for families/carers of participants aged 25 and over (40% and 23% of respondents, respectively). Overall, parents have the lowest baseline employment rates for this cohort, likely as a result of them nearing or reaching retirement age. The highest reported baseline employment rates are for siblings (58% for brothers, 52% for sisters), other family members (46%), and then the spouse/partner (44%).

Figure 9.5 investigates the impact of participant age<sup>50</sup> on baseline employment rates for parents of participants aged 0 to 14. For mothers, there is a large increase in employment after the participant reaches one year of age, which likely reflects return to work after maternity leave. This is followed by a small increasing trend in the baseline employment rates as participants get older. For fathers, the reverse relationship holds with a generally decreasing trend in baseline employment as participant age increases.

**Figure 9.5 Percentage of families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14 in a paid job at baseline, by relationship to participant and age of participant**

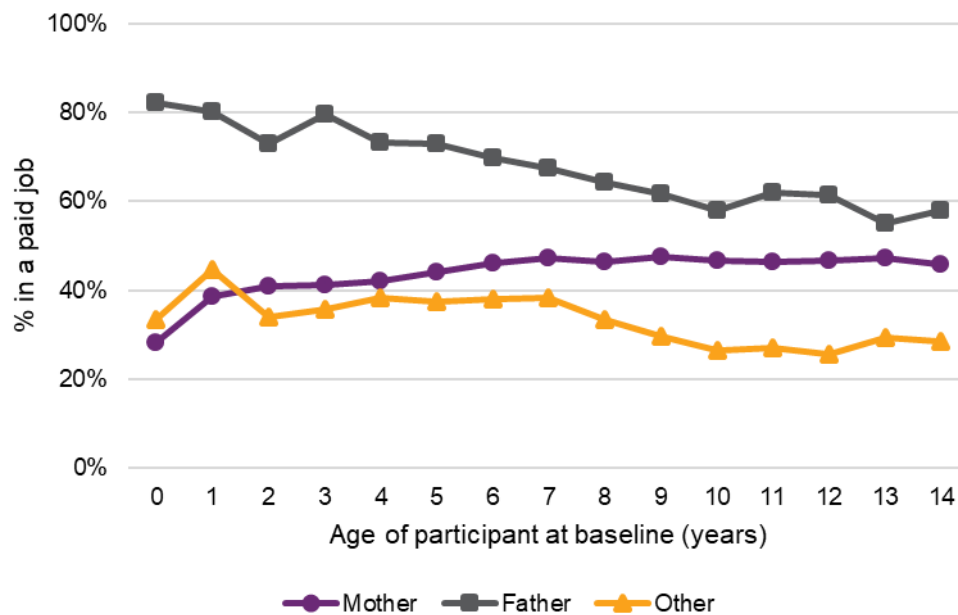
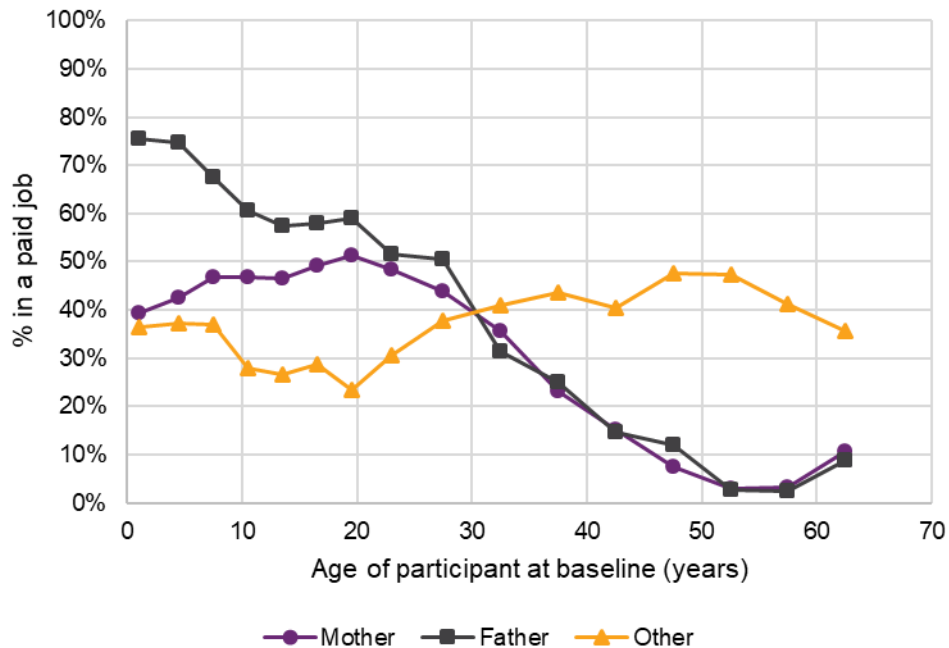


Figure 9.6 is similar to Figure 9.5 but extends the age range for participants by combining questionnaires from all three versions. Beyond age 30, percentages are similar for mothers and fathers, and decrease as they approach retirement. The increase beyond age 20 for the “Other” group reflects the increasing component of spouses and partners in this group.

<sup>50</sup> Note that the trends referred to are cross-sectional, not longitudinal.

**Figure 9.6 Percentage of families/carers of participants (all ages) in a paid job at baseline, by relationship to participant and age of participant**



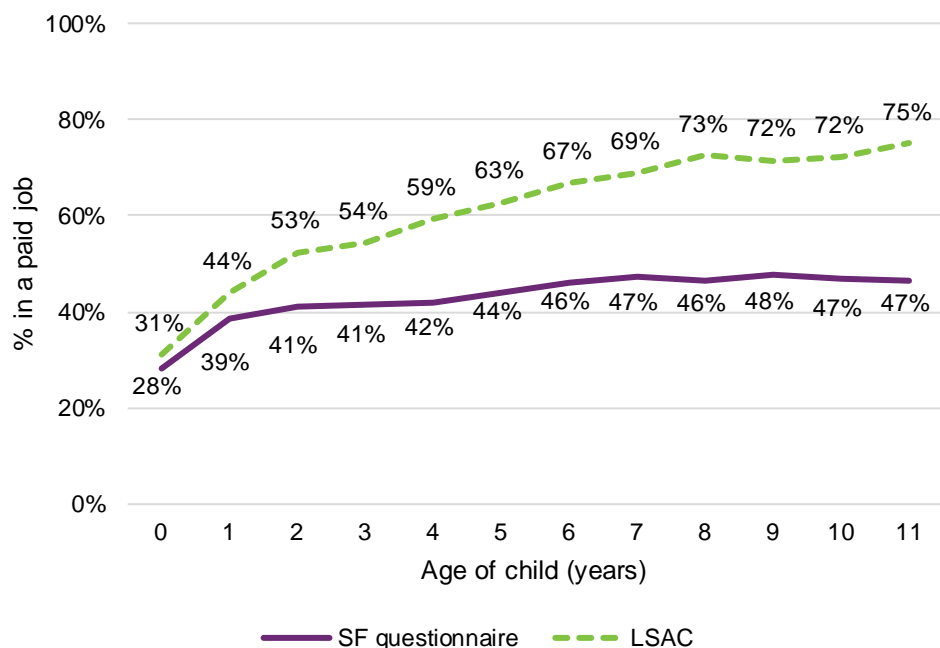
The employment experience of mothers of NDIS participants aged 0 to 11 can be compared to the employment rates of mothers in the general population by the age of their *youngest* child, using results from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)<sup>51,52</sup>. This comparison is given in Figure 9.7, noting that the two employment measures are not like-for-like as it is not possible to determine whether or not the participant is the mother’s youngest child in the SF questionnaire<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Baxter J, 2013. *Employment characteristics and transitions of mothers in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Department of Social Services.

