



# Study Update

AUGUST 2007

## Thank you

Thank you very much for taking part in the *Growing Up in Australia* study. Without ongoing support by families such as yours, this study would not be possible. By following children through childhood we can develop a better understanding of what it is like to bring up children in the 21st century. All of us in the *Growing Up in Australia* team thank you again for giving up your time to be interviewed.

## Recent news

The Wave 2 interviews finished in February, with over 9,000 families taking part. This newsletter summarises some of the things you told us about bringing up children aged 2-3 and 6-7 years. For more information about the study, visit the *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* website at [www.aifs.gov.au/growingup](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growingup).

## The future

The strength of the study depends on your continuing participation. We are looking forward to visiting you again and hope that we will be able to continue following your child for many years to come.

## Keep in touch

Between the first and second interview almost a third of families moved. It is very important that we stay in touch with you. So, if you move or change any of your contact information, could you please let us know?

## Staying in contact is easy

- You can call us free on: **1800 005 508**
- Or email us at: **[growingup@abs.gov.au](mailto:growingup@abs.gov.au)**
- Or you can write to us at:

**ESDC**  
**Australian Bureau of Statistics**  
**Reply Paid 76746**  
**Sydney, NSW 2000**



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

# Study Update



**Australian Government**

**Australian Institute of  
Family Studies**

*Growing Up in Australia* is the longitudinal study of Australian children. It is designed to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families and for early intervention and prevention strategies.

*Growing Up in Australia* is following representative samples of approximately 5,000 infants and 5,000 four to five year olds and their families from 2003-4 until 2010 and possibly beyond.

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

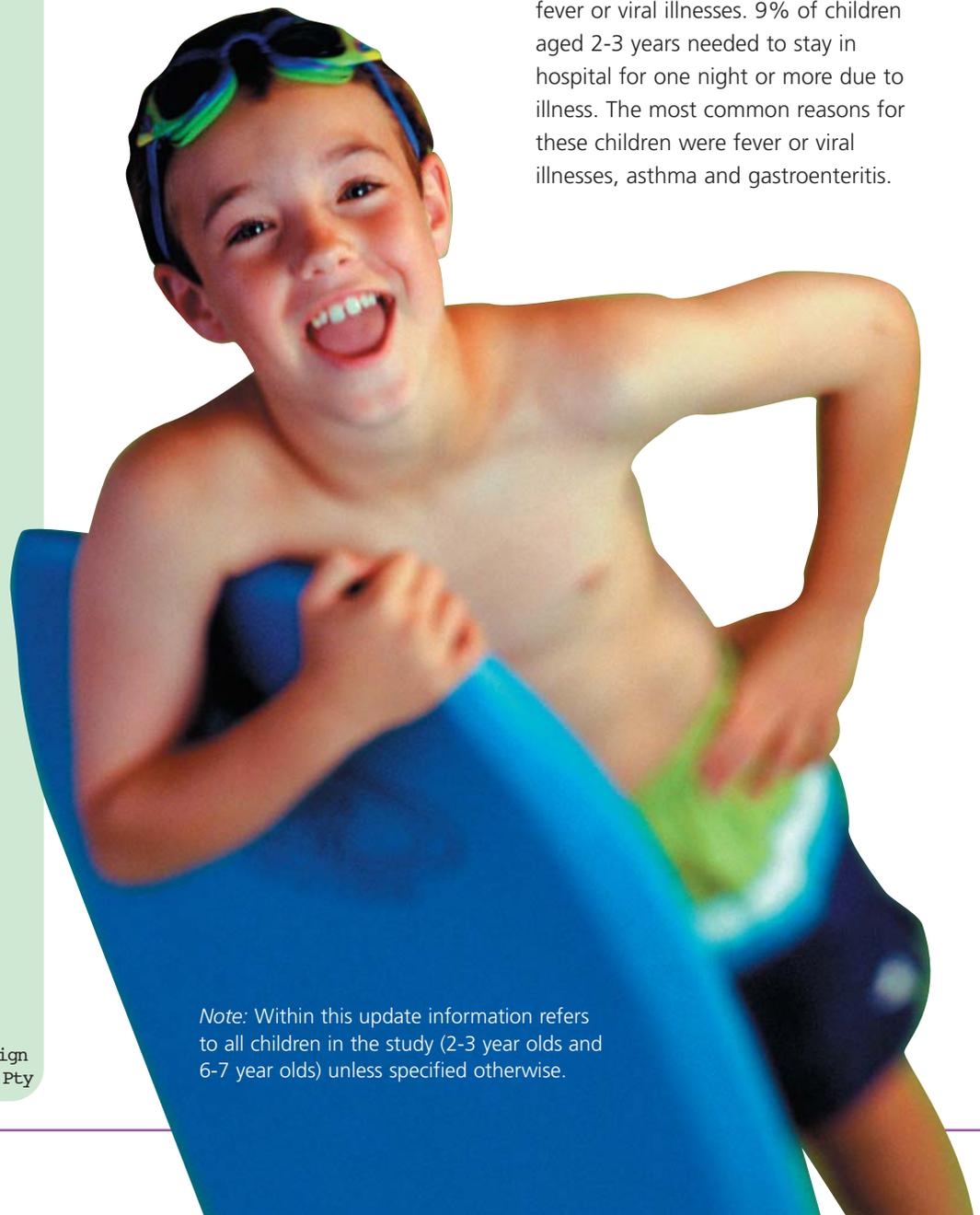
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Printed by Canprint Communications Pty

