

Housing characteristics and changes across waves

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The characteristics of children's homes and family living arrangements, being a large part of their physical and social environment, have important influences on their development and wellbeing (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). A recent scoping study (Dockery et al., 2010) identified *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* as a useful source of data for analysing housing and child developmental outcomes. This chapter describes three aspects of housing that are expected to be important for children's outcomes: housing mobility, tenure and overcrowding (Dockery et al., 2010).

In a review of residential mobility in childhood, Jelleyman and Spencer (2008) found that population residential mobility varies internationally. The Australian population is among the most mobile, with higher rates demonstrated for children aged 1–4 years, and declining until adolescence (Bell & Hugo, 2000). The authors reported that higher rates of residential mobility are associated with poverty, housing tenure, unemployment, family disruption, and single-parenting. In terms of the relationship between mobility and child developmental outcomes, studies in the United States have found associations between residential mobility and dropping out of school (Astone & McLanahan, 1994), repeating a school grade, or being suspended or expelled (Simpson & Fowler, 1994; Wood, Halfon, Scarlata, Newacheck, & Nessim, 1993).

Australian families have a wide range of housing arrangements, and therefore great variation in their security of tenure.¹ When people have secure housing tenure, they are likely to have a greater sense of autonomy, certainty and sense of control, which reduces levels of stress and increases family stability. Security of housing tenure has been found to affect the mental health of parents. It also influences family stability, including children attending a fewer number of schools and having better educational performance and rates of school completion (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute [AHURI], 2006). Both family stability and parental mental health can have a significant effect on children's development.

Overcrowded conditions have been well documented to have negative effects on children and families. Overcrowding has been associated with higher levels of stress in parents and children, higher rates of infectious diseases, poorer parenting, and increased family conflict (Evans, 2006). It is also a risk factor for child neglect and abuse (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009). When there is overcrowding in a household, children are more likely to withdraw and less likely to explore and play, which then has implications for their learning. In fact, overcrowding has been associated with poorer cognitive development in children, including having lower IQs (Evans, 2006).

This chapter capitalises on the longitudinal nature of LSAC by using Waves 1 to 3 for the B and K cohorts to explore changes in (and persistence of) these three housing characteristics across waves, as children grow older. The first section of the chapter focuses on variations in mobility, and examines whether children move within their local area or further. The second focuses on housing tenure, and how this changes across Waves 1 to 3 for each of the cohorts. The third uses a measure of overcrowding to investigate how many children experience overcrowding at one or multiple waves of LSAC, and also examines how overcrowding varies by different dwelling types. The final section of the chapter explores the relationships between mobility and housing tenure, and mobility and overcrowding, for the younger B cohort only.

¹ Assessment of the level of security of housing tenure is a complex issue; however, for the purposes of this chapter, insecure housing tenure is associated with renting rather than purchasing or owning a home.

7.1 Housing mobility

Table 7.1 shows how often children in LSAC had moved house since birth. Looking first at the percentages of children who had never moved, this shows a large decline among B cohort children across the first two waves, from 84% of 0–1 year olds to 57% of 2–3 year olds (a drop of 27 percentage points). There is less change between waves for the other age groups (5–13 percentage points), which suggests that children are most likely to experience moving house in the first two to three years of their lives.

	B cohort			K cohort		
	0–1 year	2–3 years	4–5 years	4–5 years	6–7 years	8–9 years
	%			%		
Never moved	84.2	56.5	43.6	39.7	32.2	27.1
Moved once since birth	13.7	28.4	28.1	29.5	27.8	25.9
Moved twice since birth	2.1	10.0	15.8	30.8	25.4	23.3
Moved three times since birth	– ^a	3.7	7.2	– ^a	11.6	14.2
Moved four or more times since birth	– ^a	1.4	5.4	– ^a	3.0	9.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of observations	4,250	4,250	4,250	4,192	4,192	4,192

Notes: Cases were only included if data were available at all waves. ^a In Wave 1, the maximum number of moves since birth was recorded as “two or more”, which means that the total number of moves for this wave will be underestimated, particularly for the K cohort. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

By the time they were 4–5 years old, more than half of the children had moved house at least once. When children were 8–9 years, only one quarter had never moved house, one quarter had moved once, one quarter had moved twice, and the final quarter had moved three or more times since they were born. A small proportion of children in the most recent wave for both cohorts (5% of 4–5 year olds, B cohort, and 9% of 8–9 year olds) had moved four or more times since birth.