<sup>52</sup> Employment rates are for mothers who are employed and at work. It excludes mothers who are employed and away from work i.e. employed but currently on leave or otherwise absent.

<sup>53</sup> In addition, the LSAC percentages are based on longitudinal data across four waves of the study, whereas the SF percentages are cross-sectional (at baseline).

**Figure 9.7 Percentage of mothers of participants aged 0 to 11 in a paid job at baseline, compared to population benchmark, by age of participant**



As expected, the overall employment rates for mothers of NDIS participants are lower at baseline compared to mothers in the general population. Furthermore, the differential increases significantly as children get older with 75% of mothers in the general population being at work when their youngest child is 11, compared to an employment rate of 47% for mothers of NDIS participants aged 11. This difference may reflect that mothers of children with a disability have more difficulty returning to work as their children get older compared to mothers in the general population. Alternatively it may be a result of the difference in the benchmark measure, as the mothers of NDIS participants may have other children that are younger than the participant which delays their return/entry into paid work.

### 9.4.2 Families and carers working as much as they want

The SF also asks whether families and carers are able to work as much as they want. For families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, 41% of respondents said that they (and/or their partner) were able to work as much as they wanted to at baseline. A logistic regression model for the probability of being able to work as much as desired identified the following factors as important:

- CALD status: families and carers for participants from CALD backgrounds were less likely to say they were able to work as much as they want at baseline (33%).
- Family/carers health: families and carers with better self-rated health were more likely to say they were able to work as much as they want.
- Remoteness: families and carers of participants residing in remote areas were more likely to be able to work as much as they want (48%).
- Casual employment: families and carers in casual employment were less likely to be able to work as much as they want (35%).
- Family circumstances: the percentage working as much as they want was higher for those able to access available services and supports to meet the needs of their child and family (49%), those with people to ask for childcare as much as they need (61%), and those with higher levels of confidence in supporting their child (53% for

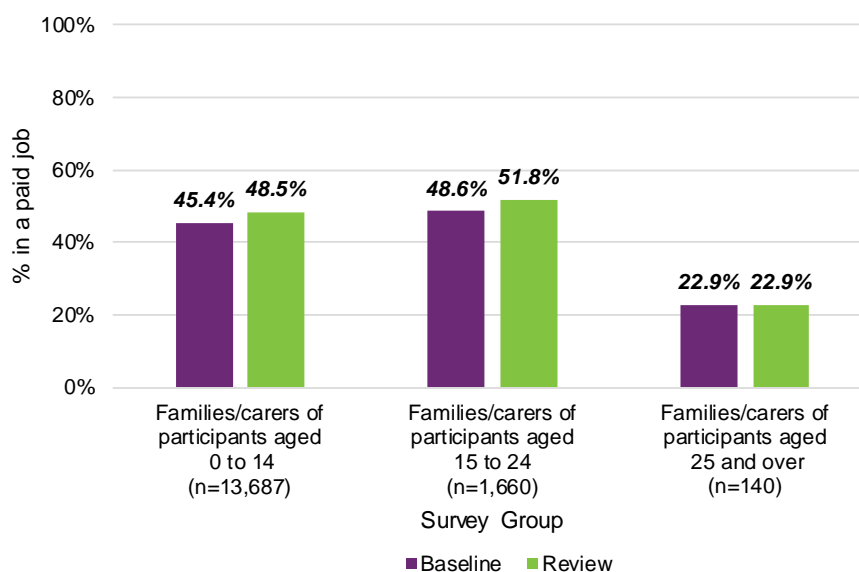


those who felt very confident decreasing to 14% for those who were not at all confident).

## 9.5 Employment experience of families/carers: trend

The trend analysis considers the employment experience of families and carers of participants who have been in the Scheme for at least one year and have received a review plan.<sup>54</sup> For this cohort, Figure 9.8 shows the percentage of families/carers who answer yes to the SF question ‘Are you currently working in a paid job?’ at baseline and at review.

**Figure 9.8 Percentage of families and carers in a paid job, at baseline and review**



The overall change in employment rates for families/carers between baseline and review as at 30 June 2018 is:

- A **+3.1%** improvement for families and carers of participants aged 0-14 years old
- A **+3.3%** improvement for families and carers of participants aged 15-24 years old
- No change for families and carers of participants aged 25 years and older.

Part of this increase in reported employment rates for families and carers of participants aged 0 to 24 may be due to improved Australian labour market conditions. Over the last two years, the employed to population ratio for 25 to 64 year olds<sup>55</sup> has steadily increased from 75.9% in July 2016 to 77.0% in June 2018<sup>56</sup>. However, the significant improvement<sup>57</sup> in employment for families/carers does not appear to be due to a strengthening job market alone, and may be a result of the impact of the NDIS. The drivers of employment outcomes for families and carers of NDIS participants are explored further in Section 9.7.

<sup>54</sup> Only where the family member/carer is the same at baseline and review, based on the response to the SF question ‘What is your relationship to the participant?’. If the family/carer chooses ‘Other (please specify)’ as a response, they must specify the same relationship at baseline and review.

<sup>55</sup> The majority of respondents to the family and carers survey for participants aged 0 to 24 were the mother or father (95% and 91% for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14 and 15 to 24, respectively), thus it is assumed that most family/carers will fall broadly in the 25 to 64 age range.

<sup>56</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2018. 6202.0 Labour force, Australia, Jun 2018.

<sup>57</sup> McNemar’s test,  $p < 0.0001$ .

The detailed transition rates between employment status at baseline and review are given in the tables below.

**Table 9.2 Employment transition rates, families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14**

Baseline Employment Status	Review Employment Status	
	In paid work (n=6639)	Not in paid work (n=7048)
In paid work (n=6219)	93% (n=5780)	7% (n=439)
Not in paid work (n=7468)	12% (n=859)	88% (n=6609)

**Table 9.3 Employment transition rates, families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24**

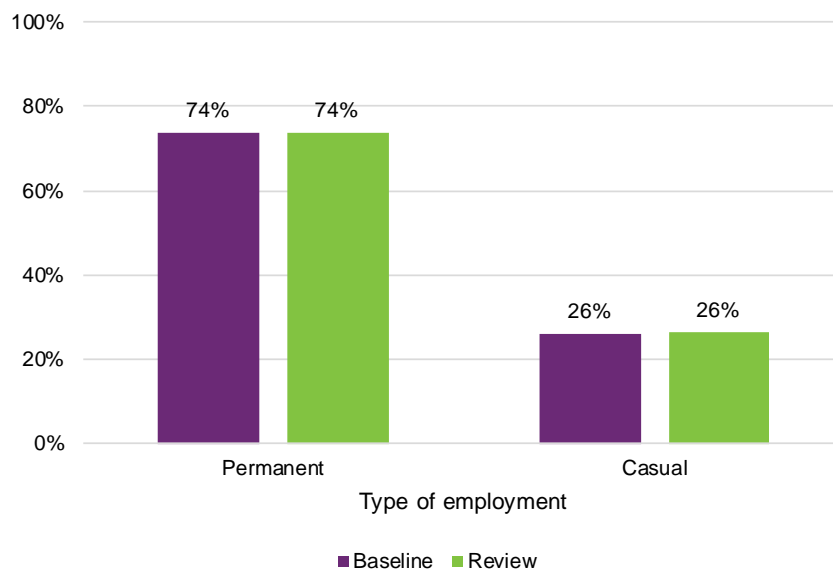
Baseline Employment Status	Review Employment Status	
	In paid work (n=860)	Not in paid work (n=800)
In paid work (n=806)	96% (n=775)	4% (n=31)
Not in paid work (n=854)	10% (n=85)	90% (n=769)

