



GROWING UP NEWS

Winter 2015



From Susan: Collecting childhood - two ways



In 2011 we called on some of our *Leading Light* families to be involved in a unique project with the Museum of New Zealand *Te Papa Tongarewa* in Wellington. The aim of this project was to build a collection of stories and objects that represent the lives and experiences of children growing up in New Zealand today.

Now the first stage of 'Collecting childhood' is available as an online exhibition for the very first time.

Seven *Growing Up* families were selected by Te Papa to take part in the long-term project. Museum staff visited each family at home for the first time when the children were three years old. During this visit, the children (with a little help from their parents) chose special items that were important to them at that time. The result is a wide variety of items including toys, photos, clothing, jewellery, homemade crafts and even a digital recording, that together provide a unique glimpse into the everyday lives of contemporary New Zealand children.


The collection will grow with the children it portrays, and new stories and items will be collected every few years by the museum. To put those stories into a wider context, the *Growing Up* research team also contributes infographics that collate information from all the *Growing Up in New Zealand* families. Museum staff have chosen information on ethnicity, language use, and early childhood activities as the first topics to be added to the online collection.

We are very proud to be working with Te Papa on this unique collection, and believe that our projects complement each other

perfectly: *Growing Up in New Zealand* tells the story of a whole generation of New Zealand children and 'Collecting childhood' exemplifies it in the personal stories and items that the seven chosen families have donated.

We would like to thank all of you for making this public display of childhood experiences in New Zealand possible, and give our special thanks to the families who are directly involved.

With kind regards,


Dr Susan Morton



An amber necklace, a toy lightsaber and ghagra choli were among the items donated to the collection by the seven *Growing Up in New Zealand* families.

Find the full collection on bit.ly/collecting-childhood

Online questionnaires for mums and dads are starting in August

Keep an eye out for emails and postcards from *Growing Up in New Zealand* from August onwards. We will be contacting all mothers, fathers and partners in the study for a new round of interviews over the next few months.

This time round we are going online with our questionnaires instead of the usual phone or face-to-face interviews. Don't worry if you do not have internet access as we can still interview you over the phone.

Under the motto 'Starting school' we will ask all mothers how they and their *Growing Up* child or children planned and experienced the move to primary school.

The fathers and partners will be asked questions about their experience of being a dad in New Zealand today, as part of our new 'Who are today's dads?' project.

Our Leading Lights families have already completed this round of interviews and we are looking forward to catching up with all parents in the study starting in August.



What we do with the information you provide

We sometimes get asked why the *Growing Up in New Zealand* study is so important to the country.

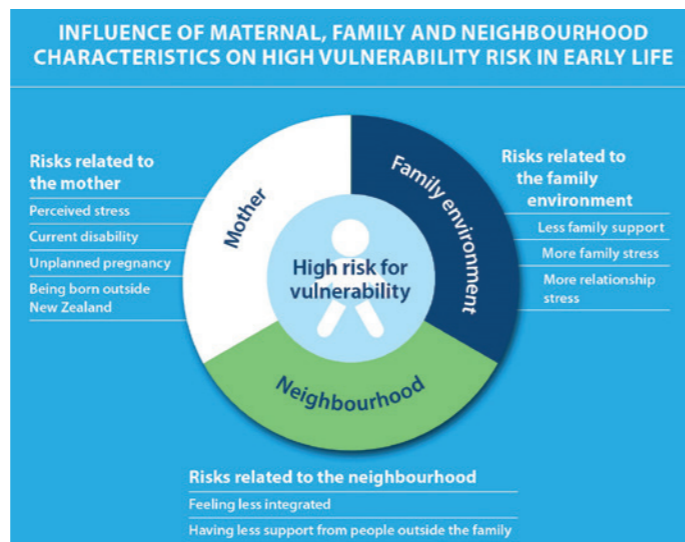
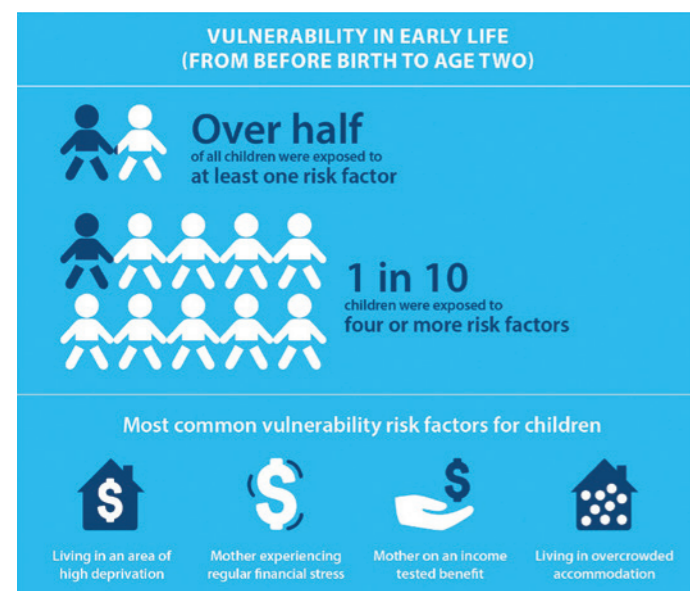
Here are some examples of the research we could perform and the insights we were able to provide to policy makers and government in 2015 thanks to your ongoing support of the study.

