



# Newsletter

AUTUMN 2005

## Greetings!

It is hard to believe that it is about a year since we visited you to talk about your child for Wave 1 of *Growing Up in Australia*. Where has the time gone? We hope the last year has been a good one for you, your *Growing Up in Australia* child, and your family.

We would like to hear how your child is progressing. The enclosed questionnaire covers a number of important aspects of the lives of your child and family. If your child was a baby when we visited you, we have some special questions for a study that seeks to better understand parents' working lives before and after the birth of a child.

We would really appreciate you filling in the questionnaire and returning it in the reply-paid envelope provided. If you prefer, you can fill in the questionnaire online. Simply go to [www.iview.com.au/growingup](http://www.iview.com.au/growingup) and follow the instructions.

Note: if you have a change in contact details, please provide them for us on the questionnaire.

Best wishes

Carol Soloff

*Growing Up in Australia* Project Manager  
Australian Institute of Family Studies



## A study of over 10,000 families

More than 10,000 families across Australia agreed to take part in *Growing Up in Australia*. Thank you for your involvement and the significant contribution you have made. The insight into children you have given – and will continue to give throughout the life of the study – is invaluable. We could not do this study without you!

### The longitudinal study of Australian children

Initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

Managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies

#### Growing Up in Australia

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### Did you know?

#### Facts about the infants in the study

- Sixty per cent of the infants were living with brothers and sisters.
- About one-third of the infants were still being breastfed.
- About one-third had at least one regular form of child care, with care by grandparents the most popular option, closely followed by day care centres.
- Thirty per cent of infants were born by caesarian section.
- At birth, 50 per cent weighed at least 3430g, and 13 per cent weighed more than 4000g.



Australian Government

Australian Institute of  
Family Studies

*Growing Up in Australia* is the longitudinal study of Australian children. It 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 evidence base for future policy and practice regarding children and their families.

*Growing Up in Australia* will follow representative samples of 5,000 infants and 5,000 four to five year-olds and their families until 2010 and possibly beyond.

*Growing Up in Australia* was initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

You can visit the *Growing Up in Australia* website at any time to get the latest information on the study. Every three months we produce a general newsletter for the website with updates on the study's progress.

[www.aifs.gov.au/growingup](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup)



The longitudinal study of  
Australian children

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## Families in the study

Over 130 interviewers spoke with families in cities, towns, and rural and remote areas in all States and Territories in Australia. Interviewers loved talking with you. As one interviewer said:

*"What is really heartwarming for me is the common ground that we share as Australian parents, and the overall care that families show for their kids."*

In the study, we have families who live in all sorts of places and in all sorts of conditions. There are families with mum, dad and two or three children living in the suburbs; families with one child, families with lots of children, families on farms, in high rise flats, in the cities, and in remote communities. We

have families with children with disabilities, foster children, adopted children, stepchildren, children born overseas, parents born overseas, single-parent families, and so on. In other words, the families in our study truly reflect the diversity of families in Australia.

You have provided us with a huge amount of information and we are busy analysing your experiences – from the interviews, the self-complete forms, the diaries, and the teacher and carer questionnaires.



Pictured at the launch of data collection for *Growing Up in Australia* in February 2004 are Ann Sanson, then acting Director of AIFS; the Minister for Family and Community Service, Senator the Hon Kay Patterson; and Dianne Gibson, chair of the AIFS' Board.

## Release of wave one data

Results from the first wave of interviews are expected to be publicly released in May 2005. The first information will be contained in the *Growing Up in Australia* 2004 Annual Report. Copies of this report will be available on our website [www.aifs.gov.au/growingup](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup) or by contacting the Institute if you would like a copy posted to you.

The detailed data will also be released around this time but will only be available to researchers who have to abide by strict security and confidentiality protocols. Researchers who want to use the data will need to apply and sign a deed of confidentiality. Your privacy is very important to us, so any information that could identify you or your family will be removed from the data set.

**Throughout the life of *Growing Up in Australia*, the participating children and their families will continue to be the study's most precious resource.**

## Some phone calls about the study

“Had a call from a lady who needs a new Time Use Diary. Apparently her daughter thought it would be a good book to read in the bath.”

“Spoke to a really interesting dad who was a bit unsure about the study, but after hearing more information he was so keen to do it, that he wanted the interviewer to come in the next half hour – tried to contact the interviewer on her mobile, and luckily she was in the area and she could go out and do the study.”

“A mother rang to thank us for including them in the study and let us know how wonderful the interviewer was and that they were looking forward to the next one.”

“Rang to remind a dad to fill in his questionnaire. He said his wife had nagged him to get it done, but he usually waits until the nagging stops before he does anything she asks!”

