

CHILD EXCLUSION CLAUSES SURVEY

A Summary Report

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**Prepared for ANEC
The European consumer voice in standardisation
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CONTENTS

	Page No.
1 OVERALL SUMMARY	4
1.1 Summary - Child exclusion clauses	4
1.2 Method	4
1.3 Findings	5
1.4 This report	6
2 BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Research objectives	7
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	9
3.1 Considerations and discussion of methodology	9
3.2 Methodology	10
3.3 The achieved sample profile of parents	11
4 KEY QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS	12
4.1 General usage of domestic appliances	12
4.2 Average age at which children first start to use appliances	12
4.3 Supervision and instructions	13
4.4 Accidents	15
4.5 Recommendations by parents	15
5 MAIN FINDINGS	16
Usage of domestic appliances	16
5.1 Microwave oven usage	19
5.2 Electric hob or oven usage	21
5.3 Grills or toaster usage	23
5.4 Kettles usage	25
5.5 Vacuum cleaner usage	26
5.6 Irons usage	28
5.7 Washing machine usage	29
5.8 Tumble dryer usage	30
5.9 Water heater usage	31
5.10 Electric lawn mower or strimmer usage	32

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Questionnaire

1. GENERAL SUMMARY

1.1 Summary - Child exclusion clauses survey

THIS IS A REPORT OF A EUROPEAN SURVEY TO IDENTIFY THE AGE AT WHICH CHILDREN START TO USE ELECTRICAL DOMESTIC APPLIANCES AND TO PROVIDE DATA ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND OUTCOME OF SUCH USAGE.

The research was planned by working groups of ANEC (the European consumer voice in standardisation). ANEC employed a competitive tender of European market research companies and commissioned IPSOS UK to conduct the survey.

1.2 Method

The ANEC questions were included in IPSOS omnibus surveys carried out in July 2003 in the following countries:

- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Spain
- Sweden.

In each country 1000 adults were initially interviewed, providing a base sample that was nationally representative. The ANEC questions were asked of parents of children aged 4 to 13, providing an achieved total sample of 887 European parents. In four of the countries, apart from Sweden, interviews were conducted in the home of the respondent. In Sweden, because of the geographical dispersion of the population, interviews were conducted by telephone.

All parents were asked about their children's usage of the following appliances:

- microwave ovens
- electric hobs and ovens
- grills and toasters
- kettles
- vacuum cleaners
- irons
- washing machines
- tumble dryers
- water heaters
- electric lawn mowers and strimmers

1.3 Findings

Two-thirds of European parents (66%) with children aged 4 - 13 report their children using one or more of the surveyed appliances. There was variation between countries, with 90% of Swedish parents reporting children's usage and only 19% of Italian parents. There was also variation between appliances, with the highest usage being of food preparation products - for example 52% of parents reported that their children use microwave ovens.

The average age at which children start to use the different appliances were almost all under ten years, with grills and toasters, vacuum cleaners and microwave ovens used before their eighth birthday. There was little variation between countries on age at first use.

The majority of parents supervised their children's first use of the products, between half and more than three-quarters supervising most of the appliances surveyed. Swedish and German parents are the most likely to supervise their children's first use.

The great majority of parents instructed their children prior to their use of the appliances - 80 to 90% of parents instructing on almost all the appliances. There was also little variation here between countries.

There was a generally low incidence of reported accidents or near accidents when children used the appliances. A total of 58 accidents or near accidents were reported by the 579 parents whose children used them. However 23 of these accidents were with electric hobs or ovens.

Parents suggested a range of improvements to make electric domestic appliances safer for children to use. Those most often suggested were giving better training to their children and a call for better instructions from appliance manufacturers.

1.4 This report

Following this summary, the background and research methodology of the research are explained. Key quantitative findings are described across all the countries and appliances covered by the survey. This is followed by more detailed consideration of the findings on each of the appliances. The questionnaire used in the survey forms an Appendix to this report. In addition full tables of the findings are available under separate cover.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

This document outlines the methodology used and provides an overview of the research findings for the study conducted on behalf of ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardisation.

In the European Union, the low voltage directive requires that all appliances, which fall under its remit, do not endanger the safety of persons when properly installed and maintained and used in applications for which it was made. This directive makes no distinction about the age and / or type of person using the appliance.

In addition to this the General Appliances Safety Guide, in a revised format, specifically mentions that safety should be ensured under 'normal or reasonably foreseeable' conditions of use and needs to take into account the categories of consumer at risk when using the appliances, in particular children.

In relation to electrical appliances, these principles are undermined by the standards used to support the principles as each standard has exclusion clauses that do not take into account children's usage of appliances without supervision.

