



Growing Update JUNE/JULY 2018

The latest *Growing Up in New Zealand* news and information



- New funding announced for *Growing Up*
- Meet Lu and Silas
- We go on location for our 2018 photo shoot
- Latest study report released

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A word from the Research Director...

Associate Professor Susan Morton



It’s hard to believe that the shortest day is now behind us and winter is here!

Even harder to believe is that on April 4, we marked ten years since the start of *Growing Up in New Zealand*.

What a journey it has been. As the children have grown, so has our knowledge and understanding of what it’s like to grow up in 21st century New Zealand.

Over the past decade we have carried out more than 90,000 interviews, collected more than 50 million pieces of data and produced eight study reports.

There have been more than 15 Data Collection Waves and more than 90 scientific manuscripts and reports have been published using *Growing Up* data.

The information our study participants have so generously shared with us has also had a positive impact on important areas such as paid parental leave and household safety. It has truly helped make a difference.

So we were delighted by Minister’s Carmel Sepuloni’s May 15 announcement that more than \$1.9 million in funding would be restored to *Growing Up in New Zealand*, enabling us to invite every study participant to take part in the current Eight Year Data Collection Wave.

It’s particularly positive news because it is during this Eight Year Data Collection that we are hearing directly from the children themselves for the first time.

You can read more about the funding announcement in this newsletter but for now, on behalf of the team, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individuals, families, groups and organisations who have partnered with us or contributed to *Growing Up in New Zealand* in so many ways over the past ten years.

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Read more about the release of the Transition to school report on page 10

Contact us...

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Have a question or query for us??

Email: contact@growingup.co.nz



A DAY FOR SMILES: We were delighted to have seven *Growing Up* children and some of their family members join us for the Minister's funding announcement on May 15.

Growing Up warmly welcomes funding announcement

The *Growing Up in New Zealand* team was delighted by Minister Carmel Sepuloni's May 15 announcement that the government would be restoring more than \$1.9 million to the study.

Growing Up in New Zealand Research Director, Associate Professor Susan Morton, says the new funding will make it possible to invite every participant family and child to take part in the study's current Eight Year Data Collection Wave.

"Our families have given us such valuable insights into their lives to date, and have been so generous with their time throughout the study, so I'm delighted and excited that we now have this opportunity to continue engaging with every child."

Last year the study's funding was reduced, creating uncertainty about the number of children and families *Growing Up in New Zealand* could interview for the current Eight Year Data Collection Wave. That data collection wave started in July last year and, to date, more than 2400 children have participated. With the newly available funding, interviews will now continue with the remaining cohort children until the end of 2018.

"The beauty of longitudinal information is that it keeps growing in value," Dr Morton says. "Each data collection provides a snapshot of a point in time but when we piece it together with what we've collected before and will collect in the future, it helps us to understand the

"The beauty of longitudinal information is that it keeps growing in value..."

development pathways children follow and what works to give them the best possible foundation for a happy, healthy future."

As well as forging ahead with the Eight Year Data Collection Wave across the full cohort, *Growing Up in New Zealand* will work with the Ministry of Social Development to make the study's information more accessible and useable to a wider range of researchers. This will help realise its full value and support policy to improve the lives of New Zealand children and families now and into the future. *Growing Up* will keep study participants and other stakeholders posted with developments in this area. Findings from the Eight Year Data Collection Wave are due to be released in early 2020. ■



What some of our participants thought of the funding announcement...

- "Yay!!!! So glad to hear you have some funding restored. We have missed being a part of this wonderful study!"
- "Congratulations on the new funding - great result!"
- "I'm delighted to hear this great news! It's that important for New Zealand and globally, to have this study continue! ... it's helping us all and future generations of Kiwis. I'm very passionate about the value of project to our future learning and in care of our children in NZ."

▶ **Q&A:** The funding announcement was covered by a range of print, broadcast and on-line media.

Interviewing the interviewer: Krista Hodder

Growing Up in New Zealand has a dedicated group of field interviewers who love getting out and about to meet with our study children and families during data collection waves. To turn the tables, we thought we'd ask some of our interviewers a few questions instead! We start, this issue, with senior interviewer Krista Hodder.

GUINZ: When did you join *Growing Up in New Zealand* as an interviewer?