## Children's health

- Most parents said that their child was in good to excellent health.
- 1 in 4 children (24%) aged 6-7 years had been diagnosed with asthma and 66% of these children had taken medication for this condition in the previous 12 months. Fewer children aged 2-3 years (15%) had been diagnosed with asthma, with 80% of these having taken medication within the previous 12 months.
- A third of children had experienced other medical conditions in the previous 12 months, with eczema,

food allergies and ear infections being the most common. 1 in 5 children had required medical attention from a doctor or hospital in the previous 12 months because of an injury that they had sustained. The most common types of injuries where the child had required medical attention were cuts or scrapes and broken or fractured bones.

- 5% of children aged 6-7 years needed to stay in hospital for one night or more due to illness. The most common reasons were tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy, asthma and fever or viral illnesses. 9% of children aged 2-3 years needed to stay in hospital for one night or more due to illness. The most common reasons for these children were fever or viral illnesses, asthma and gastroenteritis.



*Note:* Within this update information refers to all children in the study (2-3 year olds and 6-7 year olds) unless specified otherwise.

## Sleeping

- Nearly all parents reported that their child always or usually went to bed at a regular time.
- 1 in 4 parents of children aged 6-7 years and 2 in 5 parents of children aged 2-3 years said their child's sleeping was a problem. The most common problem was waking during the night, followed by not being happy to sleep alone and difficulty getting off to sleep at night.
- Some parents also reported problems with their own sleep. 23% of parents said their quality of sleep was fairly bad to very bad, while 33% of parents said their sleep quality was adequate. 44% of parents said that their sleep quality was fairly to very good.

## Children's responses

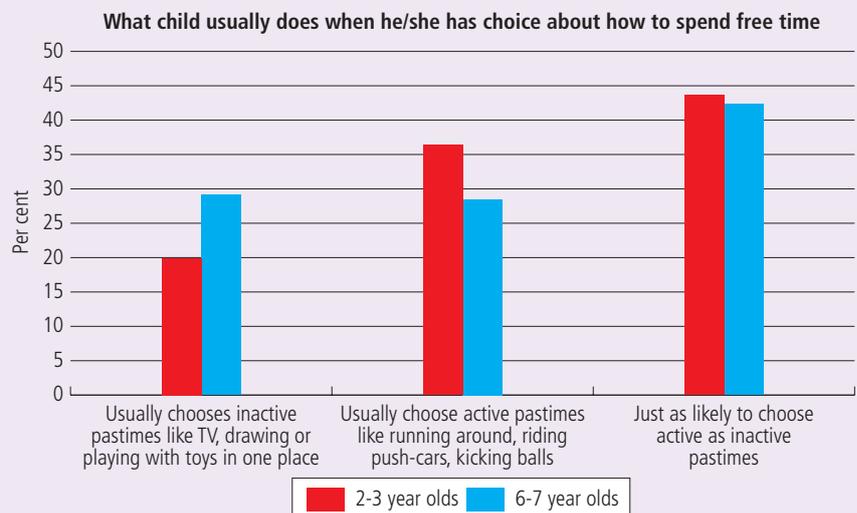
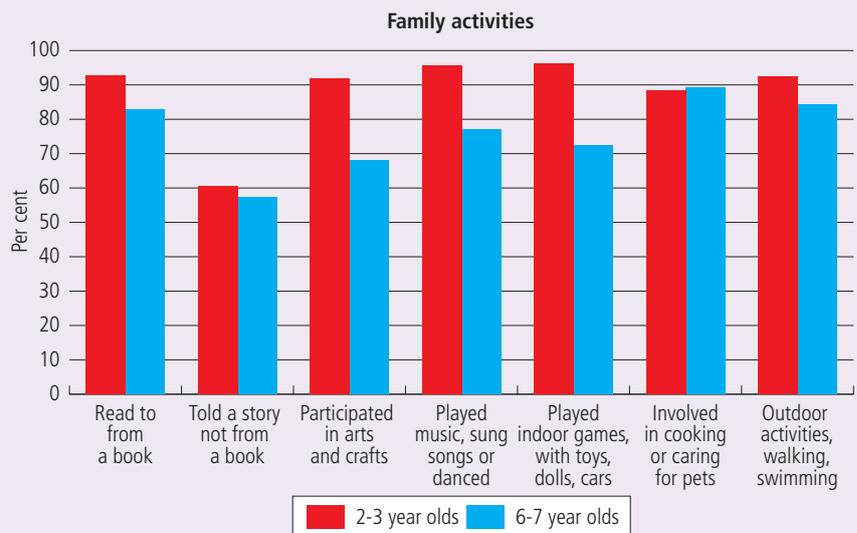
In the second *Growing Up in Australia* interview, 6-7 year old children were asked some questions.

