



GROWING UP NEWS



From Susan



Since the launch of *Growing Up in New Zealand*, one of the key aims has been to make this rich and expanding resource on child development widely available for use in research and policy translation. This is to ensure that the information you so kindly provide to us can be used by policy makers to inform their efforts to improve the quality of all New Zealanders' lives, but especially the lives of our children.

This year we have taken a big leap forward in this direction with the external release of our second fully anonymised external dataset, collected when your children were 9 months old.

Teams from the Ministries of Education and Social Development, from the Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (Superu) and from the National Institute for Health Innovation (NIHI) are now working with our datasets after going through a rigorous application process that ensures the information you provided to us is safe and – most importantly – that we respect your privacy.

They will use the information you provided to learn more about how today's children participate in early childhood education and how this affects parents' involvement in and return to the labour force; to explore how the relationship between mothers and their partners affects parenting behaviours; to gain a better understanding of the patterns of drinking in pregnancy and consider what this means for the unborn child.

These projects join the long list of topics that are already being researched by our own team, including how parents interact with maternity carers and early childhood education providers; the concept of ethnicity for New Zealand families; how the household environment affects children's health; parents' hopes and dreams for their children; and the intention of parents to immunise or breastfeed their child versus immunisation and breastfeeding reality. The results of these projects will be released over the course of the coming year, and we will make them available on our website and Facebook page as they are published.

Your involvement in the study makes all of this important research possible, and we would like to thank you yet again for your ongoing support of *Growing Up in New Zealand*.

With kind regards,

Dr Susan Morton

'Who are today's dads?' kicks off in 2015



We are excited to announce that our new project '*Who are today's dads?*' will kick off in the new year. This is a great opportunity for the fathers and partners in the study to share with us what it is like to be a dad in New Zealand today.

We will be asking the dads questions that collect relevant and timely information on father-child interactions, such as how much time they spend together and what types of activities they share. Some questions will address attitudes toward being a father, the sources of stress and support, and the sharing of tasks or roles within the family. The information collected will help us understand the contribution fathers make to their families – particularly to the resilience, health and wellbeing of their children. It will also assist in the development of policy to support and enhance these contributions.

In the past we have used face-to-face interviews to collect data. This time round, however, we will be going online so you will be able to complete the questionnaire in your own time at your own pace. Don't worry if you do not have access to a computer – our staff can help you to complete the questionnaire over the phone instead.

From around April or May of next year the first email invitations will be sent out to the *Growing Up in New Zealand* dads containing a link to your own individual questionnaire. The project will continue over the course of 2015 and will coincide with us talking to the mums again as well.

If you are uncertain of whether we have your current email address, please contact us on Freephone 0508 476 946 or email contact@growingup.co.nz.

We look forward to touching base with you in 2015.

More information: www.growingup.co.nz/todays-dads

Your first day at school: photo competition

Turning five is exciting, especially as it usually means going to school for the very first time. For most of our team members here at *Growing Up in New Zealand* it has been a while since their first day at school as you can see from the photos.



We enjoy getting to know the families behind the research, so if you 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 into the draw to **win one of two sets of movie vouchers 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.

Summer activities for kids

Have fun outside with your children and try some of these water games and activities.



Water fun

Ball blast

Use ropes to create a circle or square on your lawn. Place balls of varying sizes and weights inside. Give your child a hose and challenge her/him to push the balls out with the water in less than a minute.

Water-gun tag

This clever twist on a classic is pretty self-explanatory: Have everyone don bathing suits and play tag. Whoever is "It" gets the water gun and tries to tag the other players with a cold squirt.

Drink up

Encourage your child to try water flavoured with different ingredients. Freeze slices of cucumber, lemon, lime, orange and various berries (raspberries, strawberries, blueberries) into ice cubes—and see which one your child likes best.