**Table 9.4 Employment transition rates, families/carers of participants 25 and over**

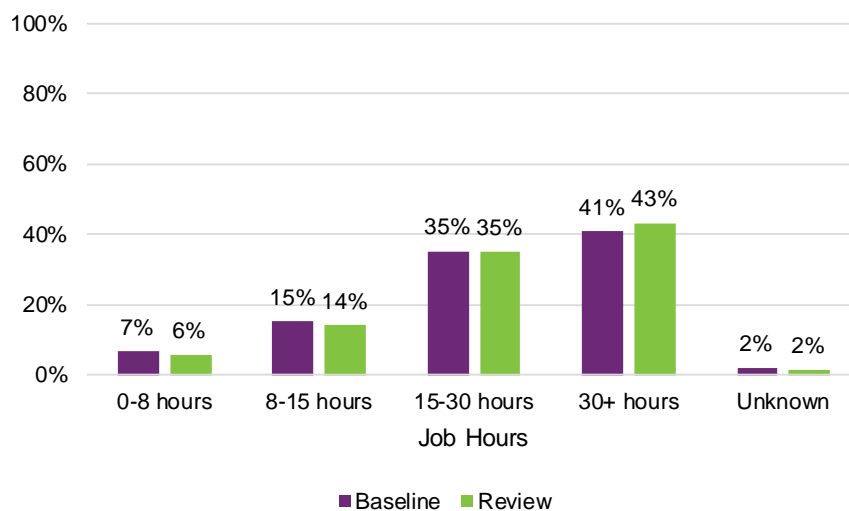
Baseline Employment Status	Review Employment Status	
	In paid work (n=32)	Not in paid work (n=108)
In paid work (n=32)	88% (n=28)	13% (n=4)
Not in paid work (n=108)	4% (n=4)	96% (n=104)

Families and carers who report that they are in a paid job in the SF questionnaire are also asked about their type of employment and the number of hours worked per week. The responses at baseline and review are illustrated in Figure 9.9 and Figure 9.10 for families and carers of participants, all ages combined.

**Figure 9.9 Type of employment for families and carers in a paid job**



**Figure 9.10 Typical hours worked per week for families and carers in a paid job**



For families and carers in a paid job, 26% are reported to be working in casual rather than permanent employment and this result has remained steady over time. In comparison, 15% of employees aged 25 to 64 in the general population were casually employed in 2016<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, Figure 9.10 shows that 57% of families and carers of NDIS participants work less than 30 hours per week at baseline, decreasing slightly to 55% at review. For the general population, only 26% of employees aged 25 to 64 were working on a part-time basis as at June 2018<sup>59</sup>.

These results show that families/carers who are in a paid job work less hours on average than employees in the general population, and are more likely to be in casual employment.

<sup>58</sup> HILDA Survey 2016, Wave 16

<sup>59</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2018. 6202.0 Labour force, Australia, Jun 2018. ABS defines part time work as less than 35 hours per week, so the percentage of the general population working less than 30 hours per week would likely be lower than 26%

The need to balance both work and caring commitments is expected to make part-time work more appealing to families and carers of people with a disability, and part-time work is more likely to be associated with casual employment than full-time work.<sup>60</sup>

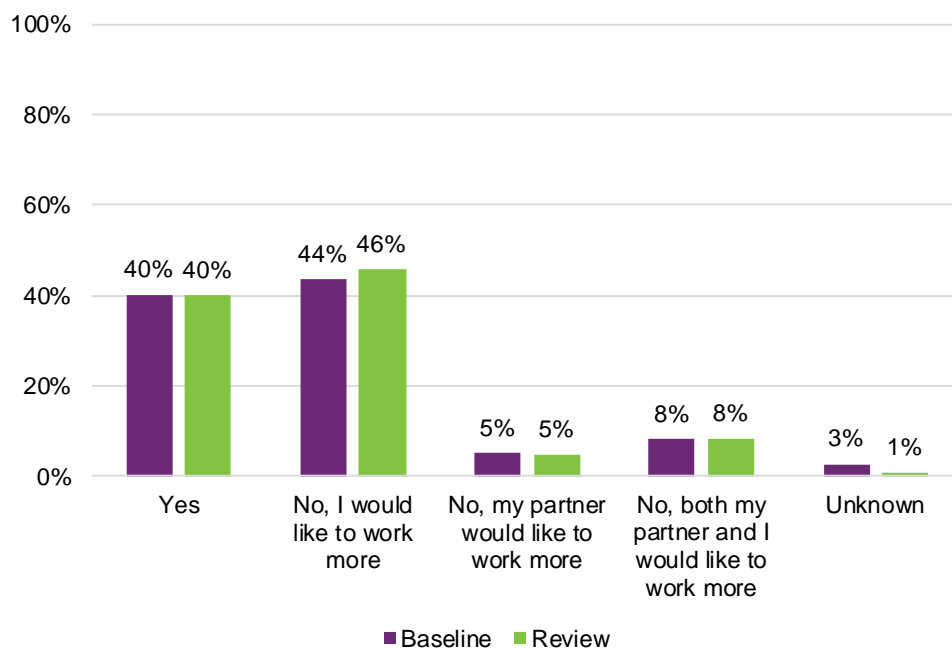
## 9.6 Barriers to employment for families/carers

While overall employment rates are improving for the families and carers of NDIS participants, it is also important to understand whether barriers remain that prevent families and carers working as much as they would like to. In the SF questionnaire, families/carers are asked the following questions (regardless of whether or not they are in a paid job):

- ‘I/(my partner and I) am/are able to work as much as I/we want’ for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14
- “Family who provide informal care to my family member with a disability are able to work as much as they want” for families/carers of participants aged 15 to 24, and 25 and over

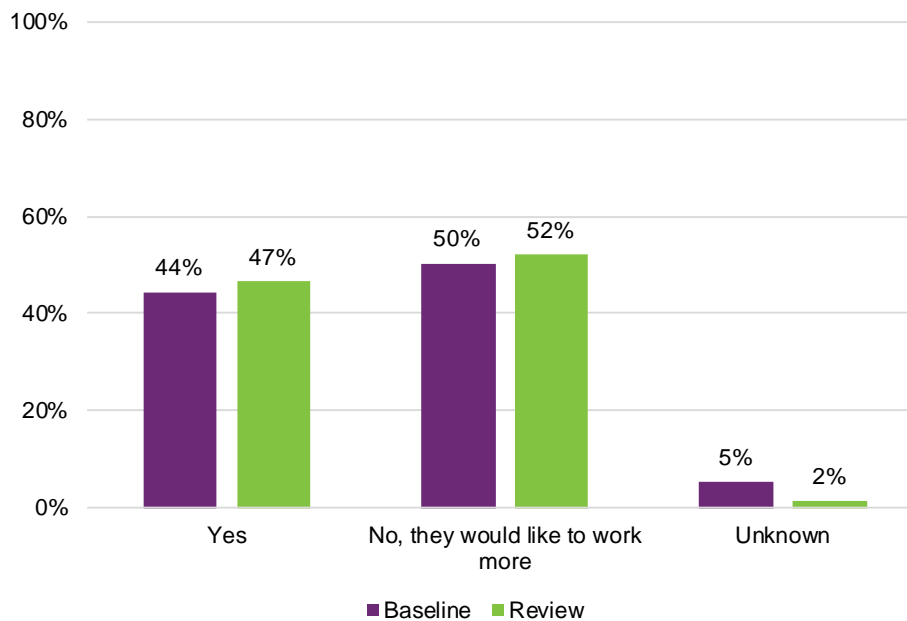
The answers to these questions at baseline and review are illustrated in Figure 9.11 and Figure 9.12 for each age group.