Table 7.2 shows the types of moves that families make, in terms of whether they moved within their local area, or further away. The data shown relate to the family’s most recent move, and the table shows a similar pattern for the two cohorts at both Wave 2 and Wave 3. Just under half of all families who moved between waves moved within the same town or suburb, and an additional third of families moved slightly further away, but still within the same area or region. Between 11% and 13% of families who moved did so to somewhere out of their area or region, but still within the same state, and a smaller percentage (8–9%) moved further away still—interstate or from overseas.²

	B cohort		K cohort	
	Moved between Waves 1 & 2	Moved between Waves 2 & 3	Moved between Waves 1 & 2	Moved between Waves 2 & 3
	%		%	
Within town or suburb	45.0	45.2	47.9	47.5
Within area or region	36.1	33.9	32.8	30.1
Within state	10.8	12.6	11.0	13.1
Interstate	7.7	7.3	8.0	8.1
From overseas ^a	0.4	1.0	0.3	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of observations	1,622	1,381	1,213	1,048

Note: Cases were only included if data were available for both waves under consideration (Waves 1 and 2, or Waves 2 and 3). ^a A small number of study families lived in Australia in Wave 1, lived overseas in Wave 2, and lived back in Australia in Wave 3.

2 A small number of study families lived in Australia in Wave 1, lived overseas in Wave 2, and lived back in Australia in Wave 3.

7.2 Housing tenure

At each wave, the child's primary parent was asked to provide details about the family's current housing tenure arrangements. While these questions were asked slightly differently at each of the three waves, they have been summarised into the five categories shown in Table 7.3. The first category, "owner without a mortgage", includes those families in which the respondent (or the child's secondary parent living in the household) owned their house outright. The second category, "owner with a mortgage", includes those families in which the child's primary and/or secondary parent was currently paying off a mortgage on the house. The third category, "renter—private landlord", includes families who paid rent through a real estate agent or to someone (not a relative) who did not live in the home. The fourth category, "renter—public housing", includes families who paid rent to a state or territory housing authority. The final category includes "other tenure types", such as paying rent to someone else in the same dwelling (such as in a boarder arrangement), a relative or friend, an employer, a community/cooperative housing group, a caravan park, an unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing a house under a rent/buy scheme; living in a property under a life tenure scheme; or living in a property rent-free. Changes in tenure between waves do not necessarily mean that a family has moved house, as they may change their tenure arrangement within the same property (e.g., moving from having a mortgage to owning the property outright). Conversely, mobility doesn't necessarily reflect a change in tenure as families may move between two properties with the same tenure arrangement.

Table 7.3 Types of housing tenure, B and K cohorts, Waves 1–3

	B cohort			K cohort		
	0–1 year	2–3 years	4–5 years	4–5 years	6–7 years	8–9 years
	%			%		
Owner without mortgage	7.4	8.8	10.5	11.2	11.6	12.7
Owner with mortgage	59.7	59.0	57.2	60.7	61.1	58.9
Renter—private landlord	19.2	18.8	19.3	16.7	15.4	16.4
Renter—public housing	2.4	3.9	4.4	2.6	4.5	5.0
Other tenure type ^a	11.4	9.5	8.4	8.9	7.4	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of observations	4,241	4,241	4,241	4,190	4,190	4,190

Notes: Cases were only included if the data were available at all waves. ^aThe "other" category includes: renting from a person in the same dwelling, relatives or friends, employer, community/cooperative housing group, caravan park, unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing the dwelling under a rent/buy scheme; living in a dwelling under a life tenure scheme; or living in a dwelling rent-free (all of these categories had small sample sizes). Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Table 7.3 shows changes in housing tenure across waves, as the children grow older. Around 60% of families at all waves had a mortgage on the property they lived in, and this was the most common tenure type. There was a slight reduction across the three waves for both cohorts in the percentages who had a mortgage (from 60% in Wave 1 to 57% in Wave 3 for the B cohort, and from 61% to 59% for the K cohort), and a corresponding increase in the percentages who owned their house outright (from 7% to 11% in the B cohort, and from 11% to 13% in the K cohort). The second most common tenure type was renting from a private landlord (15–19%), and this remained stable across the waves, at 19% for B cohort families, and between 15% and 17% for K cohort families. There was a slight increase in the percentage of families who were renting public housing; from 2% to 4% of B cohort families and from 3% to 5% of K cohort families. The percentages of families with other tenure types declined slightly across the three waves, from 11% to 8% of B cohort families and from 9% to 7% of K cohort families.