KH: I joined in 2012 when the children were 45 months old, or about three and three quarters.

GUINZ: What appealed to you about the job?

KH: I had a background working in early childhood education for 17 years and it was initially a casual role, which meant it fitted in with my family commitments at the time too. I'd just returned from Japan where my husband was coaching rugby and I came home to support my youngest child at high school.

GUINZ: So you have children yourself?

KH: Yes, four adult ones. They're aged 20 to 33 and I have two small grandsons as well. One of my daughters, Jenna, is a casual interviewer for *Growing Up in New Zealand* too.

GUINZ: What do you love most about the job?

KH: I enjoy interacting with the families and children the most. I really enjoy engaging with the eight-year-olds and seeing them start to understand the importance of their place in the study. I love hearing the cute things they say and being part of the wider *Growing Up* team.

GUINZ: What geographical area do you cover?

KH: I cover from Turangi to Bombay and travel anywhere between 600 and a thousand kilometres each week. It's challenging keeping the waistline in trim when you're spending so long sitting in the car!



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY:
Krista Hodder and daughter Jenna are both field interviewers with Growing Up in New Zealand.

GUINZ: What's most challenging about the job?

KH: For the Eight Year Data Collection Wave the big challenge is the timeframes we have to work to. The children are at school now so we have a smaller window of opportunity to see them – it has to be after school, on the weekends or during school holidays. Sometimes you also have to become a detective when families move on and we don't know their new contact details. We really want every child's voice to continue being heard at each data collection wave.

GUINZ: As a parent, what changes do you see in the current generation of children compared to when your children were small?

KH: You definitely see much more early use of technology for children today. I see it not only in our participant families, but with my own grandchildren. They show a strong interest in devices. The other thing I've noticed is how walking, bussing or biking to school is a lot less common than being driven. And there seems to be a huge increase in the extracurricular activities

children are involved in today.

GUINZ: Is there anything that has surprised you during your time with *Growing Up in New Zealand*?

KH: One of the research findings that surprised me was the lack of Vitamin D among our children. You assume as a New Zealander that we'd have plenty of sunshine – and we do, but we're so often covered up and sun-screened that we're not getting enough. I guess the other thing that has surprised me is the lack of quality across our housing stock.

GUINZ: The *Growing Up in New Zealand* study is planned to continue until the children are at least 21 years old. Do you see yourself continuing in your role?

KH: Yes, I'm very proud to be part of the *Growing Up in New Zealand* study. It has already added value to the lives of New Zealand children and families in areas like paid parental leave. It's helping us to uncover things that we can only do something about once we know they exist, so I'm definitely looking forward to being in for the long haul! ■



◀ **PARENTING, PART TWO:** Mum-of-four Lu with nine-year-old Silas, who enjoys hanging out with his big brothers: 'They're just fun, and I get to do older things!'

Family focus: Lu and Silas

Our participant children and families are vital to the *Growing Up in New Zealand* study and at the heart of everything we do. In this new *Family Focus* feature, we'll meet some of the study families and hear their experience of being part of the *Growing Up* whanau. This issue, Lu and Silas.

British-born Waikato horticulturalist Lu is in the unusual position of being a mum to two generations of children.

Her oldest sons, born and raised in the UK, are now 19 and 23. But her younger children are just seven and nine and still very firmly under mum and dad's wing. For Lu, there are significant differences in the parenting experience second time around.

"It feels like there's a lot more to juggle now in terms of other things that can encroach on your life. Both parents have to work and the choices you make are really quite different. "For me, my focus as a parent has changed as well – I'm much more clued up on nutrition and evaluating opportunities that might benefit Silas and his sister."

Lu and her family moved to New Zealand from the UK in 2007 and it's nine-year-old Silas (who loves Lego, sushi, soccer and roller-skating, and is keen to become a pilot or perhaps a mechanical engineer) who is part of the *Growing Up* study.

"We decided to participate because really, there just can't be enough information to guide parents. As a parent with older children and then having younger children, there's always something to take on board and get knowledgeable about."

Lu says signing up for the study also helped the family adjust to New Zealand. "We were new to the country and it was difficult. Even though New Zealand was a place with a similar culture and the same language, society was actually really different. So I hoped the study would give us some new insights, and it has."