**Figure 9.11 Ability of families/carers and their partners to work as much as they want - for families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14**



<sup>60</sup> HILDA Survey 2018: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 16 pp. 66.

**Figure 9.12 Ability of families/carers and their family members to work as much as they want - for families and carers of participants aged 15 and over**



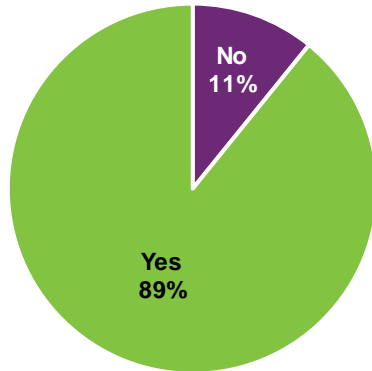
Families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 have not reported any increase in their (and their partner's) ability to work as much as they want between baseline and review, despite a significant increase in the reported employment rate. For families and carers of participants aged 15 and over, both the positive and negative response options regarding the ability of family members to work as much as they wanted increased as a result of a decrease in missing responses at review. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the percentage of families/carers (and their partners/family) who are able to work as much as they want to has increased as a result of participants being involved with the NDIS.

On the other hand, the overall increase in the typical working hours for families/carers in a paid job (see Figure 9.10) suggests that some families/carers may be *progressing* towards working as much as they would like to, but are not yet achieving their optimal employment hours. A single year may not be a long enough period for families and carers of NDIS participants to adapt to the support provisions and requirements under the Scheme, and to then adjust their own employment accordingly. Furthermore, it may take additional time for families and carers who are already in paid work to negotiate new working hours and conditions with their employers.

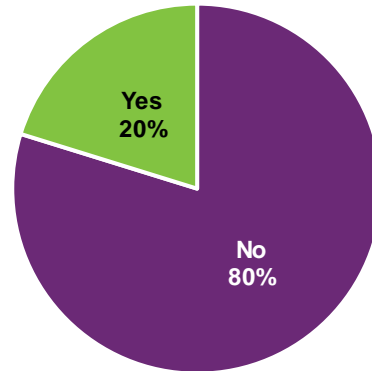
To understand why families and carers are limited in their ability to work as much as they want to, the SF questionnaire asks families/carers what barriers they face to working more. Respondents can choose more than one option, and the results at review are illustrated below for all age groups combined.

**Figure 9.13 Barriers to families/carers working more, for those who can't work as much as they would like to at review**

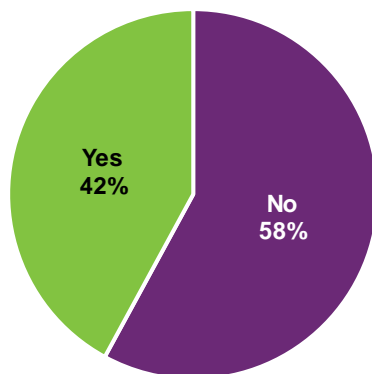
Situation of child/family member with disability



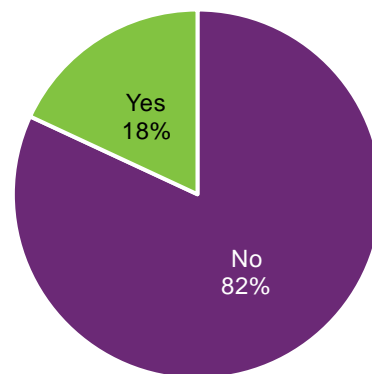
Availability of jobs



Flexibility of jobs



Other barriers



The majority (89%) of families and carers who reported that they were not able to work as much as they would like to found the situation with their child or family member with a disability to be a barrier to working more. A large proportion (42%) also reported a lack of job flexibility as a barrier to meeting their employment goals. This could include both families/carers who cannot find jobs with sufficient flexibility to accommodate their responsibilities, as well as those whose current jobs are not suitably flexible. The general availability of jobs was also reported to be a barrier to employment for 20% of families and carers.

For the 18% of families and carers who reported that other barriers prevented them from working more, they were asked in the SF questionnaire to specify what those barriers were. The key themes that emerged from the responses are given in Table 9.5 below with examples.

**Table 9.5 Other barriers to families/carers working more, for those who can't work as much as they would like to at review**

Other barriers to work	Examples
Ill health	'We cannot work due to ill health - my husband has a disability and I have chronic pain.'  'My own mental health issues and my other children have mental health issues as well.'
Cost and availability of childcare and after school care	'Cost of child care and vacancy rates'  'No appropriate childcare with experience in ASD'
Additional caring responsibilities	'3 of the 5 children in the family have a disability. Father is also the guardian of his brother with a significant ABI'  'I've had a new baby.'  'Currently in caring role for ageing parent'
Study	'Studying Aged care diploma'  'Studying towards qualifications that will increase employment opportunities.'
Language barriers	'Language and skill barrier. Has limited English.'

## 9.7 Key drivers of employment outcomes

The key drivers of employment success for families and carers of NDIS participants have been identified using multiple logistic regression analysis, where the binary response (dependent) variable is one if the family member or carer has a paid job at review and zero otherwise. A stepwise regression approach is used to determine the statistically significant predictors of employment success from a number of different variables related to both the family/carer and participant that are expected to influence the ability of family members and carers to find or maintain a job.

For the SF questionnaire variables, responses were measured at baseline only (i.e. changes to responses at review were not included in the regression analysis).

The regression modelling has only been applied to the families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 to ensure sufficient data is available for analysis. The results of this analysis are given below for two different cohorts of families/carers:

- Families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 who are not in paid work at baseline
- Families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 who are in paid work at baseline.

### 9.7.1 Families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are not in paid work at baseline

Of the 7,468 families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 who reported that they were not in paid work at baseline, 859 had found a paid job at review. This corresponds to 12% of families/carers who were not employed at baseline successfully finding a paid job over the review period. The key drivers of this employment success, as determined by multiple regression analysis, are outlined in Table 9.6 below. The key drivers relate to either the participant, or to the family member/carer using answers from the SF questionnaire at baseline. The direction of the relationship between each key driver and the likelihood of finding paid work at review is also shown.

**Table 9.6 Key drivers of employment success for families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are not in paid work at baseline**

Type	Key driver	Relationship to employment success
Participant characteristics	Streaming type is intensive or super intensive	↓
	Scheme access reason is 'benefit from early intervention'	↑
	Plan is fully or partly self-managed	↑
	Identifies as Indigenous	↓
	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) decile score for the participant's local government area (LGA) <sup>61</sup>	↑ with lower relative disadvantage
	Participant lives in NSW, QLD or SA	↑
Family/carer baseline SF questionnaire responses <sup>62</sup>	Is able to access available services and supports to meet the needs of the participant and their family	↑
	Would like to receive services and supports needed to care for the participant at different times	↑
	Family/carer would like to work more and participant is of school age	↑
	Self-assessed health status is fair or poor	↓
	Has friends and family they see as often as they like	↑
	Relationship to participant is "other" (rather than mother or father)	↓
	Currently studying part-time or full-time	↑

<sup>61</sup> The IRSD is an index published by the ABS which ranks areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general and a high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general.

