More households are under mounting pressure as the economic downturn bites - but new research has found that half of families think Scotland is the best place in the world to bring up children.

Fifty percent of families said that Scotland was the best country to raise children as part of a survey into attitudes towards parenting in Scotland.

But a quarter disagreed in the survey of over a thousand adults, commissioned by Parenting Across Scotland, a partnership of high-profile charities which offers support to children and families in Scotland.

While welcoming the fact that so many of Scotland's families feel that Scotland is the best place in the world to bring up children, Parenting Across Scotland urged the Government to remember that too many of Scotland's families still struggle to find the help they need and that Scotland continues to lag behind in Europe on children's wellbeing.

A national parenting strategy should be the positive step-change that families need to ensure that Scotland is the best place in the world to bring up children for all Scotland's families.

The charities will tell the Government it needs to raise the bar in Scotland to improve the life chances of children by investing in support for every family at the launch of a new major anthology on parenting in Edinburgh on Wednesday 18 April.

In the collection of essays, commissioned by Parenting Across Scotland, organisations from the voluntary sector put forward proposals for what needs to happen to make Scotland the best place in the world to bring up children.

Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People and leading charities and researchers contributed over thirty essays reflecting on some of the biggest challenges facing parents and service providers, from childcare to parenting programmes.

Many of the contributors have called for changes in how we deliver support to families in Scotland with proposals including a large scale recruitment drive for health visitors, a campaign on positive parenting and better support for fathers.

Clare Simpson, Parenting Across Scotland Project Manager, said:

“Most parents do a great job by themselves but all families need help from time to time and some need real support at times of crisis. We have a lot of work to do to get it right from the start for every family in Scotland and give all families the support they deserve.

“We can’t afford to be complacent. Research shows that Scotland still needs to make significant improvements.

“If the Scottish Government is serious about making Scotland the best place in the world to bring up children, it needs to invest in mainstream support for all families to ensure the National Parenting Strategy is something that really makes a difference to all Scotland’s families.”

As it launches the new research and anthology Parenting Across Scotland is calling on the Government to address five priority areas in the National Parenting Strategy.

1. Value the importance of parenting and the important work parents do.
2. Ensure that parents get the help they need when they need it, through the principle of ‘progressive universalism’
3. Invest in the early years, and in particular, reinvigorate the crucial profession of health visiting.
4. Improve work-life balance and encourage shared parenting, by making workplaces more family-friendly and standing alongside a new childcare strategy.
5. Support parents to build their own communities of support, through family centres and investing in communities.

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People said, "I want Scotland to be the best place in the world for children to grow up. That's why we are focused on improving services, for example through the Early Years Framework, The Early Years Taskforce, The National Parenting Strategy and proposed Children's legislation to address the five points the Anthology suggests.

"We are not complacent and will continue to improve the circumstances for Scottish Families and invest in our children to ensure they have the best possible future."