Lu, who volunteers for the local council and works with families and schools to help them grow edible gardens, says *Growing Up* has also given her the opportunity to focus and reflect as a parent.

"For me, my focus as a parent has changed as well – I'm much more clued up on nutrition and evaluating opportunities that might benefit Silas and his sister."

"The questions we get asked as part of the study always give you food for thought. Every questionnaire has raised things that have struck either Silas or I and we've talked about them afterwards."

So being part of *Growing Up* has been worthwhile?

"Yes. It's a snapshot of society and what's

happening at a time when things are moving at a really fast pace. We have a real sense of ownership and pride in the study." ■

Latest study report released: Transition to school

Growing Up in New Zealand released its latest study report, *Transition to school*, in Wellington on June 14.

More than 100 people attended the official release of the report, which is the study's eighth and summarises findings from *Growing Up's* 72 Month Data Collection Wave.

Dr Susan Morton says this report homes in on the cohort children's experience of embarking on formal schooling.

"Starting school is an important milestone for every child and their family, and this report gives us some insight into what contributes to making that process more positive or challenging."

Dr Morton says it was heartening to learn that generally, the children were ready to start school and settled relatively quickly.

"Most mothers and children adapted to the change and the school routine in less than a month, though we did find that some mothers were still experiencing difficulties six months after their child had started school."

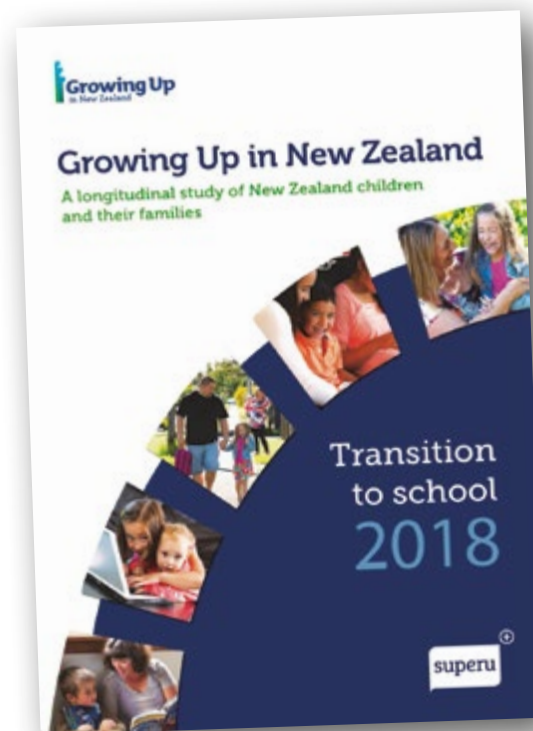
Some of the reasons mothers gave for still experiencing difficulties included worrying their child wouldn't make friends, worrying that they wouldn't like the school, being separated from their child or that the process was new because the child was their oldest.

"But what we also found was that around 90 percent of mothers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the effect their child's current school was having on their educational, social, emotional and physical needs."

For the children, the most common difficulties included adapting to a new routine, being separated from family and getting used to new rules, Dr Morton says.

Other Transition to school findings included:

- About 25% of the children have experienced a Modern Learning Environment (MLE) within their current school. Over half have experienced the Milk for Schools programme and 10% have a breakfast club at their school.



- 77% of the children lived within 5km of their school and, while one in four regularly used forms of active transport such as walking, biking or scootering to and from school, the majority (68%) travelled by car.
- 88% percent of mothers reported some form of regular (formal or informal) parental involvement in their child's school.
- 98% of the children had attended some form of early childhood education in the six months before starting school and had visited their new school before starting.
- Around 10% of the children moved schools at least once during their first year of primary school.
- 25% of mothers also reported their child had had at least one change in classroom teacher.
- Around 90% of mothers reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the effect their child's current school was having on their educational, social, emotional and physical needs.

Transition to school also reports on other areas, such as how many of the children had completed their Before School Check (B4SC) by the time they started school and what influenced parents' choice of school for their child. This included the school's reputation, how the school engaged with the local community, its ability to cater for individual children's needs and whether it had an anti-bullying policy.

Dr Morton says that, thanks to the generosity of study participants, the findings in this latest report add to the body of knowledge *Growing Up in New Zealand* has already gathered during the before birth and preschool periods.