<sup>62</sup> The modelling also suggested a positive relationship between missing answers to some SF questions and employment success. This is likely to be a consequence of the way data are collected in the ICT system, rather than indicating a genuine impact on employment success.

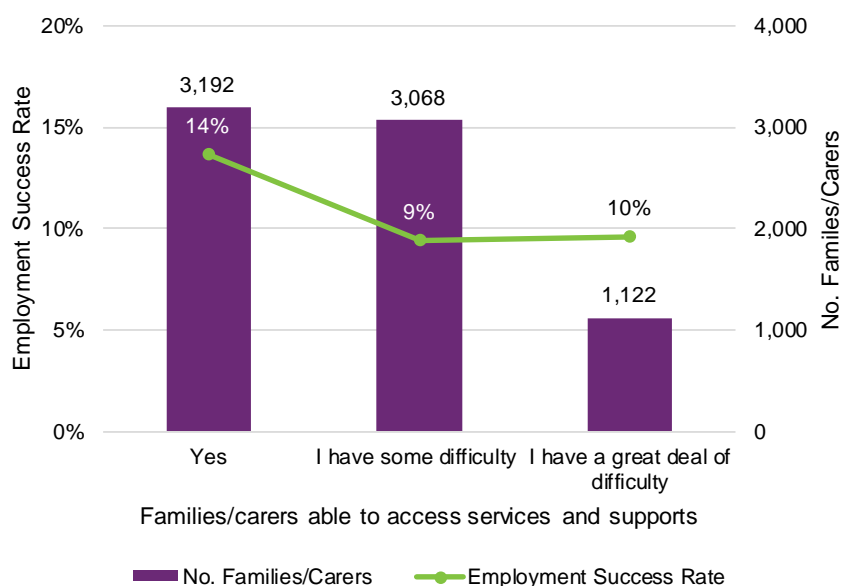


Selected key drivers from Table 9.6 are now examined in more detail. All supporting figures show the impact of the key drivers on the likelihood of families/carers finding paid work at review on a one-way basis (i.e. not allowing for the other explanatory factors from the multiple regression analysis).

### Access to services and supports

In the SF questionnaire, families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 are asked whether 'I am able to access available services and supports to meet the needs of my child and family'. The employment success rate by the response to this question at baseline is illustrated in Figure 9.14 below.

**Figure 9.14 Employment success rates by whether families/carers are able to access services and supports – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline\***

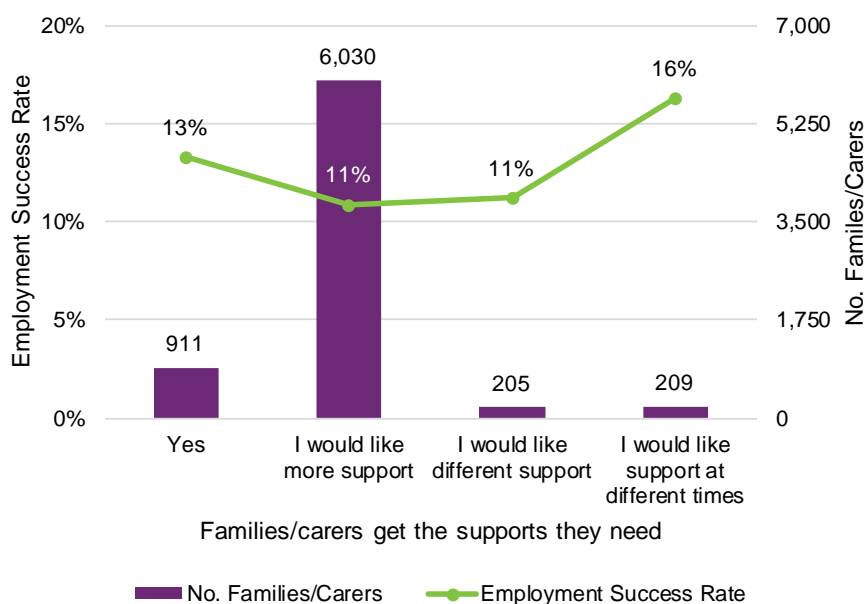


\* Excludes missing responses

The likelihood of finding paid employment at review is highest for the families/carers who are able to access available services and supports for their child and family without difficulty. This finding highlights the importance of families and carers having access to reasonable and necessary supports for their child through the NDIS and other informal and mainstream services that will enable them to have the time and confidence to pursue paid employment.

Families and carers are also asked in the SF questionnaire whether 'I get the services and supports I need to care for my child with a disability'. This question addresses the quality and the amount of support that families/carers receive, rather than accessibility. Figure 9.15 shows the family/carer employment success rate by the baseline response to this question.

**Figure 9.15 Employment success rates by whether families/carers get the supports they need – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline\***



\* Excludes missing responses

Families and carers who respond that they would like support at different times are found to have a significantly higher likelihood of finding employment at review compared to the other response options. A possible reason for this result is that these families and carers may have already been interested in paid employment prior to the child entering the Scheme but were not able to find supports that were flexible enough to accommodate a work schedule. Under the NDIS, there is greater flexibility in the way participants access supports compared to the old State-based disability system, and this may have resulted in an increase in paid employment for families and carers.

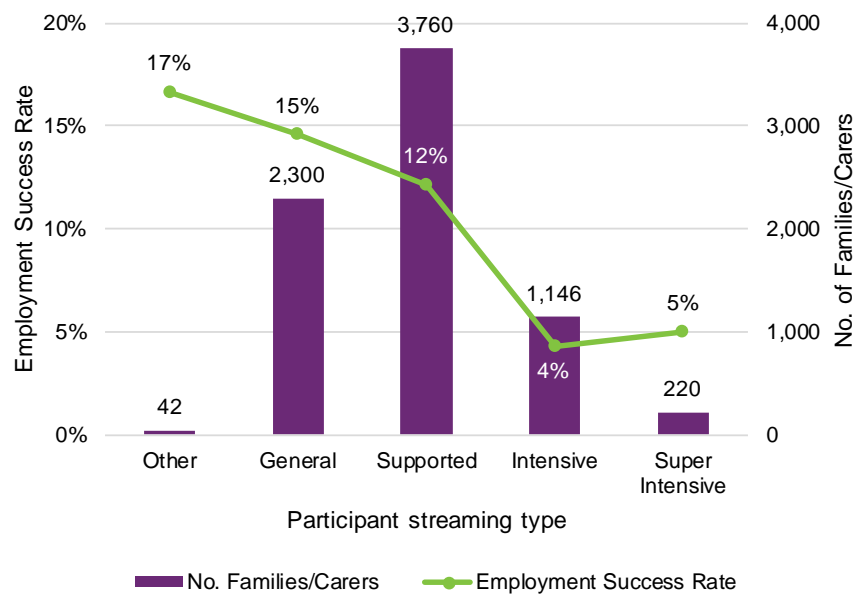
#### *Streaming type and access decision*

A participant's streaming type reflects the level of support they need to manage the NDIS Pathway, and child participants are often streamed intensive or super intensive when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