While the percentages of children in some of the tenure types show some variation across waves, others show only slight changes. Nevertheless, these trends between waves conceal the fact that many individual children experienced a change in housing tenure during this time. The next two tables look at how individual children's housing arrangements changed between Waves 1 and 3 of the study. Overall, 26% of B cohort children and 23% of K cohort children experienced a change in tenure between Waves 1 and 3.

Table 7.4 shows the change in housing tenure experienced by individual B cohort children at Wave 1 (when they were 0–1 years) and at Wave 3 (when they were 4–5 years).³ The shaded cells on the diagonal of the table indicate those who remained in the same housing tenure category at both waves. The table shows that the group that experienced the greatest consistency at both waves was that of the families who owned or were purchasing their home. Ninety per cent of those who owned or were purchasing their home when the study child was 0–1 years were still in this group four years later. However, 8% of these had moved into private rental. Those families who were in public housing also showed low levels of movement out of this type of tenure, with 64% of those families who were in this group when the child was 0–1 years old remaining in this situation. However, 12% had moved into private rental, and 10% were purchasing or owned their own home. After those in the “other” category, private rentals were the most unstable tenure type, as just over half of the families who were renting privately when the study child was 0–1 year old were still doing so when the child was 4–5 years, a third owned or were purchasing their home, and 4% were renting public housing.

Table 7.5 shows the change in housing tenure experienced by individual K cohort children between Wave 1 (when they were 4–5 years) and Wave 3 (when they were 8–9 years). The shaded cells on the diagonal of the table indicate those who remained in the same housing tenure category between waves. These families show similar patterns of movement between categories to those seen for

Wave 1 (0–1 years)	Wave 3 (4–5 years)	Owner/ purchaser	Renter— private landlord	Renter— public housing	Other tenure type ^b	Total	No. of observ- ations
	%						
Owner/purchaser	89.6 ^a	7.5	0.0	2.9	100.0	2,909	
Renter—private landlord	32.4	52.5 ^a	4.0	11.2	100.0	768	
Renter—public housing	9.7	12.1	63.9 ^a	14.3	100.0	83	
Other tenure type ^b	33.5	24.0	12.1	30.4 ^a	100.0	482	
Total	67.8	19.3	4.4	8.5	100.0	4,242	

Notes: Cases were only included if data were available in both Waves 1 and 3. ^a The percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same housing tenure category at both Waves 1 and 3. ^b The “other” category includes: renting from a person in the same dwelling, relatives or friends, employer, community/cooperative housing group, caravan park, unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing the dwelling under a rent/buy scheme; living in a dwelling under a life tenure scheme; or living in a dwelling rent-free, all of which had small sample sizes. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Wave 1 (4–5 years)	Wave 3 (8–9 years)	Owner/ purchaser	Renter— private landlord	Renter— public housing	Other tenure type [*]	Total	No. of observ- ations
	%						
Owner/purchaser	90.7 ^a	6.7	0.1	2.5	100.0	3,055	
Renter—private landlord	33.8	52.3 ^a	3.8	10.1	100.0	673	
Renter—public housing	8.7	11.1	75.5 ^a	4.7	100.0	93	
Other tenure type ^b	30.5	17.4	18.9	33.2 ^a	100.0	369	
Total	71.7	16.3	5.0	7.0	100.0	4,190	

Notes: Only families who were present in both Waves 1 and 3 are included. ^a The percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same housing tenure category at both Waves 1 and 3. ^b The “other” category includes: renting from a person in the same dwelling, relatives or friends, employer, community/cooperative housing group, caravan park, unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing the dwelling under a rent/buy scheme; living in a dwelling under a life tenure scheme; or living in a dwelling rent-free (all of these categories had small sample sizes).

³ Note that families may have changed tenure type more than once between waves.

B cohort families, with the least change occurring for those who owned or were purchasing their home at Wave 1, and the most change for those in the “other” category. Families who were originally living in public housing showed less movement than B cohort families, however, with 76% of families who were living in public housing when their study child was 4–5 years old remaining in this type of housing, 11% moving into private rental, and 9% owning or purchasing their home.