Given the ever-increasing number of children using electrical appliances, it is recognised that this situation needs to be improved. As electrical appliances become more and more easy to use, parents perceive children to be capable and competent at using electrical domestic appliances, irrespective of the manufacturers instructions. Due to this the standards need to include appropriate requirements for the associated additional risks presented to children.

2.2 Research objectives

The purpose of the research was to provide information on what IEC / EN 60335 appliances children aged four to thirteen use and at what age they start using them. In addition to this, information needed to be collected on the prevalence and severity of accidents that may have happened.

Overall the research requirements were:

- What domestic appliances do children use
- At what age do they start using them

- Whether or not the child was supervised when using the appliance
- If any instructions were given prior to using the appliance
- Has the child suffered any accidents when using the appliance
- If they have suffered an accident what was the cause
- And how severe it was
- Finally, we asked the parents of children who use the appliance what, if any, improvements could be made to the appliance in order to make it safer to use.

Each of these requirements were asked in turn for the following appliances which fall under the IEC / EN 60335 series of standards.

- Microwave ovens
- Electric hobs and ovens
- Grills and toasters
- Kettles
- Vacuum cleaners
- Irons
- Washing machines
- Tumble dryers
- Water heaters
- Electric lawn mowers / strimmers

The above research objectives were addressed on both a multi-country and individual country basis in order to show cultural differences in attitude to children's usage of domestic electrical appliances. Doing this, will enable appropriate promotion of the need to remove these exclusion clauses, to be actioned not only in each local market but also on a European level.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Considerations and discussion of methodology

Given the information requirements of this project, and the need to collect data which is representative of parents within the various national populations, the most cost-effective approach was to place the questionnaire, when designed, onto an omnibus: Omnibus research, whereby a number of questions can be asked as part of a broader interview, with subscribers on each wave sharing the fixed costs of fieldwork. The questionnaire designed was asked exclusively for ANEC and no other subscribers had access to the research findings.

In addition the speed with which omnibus surveys can be conducted strengthened the case for this methodology.

3.2 Methodology

As mentioned above, the research tool used to collect the data was an omnibus. In each market the questionnaire was placed onto Ipsos' local omnibus service that is run in accordance to guidelines set out by Ipsos Group in Paris.

In 4 of the 5 markets (all excluding Sweden) a CAPI methodology (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) was used to administer the interview. Each interview in these markets was conducted in the home of the respondent by a fully qualified and trained Ipsos interviewer. The questionnaire was asked via the use of computers that not only tell the interviewer what questions to ask but also record the answers that the respondent gives.

In Sweden, due to the geographical dispersion of the population, the most cost effective way of providing a nationally representative sample is to conduct interviews over the telephone (a CATI methodology). Like CAPI the questions and answers are selected / recorded by the computer.

In the table below details of the omnibus in each country are provided.

Market	Local agency used	Methodology	Standard Sample size
France	Ipsos	CAPI	1000 (15+)
Germany	Ipsos Deutschland	CAPI	1000 (14+)
Italy	Ipsos Explorer	CAPI	1000 (15+)
Spain	Ipsos Eco Consulting	CAPI	1000 (15+)
Sweden	Ipsos IMRI	CATI	1000 (15-74)

In each of the markets, the base sample, from which the sample of parents of children aged 4-13 was derived from, is nationally representative of the adult population (as defined in each local market).

3.3 Achieved sample profile of parents with children aged 4-13

The achieved sample for parents of children aged 4-13 is provided by age of parent and occupation of the Chief Income Earner (CIE) in the table below.

Market	Total	Age			Occupation of CIE				
		15-34	35-55	55+	Mang / proff	Clerica l	Manual	Self- employ.	Inactiv e
France	208	34%	64%	2%	14%	40%	33%	10%	4%
Germany	159	30%	66%	1%	9%	40%	38%	4%	9%
Italy	124	34%	65%	1%	21%	31%	28%	17%	3%
Spain	130	29%	71%	1%	9%	18%	53%	20%	5%
Sweden	266	30%	68%	2%	7%	38%	37%	12%	5%

4. KEY QUANTATIVE FINDINGS

4.1 General usage of the listed domestic appliances

From our findings it is clear that from the 5 European countries in which the study was carried out, two-thirds of parents (66%) with children aged 4 -13 report their children using domestic appliances. Microwave ovens are the most used domestic appliance by children.

Within the 5 countries there are 2 main types of parent.

In Sweden, France and Germany, parents seem to have a more relaxed attitude to their children using any of the listed domestic appliances. This is most apparent in Sweden where only 10% do not use any appliances and three quarters use an appliance that involves heat.

In Spain and Italy, children are more restricted in their use of domestic appliances; however, Spain mirrors Germany in the usage of microwaves

See the Main findings at section 5 for a table of Usage of domestic appliances by country.