## NEXT INTERVIEW

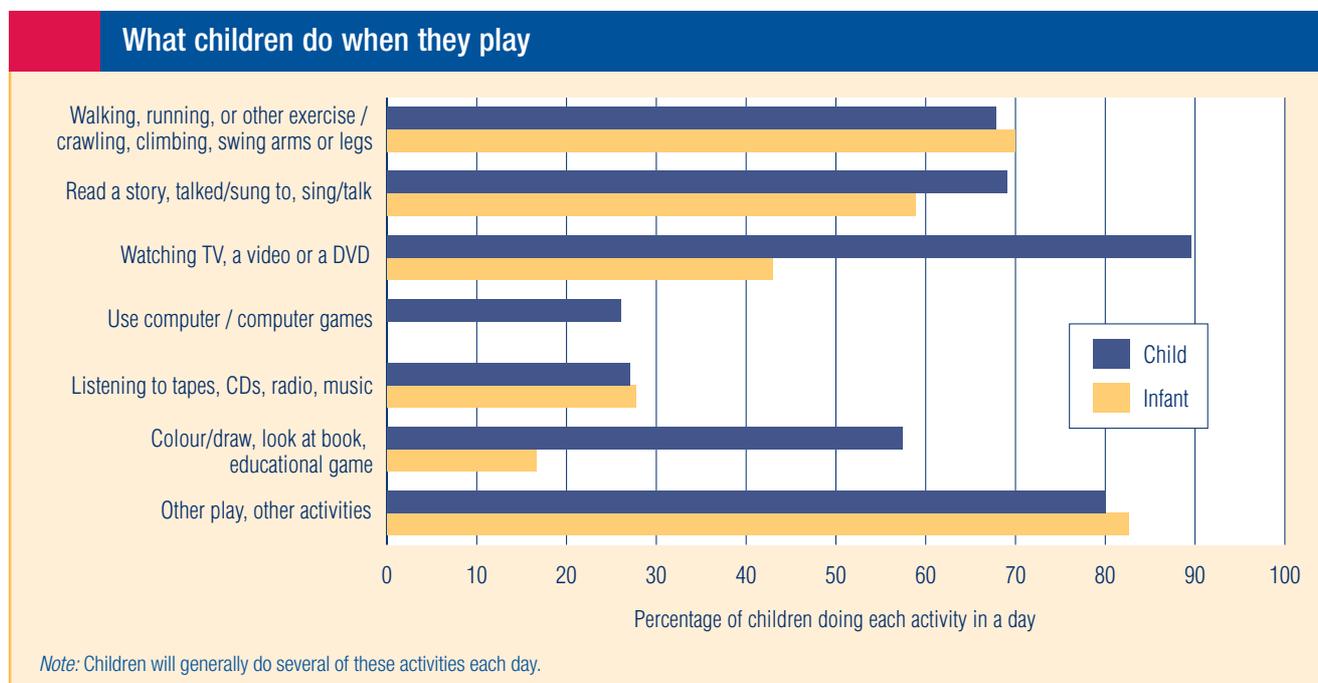
We are starting to prepare for our next contact with you, which is due about this time next year. The children in the study will then be aged two-three years and six-seven years. We know that the interviewers will be excited to be in touch and see how everything is progressing for you and your family. Next time, the interviewers will be from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## How do children spend their time?

We were very pleased with your response to the Time Use Diary. Over 80 per cent of families filled in the diaries, which are providing us with a wealth of information about what your children do each day. Many parents told us that they found it very interesting to keep a record of what their children were up to.

The following is just an example of the information we have found, showing how children play. Infants averaged five hours a day of play, and children aged four–five years averaged eight hours a day of play.

The graph shows the sorts of activities that children were doing, and how many children did them on average each day. For example, about 68 per cent of the four–five year olds spent time walking, running or doing other exercise, and 70 per cent of infants did the equivalent – crawling, climbing or swinging their arms and legs. Around 90 per cent of four–five year olds watched some television, video or DVD.



**Collecting good quality information about children’s time use is one of the most original and distinctive features of *Growing Up in Australia*.**

## Did you know?

### Facts about four-five year old children in the study

- Most of the children aged four–five years (89 per cent) were living with at least one brother or sister.
- Most of the children were at pre-school, with some already at school.
- Most are read to by their parents at least three times a week (47 per cent of parents read to their child every day).
- Twenty per cent are spoken to in a language other than English.
- Almost all had gone to a playground or a swimming pool in the last month.
- Since they were born, 62 per cent of the children have lived in at least two houses.
- Two out of five children live in families that own a dog (one-quarter of families have a cat and one-third have another pet).

## Some of the people behind the study

Many people have been involved in making *Growing Up in Australia* happen. The study is housed at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, where its Project Operations Team (POT) is located. This team has developed the study, along with a Consortium of leading research institutions, to ensure that the best possible data are collected.

As you know, this study was initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS). FaCS has a small team based in Canberra, who work closely with us here at the Institute and our Consortium partners to help ensure the Government is able to make good use of the information you give us.

So far you will mostly have had contact with the interviewing team from I-view. Supporting the team of 130 interviewers and supervisors around Australia is the I-view/Colmar Brunton Social Research Office team. This team organised everything that needed to be done for the Wave 1 data collection and is coordinating the mail-out of this Newsletter. For Wave 2 the data collection and processing will be undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Pictured are members from the POT and FaCS teams.



POT: Pictured from left are: (front) Grace Soriano, Research Officer; Joanne Slater, Graduate Assistant; Ann Sanson, Project Director; Alison Morehead, Executive Project Manager; (middle) Linda Bencic, Design Manager; Anna Ferro, Research Officer; Emma White, Survey Officer; Carol Soloff, Project Manager; (back) Robert Johnstone, Data Manager; Sebastian Misson, Data Administrator.



FaCS: Pictured from left are Karen Wilson, Margaret Wada, Paula Chevalier, Peter Walkear and Jane Dickenson.

## DON'T FORGET!

You are unique and irreplaceable! If you move house or change your telephone number(s) or other contact details, please let us know – it will make it so much easier for us to contact you next year.

Please ring 1800 005 508, use the change of address form, or email [growingupinaustralia@iview.com.au](mailto:growingupinaustralia@iview.com.au) to update your details.

And **thank you** for continuing to be part of this very important study. Only through your continued support can we obtain the best possible information for the benefit of all children.

***Growing Up in Australia:***

**helping to make sure all children have a good start in life**