



Selecting the sample

The Health Insurance Commission is cooperating with *Growing Up in Australia* by selecting two large samples of children and their families from their Medicare database and sending out a letter to invite these families to participate in the study. A large number of postcodes across Australia will be selected, and from these postcodes, families with children of the right ages will be randomly selected.

The Health Insurance Commission will pass on to *Growing Up in Australia* researchers the names and addresses of those who have not declined to participate. Interviewers will then visit the families in their homes. We hope to interview families of 5,000 infants and 5,000 four-year-olds. Parents will be asked for permission to contact their child care provider and/or preschool teacher to gather data on these contexts of the child's life as well.

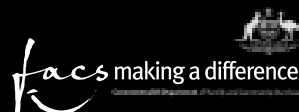
Advising the study

The study is receiving scientific and policy advice through:

- The Department of Family and Community Services Steering Committee, which contains representatives of several Commonwealth departments, state governments, senior academics, service providers, and other bodies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- A Scientific and Policy Advisory Group which includes representatives from some of the large overseas longitudinal studies of children, and experts in a broad range of fields in Australia.
- An email reference group provides another avenue of input into the study.

Email reference group

To join the *Growing Up in Australia* email reference group, send an email to:
majordomo@aifs.gov.au
Subject: (leave blank)
In body of email, type:
subscribe GROWINGUP-REFGROUP



Growing Up in Australia

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The longitudinal study of
Australian children

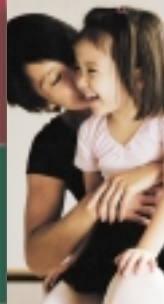
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Growing Up in Australia

The longitudinal study of Australian children

Helping to ensure that every child in Australia has the best possible start in life.



Growing Up in Australia

Growing Up in Australia is the longitudinal study of Australian children. It is a major new study which will follow two large, nationally representative samples of Australian children through the crucial early years of their lives.

Growing Up in Australia is being undertaken by a consortium led by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other member institutions in the consortium are:

- Australian Council for Educational Research
- Telethon Institute for Child Health Research
- Queensland University of Technology
- Macquarie University
- Charles Sturt University
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Australian National University's National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, and Centre for Mental Health Research
- Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales

Growing Up in Australia is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services as part of the Government's *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*.

Growing Up in Australia is housed at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Aims of the study

Growing Up in Australia aims to provide the database for a comprehensive understanding of children's development in Australia's current social, economic and cultural environment, and to become a major element of the evidence base for future policy and practice regarding children and their families.

Growing Up in Australia will deliver the first-ever comprehensive, national Australian data on children as they grow up. It will follow representative samples of 5,000 infants and 5,000 four-year-olds and their families, for the period 2004–2010 and possibly beyond.

Longitudinal data are essential to answer many of the questions facing policy makers and researchers today. We know that the roots of many problems in adolescence and adulthood can be found in early childhood. By tracking children over time, researchers will gain a better understanding of how, why and when children embark on pathways leading to positive or less positive outcomes, and where the opportunities are to help children move onto better pathways.

Growing Up in Australia is based on an ecological model of development, and will collect data not only on children's experiences at home but also in child care, school and their local communities. The study is concerned with all aspects of children's development – their physical and mental health, social adjustment, cognitive development, and school achievement.

Duration of the study

The first data collection is planned to start in early 2004 (preceded by a pilot study in 2003). Families will be contacted again in 2005 to fill out mail-back questionnaires. Interviewers will visit families again in 2006, 2008 and 2010. It is not yet known whether the study will proceed beyond this point.

Research questions

Growing Up in Australia will collect data to address seven broad policy-relevant research questions:

- How well are Australian children faring on a number of key developmental outcomes?
- What are the pathway markers, early indicators, or constellations of behaviours that are related to different child outcomes?
- How are child outcomes linked with their wider circumstances and environment?
- In what ways do features of children's environment (such as families, communities, and institutions) impact on child outcomes?
- What helps maintain an effective pathway, or change one that is not promising?
- How is a child's potential maximised to achieve positive outcomes for children, their families and society?
- What role can the government play in achieving these outcomes?

Growing Up in Australia will also address a number of more specific questions under the headings of "family functioning", "child care", "health" and "education". For more information see the discussion papers on the *Growing Up in Australia* website, or available from the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Analysing the data

Data from *Growing Up in Australia* will be warehoused at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and will be widely available to researchers who abide by strict security and confidentiality protocols. The release of the first wave of data is planned for early 2005. The Institute will provide user support services to those who wish to analyse the data.