7.3 Housing overcrowding

The Canadian National Occupancy Standard (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2007; Dockery et al., 2010) is an indicator of housing overcrowding that is often used in Australia and internationally. A house is defined as being overcrowded if it does *not* meet the following criteria:

- there are no more than two persons in each bedroom;
- children under 5 years old of the same or different gender may share a bedroom;
- children between 5 and 18 years may share a bedroom with other children between 0 and 18 years only if they are of the same gender; and
- single adults aged 18 years or older, and parents and couples, have a separate bedroom (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010).

These criteria were applied to the LSAC data to create an indicator of overcrowding. However, the data collected in LSAC do not include all the information needed for the precise derivation of this indicator, so a number of additional assumptions were made:

- a boarder or housemate who is unrelated to the study child is defined as having a partner only if they are identified as being a partner of the child’s primary or secondary parent;
- siblings of the study child do not have partners;
- if two people are the uncle/aunt of the study child, they are defined as a couple if one of them is a sibling of a parent of the study child, and the other is defined as an “other relative/in-law”, unless the “other relative” is the sibling of the child’s other parent;
- nieces/nephews of the child’s parent, or cousins of the study child, do not have partners; and
- if the house has five or more bedrooms in Wave 1, the household is not overcrowded (the Wave 1 response options only specified 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 or more bedrooms).

The percentages of families meeting this derived measure of overcrowding are shown in Table 7.6. The table shows that between 6% and 10% of families lived in overcrowded homes at any one wave for both cohorts. There was a slight increase in this percentage over time for both cohorts, from 6% of 0–1 year olds to 8% of 4–5 year olds in the B cohort, and from 7% of 4–5 year olds to 10% of 8–9 year olds in the K cohort. This increase may in part be due to changes in the overcrowding criteria for children older than 5 years (as children of different genders may share a bedroom when they are younger than 5 years, but should have separate bedrooms once they are 5 years and older).

	B cohort			K cohort		
	0–1 year	2–3 years	4–5 years	4–5 years	6–7 years	8–9 years
	%			%		
Housing overcrowding	6.1	6.8	7.9	7.0	8.3	9.8
No. of observations	4,248	4,248	4,248	4,191	4,191	4,191

Notes: Cases were only included if data were available at all waves. Indicator of overcrowding developed to meet the criteria for the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010), with slight modifications for LSAC data.

Table 7.7 (on page 72) shows how overcrowding is experienced by families living in different types of dwellings. Information about dwelling type was obtained from observations made by the interviewers when they visited the study families. Some categories of dwelling types were reported infrequently—“caravan/cabin”, “house or flat attached to shop etc.”, and “farm”—so these have been combined into the “other” category.

The table shows that a “separate house” was the most common dwelling type for both cohorts at all waves. However, overcrowding was most likely to be experienced by families living in a flat/

unit/apartment. The percentage of families living in a flat/unit/apartment who were experiencing overcrowding increased across waves for both cohorts. For B cohort families, the increase was from 19% in Wave 1 to 29% in Wave 3. For K cohort families, the increase was from 30% in Wave 1 to 36% in Wave 3. For families who lived in a semi-detached house, the percentage who experienced overcrowding increased between Waves 1 and 3 from 8% to 14% in the B cohort families and from 12% to 20% in the K cohort. This is compared to an increase for families living in a separate house from 5% to 6% in the B cohort and from 6% to 8% in the K cohort. Again, it is important to recognise that the definition of overcrowding changes once children reach 5 years of age.

Table 7.7 Housing overcrowding and dwelling type, B and K cohorts, Waves 1–3

Dwelling type	B cohort			K cohort		
	0–1 year	2–3 years	4–5 years	4–5 years	6–7 years	8–9 years
	% overcrowded (n)			% overcrowded (n)		
Separate house	4.8 (146)	5.8 (167)	6.3 (174)	5.6 (189)	6.8 (218)	7.9 (237)
Semi-detached house	8.2 (21)	12.2 (23)	14.1 (22)	11.8 (22)	14.3 (20)	19.8 (27)
Flat/unit/apartment	19.0 (39)	18.3 (23)	28.5 (31)	30.0 (35)	31.5 (32)	35.8 (29)
Other dwelling type ^a	8.0 (9)	9.1 (6)	15.1 (11)	8.8 (11)	16.1 (13)	19.2 (23)
No. of observations	4,112	4,112	4,112	4,075	4,075	4,075

Notes: Cases were only included if data were available at all waves. Indicator of overcrowding developed to meet the criteria for the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010), with slight modifications for LSAC data. Dwelling type was reported by field interviewers. ^a “Other dwelling type” includes “caravan/cabin”, “house or flat attached to shop etc.” and “farm”, all of which had sample sizes of 12 cases or lower for both cohorts/all waves.

