



GROWING UP NEWS



Autumn/Winter 2014

From Susan



2014 is shaping up to be a very exciting year for *Growing Up in New Zealand*: The pre-school interviews are well under-way; we are about to release the second wave of anonymised data to researchers; and we are soon to release two new reports that use the information you have shared with us about your children during their first two years.

None of this would be possible without your ongoing support and dedication, and we would like to once again thank each and every one of you for participating in *Growing Up in New Zealand* and making the study so successful.

Now we are Two – Describing our first 1,000 days

We are especially excited to announce the release in June of our third comprehensive report, and second longitudinal report, '*Growing Up in New Zealand: Now we are Two – Describing our first 1,000 days*'.

This report describes how all the *Growing Up in New Zealand* children are doing in their first two years of life. It describes their health and wellbeing, physical development and language skills, the families and houses they are growing up in, their engagement with early childhood education, and the highlights and challenges you shared with us about being the parent of a toddler in New Zealand today.

This newsletter contains some key findings from the report which we are making available to you before the official launch to acknowledge that this report would not be possible without your voices and information. The full report will be available on our website (www.growingup.co.nz) after the official launch in Wellington on 17 June.

Defining vulnerability in early life for NZ's children

Our fourth report which is due for release in late July will focus on how we can identify children who are most vulnerable in early life, with a view to ensuring that support is available to help them grow up to be successful and healthy adults.

Reducing the impact of vulnerability in early childhood has recently become an important goal for policymakers in New Zealand, so this report is especially targeted to assist those who are charged with making policy in this area. The report will use information collected over the first two years of the children's lives to help define what family and environmental factors might contribute to early vulnerability for children born in New Zealand today.

Progress of pre-school data collection wave

As at early June, around 58% of pre-school interviews have been completed. We would like to thank all families who have already made the time to meet with our interviewers and provide the valuable information that helps us to write these reports that can help shape policy.

If you haven't heard from us and your child is nearly five, we might have inadvertently missed you or we may not have your up-to-date contact details. If this is the case, please get in touch as soon as possible via contact@growingup.co.nz or Freephone 0508 476 946 so we can find a time to see you.

Update on data release to other researchers

The information we collect from you is a valuable resource not just for the immediate *Growing Up* research team but also for other researchers to understand what shapes contemporary New Zealand children's development. Never before has such a broad range of data been collected about New Zealand pre-school children, and we can learn much about the impact of experiences during infancy on an individual's physical, psychological, social and professional development from analysing the data collected by *Growing Up in New Zealand* on its own, and from comparing it to data collected from cohorts overseas. However, there are so many questions to answer that we can't do all the work ourselves.

In July, we will make the fully anonymised information from the interviews in pregnancy and at 9 months available to a wider group of researchers. As always, strict processes will be followed to ensure that we maintain the security of the information and most importantly that we respect your privacy.

So again, from me and the entire *Growing Up in New Zealand* team, thank you for continuing to provide your information to this important study. Together we can use this information to improve outcomes for all our young New Zealanders.

With kind regards,


Dr Susan Morton



In mid-May our field interviewers from all over New Zealand visited the *Growing Up* team in Auckland. They talked about their experiences with the pre-school data collection wave so far, and celebrated the halfway mark of this round of interviews. Here they are with our interview manager Cherie (first row, 2nd right).

Kai Time in ECE - PhD research within Growing Up in New Zealand

Early Childhood Education (ECE) services like daycare centres, kindergartens, Kōhanga Reo and playcentres have become an increasingly important area of young children's lives: New Zealand children start ECE services at an earlier age and attend for more hours per day than ever before. 95% of NZ 3-4 year olds currently attend ECE for an average of 22 hours a week.

The *Growing Up in New Zealand* interviews have collected a lot of information about nutrition and physical activity in the home. Yet little is known about what children eat and how active they are in childcare settings. We also don't know how effective new ECE initiatives such as the Heart Foundation's "Healthy Heart Awards" and Sport Waikato's "Under 5 Energize" are in supporting children's health.

One of *Growing Up's* PhD students, Sarah Gerritsen, has designed an online survey called "Kai Time in ECE" to capture information about current trends in ECE nutrition and physical activity. Invitations to take part in the survey were sent out in May to the managers of all licensed ECE services in the Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waikato areas. To date, over 100 managers have filled in the survey, sharing what happens with meals in their ECE service and how they encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

Sarah's PhD research will combine the Kai Time in ECE findings with information from *Growing Up in New Zealand* to examine



how different childcare practices are influencing the diet and growth patterns of our children, in addition to what is happening at home with regards to nutrition and physical activity.

This kind of research exploring the association between children's health and their ECE environment has never been done before in New Zealand and will offer us many insights into how ECE services can assist our children to grow up healthy.

The preliminary results will be available in the new year. We will make them available to you on our website.

More information about the survey: www.growingup.co.nz/kai-time

Winter activities for kids

Here are a few ideas to keep your kids busy on those cold, rainy autumn and winter days.