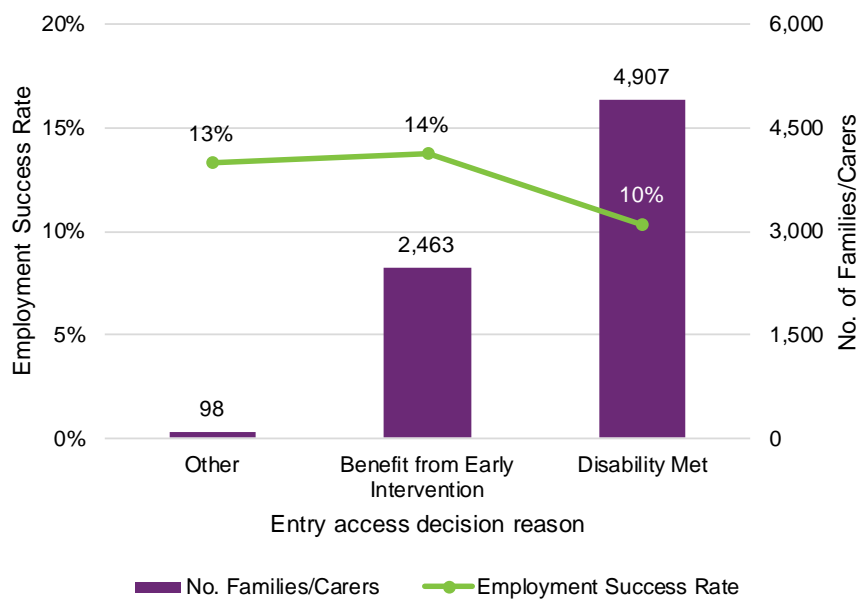
- Participant exhibits behaviours of concern
- Participant has minimal/no informal or community supports
- Parent/carer/other family members have a disability
- History of abuse/neglect or current involvement with Child Protection

A participant being streamed as intensive or super intensive may therefore indicate that the family member or carer has additional caring responsibilities with regards to the child and/or the rest of the family that makes finding paid employment more difficult. On the other hand, child participants who access the scheme through early intervention generally have a higher level of function compared to other participants, and with the supports provided by the NDIS may be able to reduce the impact of their disability over time. As a result, the families and carers of these participants may experience fewer barriers to finding employment compared to the families and carers of participants with higher needs. Figure 9.16 and Figure 9.17 illustrate the employment success rate by streaming type and access decision, respectively.

**Figure 9.16 Employment success rates by participant’s streaming type – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline**



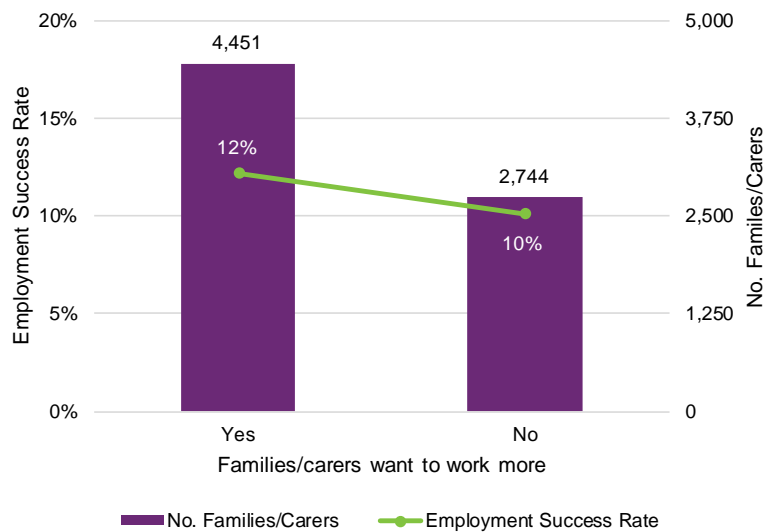
**Figure 9.17 Employment success rates by participant’s entry access decision reason – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline**



*Families/carers want to work more*

For families and carers who do not have paid work at baseline, their motivation to find work is expected to have a significant impact on their employment success. For example, a parent with a newborn baby may not have the capacity or interest in finding employment until the child is older. The family and carers SF questionnaire asks respondents the question ‘I/(my partner and I) am/are able to work as much as I/we want’. Families/carers who are not in paid work at baseline and answer this question with ‘No, I would like to work more’ or ‘No, both my partner and I would like to work more’ are assumed to be motivated to find paid employment. The relationship between motivation and employment success is illustrated in Figure 9.18 below.

**Figure 9.18 Employment success rates by whether families/carers want to work more – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline\***

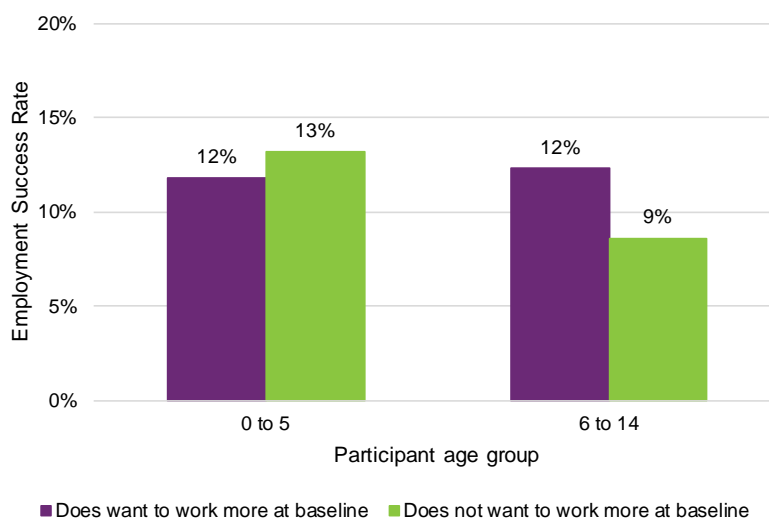


\* Excludes missing responses

As expected, the likelihood of finding a job at review is higher for families/carers who are motivated to find employment compared to families/carers who don't want to work more, although not by a large margin. Since motivation for work is measured at baseline, this result may actually reflect that some families/carers changed their minds regarding employment over the review period. This is likely to occur if there has been a change of circumstances within the family, such as the child beginning school or childcare.

In Figure 9.19, the employment success rate is shown by both the family member/carer's motivation to work more at baseline as well as the participant's age group. A positive relationship between motivation and employment success is only observed when participants are aged 6 to 14, at which age most children are enrolled in school and the circumstances of the family may have become more stable.