4.2 Average age at which children start to use domestic appliances

Children first start to use vacuum cleaners, microwave ovens and grills or toasters before any other appliances. The average age at which they start to use these appliances is c.7.5 years old. Two of the most dangerous appliances, electric hobs or ovens and electric lawn mowers or strimmers also have young children using them. On average children start to first use these appliances at c.9 years old. Popular thinking implies that given the high risk that each of these appliances pose to children, they would be significantly less likely to use these appliances. **The findings do not show this however.**

This table shows the average age at which children in each country start to use the appliances mentioned.

In all of the following tables in section 4, figures marked in blue are products where 30 or more parents stated that their child(ren) use the item so the results are statistically significant. For all other appliances, where less than 30 parents have children using them, the information should be treated as indicative only.

Table 1 - Average age at which children start to use Appliances

Appliance	TOTAL	Country				
		Sweden	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
Microwave Oven	7.85	7.80	7.34	8.31	8.37	8.81
Electric hob / oven	9.60	9.46	10.16	9.41	9.25	10.45
Grills / toasters	7.58	7.47	7.72	7.19	8.56	10.15
Kettles	8.76	8.73	9.04	7.55	N/A	13.00
Vacuum Cleaners	7.60	7.06	8.19	7.92	8.95	7.53
Irons	10.13	9.55	10.94	9.25	9.49	11.55
Washing machine	9.89	9.72	10.53	8.04	9.98	10.00
Tumble dryer	10.26	10.53	10.31	8.41	9.00	N/A
Water heater	8.60	7.65	8.44	8.51	9.64	9.94
Lawn mower / strimmer	9.13	9.05	9.01	9.19	N/A	12.00

4.3 Supervision and instructions

The majority of adults instruct their children on how to use the domestic appliances before allowing their children to use them and supervise this first use.

Approximately 80-90% of parents give instructions with Swedish parents being most likely to do so. With the exception of tumble dryers, at least 60% of parents supervise the use, again with Swedish parents being one of the most likely to do so.

In Sweden and Germany, countries where the appliances are used most, approximately 80% of parents supervise their children's first use of the appliance, however, and this does vary by appliance. Appliances that are perceived to be less dangerous have a lower level of supervision.

This is not the case for France, a market where children also use domestic appliances a lot. On average c.40% of parents leave their children to try out the appliance unsupervised, strongly highlighting the need for a review of the exclusion clauses in the electrical standards.

One strong finding from the research was that for dangerous appliances such as electric hobs or ovens,

although there was a slightly higher level of supervision among children under ten, it was not reflective of the level of danger involved.

The following table highlights the percentage of parents in each country who either supervise their children or have given them instructions prior to using the product.

Table 2 - Parents who supervise their child(ren)s first use of appliance

Appliance	TOTAL	Country				
		Sweden	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
Microwave Oven	73%	83%	48%	87%	78%	90%
Electric hob / oven	82%	92%	50%	86%	57%	85%
Grills / toasters	89%	84%	49%	89%	68%	89%
Kettles	73%	78%	52%	74%	N/A	100%
Vacuum Cleaners	64%	77%	39%	66%	76%	91%
Irons	78%	92%	67%	79%	64%	75%
Washing machine	63%	83%	37%	62%	59%	72%
Tumble dryer	43%	54%	16%	81%	100%	N/A
Water heater	49%	56%	10%	61%	30%	100%
Lawn mower / strimmer	87%	86%	100%	79%	N/A	100%

Table 3 - Parents who instruct their child(ren) prior to first use of the appliance

Appliance	TOTAL	Country				
		Sweden	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
Microwave Oven	91%	96%	91%	95%	71%	90%
Electric hob / oven	95%	98%	96%	87%	85%	85%
Grills / toasters	89%	88%	89%	93%	62%	100%
Kettles	86%	87%	79%	82%	N/A	100%
Vacuum Cleaners	80%	75%	80%	90%	88%	91%
Irons	84%	100%	85%	68%	64%	39%
Washing machine	76%	96%	80%	57%	25%	72%
Tumble dryer	84%	100%	73%	81%	100%	N/A
Water heater	65%	73%	25%	80%	48%	100%
Lawn mower / strimmer	92%	95%	90%	79%	N/A	100%

4.4 Accidents

When reporting the findings for accidents (or near accidents) and their cause / severity, information could be drawn for one appliance only: electric hobs or ovens. For all other appliances, there were a low number of children suffering an accident and due to this the base sizes were statistically insignificant to analyse further.

The higher level of accidents with an electric hob or oven is not surprising since these are among the most dangerous domestic appliances that a child can come into contact with. One in ten parents whose children use these appliances reported them suffering an accident. German children, who were least likely to be provided with instructions on its use, are the most likely to suffer an accident. The majority of accidents involved the child being burnt or scalded but only a minority required a hospital visit.