Blow paint trees

What you need

- An A4 (or larger) piece of cardboard or heavy paper
- Masking or sellotape
- Acrylic paint in different colours
- A drinking straw (you can cut it shorter to make blowing the paint easier)

How it works

Water down your acrylic paint to the consistency of watercolour paint, so it is just thin enough to be blown, and tape the paper to a table. Drip some paint at the bottom of the cardboard and let your child blow it as far as she/he can with the straw to form a solid trunk. Drip some more paint at the top of the trunk and let your child blow branches in different directions. If your child struggles, try taking turns in blowing the paint. Keep blowing until you have the tree looking the way you want it to.

Once the paint is dried, let your child dip her/his fingertips in the other paints to add autumn-coloured leaves to the tree – or collect some colourful leaves outside and glue them onto the branches.

Tip: You can use this technique to make colourful abstract pictures by watering down several different colours and blowing shapes all across the cardboard.

Instructions from www.puttisworld.com (direct link: <http://goo.gl/y57SDC>)

Jumping frogs

Have you ever had a static shock from a shopping trolley or an escalator, especially when wearing a thick woolly jumper? The shock is because of static electricity which can also cause materials to attract or repel each other. A fun way to demonstrate static electricity is by making jumping frogs.

What you need

- Balloon
- Light paper, cut into shapes. Tissue or sugar paper work best.
- Woolly jumper or hair

How it works

Help your children cut up the paper into frog shapes (or anything else you want to make jump) and let them colour them in. Blow up the balloon, and let your children rub it on their jumper or hair. Hold above the frogs, and watch them jump up.

Instructions from www.science-sparks.com (direct link: <http://goo.gl/S2NZyL>)

When your child was two

The first 1000 days of your child's life - from conception until her or his second birthday - are a very important time in children's development; it is the time where foundations are laid for your child's brain and physical development, language and social skills, and overall health and well-being.

We are about to release our third report which presents information from the interviews with your family when your child was two, but also highlights what has happened from before birth throughout their first 1,000 days.

Below is a snapshot of the results – the full report will be available on www.growingup.co.nz/reports after the official launch in Wellington on 17 June.

Mother-child relationships at two



82%

let their children know they really care about them



65%

let their child take a risk if there is no major threat to the child's safety



33%

discipline their child by sending them to time out



26%

discipline their child by taking away treats

Household structure at two



PARENT ALONE



TWO PARENTS ALONE



PARENT(S) WITH EXTENDED FAMILY



PARENT(S) WITH NON-KIN

Activities and experiences your children had taken part in by the age of two (Font size proportional to frequency)



Children's health up to age two



86%

were in excellent or very good health



10.5 hours

was the average length of sleep per night



94%

received at least some of their 15 month immunisations



6

was the average number of GP visits over the last year

Of the children:



47% had an ear infection

40% had a chest infection

43% had gastroenteritis

14% had a skin infection



Told by a doctor they had:

an allergy **10%**

eczema **26%**

asthma **12%**



20%

had one or more hospital stays

In the media

Being featured in the media is an important part of sharing our latest findings with the wider community and demonstrates the great contribution this study is making.

In the last months, there has been ongoing interest from the media, including two articles in the New Zealand Herald and Waikato Times about our findings on media use in two-year olds. Both articles highlighted the increased screen time today's toddlers are engaging in. It is not known how this will impact on later development, especially given the different electronic media available today, many of which are interactive such as tablets and smartphones.

In May the University of Auckland profiled two of our families in its alumni magazine Ingenio which is sent out to more than 100,000 graduates worldwide. Both families opened their homes to the Ingenio videographer to give an insight into how the 'average' Kiwi family lives today. We were also able to highlight some of our results from the first two reports and provide readers with a taste of the research to be published this year on the important topic of vulnerable children.

Most recently, Canvas Magazine approached us about profiling the study in a feature article. The piece is yet to be released so keep an eye out for it.

Thank you to those families who agreed to be featured in the media. Your faces and voices give a wonderful personal touch to the study and its results.



For all articles mentioned above and other media coverage visit: www.growingup.co.nz/in-the-media

New chair of Expert Scientific Advisory Group

In March, we appointed Harvard epidemiologist Professor Carlos A. Camargo as the new chair of the study's Expert Scientific Advisory Group (ESAG). ESAG is comprised of New Zealand and international experts in child development, health and longitudinal research. The group provides strategic advice on longitudinal study design to the GUiNZ research team.

Carlos is Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Professor of Epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health and the Conn Chair in Emergency Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Carlos and his team study the causes and management of respiratory/allergy disorders, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and food allergy in several large cohorts. His team first described the strong association between obesity and risk of developing asthma, and discovered that higher intake of vitamin D by mothers during pregnancy was associated with a lower risk of wheezing in their children.

After being appointed chair of the advisory group, Carlos was interviewed by Radio New Zealand about *Growing Up in New Zealand*.

You can find the interview here: <http://goo.gl/HKz6KG>



Moving house or moving overseas?

That's no problem.

If you are moving within New Zealand and your contact details change, give us a call on Freephone 0508 Growing Up (0508 476 946) or send us an email: contact@growingup.co.nz.

If you are moving overseas, let us know via Freephone 0508 Growing Up (0508 476 946) before you go and we'll make a note of it. Even if you are overseas we would still love it if you could continue participating in the study. You can send us your new contact details by emailing contact@growingup.co.nz. If you are overseas and wish to call us the number is +64 9 923 9972.