Supporting vulnerable children

You might have heard the term 'vulnerable children' often in the media over the last few years. 'Vulnerable' children have been a focus for New Zealand's policy makers for quite some time, with the aim of supporting these children and their families as early as possible so they have the best start to life.

But what makes a child 'vulnerable' and who needs support most? And what effect does vulnerability have on the child's health and development?

Our '*Vulnerability and Resilience*' report series tries to answer these questions and explain why some children thrive despite being considered at risk of vulnerability while other vulnerable children experience behavioural, health and developmental problems.



In our first report, released in 2014, we found out that the likelihood of experiencing vulnerability in early life can be estimated by looking at the home and family environment, and the neighbourhood they are born into. We distinguished twelve common risk factors that can be used to help identify the most vulnerable children even before their birth.

In our second report in this series, which is to be released on 24 July, we explore how exposure to the twelve factors of vulnerability changes over time for the children in *Growing Up in New Zealand*. We describe which risk factors are most common and which ones are most likely to make children most vulnerable.

We hope that by recognising vulnerability early we can work out how to support parents better from as early as possible so all children can do well.

More details: www.growingup.co.nz/vulnerability2

Improving household safety

Injuries are common for children under two in New Zealand, and our country has the highest number of deaths from injury in under 20-year-olds in the OECD. Injuries cause a significant and sometimes long-lasting burden to the children themselves, their families and New Zealand society.

Most accidents happen at home. In fact, more than one in four *Growing Up in New Zealand* children had an injury that required a doctor, health centre or hospital visit in their first two years of life. So the home is a good place to start thinking about improving safety for children.

Many parents accessed a variety of safety information and were aware of ways to keep their children safe in the home. Almost all used car seats and the majority stored poisons and matches away from children. But not all parents were able to implement safety measures, especially expensive ones, often because they were renting their home or because they couldn't afford them.

We hope that the information we provided in this policy brief to government will help to improve safety resources for parents and landlords, and initiate new support programmes for those families whose children are most at risk of injury in the home.

The recently announced changes to the Residential Tenancy Act which will require smoke alarms in all tenanted properties from 1 July 2016 are a first step in this direction.

More details: www.growingup.co.nz/householdsafety

Upcoming public events

If you are interested to hear more about our research, join us for one of our public talks.

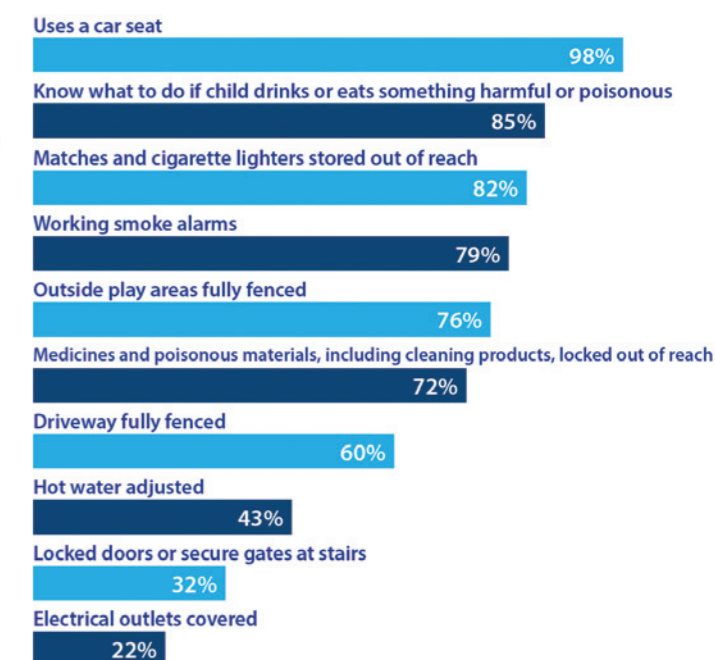
Research launch: 'Vulnerability 2' report

24 July, 10 - 11am, Te Puni Kokiri House, Wellington

Now we are Two: Describing our first 1000 days

4 August, 4:30 - 5:30pm, MIT - North Campus, Auckland

Details about these and more upcoming events: www.growingup.co.nz/events



Proportion of *Growing Up* families that answered 'Yes' or 'Always' to questions about home safety measures.

Influencing policy on paid parental leave

Over half of the mothers (55 percent) and 80 percent of the partners in *Growing Up in New Zealand* were working during late pregnancy. Like the majority of Kiwi parents, these mums and dads had to make decisions about parental leave, who would take it and for how long.