Table 4 - Parents reporting child(ren)s accidents or near accidents with appliance

Appliance	Europe combined
Microwave Oven	7
Electric hob / oven	23
Grills / toasters	8
Kettles	1
Vacuum Cleaners	5
Irons	9
Washing machine	0
Tumble dryer	1
Water heater	3
Lawn mower / strimmer	1

4.5 Recommendations by parents

Although Swedish children tend to use domestic appliances more than anyone else, their parents are on average less likely to believe that improvements can be made to the appliances in order to make them safer to use. In contrast German parents are the most proactive in naming improvements with the majority mentioning at least one improvement to each appliance.

Overall, the most notable recommendation by parents reflects on themselves. The main improvement mentioned is that they could give better training to their children before using the appliance.

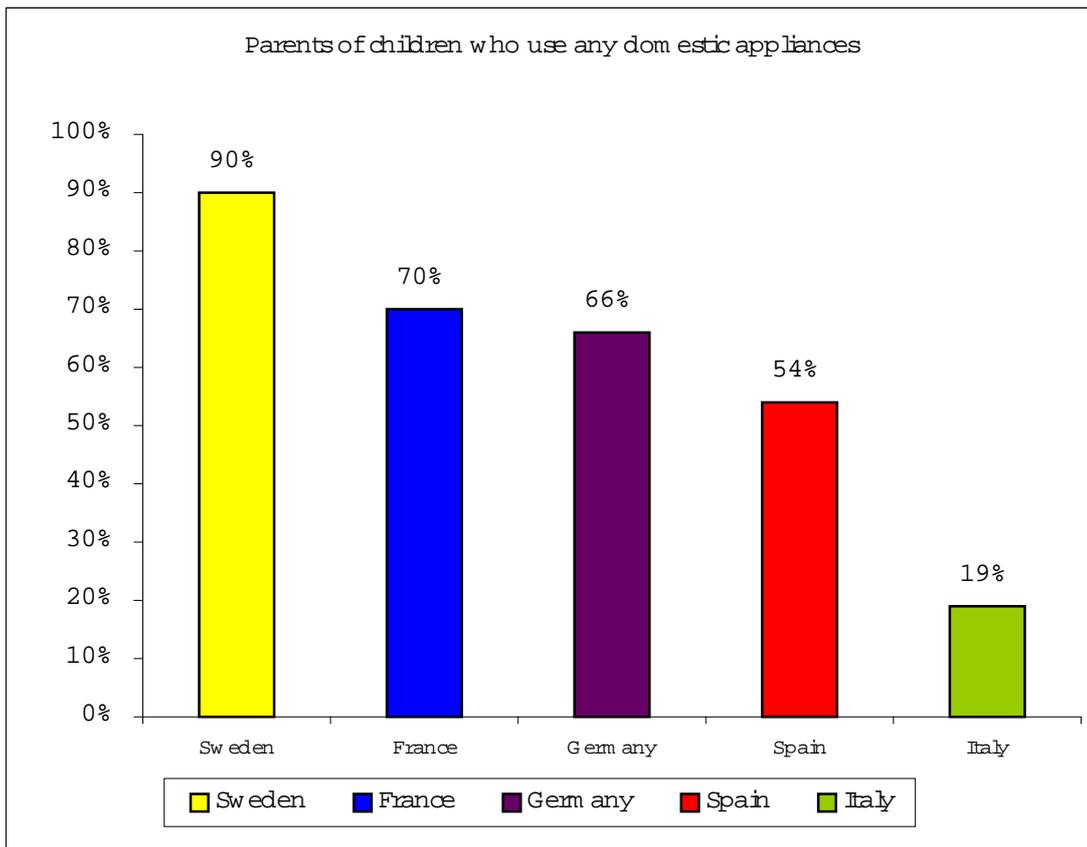
Specifically relating to improvements to the appliances, the main finding was that improved clarity of the

instructions and warnings would make the appliances safer to use for children.

5. MAIN FINDINGS

Usage of domestic appliances

Parents of children aged four to thirteen were asked to name all the domestic appliances, from the list of ten, that their child / children use. Looking at the information contained in the chart below, it is immediately apparent that usage of domestic appliances varies not only by appliance but also more significantly by country. Specifically the chart looks at the percentage of parents with children who use any of the listed appliances.



It can be inferred that Swedish parents adopt a more relaxed attitude to their child's / children's use of domestic appliances. Only one in ten Swedish parents have a child / children who does not use any of the listed appliances. The opposite is observed in Italy where the

majority (81%) of children do not use a domestic appliance.