- Three quarters of children said they had a pet. About 40% reported having a dog, 12% having a cat and a further 10% reported having both.
- Half of the children said they felt happy about going to school when they got up in the morning, a third of children said they felt happy sometimes, and one-fifth said they didn't feel happy about going to school.
- 9 in 10 children said that they enjoyed reading and writing.



## Family activities

Children participated in many different activities at home during the week before the interview.



## Working lives

- 55% of mothers with a child aged 2-3 years were employed and 63% of mothers with a child aged 6-7 years were employed. Only 3% were unemployed and looking for work.
- 93% of fathers were employed.
- Of the parents in paid work, 88% reported that they felt secure in their job.



## Parents health

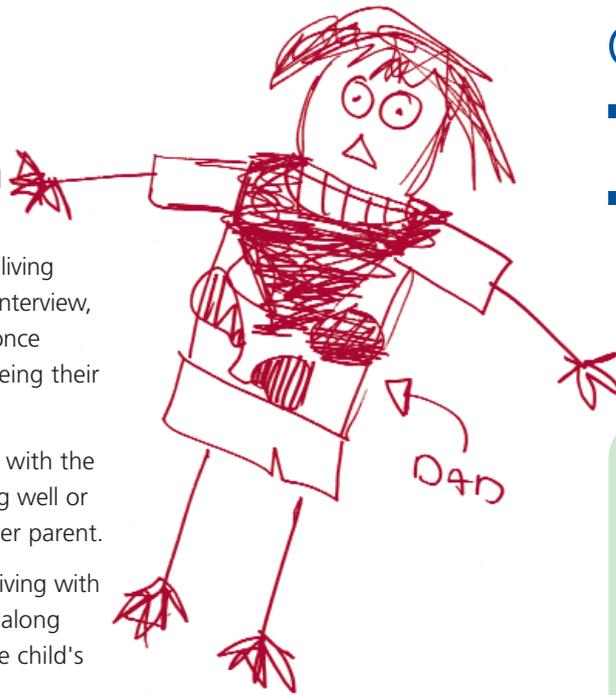
- Two-thirds of both mums and dads said their health was very good to excellent.
- 10% of all parents reported that they had no problems or stresses in their lives.

## Neighbourhood

- 87% of parents said their neighbourhood was a good place to bring up their child.
- 75% of parents agreed that their neighbourhood was safe for children to play outside and 95% agreed that their neighbourhood was clean.
- 80% parents said that there were good parks, playgrounds and play spaces in their neighbourhood.

## Separated families

- There were about 1,470 children who had a biological parent not living with them.
- Of the parents who were not living with the child at the time of interview, 36% usually saw their child once per week with 9% usually seeing their child every day.
- Half of the parents still living with the study child said they get along well or very well with the child's other parent.
- A quarter of the parents still living with the study child said they get along poorly or very poorly with the child's other parent.



## TV and computers

- Nearly all children (98%) watched TV, DVDs or videos during the week. Around 38% of children watched 1 hour a day or less, 37% of children watched between 1 and 2 hours a day and 25% watched more than 2 hours a day. Children watched more TV, DVDs or videos on the weekend.
- Computers are starting to play a significant part in children's lives at age 6-7 years. The majority (87%) of children this age have access to a computer at home. However, almost all of these children (92%) used a computer at home during the week for an hour or less a day. About 8% used a computer for more than one hour. Computer use, like TV watching, was higher on the weekends.



## Childcare

- 69% of children aged 2-3 years were receiving some type of childcare.
- 43% of 2-3 year olds were attending day care centres, 13% were looked after by a maternal grandparent, 8% were attending family day care and 7% were looked after by a paternal grandparent.



### The longitudinal study of Australian children

Initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

### Growing Up in Australia

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

## Schooling

- 27% of 6-7 year old children were enrolled in grade 2 / year 2, a further 68% were enrolled in grade 1 / year 1 and about 4% were in preparatory/kindergarten.



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