Table 7.8 shows the persistence of overcrowding for individual families across the three waves. Just under one-sixth of families had experienced overcrowding at one or more waves. K cohort families were slightly more likely to experience overcrowding at two or three waves, and less likely to never experience overcrowding.⁴ Eighty-six per cent of B cohort families never experienced overcrowding, while 9% did so at one wave only, and 6% did so at two or more waves. Eighty-four per cent of K cohort families never experienced overcrowding, 9% did so at one wave only, and 7% did so at two or more waves. Overall, however, these results suggest that overcrowding is usually a temporary situation for most families.

Table 7.8 Number of waves living in overcrowded house, B and K cohorts, Waves 1–3

Number of waves lived in overcrowded house	B cohort	K cohort
	%	
0	85.7	83.9
1	8.9	8.8
2	3.1	4.1
3	2.4	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0
No. of observations	4,248	4,191

Note: Cases were only included if data were available at all waves. Indicator of overcrowding developed to meet the criteria for the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010), with slight modifications for LSAC data. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Table 7.9 (on page 73) further investigates those families experiencing overcrowded housing by looking at who else lived in their households. The table compares households that met (or did not meet) the overcrowding criteria, by whether the household contained:

- anybody other than the study child’s parents or siblings; and
- anybody not related to the study child.

⁴ Note that this difference between the cohorts is possibly due to the differences in the numbers of siblings in the household. The older K cohort children were more likely to have at least one sibling compared to the younger B cohort children (see Chapter 1). It is also important to recognise that the definition of overcrowding changes once children reach 5 years of age—children under 5 years of the same or different gender may share a bedroom; however, once they turn 5 they may only share a bedroom if they are of the same gender.

Table 7.9 Other relatives and non-relatives in children's households, by whether house overcrowded, B and K cohorts, Waves 1–3

	B cohort			K cohort		
	0–1 year	2–3 years	4–5 years	4–5 years	6–7 years	8–9 years
	%			%		
House overcrowded						
Lives with one or more people who are not a parent/sibling of the study child	45.2	46.7	39.1	26.9	31.2	32.8
Lives with one or more people who are not related to the study child	6.6	4.9	5.8	3.5	5.6	6.8
No. of observations	227	229	253	274	303	335
House not overcrowded						
Lives with one or more people who are not a parent/sibling of the study child	6.6	6.8	6.3	5.5	7.4	6.6
Lives with one or more people who are not related to the study child	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.5	3.1	3.6
No. of observations	4,021	4,019	3,995	3,917	3,888	3,856

Notes: Cases were only included if data were available at all waves. Indicator of overcrowding developed to meet the criteria for the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010), with slight modifications for LSAC data.

By comparing these two groups, we can get a sense of whether children lived with extended family members or with people who were not related to them. For example, the table shows that 45% of 0–1 year olds living in an overcrowded house lived with people who were not a parent or sibling, but only 7% lived with someone who was not related to them, suggesting that 38% lived with extended family members.

The table shows fairly similar patterns for the two cohorts across the three waves, although K cohort children who lived in an overcrowded house were less likely to live with one or more people who were not their parents/siblings. Between 27% and 47% of children experiencing overcrowding lived with someone who was not their parent/sibling, compared to between 6% and 7% of children living in a house that was not overcrowded. Between 4% and 7% of children living in an overcrowded house lived with someone not related to them, compared to between 1% and 4% of children not in an overcrowded home. In interpreting these results, it is important to note the small numbers of families living in overcrowded housing in comparison to those families not living in overcrowded housing.

7.4 Mobility, tenure and overcrowding

This final section investigates the relationships between mobility and housing tenure, and mobility and overcrowding, and focuses on the younger group of children (the B cohort) because of the relatively high levels of mobility experienced by this group. The first two tables, Table 7.10 (on page 74) and Table 7.11 (on page 75), show changes in housing tenure after moving house between waves.⁵ The shaded cells on the diagonal of each table indicate those who remained in the same category between waves.