**Figure 9.19 Employment success rates by whether families/carers want to work more and participant age – families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline\***

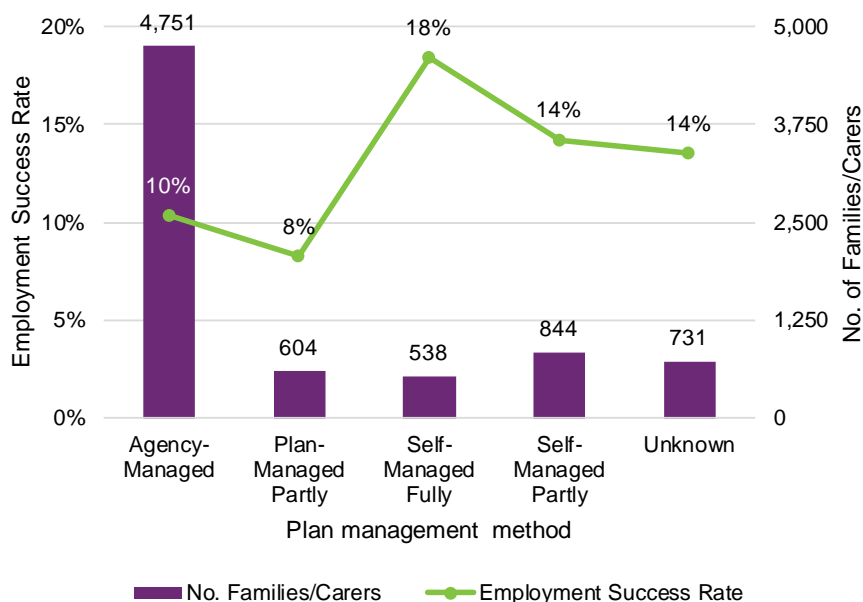


\* Excludes missing responses

*Participant's plan is self-managed*

Figure 9.20 shows the employment success rate for families and carers by the participant's plan management method. For child participants with self-managed plans, it is generally expected that the family member/carer who answers the SF questionnaire during the planning process will also be the primary plan manager.

**Figure 9.20 Employment success rates by participant's plan management method – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, not in paid work at baseline**



Families and carers who fully or partly self-manage a child participant's plan are found to have a significantly higher likelihood of finding paid work at review compared to families/carers who use other plan management methods.<sup>63</sup> Although self-managing a plan can often be more time consuming than agency- or plan-management, it also gives the family member or carer more flexibility and control in choosing the appropriate supports for the child. As a result, families and carers who self-manage may have an increased level of confidence in the supports provided to the participant, and will feel more comfortable leaving the child in alternative care in order to participate in the workforce.

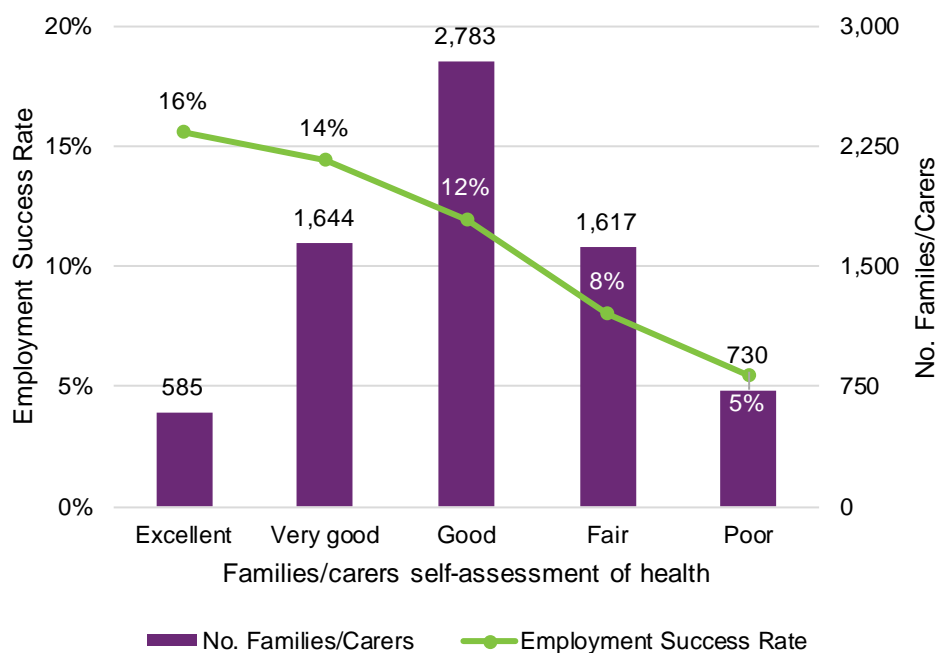
In addition, choosing to self-manage the child's plan may indicate that the family member or carer has a greater level of work-readiness than those who choose other plan management methods. The responsibilities of self-managers include purchasing supports, negotiating provider agreements, managing funding, recording invoices and receipts, and more. These are skills that are desirable in many workplaces, and hence families/carers who are able to self-manage may be more attractive to potential employers.

<sup>63</sup> Unknown plan management also has a high likelihood of employment success on a two-way basis. However, because a large proportion of this group (60%) entered the scheme under early intervention, it was not found to be a significant driver of employment success in the regression analysis after allowing for access reason.

### Health status of family and carers

In the SF questionnaire, families and carers are asked to rate their overall health on a 5-point scale between Excellent and Poor. Figure 9.21 illustrates the employment success rate by the family member or carer's response at baseline.

**Figure 9.21 Employment success rates by families/carers self-assessment of health – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are not in paid work at baseline\***



There is a clear downward trend in the likelihood of a family member or carer finding work as the assessment of their health deteriorates. This result is not surprising as families and carers identified their own ill health, whether physical or mental, as a barrier to working more in the SF questionnaire (see Table 9.5).

#### 9.7.2 Families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are in paid work at baseline

For families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, 6,219 respondents reported that they were in paid work at baseline. Of this group, 5,780 also reported that they were in paid work at review. The employment success rate is the proportion of families/carers that have successfully maintained paid work at review, which is 93% for this cohort. It is important to note that this does not necessarily say anything about the *consistency* of employment status over the plan period, only whether the family/carers is in paid employment at the start and end of the period.

The key drivers of employment success for families/carers who are in paid work at baseline are determined by multiple regression analysis, and are outlined in Table 9.7 below. The direction of the relationship between each key driver and the likelihood of maintaining employment at review is also shown.

**Table 9.7 Key drivers of employment success for families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are in paid work at baseline**

Type	Key driver	Relationship to employment success
Participant characteristics	Scheme entry age	↑ with increasing age
	Streaming type is intensive or super intensive	↓
	Scheme access reason is 'benefit from early intervention'	↑
	Plan is partly self-managed	↑
	Participant relocated during plan period	↓
	Participant lives in VIC	↑
Family/carer baseline SF questionnaire responses	Type of employment is casual	↓
	Number of hours typically worked per week	↑ with increasing hours (approx. <sup>64</sup> )
	Is very confident or somewhat confident in supporting the child's development	↑
	Is able to access available services and supports to meet the needs of the participant and their family	↑
	Would like to receive services and supports needed to care for the participant at different times	↑
	Relationship to participant is father (rather than mother or other)	↑

Selected key drivers from Table 9.7 are now examined in more detail. All supporting figures show the impact of the key drivers on the likelihood of families/carers maintaining employment at review on a one-way basis (i.e. not allowing for the other explanatory factors from the multiple regression analysis).

#### *Employment type and number of hours typically worked per week*

The likelihood of a person keeping their job is expected to be strongly influenced by the characteristics of the job itself e.g. industry, benefits, how well suited it is to the person etc. For families and carers who are working in a paid job at baseline, the SF questionnaire asks about two features of their employment: 1) is the job permanent or casual, and 2) what are the typical hours worked per week. Figure 9.22 and Figure 9.23 illustrate the employment success rate for families and carers at review, by their response to these questions at baseline.

<sup>64</sup> Hours reported in broad ranges i.e. categorical variable.