Ideas from www.parenting.com (direct link: <http://goo.gl/oOaOWc>)

Cornstarch goo

What you need

- Cornstarch (available at the supermarket)
- Water
- A bowl or large dish
- Food colouring (optional)

How it works

This is a very messy activity - but it cleans up really easily. You could do it outside on a summer's day.

Take some cornstarch, and put some in the bowl. Add the water very slowly. As you add the water, let your child stir the water into the cornstarch with her/his hands. The key is to add just enough water so that the cornstarch and water mix will flow very, very slowly. Add food colouring to the mix if you like but be careful as it might stain your child's clothes.

Now you have something which is a very strange goo indeed. If you walk fast enough, you can actually walk on it. But if you pour it, it will flow like water!

Why this happens

The cornstarch is made up of long chains of atoms - a polymer. These chains can move past each other, but they take some time to do this. If you pour it slowly, it can flow like a liquid. If you try to force things and make the chains slide more quickly than they want to, they get entangled - and the mixture gets firmer. So if you push hard on it, it acts more like a solid.

Instructions from littleshop.physics.colostate.edu (direct link: <http://goo.gl/c8qEL>)

Moving house in the first 1000 days

New Zealand families with very young children move house much more than previously thought and more often than families in other countries – these are two of the key findings from our second topical report with information you provided to us up to the second birthday of your child.

'Residential Mobility Report 1: Moving house in the first 1000 days' will be released on 9 December at a public seminar in Wellington.

Residential mobility is a highly relevant topic for current policy development. A growing level of mobility in families with young children challenges the way government and other providers traditionally plan and deliver healthcare, education and social services to support these families and their children as they grow up. Knowing the extent and nature of families' residential mobility is

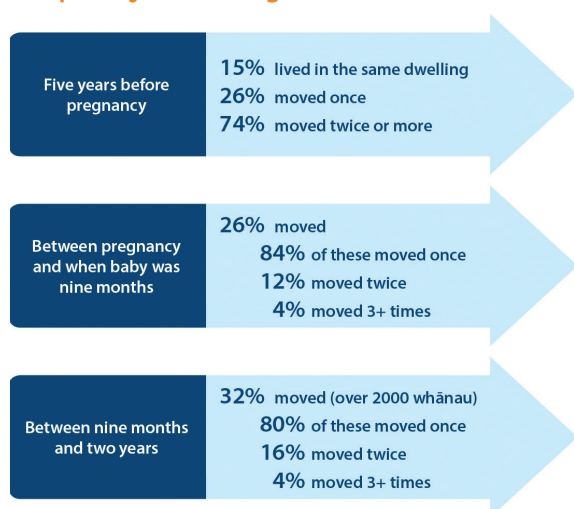
crucial to design services that are accessible and work for contemporary children, where mobility is rapidly becoming the norm.

'Residential Mobility Report 1' describes the frequency and distance of residential mobility at the start of your children's lives and identifies some of the ethnic, demographic, family and housing characteristics associated with high degrees of mobility.