France and Germany display similar characteristics to Sweden, as the majority of children use some sort of appliance, however, it must be noted that the usage of these appliances are not as common as in Sweden. Spain mirrors Italy in all aspects with one exception, the usage of Microwave ovens. The number of children using this type of appliance is comparative to that of Germany, but this is where the similarities end.

Clearly, children also have varied usage towards certain appliances. In all markets, with the exception of Italy, Microwave ovens are the most used appliance by children. Across all five markets on average one in two children (52%) use this type of appliance. The degree of usage for the remaining appliances varies by market and can be best illustrated in the table on this page.

USAGE OF DOMESTIC APPLIANCES BY COUNTRY

Table 5 - Summary of domestic appliances by country

Appliance	Country					
	TOTAL	Sweden	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
Microwave Oven	52%	71%	60%	49%	47%	7%
Electric hob / oven	40%	63%	49%	40%	10%	8%
Grills / toasters	38%	69%	31%	40%	11%	6%
Kettles	24%	44%	20%	29%	4%	5%
Vacuum Cleaners	12%	29%	9%	3%	0%	1%
Irons	10%	11%	15%	12%	3%	3%
Washing machine	7%	9%	9%	8%	5%	2%
Tumble dryer	5%	5%	9%	5%	1%	0%
Water heater	7%	3%	6%	19%	6%	4%
Lawn mower / strimmer	6%	14%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Hot appliances (net)	47%	76%	45%	52%	16%	12%
Cleaning appliances (net)	41%	64%	39%	40%	14%	9%
Do not use any	34%	10%	30%	34%	46%	81%

In addition to microwave ovens other notable appliances that are used by children aged four to thirteen are vacuum cleaners, grills or toasters and electric hobs or ovens.

When combined together it is quite surprising that just under half (47%) of children use some sort of domestic

appliance that involves heat. In analysing this net usage figure we excluded microwave ovens but did include electric hobs or ovens, grills or toasters, kettles and water heaters.

It can be reasonably assumed that these types of appliances present the greatest danger to children due to their hot surfaces. Naturally there are large differences across countries with Swedish children being the most likely and Italian children the least likely to use appliances that involve heat.

Domestic appliances such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners and tumble dryers also, on average, have a large number of children (41%) using them.

When presenting the findings for each appliance in the pages following, wherever possible the results are broken out by country. The appliances where this is not possible are washing machines, tumble dryers, water heaters and electric lawn mowers or strimmers where the findings are reported on a European level only.

Due to the low number of accidents that parents admit to, findings on how severe and what caused the accident could only be presented for electric hobs or ovens.

HOUSEHOLD COOKING APPLIANCES

5.1 Microwave oven usage

Provided in the table below, and at the start of each appliance, is an overview of the answers of parents of children who use microwave ovens. This information is presented at a European level. In addition to this, where possible, analysis is given on notable findings.

Table 6 - Overview of microwave ovens

Microwave ovens		
Parents with children who use microwave ovens		52%
Average age when first used		7.85 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use microwave ovens		
Supervision of children	Yes	73%
	No	25%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	91%
	No	8%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	1%
	No	98%
Top 3 Improvements		
Lock on microwave		13%
Clarity of instructions given		13%
Training of child		11%

The age at which children start to use microwave ovens

When asked at what age their child started to use a microwave oven, across all five markets the average was 7.85 years old. Given the high level of usage of this appliance in Sweden we would initially assume that children in this market would start to use the appliances first. This is not the case however and French children, on average start to use this appliance at an earlier age. Results for Germany, Spain and Italy indicate that children start to use this appliance when they are slightly older.

Supervision and instructions

A quarter of parents did not supervise their children aged four to thirteen when they first used a microwave oven. The level of supervision is higher in children aged under ten, implying that parents are less sure of their child's ability to use this appliance.

French children, who are on average the most likely to start using a microwave oven at an earlier age, are least likely to be supervised. Approximately half are supervised. In all other markets more than three quarters of children are supervised when first using this appliance. This would indicate that French parents are either sure of their child's ability to safely and confidently use a microwave oven or are not fully aware of the risks associated with children using microwave ovens.

At a European level, 91% of children were given instructions by their parents prior to using a microwave oven. This figure varies greatly between countries e.g. in Spain a quarter of parents (25%) did not give their children any instructions at all.

41% of parents with children aged four to thirteen who use microwave ovens could name at least one improvement in order for them to be safer to use. The most popular improvement was to have a lock on the microwave oven. 14% of parents mentioned this.

Interestingly, 13% of parents think that the clarity of the instructions (which includes better instructions and warnings on the instructions or appliances) could be improved in order to make the appliances safer for children to use. German parents more than anyone else were likely to mention this and overall they were the most proactive in stating improvements that could be made. Swedish parents, who were the most relaxed in letting their children use microwave ovens, were most likely not to mention anything.