**Figure 9.22 Employment success rates by families/carers employment type – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are in paid work at baseline**

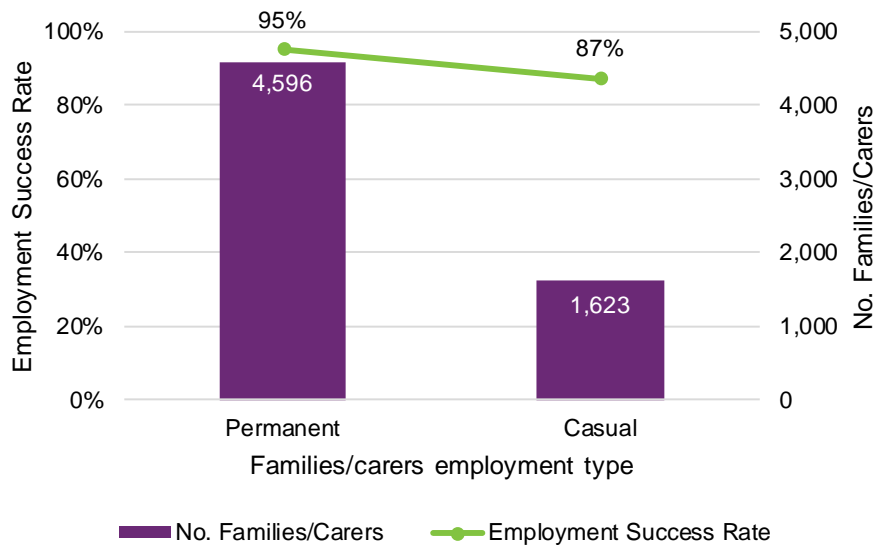
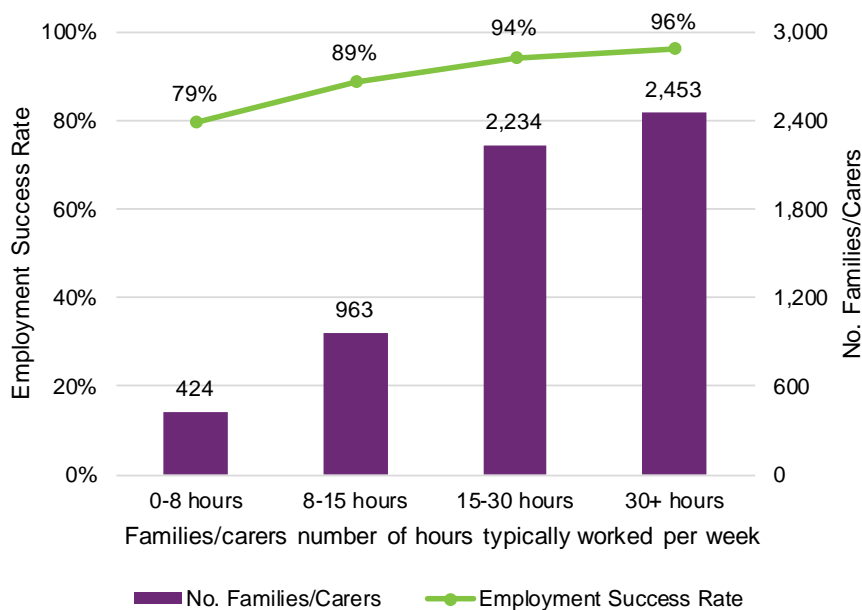


Figure 9.22 shows that families and carers who are employed in a casual job at baseline are less likely to have paid work at review compared to those who are permanently employed. This result could reflect that casual employment is generally less secure than permanent employment, as employers do not need to provide notice of termination or redundancy benefits to casual employees. Alternatively, some families and carers may find it difficult or unappealing to maintain casual work because the irregular hours and lack of paid leave entitlements can make it challenging to balance work and caring responsibilities.

**Figure 9.23 Employment success rates by families/carers number of hours typically worked per week – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are in paid work at baseline\***



\* Excludes missing responses



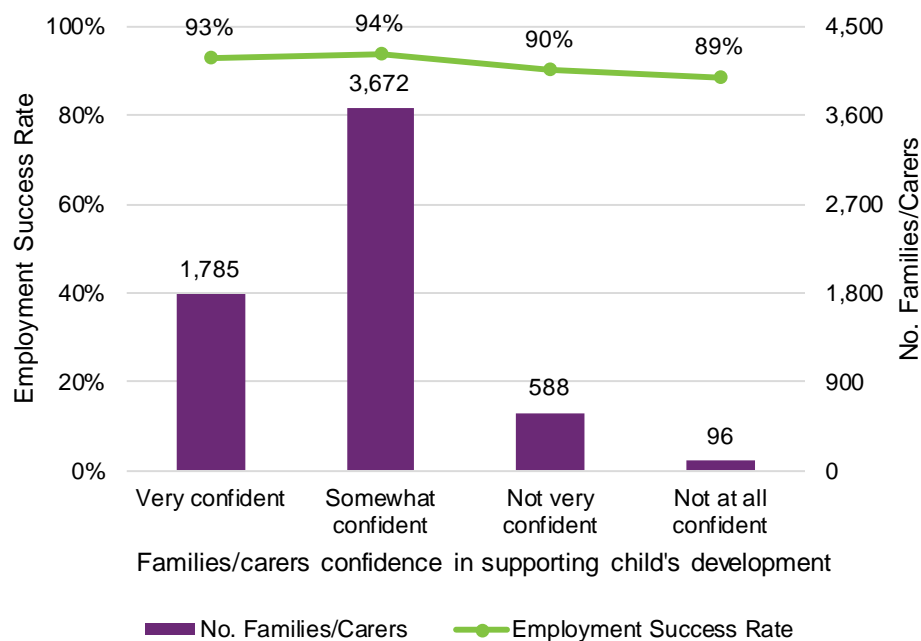
In Figure 9.23 the likelihood of maintaining paid work at review is shown to increase with the number of hours the family/carer works per week at baseline. While lower employment success rates for part-time workers may be partly due to higher rates of casual employment, the regression analysis suggests an additional impact that may be related to capacity to work. Families/carers who are only working a few hours per week may have chosen to do so because of the situation with the child participant or their own circumstances e.g. ill health, which could reduce the likelihood of maintaining employment. Similarly, those families/carers who are working full-time at baseline may have chosen to do so because the situation with the child and the rest of the family is relatively stable, and thus they are more likely to have the capacity to retain their job at review.

Between baseline and review, the overall percentage of families/carers who are working 30+ hours per week has increased by approximately 2% whereas casual employment rates have remained steady (see Section 9.5). If the observed relationship between number of work hours and employment success continues into the future, it is expected that this increase in hours worked will result in more families and carers of NDIS participants successfully maintaining their paid employment (holding all other factors constant).

#### *Confidence in supporting child's development*

In the SF questionnaire, families and carers of participants aged 0 to 14 are asked 'How confident do you feel in supporting your child's development'. The employment success rate by the response to this question at baseline is illustrated in Figure 9.24 below.

**Figure 9.24 Employment success rates by families/carers level of confidence in supporting the child's development – for families/carers of participants aged 0 to 14, who are in paid work at baseline\***



\* Excludes missing responses

A high proportion (88%) of families/carers feel somewhat or very confident in supporting their child's development at baseline, and this is associated with a higher likelihood of maintaining paid employment at review. If the NDIA is able to further increase the confidence of families and carers to support their children with a disability by providing reasonable and necessary

supports for their development, it is possible that the percentage of families and carers who are able to maintain their employment will increase over time.

*Access to services and supports, plan management, streaming type and access decision*

These factors were also found to be key drivers of employment success for families and carers who are not in paid work at baseline i.e. they influence both the likelihood of finding and keeping a job. For further commentary on the relationship of these drivers to employment success, see Section 9.7.1.