

Impact of school closures on primary school children and their mothers

A longitudinal qualitative study



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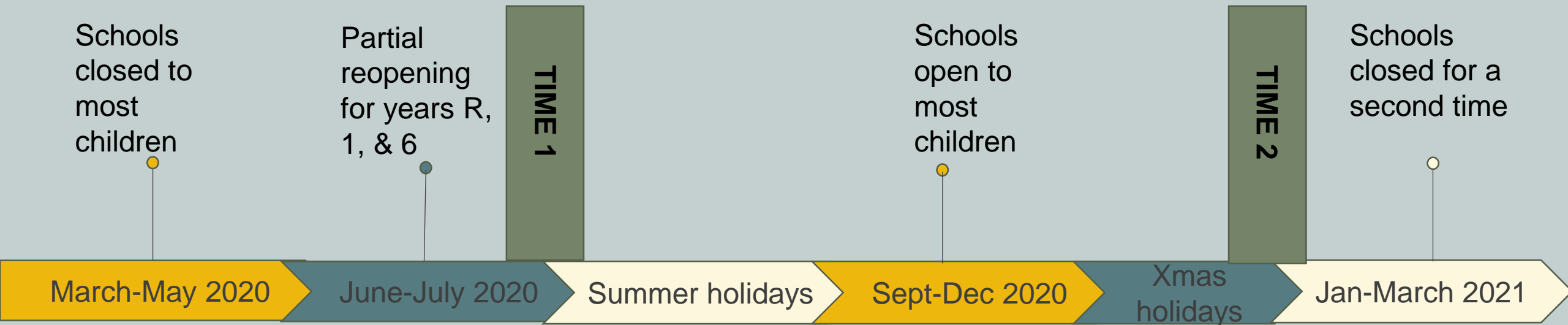


Background & Rationale

- Urgent need to understand the ways in which families adjusted *over time* to the sudden and drastic changes to education, family life and social relationships caused by national school closures.
- Two faces of lockdown: families reported benefits as well as disadvantages of school closures. Qualitative approaches able to capture fluid, nuanced, context-specific responses to change
- Dual perspective: child's voice frequently missing from COVID-focused research

Methodology

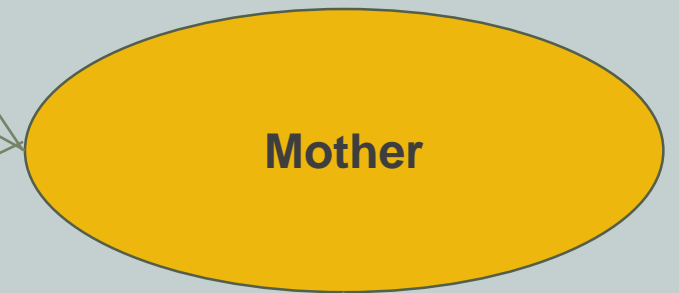
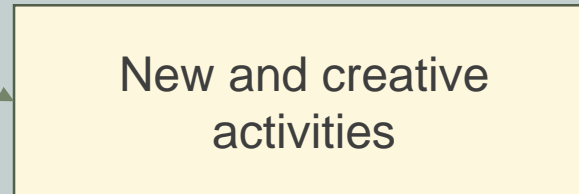
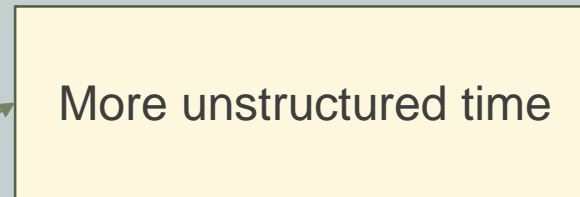
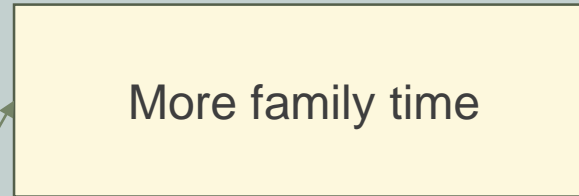
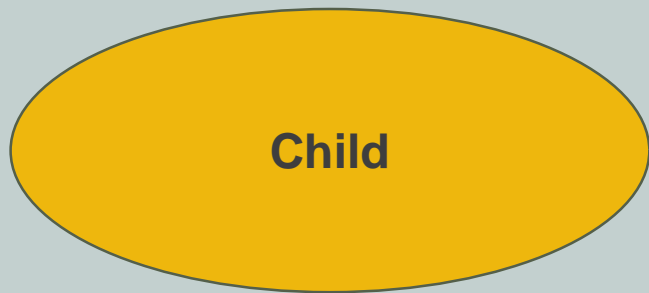
- 21 mothers and children in KS2 (Years 3-6 during academic year 20/21) took part in a semi-structured interview at two time-points.
 - T1: Impact of school closures on child's emotional, social, educational well-being
 - T2: Reflections on Autumn term and response to second period of school closures



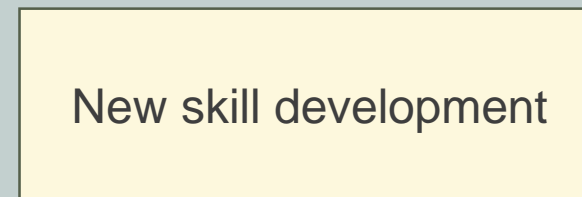
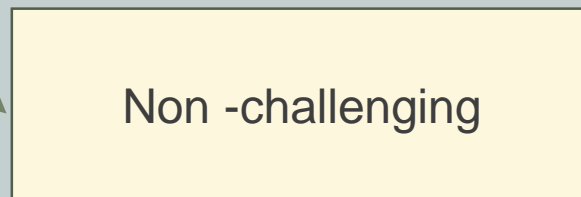
Time 1: Positive impact of lockdown

