



Growing Up in Australia: helping to ensure every child has the best possible start in life

A study of Australian families

Two years have passed since you were kind enough to talk with us about your child and your family for the *Growing Up in Australia* study. As you know, this unique study is following the development of the same group of children over time to help us gain an understanding of what happens for children as they grow up – and why.

More than 10,000 families across Australia agreed to be in this study and it is now time for families to be interviewed again. No doubt there have been many changes in your child's life over the last two years.

This study will make a difference

Already the information collected last time is being used to look into factors that affect children's development. This information is helping to design policies about health care, education, and child care services to bring real benefits to children and their parents.

The real value of this study will come from having information about the same children collected over time. Information of this kind can help answer questions such as:

- How are children in Australia faring in terms of health, learning skills, and personal wellbeing?
- What helps children do well?
- How do child care and the early school years contribute to children's development?
- What services help children who have difficulties in their early years?
- How can governments make sure that *all* children have the best possible start in life?

This phase of the study

An interviewer will be in touch with you to arrange a time to visit. This time we have asked the Australian Bureau of Statistics to collect the information about your child and family on our behalf.

The interview will take one to two hours to complete and, similar to last time, will involve:

- asking questions of the parent who knows most about your child – where possible, we would prefer to speak with the same parent who was interviewed last time;
- asking this parent to fill in a short questionnaire during the interview;
- taking height, weight and waist measurements of your child;
- for parents of study children aged 6 - 7 years, doing some activities with your child (like the ones we did last time) and asking your child a few questions about how they like school and how they feel in general; and
- leaving questionnaires and the Time Use Diaries for you to complete. ➤

◀ *Views of parents living at other addresses*

Children live in a variety of family situations, and we know that the parents of some of the children in the study do not live together. To fully understand children's development it is very important to have information from both parents (as well as step-parents).

If your child has a parent living elsewhere, we would like to make contact with them and ask them to fill in a short questionnaire. The interviewer will have a copy of this form to show you. If you are in this situation, we would greatly appreciate your help with this part of the study.

Views of teachers and carers

We know that children's child care and early education experiences can be important for their future development. As we did for parents with children at child care, pre-school or school last time, we will be asking for your consent to contact your child's school teacher or carer (if your child has at least 8 hours of non-parental care each week).

Last time we had a good response from carers and teachers, and their information has been extremely helpful. We hope you continue to give this aspect of the study your support.

Your privacy – what happens to the information?

Your privacy is important to us and only the combined results from everyone in the study will be discussed and published. Any information you provide will remain absolutely *confidential* – it will never be used in any way that identifies you, or your child or family. Strict procedures are followed to ensure that only authorised people have access to your information, and all the interviewers, researchers and others involved must comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Medicare Australia (formerly HIC) data release

If you signed the Data Release consent form for the Health Insurance Commission (now Medicare Australia) to release data on your child to the study, these data will now be released via the Australian Bureau of Statistics, not I-view as stated on the consent form. If you have concerns about this, please call Medicare Australia on freecall 1800 420 074.

Your continued support

Thanks to all the parents, children, teachers and child carers who are involved - your contribution makes the study possible.

We try to have interesting questions and make taking part in the study an enjoyable experience. Your participation in any aspect of the study is voluntary and you can leave the study at any time – although of course we hope you stay with us!

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN *GROWING UP IN AUSTRALIA*



Growing Up in Australia aims to further an understanding of early childhood development, inform social policy debate, and identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention by following two groups of children, starting as infants and children aged 4-5 years, as they grow up.

Growing Up in Australia was initiated and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The study was developed and is managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The data collection is undertaken for the Institute by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Further information: phone 1800 005 508, or visit www.aifs.gov.au/growingup