Some parents are also critical of the training that they give to their child with one in ten mentioning this was a possible way to increase safety.

5.2 Electric hob or oven usage

Table 7 - Overview of Electric hobs and ovens

Electric hobs and ovens		
Parents with children who use electric hobs or ovens		24%
Average age when first used		9.60 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use electric hobs or ovens		
Supervision of children	Yes	82%
	No	17%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	95%
	No	4%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	11%
	No	89%
Top 3 Improvements		
Lock on electric hobs or ovens		15%
Training of child		11%
Timers that turn the appliance off if left on		7%

The age at which children start to use electric hobs or ovens

This appliance, more than any other, presents the most danger to children due to the high temperatures involved in cooking. We would hope that children would start to use this appliance when they are older and indeed the findings from the research quantify this, as the average age at which children start to use the appliances is 9.6 years old.

The majority of children who use this appliance are Swedish (55% of parents) and virtually no children in Spain and Italy use the appliance, however careful consideration must be taken into account as it may be traditional in these markets to cook with gas.

On average French children start using these appliances later than compared to Sweden and Germany. This is opposite to the finding for microwave ovens and would suggest that French parents see microwave ovens as a safer cooking appliance.

Supervision and instructions

Across the European countries surveyed 17% of parents do not supervise their children's first use of electric hobs or ovens. 30% of these parents do not supervise children aged between four and ten, a notable and worrying finding. As with microwave ovens there is a lack of supervision among French parents as only half of French parents supervise.

Again the majority of parents (95%) across the countries surveyed gave instructions to their children prior to using this appliance. Analysing the information by country, German children are significantly less likely to be given instructions than compared to more proactive Swedish parents.

Accidents that have occurred

Emphasising the assumption that electric hobs or ovens are one of the most dangerous appliances, 11% of parents with children aged four to thirteen reported an accident. Not surprisingly German children, who are the least likely to be provided with instructions prior to use, are the most likely to have had an accident.

Due to the low number of children who have had an accident, care must be taken when drawing findings from what happened and how severe the accident was. Not surprisingly half of all accidents are to do with the child being either burnt or scalded but only a small minority required a hospital visit.

Again as with microwave ovens, most parents of children who use electric hobs or ovens believe that having a lock on this appliance would improve safety with 16% mentioning this. Another improvement, with 14% of parents stating this is the training of the child who is using the appliances.

Parents in France are less likely to believe that any improvements can be made to electric ovens. Again, German parents believe most that improvements can be made.

5.3 Grills and toaster usage

Table 8 - Overview of Grills and toasters

Grills and toasters		
Parents with children who use grills or toasters		38%
Average age when first used		7.58 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use grills or toasters		
Supervision of children	Yes	78%
	No	22%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	89%
	No	9%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	2%
	No	97%
Top 3 Improvements		
Training of child		12%
Clarity of instructions given		9%
Item which makes it impossible for fingers to be trapped		6%

The age at which children start to use grills or toasters

The average age at which children start to use grills or toasters are at a similar level to microwave ovens. On average, children start to use this appliance at 7.6 years old. This provides further indication that parents believe that an electric hob or oven to be the most dangerous cooking appliance.

The average age for Swedish, French and German children is roughly the same. In Spain and Italy the average age is higher, however children in these markets are less likely to use the appliance. For this reason, the findings for Spain and Italy must be treated as being indicative only due to the small base size.

Supervision and instructions

Again, as with microwave ovens, just under a quarter (22%) of parents do not supervise their children aged four to thirteen when they first use a grill or toaster. There is no apparent higher supervision for children who started to use this appliance at a young age (under 10) even though younger children are a higher risk group.

Again, in the three markets in which this appliance is used the most, French children are least likely to be initially supervised. On average across all five markets just over three quarters of children are supervised, France is a notable exception however, with one in two children being supervised when using a grill or toaster for the first time.

The majority of parents (89%) give instructions to their children on how to use a grill or toaster and this figure is common for Swedish, French and German children who use the appliances. Again, due to the low base size information on Spanish children should be treated as being indicative only but less children in Spain are given instructions.

Parents feel that the best way to increase safety is by training their child better. Twelve percent of parents who have children who use this appliance stated this. Other notable recommendations are better clarity of instructions given by the manufacturers (9%) and a safety device that prevents fingers getting trapped (6%).