“We got the mouldy bug-eaten sun loungers out of the shed and now every time it's sunny we get them out and lay on them. It's nice to watch the clouds float by”

“I saw it as an opportunity to step outside of the curriculum”



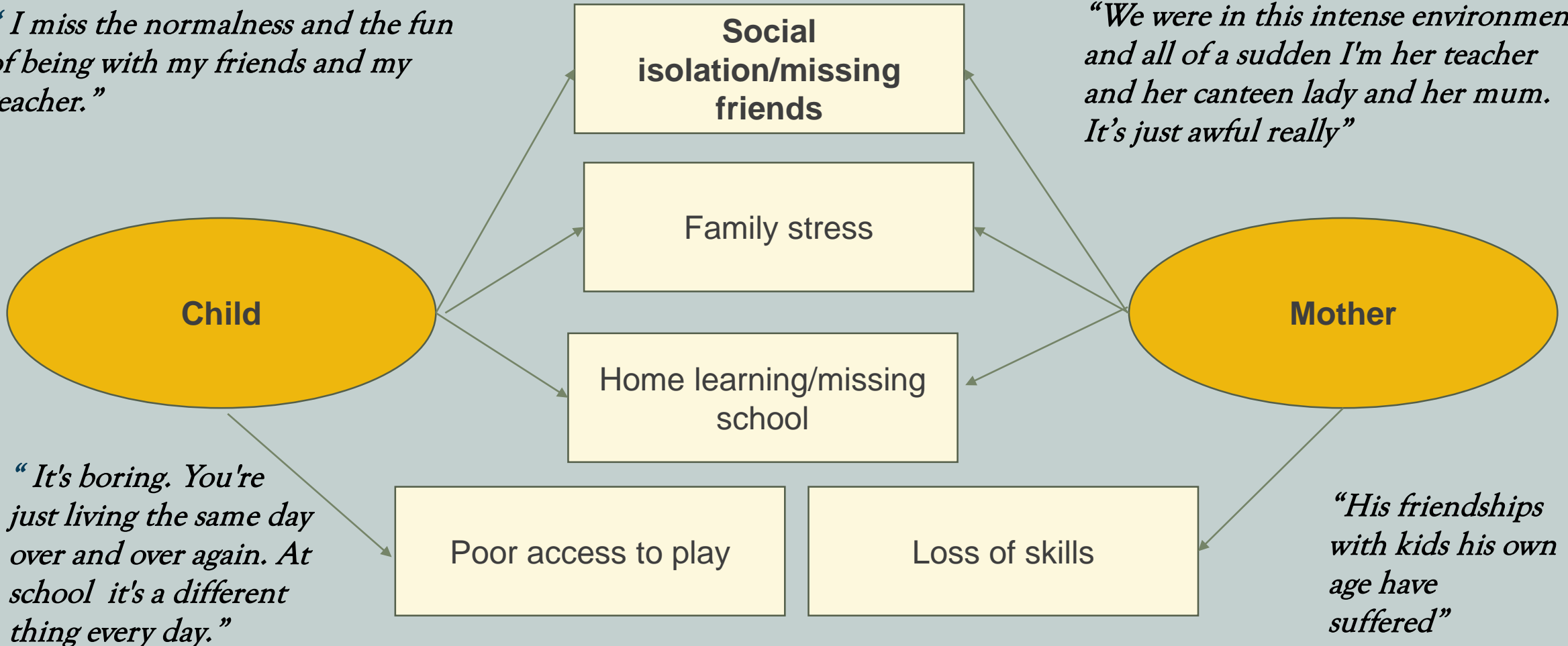
“People at school annoy me sometimes and not being in school means not being with them”



“The slowing down thing was actually good for all of us”

Time 1: Negative impact of lockdown

“ I miss the normalness and the fun of being with my friends and my teacher.”



“We were in this intense environment and all of a sudden I'm her teacher and her canteen lady and her mum. It's just awful really”

“ It's boring. You're just living the same day over and over again. At school it's a different thing every day.”

“His friendships with kids his own age have suffered”

Children's well-being over time



- The extent to which families experienced these positive and negatives influenced the extent to which school closures were associated with a decline in well-being.
- However, at T2 we observed strikingly similar well-being trends despite variability in family SES, parental availability, access to resources, and well-being prior to lockdown.

Most children (86%) experienced prolonged decline in mood, motivation, and/or behaviour during LD1 that completely (57%) or partially (19%) resolved with the return to school

“Frank's mood nose-dived so much that he was barely able to get off the sofa... it was absolutely heart-breaking. It was terrible.”

”[Every day] she will shriek, cry, tantrum, hit, kick.”

“It's like somebody came and lived here for lockdown and now I have my Ada back.”

“It's like the old Frank's back. You know, he's just been himself again”

Conclusions & Next Steps



1. Paper in preparation:

- ❖ RISK and PROTECTIVE factors for optimal family adjustment during lockdown over time
- ❖ Lessons learned for schools: home learning strategies and support for families at home
- ❖ Whole school approaches and interventions: what parents and children found useful during the autumn term

2. **Interview study with teachers** ($N = 20$) developed based on findings identified in parent/child interviews.