WELL ATTENDED: More than 100 people attended the official release of the *Transition to school* report in Wellington on June 14.

"It also lays the platform for later data collection waves as the children transition to adolescence and into adulthood."

[Read the full report.](#) ■

COVER STARS: The New Zealand Herald featured the release of the *Transition to school* report on its front page. *Growing Up in New Zealand* participant Sahib - along with Dad Ranjeet, mum Satnam and sister Shyla - were cover stars!



'An Auckland-based seminar and Data Access Workshop about the Transition to school report and the 72 Month Data Collection Wave will be held soon. If you'd like to receive information about this, please email your details to: contact@growingup.co.nz.



In brief...

Welcome to our new interviewers!

In June we welcomed around 20 new field interviewers (pictured above) to the *Growing Up* in New Zealand team.

With the Eight Year Data Collection Wave now set to continue until the end of the year, this new group will help us ensure that every family who wishes to participate in the Eight Year Data Collection Wave can do just that.

In the news...

There was significant media coverage about *Growing Up* in New Zealand after the May 15 funding announcement, including this *Herald on Sunday* feature article on May 20. You can also view this feature on-line here: <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?id=1&objectid=12051773> or by going to the nzherald.co.nz and searching 'Growing up in New Zealand'.



2000+ interviews complete!

We have now completed more than 2,400 child interviews during the Eight Year Data Collection Wave. A big thank you goes to all of the families we have met with so far – their time and contributions have been invaluable to the *Growing Up* in New Zealand study!

Growing Up attends Child Poverty Reduction Bill Select Committee hearing

In April, *Growing Up* in New Zealand made a submission to the Child Poverty Reduction Bill. And in May, Dr Susan Morton presented to the Select Committee at a hearing in Auckland. You can read our submission by visiting the following site: https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/BILL_76267/child-poverty-reduction-bill and scrolling down to click on the Submissions & Advice tab. All submissions are listed in alphabetical order. Being able to contribute to important legislation like this is another way our study families help make a difference through *Growing Up* in New Zealand.

Out and about

The *Growing Up* in New Zealand team was delighted to be invited to attend the Celebrating Research Excellence 2018 event, hosted by the University of Auckland and UniServices Ltd at the University of Auckland, on May 1. The event is held to acknowledge the outstanding research achievements of staff and students, and the awards that have been won over the past year. The theme of this year's event was 'The Future of New Zealand communities', and we were delighted to meet the evening's special guest - Minister of Research, Science and Innovation, Hon Dr Megan Woods – and introduce her to the *Growing Up* in New Zealand study.



MEETING THE MINISTER: Associate Professor Susan Morton gives Minister Woods a brief overview of the *Growing Up* in New Zealand study.



Five minutes, five questions with...

Acting Research Manager Caroline Walker

Dr Caroline Walker is *Growing Up* in New Zealand's Acting Research Manager and heads up our research team. We take five minutes for five questions with her.

GUINZ: You've been with the study for two years – what do you enjoy most about it?

CW: It's a privilege to be part of *Growing Up* in New Zealand because it's so valuable and has so much potential. I think the most important thing is that if we do a really great job with this study now – even if we don't understand everything we might want to – we'll have data that will exist into the future to benefit researchers, children and families.

GUINZ: You're passionate about genetics. Why?

CW: I guess I like to figure out why things happen and what makes us work, so I'm really interested in understanding how our genes decide the way we are. *Growing Up* is New Zealand's largest and most representative study of children, so there's a really big opportunity for genetic research to find out how our genes can contribute to making us healthy or sick.

GUINZ: What's the most challenging thing about working on the study?

CW: I think what makes the study so great to work on is the same thing that makes it so challenging: it's the volume of data we have. It means we've got an amazingly rich resource and there's so much we could do. But we have finite time and finite resources, so we really have to home in on the most important areas.

GUINZ: What would you say to young people who might be considering a career in science?

CW: I'd tell them that if you like figuring stuff out, and working out why things are the ways they are, then science can be a really rewarding career. It's all about having an idea, testing it out, having it reviewed by others and then putting it out into the world to grow other people's knowledge. You can also work with people nationally and internationally and travel overseas to spend time at different universities and conferences.