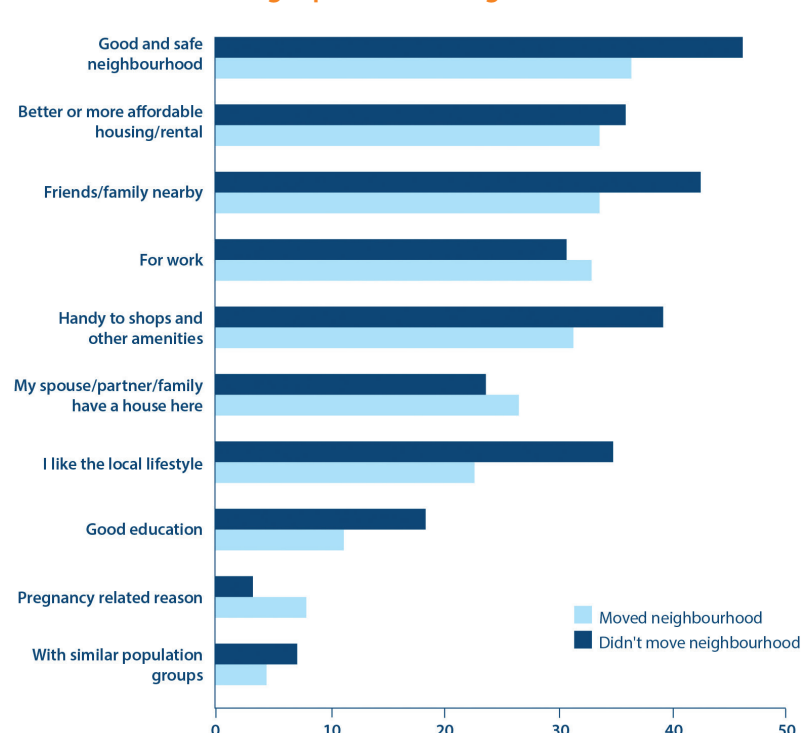
As your children grow up, we will add to these initial results and describe how residential mobility effects their behavioural, educational and health outcomes.

This page provides a snapshot of the key results. The full report will be available on www.growingup.co.nz/reports after the official launch.

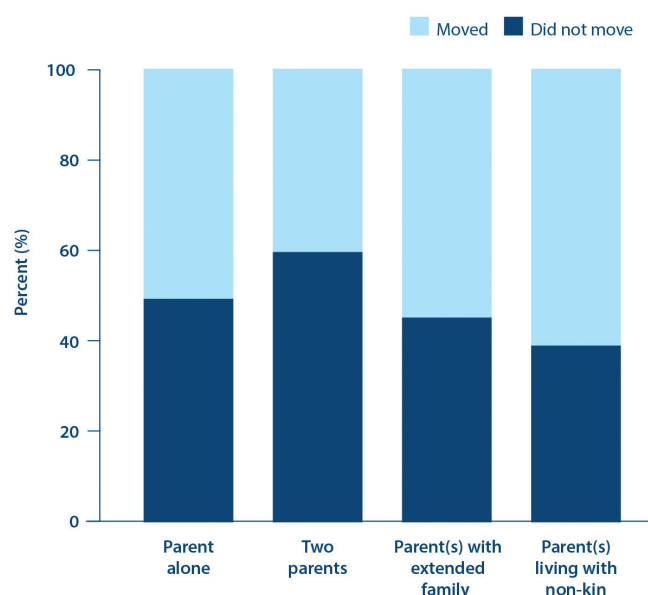
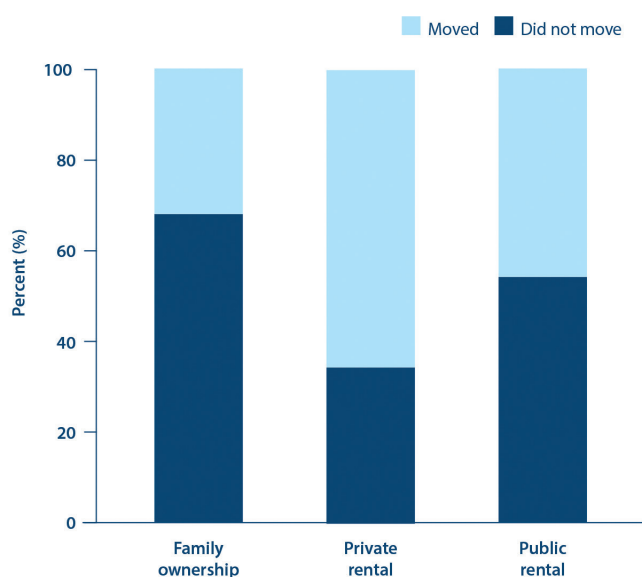
Frequency of moving house



Reasons for choosing a particular neighbourhood



Key factors that influence mobility in the first 1000 days: Housing tenure (left) and household structure (right)



In the media

Kids learn te reo at school

Mt Maunganui parents Tessa and Tamati Cameron are kept busy with four children under 10.