5.4 Kettle usage

Table 9 - Overview of Kettles

Kettles		
Parents with children who use kettles		12%
Average age when first used		8.76 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use kettles		
Supervision of children	Yes	73%
	No	24%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	86%
	No	9%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	1%
	No	97%
Top 3 Improvements		
Clarity of instructions given		7%
Training of child		5%
Make it lighter / easier to life		3%

The age at which children start to use kettles

Over the years there has been a lot of media coverage concentrating on educating parents on the dangers of kettles and boiling water around children. Whilst this has educated parents toward possible dangers, the average age at which a child starts to use this appliance in the markets surveyed is only 8.76 years. Swedish children are the primary users of kettles as they account for 76% of all parents with children who use the appliance. Due to the low numbers for France and Germany (the only other markets in which this appliance is used), we will only concentrate on results for Sweden.

In Spain and Italy and to a certain extent France, the household ownership of kettles is lower than in Sweden and Germany.

Supervision and instructions

One in five Swedish parents do not supervise their children's first use of a kettle. Most (86%) give instructions prior to use.

The majority of parents feel that no improvements can be made to kettles. Of the 27% that do believe improvements

can be made, clarity of the instructions was what most people mentioned.

DOMESTIC CLEANING APPLIANCES

5.5 Vacuum cleaner usage

Table 10 - Overview of Vacuum cleaners

Vacuum cleaners		
Parents with children who use vacuum cleaners		40%
Average age when first used		7.60 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use vacuum cleaners		
Supervision of children	Yes	64%
	No	35%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	80%
	No	18%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	1%
	No	99%
Top 3 Improvements		
Training of child		8%
Lock on vacuum		5%
Clarity of instructions given		5%

The age at which children start to use vacuum cleaners

Domestic cleaning appliances are perceived to be less dangerous than cooking appliances, however, the age at which children start to use these may not necessarily be younger as it takes greater physical effort to use cleaning appliances. This said, the average age at which children start to use vacuum cleaners is just over 7.5 years old.

Generally it has been noted that Swedish children are most likely to use any domestic appliance when compared to the other markets. This finding is also self evident when we look at the age at which Swedish children start to use vacuum cleaners. Swedish children are more likely to start to use the appliances at an earlier age (the average is just over 7 years old) than compared to French and German children (over and under 8 respectively). We were unable to test if this difference was significant compared to Spanish and Italian children due to the low number of children in each of these markets using the appliances.

Supervision and instructions

Vacuum cleaners can be perceived as being easy to use and 35% of parents do not supervise their children's first use of them. Sweden and Germany display similar levels of supervision however, as with the cooking appliances, French children are significantly less likely to be supervised.

80% of parents instructed their children on how to use a vacuum cleaner before they actually used it, a figure that is common across Sweden, France and Germany.

Again, even though most parents could not name anything that would improve safety when using vacuum cleaners, marked country differences stand out. As with microwave ovens Swedish parents are the least likely to believe any improvements can be made to make vacuum cleaners safer for children and conversely German parents are able to name at least one improvement.

5.6 Iron usage

Table 11 - Overview of Irons

Irons		
Parents with children who use irons		10%
Average age when first used		10.13 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use irons		
Supervision of children	Yes	78%
	No	16%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	84%
	No	9%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	10%
	No	87%
Top 3 Improvements		
Clarity of instructions given		8%
Lock on iron		7%
Training of child		6%

The age at which children start to use irons

Most children rely on their parents to press their clothes and this is evident in the low number of children who use this appliance. Indeed only a small number of children in each market have used an iron and as such any finding should be treated as indicative only. Usage is highest in Sweden and France and we will look at results for these two markets only.

Provided below is a brief summary of the findings.

On average, Swedish children start to use irons at 9.6 years old, a year earlier than in France. As before, supervision at first use in Sweden is higher than that in France, however the majority of children who use the appliance have been given prior instruction. One noticeable finding is that all children in Sweden have been given instructions, but respondents may have taken the question to ask if they have given instructions on how to iron rather than how to use it.

Across all five markets 11% of parents reported their children suffering an accident when using an iron. In Sweden, the number of children suffering an accident (reported by 17% of parents) is 10% higher than in France.

For the remaining domestic appliances, due to the low number of children in each market that use the appliances it is not possible to split the results out by country due to statistical validity. Therefore any analysis is only presented on a an aggregated European level.

5.7 Washing machine usage

Table 12 - Overview of Washing machines

Washing machines		
Parents with children who use washing machines		7%
Average age when first used		9.89 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use washing machines		
Supervision of children	Yes	63%
	No	30%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	76%
	No	18%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	0%
	No	98%
Top 3 Improvements		
Lock on washing machine		14%
Clarity of instructions given		9%
Training of child		8%

The average age at which children start to use a washing machine is just under 10 (9.9) years old. Around one in three parents (30%) do not supervise their children when first using this appliance and three quarters give instructions prior to use.