GUINZ: Is there anything you've learned during the study that has surprised you?

CW: One fact that surprised me was learning that the children involved in the *Growing Up* study make up ten percent of all the children their age in New Zealand. Who knew there were that many eight-year-olds in New Zealand! On a more serious note, finding out that one in three children are regularly bullied or picked on at age four, ten percent persistently, was surprising and really sobering. It's also hard to accept that many families are living in poverty or facing material hardship. The rewarding thing about what we do is that we can share this information in ways that can help make things better for families. ■

Caroline's 'fast five'

Favourite sport? Basketball

Last movie I saw? The Breaker Upperers
(I'd give it four stars out of five!)

Vegemite or Marmite? Vegemite

Favourite music? I'd describe my taste as eclectic!

If I wasn't a researcher I would be...

Working with horses or in fashion.

Growing up in New Zealand goes ‘on location’

Growing Up in New Zealand was out ‘on location’ at the end of April, photographing some of our study participants during a two-day photo shoot.

Five families generously welcomed *Growing Up* into their homes to capture images of their children participating in typical daily activities.

Growing Up in New Zealand Communications Manager Janine Kendall says the images will help update

the study’s image library and be used for a range of purposes, including illustrating upcoming reports and presentations.

“Each family gave up two to three hours of their weekend for us and were so accommodating. It was a busy two days, but a lot of fun too - the study children and their siblings were all super stars in front of the camera!”

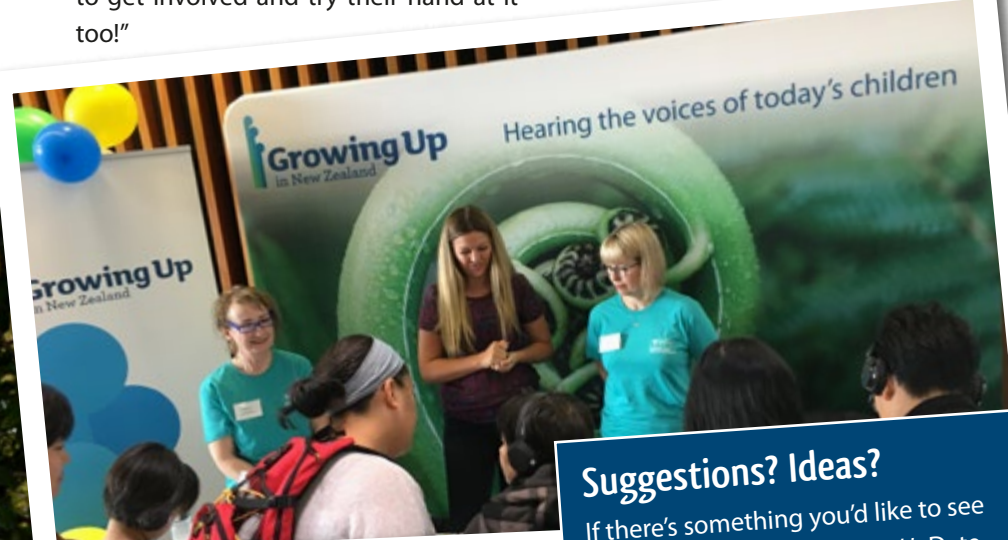
A big, big thank you to our participating families!

Growing Up’s Te Reo Tool proves popular at family open day

There was a steady stream of visitors to the *Growing Up in New Zealand* stand at the University of Auckland’s recent Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences’ 50th Anniversary.

Around 200 people tested their Māori language skills at the family open day by having a go at *Growing Up’s* Te Reo Tool – an interactive, on-line tool that tests participants’ knowledge of commonly used Māori words. A similar version is currently being used as part of the study’s Eight Year Data Collection Wave. *Growing Up in New Zealand* Acting Research Manager, Caroline Walker, says it was a fun and enjoyable day.

“There were lots of families coming through and the children were really attracted to the iPads and the game-like nature of the Te Reo Tool. And once they’d had a go and the scores were revealed, the mums and dads were keen to get involved and try their hand at it too!”



Suggestions? Ideas?
If there’s something you’d like to see in the next issue of *Growing UpDate*, let us know! We’d love to hear from you! **Email us:** contact@growingup.co.nz.