Table 7.10 shows the housing tenure in Wave 1 and Wave 2 after moving house between those two waves. Among those families who moved, the largest groups were those who initially lived in a house on which they had a mortgage, followed by those in private rentals. A large percentage (63%) of families who owned their house outright in Wave 1 moved into a new house with a mortgage, suggesting that some families may upgrade their houses when their children are young. Twenty-three per cent of Wave 1 outright owners moved to a new house that they also owned outright, and 6% moved into a rental property.

5 Note that families may have moved more than once within the two years between waves.

Wave 2 (after moving) Wave 1 (before moving)	Owner without mortgage	Owner with mortgage	Renter—private landlord	Renter—public housing	Other tenure type ^b	Total	No. of observations
	%						
Owner without mortgage	22.5 ^a	62.6	5.9	0.0	9.0	100.0	85
Owner with mortgage	5.1	60.9 ^a	23.3	0.0	10.7	100.0	615
Renter—private landlord	2.0	28.6	51.9 ^a	4.2	13.2	100.0	568
Renter—public housing	2.2	12.7	38.6	33.1 ^a	13.4	100.0	36
Other tenure type ^b	1.9	30.0	35.3	8.3	24.7 ^a	100.0	311
Total	4.0	41.0	36.3	4.3	14.5	100.0	1,615

Notes: Only families who moved house between Wave 1 and Wave 2 are included. ^a The percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same housing tenure category at both Waves 1 and 2. ^b The “other” category includes: renting from a person in the same dwelling, relatives or friends, employer, community/cooperative housing group, caravan park, unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing the dwelling under a rent/buy scheme; living in a dwelling under a life tenure scheme; or living in a dwelling rent-free, all of which had small sample sizes. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

Families who were purchasing their home in Wave 1 were most likely to remain in this situation if they moved house between Wave 1 and Wave 2 (61%). However, a larger percentage of these families moved into a rental property (23%), compared to those who originally owned the home in which they lived (6%). Five per cent of purchasers no longer had a mortgage (i.e., they owned their house outright) after moving. None of the families who originally owned or were purchasing their home moved into public housing.

Thirty-one per cent of families who were renting privately in Wave 1 and had moved house by Wave 2, had moved to a house that they were purchasing or owned, while 4% had moved into public housing. Families who were living in public housing before moving showed the second highest level of movement out of that tenure type (after those who owned their house outright). Thirty-three per cent of the families who lived in public housing and then moved house, had moved to another public housing arrangement at Wave 2. Thirty-nine per cent of these families had moved into a private rental, and 15% owned or were purchasing their home. In interpreting these results, it is important to note the small proportion of the sample who were renting in public housing.

Table 7.11 (on page 75) shows the changes in tenure type for families who moved between Wave 2 (when the study children were 2–3 years) and Wave 3 (when the study children were 4–5 years). The table shows a similar pattern to that seen between Waves 1 and 2. Again, the largest groups were those who had a mortgage and those who were renting privately.

Among those families who owned their home outright in Wave 2 then moved house in Wave 3, 29% continued to own their house outright after moving, while 51% moved to a property that was mortgaged and 13% started renting privately. Sixty per cent of those who lived in a mortgaged property in Wave 2 moved to another mortgaged property in Wave 3, 5% moved to a property they owned outright and 27% moved to a private rental.

Over half of those who were renting privately in Wave 2 moved to another rental property, while 25% moved to a property that was mortgaged, 1% moved to a property they owned outright and 3% started renting public housing.

Among the small proportion of the sample who were renting public housing in Wave 2 and then moved house, over half moved to another public housing arrangement, 15% moved to a private rental and 14% moved to a property that was mortgaged or owned outright.

Wave 3 (after moving) \ Wave 2 (before moving)	Owner without mortgage	Owner with mortgage	Renter—private landlord	Renter—public housing	Other tenure type ^b	Total	No. of observations
	%						
Owner without mortgage	28.6 ^a	50.5	12.7	0.0	8.1	100.0	85
Owner with mortgage	5.0	59.8 ^a	27.1	0.0	8.0	100.0	512
Renter—private landlord	1.3	25.4	56.0 ^a	3.0	14.3	100.0	432
Renter—public housing	3.8	10.2	14.5	56.0 ^a	15.5	100.0	35
Other tenure type ^b	3.1	37.2	27.4	3.4	28.9 ^a	100.0	229
Total	4.6	40.4	36.4	4.2	14.4	100.0	1,293

Notes: Only families who moved house between Wave 2 and Wave 3 are included. ^aThe percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same housing tenure category at both Waves 2 and 3. ^bThe “other” category includes: renting from a person in the same dwelling, relatives or friends, employer, community/cooperative housing group, caravan park, unspecified landlord or the government; purchasing the dwelling under a rent/buy scheme; living in a dwelling under a life tenure scheme; or living in a dwelling rent-free, all of which had small sample sizes. Percentages may not total exactly 100.0% due to rounding.