5.8 Tumble dryer usage

Table 13 - Overview of Tumble dryers

Tumble dryers		
Parents with children who use tumble dryers		5%
Average age when first used		10.26 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use tumble dryers		
Supervision of children	Yes	43%
	No	48%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	84%
	No	11%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	3%
	No	95%
Top 2 Improvements		
Training of child		7%
Clarity of instructions given		5%

Children first start to use tumble dryers slightly later than washing machines; the average age at which children start using this appliance is 10.26 years old. Fewer children are supervised when first using a tumble dryer with 48% of parents not supervising their children. This may be due to the fact that children start to use this appliance slightly later and their parents feel that less supervision is needed. As with most appliances (both cooking and cleaning), most children are given instructions prior to use.

OTHER DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

5.9 Water heater usage

Table 14 - Overview of Water heater usage

Water heater usage		
Parents with children who use water heaters		7%
Average age when first used		8.60 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use water heaters		
Supervision of children	Yes	49%
	No	44%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	65%
	No	29%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	5%
	No	91%
Top 3 Improvements		
Lock on water heater		9%
Training of child		8%
Clarity of instructions given		4%

The average age at which children first start to use water heaters is 8.6 years. Around half of all parents (49%) supervise their children's first use of this type of appliance. However, compared to other appliances, fewer children are given instructions. Just under a third of parents (29%) did not given their children any instructions at all.

5.10 Electric lawn mowers and strimmer usage

Table 15 - Overview of Electric lawn mower and trimmers

Electric lawn mowers and trimmers		
Parents with children who use electric lawn mowers and trimmers		6%
Average age when first used		9.13 years
All figures quoted below are based on parents with children who use vacuum cleaners		
Supervision of children	Yes	87%
	No	8%
Instructions prior to use	Yes	92%
	No	5%
Suffered accidents / near accidents	Yes	2%
	No	96%
Top 3 Improvements		
Lock on electric lawn mower or trimmer		10%
Protective surface over the blades		9%
Automatic cut off		6%

This type of appliance would pose serious potential danger to children as it has parts that are sharp and also rotating at high speeds. This said it could be assumed that the average age at which children start to use this appliance would be high. The findings from the research tell a different story though. Children first start to use this type of appliance when they are just over nine years old. Most parents supervised their children and only a small minority left them to use the mower or trimmer without any prior instructions.

APPENDIX A - Questionnaire

ASK ALL PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGED 4-13.

MULTI CODE. ALLOW NULL

SHOW CARD AN01.

AN01. And could you mention all of the following products in your household that your children use?

Microwave oven

Electric hob / oven

Grills / toasters

Kettles

Vacuum cleaners

Irons

Washing machine

Tumble drier

Water heater

Electric lawn mowers / strimmers

ASK FOR EACH ITEM THE CHILDREN USE AT AN01.

SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK.

AN02. And at what age did you child start to use a [insert item used].

NUMERIC - RANGE FROM 4-13

QUESTIONS AN03 THROUGH TO AN08 WILL BE ASKED IN ROTATION FOR EACH ITEM MENTIONED AT *AN01.

ASK ALL WHO HAVE NOT STATED NULL AT AN01.

SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK.

Thinking now about your child / children's use of the [insert item mentioned at AN01]

AN03. Could you tell me if the use was supervised?

Supervised

Unsupervised

ASK ALL WHO HAVE NOT STATED NULL AT AN01.

SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK.

AN04. Did he / she have any instructions on how to use the product before they actually used it?

Yes

No

ASK ALL WHO HAVE NOT STATED NULL AT AN01.

SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK.

AN05. Has your children ever suffered any accidents or near accidents when using a [INSERT PRODUCT MENTIONED FROM AN02]?

Yes

No

ASK ALL WHO HAVE SAID YES AT AN05.

MULTI CODE. DO NOT READ OUT. ALLOW DK.

RECORD FIRST MENTION

AN06. Could you tell me what happened to cause this accident or near accident?

Fingers trapped
Fingers crushed
Appliance toppled
Access to moving part
Burnt
Scalded
Cut
Suffocated
Choked on part
Electric shock
Other

ASK ALL WHO HAVE SAID YES AT AN05.

SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK.

AN07. And from the list, please can you tell me how severe the accident was?

It was a near accident so no injury occurred
Discomfort
Home medication
Doctor / hospital visit

ASK ALL PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGED 3-13.

MULTI CODE. DO NOT READ OUT. ALLOW NULL

RECORD FIRST MENTION

AN08. Can you think of any improvements that could be made to [INSERT PRODUCT MENTIONED FROM AN02] in order for them to be safer for children to use?

Lock on product
Training of child
Better instructions
Warnings in instructions
Warnings on product
Redesign the product
Make product less child appealing
Other (SPECIFY)