The couple, both 32, were one of the families the Herald spoke to when the Growing Up in New Zealand study produced its first report four years ago.

At the time, Mrs Cameron was pregnant with her fourth child Victor, now aged 3. The young family were also saving for their first home – a dream that came true in 2012.

Mrs Cameron said their four-bedroom home with a two-bedroom flat was "a bit of a miracle".

"The flat was rented out to two young guys, which helped pay the mortgage."

Isaac, 5, who is part of the longitudinal study, started school this year and was thoroughly enjoying it, Mrs Cameron said.

Like his older siblings Tawhai, 9,



Tamati and Tessa Cameron with their children (clockwise, from back left) Victor, 3, Isaac, 5, Tawhai, 9, and Evita, 7.

Picture: Alan Gibson

and Evita, 7, he was learning to reo.

And unlike many of the children in the study, the Camerons were not allergic to anything, meaning meal times were relatively simple.

"Izzy had eczema," Mrs Cameron said, "but he seems to have grown out of it mostly."

Growing Up in New Zealand made a big splash in the media this year, with five TV appearances by our researchers and more than 90 radio interviews, print and online articles published about our findings.

Being featured in the media is an important vehicle for us to tell the wider public – many of them mothers and fathers like you – about the research we do and why it is relevant to every New Zealander.

The media took a special interest in our two new reports, *'Now we are Two'* and *'Defining Vulnerability'* with the information you provided in the first 1000 days of your child's life.

The personal stories our participants contributed – including the Cameron family profiled in the NZ Herald (above) and the Hollis family who let the TV 3 team into their home – made the data come to life.

The media also picked up on research on your hopes and dreams for your children, and the risk high milk consumption of mums-to-be might pose on their babies' iron levels.

For all media coverage visit: www.growingup.co.nz/in-the-media

To read more about our current research visit: www.growingup.co.nz/research

If you would like to help us spread the word about *Growing Up in New Zealand* please get in touch. We are always looking for families who are willing to be featured in the media and share their stories and opinions about what it is like to have children growing up in New Zealand today.

Email us on contact@growingup.co.nz for more information.

Keep in touch

Our new website launched in September. Take a look and let us know what you think about the new design. We are also keen to hear your ideas on how to make the site more usable for you and our other visitors: www.growingup.co.nz



To keep up with what's happening with *Growing Up in New Zealand* throughout the year, follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/growingupnz

Update your contact details



Did you recently move or do you have a new phone number or email address? Please update your contact details by calling us on Freephone 0508 476 946 or emailing contact@growingup.co.nz. If in doubt, please get in touch anyway so we can ensure we can contact you for the next round of interviews.

Moving overseas?

That's no problem. Even if you are overseas we would still love for you to continue participating in the study. You can send us your new contact details by emailing contact@growingup.co.nz. Or give us a call on +64 9 923 9972 if you are outside of New Zealand.

Thank you for your feedback

The *Growing Up in New Zealand* team was delighted at the amount and quality of comments we received after mailing out our interview feedback form for the pre-school data collection wave in October.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to tell us how the interview went, and who sent us feedback and suggestions on how to improve the experience for both you and your child.

We received a lot of positive comments about our interviewers, their professionalism and friendliness. Some of you provided advice on how we could better interact with your children and prepare them for the questions and tasks. We will pass the positive and the critical comments on to our staff.

Some of you found the pre-school interview with up to 2 ½ hours very long and suggested completing part of the questions online before visiting you in your home. Our team is currently investigating options for online interviews for the *'Who are today's dads?'* sub-study which we hope to be able to use for upcoming interviews with the mothers of the *Growing Up in New Zealand* children as well.

We will also consider your suggestion to introduce food and activity diaries to make it easier for you to recall your choices and behaviours.

Our interviewers are looking forward to meeting you and your family again when your children are around seven years old.