Little had been known about today's New Zealand parents' parental leave preferences and realities, so the *Growing Up* research filled a gap in the data for policy makers.

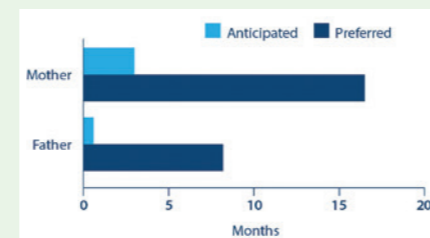
We found that New Zealand parents would prefer to spend double the amount of time at home after their child's birth

than they are currently able to. By the time their child was nine months old, almost all fathers and many mothers had returned to work, predominantly for financial reasons.

We also found that over 80 percent of mothers and fathers who had been working took some leave when their children were born. Multiple types of leave were usually combined to maximise the length of time parents could take off work.

This policy brief was part of the information that was considered by government for recent changes to paid parental leave, introduced in April 2015. Your information

has made a real difference to all New Zealand families; that is why we are especially proud of this piece of research.



Anticipated and preferred leave periods for mothers and fathers

More: www.growingup.co.nz/leave

Helping New Zealand kids stay healthy

After the gut, there are more microorganisms on the skin than anywhere else in the body. All healthy children - and all adults as well - carry a wide range of bacteria, fungi, viruses and mites on their skin. Usually these organisms are harmless but in some people they can cause respiratory illnesses and skin infections.

New Zealand has a very high rate of serious skin infections caused by the *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus pyogenes* bacteria compared to children in other developed countries, and more and more children are admitted to hospital with these infections every year. But no one knows exactly why this is happening.

The *Growing Up* team used the swabs we collected from your children during the pre-school interviews to find out how many healthy children carry *Staphylococcus* and

Streptococcus in their nostrils, throat and crook of the arm. Never before has such a large number of healthy pre-school children been tested in New Zealand. First results with a small group showed that over 54 percent carried *Staph* and 16 percent carried *Strep* bacteria on their bodies, with 10 percent colonised with both bacteria.

The results will help researchers find out why some children carry these bacteria on their skin without any effect on their own health while other kids develop serious skin, respiratory or other infections. Potential factors could be related to a child's general health, the environment within which the child is living, or the bacteria itself.



More details and results: www.growingup.co.nz/bacteria

Your first day at school: photo competition

There is still time to enter the second round of our 'First day at school' photo competition which **closes on 31 August 2015**.

If you haven't entered yet but would like to share a photo of your child's first day at school with us, please email the photo to competition@growingup.co.nz.

All submissions will go in the draw to win one of two sets of movie vouchers plus snacks for the whole family.

We would love to use some of these photos in our upcoming pre-school report, and share a few in our newsletter and in a video collage on our website.

By entering the competition and sending the photo you agree that *Growing Up in New Zealand* can use the image and the child's first name on our website or other publicly available materials.



Malae from Kawakawa (pictured with her cousin) and Aidan from Putaruru (with his mum) were our winners in the first competition round.

Keep in touch

Update your contact details

Did you recently move, or do you have a new phone number or email address? Please Freephone 0508 476 946 or email contact@growingup.co.nz to update your contact details.

Moving overseas?

That's no problem. Even if you are overseas we would still love for you to continue participating in the study. Send us your new contact details via contact@growingup.co.nz or give us a call on 0064 9 923 9972 (outside of NZ).

Follow us

To keep up with what's happening with *Growing Up in New Zealand* throughout the year, you can visit our website, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter:



www.growingup.co.nz



www.facebook.com/growingupnz



twitter.com/GrowingUpinNZ

Build a wētā motel



Do something for New Zealand's wildlife this winter. Wētā motels are no-fuss homes for native wētā where they are safe from predators. They find one, crawl in and relax.

What you need

- A parent to help
- Some bamboo, with a hole that is around 18mm wide. One of your neighbours might have some in their garden that you are allowed to use. Ask first!
- Hand saw
- Drill
- Wire

Did you know

- The wētā is only found in New Zealand and is so old it has outlived the dinosaurs.
- Wētā are at risk of being eaten by introduced animals like rats, stoats, cats and hedgehogs.
- Female wētā lay 100-300 eggs so if you build a home they like and wētā live there, their numbers will grow.

How it works

1. Cut your bamboo to lengths with the saw and make sure that the bottom of your length is open. If you cut your top two centimetres above a line in the wood, your wētā motel will have a natural roof and your wētā will stay dry.
2. Drill through the bamboo horizontally above the top of the roof to make holes for your handle.
3. Thread your wire through the holes, twist them together and bend the wire into a hook.
4. Hang your motel on a tree, fence or railing and wait for the wētās to move in.
5. If you like, you can paint your wētā motel in your favourite colours. The wētā won't mind.

If you would like to watch your new pets, you can create a motel with a window instead. It might take a little bit longer though.

For instructions (text and video) on different wētā motels, visit the DOC website: bit.ly/weta-motel