The final two tables in this chapter explore changes in experiences of overcrowding after moving house, again with a focus on the B cohort. Table 7.12 shows changes and persistence of overcrowding for families who moved between when their study child was 0–1 years (Wave 1) and 2–3 years (Wave 2). The shaded cells on the diagonal of the table indicate those who remained in the same category between waves. The table shows that two-thirds of families who lived in an overcrowded house in Wave 1 and then moved, moved into a house where they did not experience overcrowding. However, one-third moved into a house that was also overcrowded.

Wave 2 (after moving) \ Wave 1 (before moving)	Overcrowding	No overcrowding	Total	No. of observations
	%			
Overcrowding	32.1 ^a	67.9	100.0	126
No overcrowding	6.1	93.9 ^a	100.0	1,494
Total	8.4	91.6	100.0	1,620

Notes: Only families who moved house between Wave 1 and Wave 2 are included. ^aThe percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same overcrowding category at both Waves 1 and 2.

Table 7.13 shows a similar pattern for the children who moved house between when they were 2–3 years (Wave 2) and when they were 4–5 years (Wave 3). Seventy-six per cent of children who lived in an overcrowded house moved to one that was not, and 24% also lived in an overcrowded house after moving.

Wave 3 (after moving) \ Wave 2 (before moving)	Overcrowding	No overcrowding	Total	No. of observations
	%			
Overcrowding	23.6 ^a	76.4	100.0	87
No overcrowding	7.2	92.8 ^a	100.0	1,206
Total	8.7	91.3	100.0	1,293

Notes: Only families who moved house between Wave 2 and Wave 3 are included. ^aThe percentages in these cells indicate families who remained in the same overcrowding category at both Waves 2 and 3.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has made use of two aspects of the LSAC data—its longitudinal nature and the information collected about the people with whom children live. The chapter has examined housing mobility, tenure and overcrowding as three aspects of children’s housing that are thought to have important influences on their development (Dockery et al., 2010).

The analyses show that LSAC children have experienced high levels of housing mobility, with approximately three-quarters of children moving house at least once before they turned 10. Children were most likely to move house when they were young, but the majority of moves were within the same local area. For many children, housing mobility also led to changes in their housing tenure and levels of overcrowding (mostly to less crowding).

More than half of the families owned or were purchasing their own home, and the percentage that did so increased as the children became older. This group of families had the greatest consistency of tenure between waves, as most families remained in this tenure category even after moving house between waves. A reasonable proportion of families who owned their own house outright when their children were babies acquired a mortgage when they moved into a new house.

Using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (ABS, 2007; Dockery et al., 2010), this chapter has shown that fewer than 10% of children younger than 10 years lived in an overcrowded house. The majority of families who experienced overcrowding did so at only one wave. Similarly, families who lived in an overcrowded house were less likely to do so after moving. Children in overcrowded homes were more likely to be living with extended family members compared to those not experiencing overcrowding.

Further research is needed to better understand the housing characteristics of the families who fall into the “other tenure type” category in this chapter. Although there is a relatively small number of families in this situation, because of the nature of these housing arrangements (including paying rent to someone else in the house, a friend or a relative), it is likely that many of these families experience high levels of overcrowding and mobility, particularly when living in shared housing arrangements (e.g., sharing with relatives), which is common after family separation (AIHW, 2007).

Future analysis using LSAC data will be able to examine the relationships between housing characteristics and children’s outcomes in Australia, and thereby help to reduce the dearth of information in this area.

7.6 Further reading

Dockery, A. M., Kendall, G., Li, J., Mahendran, A., Ong, R., & Strazdins, L. (2010). *Housing and children’s development and wellbeing: A scoping study* (AHURI Final Report No. 149). Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

7.7 References

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