

GROWING UP NEWS



Summer 2013

From Susan...



As 2012 draws to a close we look back on the progress we've made and all the information and insights we've been able to gather so far. We're incredibly thankful for all of the families who are participating in *Growing Up in New Zealand* and we hope that as you enter into the busy holiday season

you take a moment to reflect on how special and important your family is. The input you're providing is tremendously valuable as we move into 2013.

We have many exciting things planned for next year. We've already spoken to some of you as your children are getting close to four years of age. And we're planning on speaking with all our families during 2013.

Growing interest in and recognition for the study

There has been ongoing interest in *Growing Up* from the media, including a recent article in the *New Zealand Listener*. It covered the patterns of New Zealand parents having children at different ages and the effect that age may have on fertility, development and family life. We were interviewed and were able to share some of our findings around parental age and other lifestyle factors that have come out of our research. The fact that we were consulted and referenced like this is further proof of the great contribution this study is making. ("Age matters: A major study finds surprises in the way we are having babies", interview with Dr Susan Morton, 10 November 2012)

Earlier this year the TV One series "Keep Calm And Carry On", hosted by Jaquie Brown, spoke to us about the work we're doing (Jaquie even got me singing Whitney Houston with her on TV). We were able to discuss how growing up for current generations is now very different than it was in our parents' age from our working habits, whether we own our homes, to the role of other caregivers around us. One of our

field workers was shown working with one of our families and we are very grateful for their participation.

To view the episode online, go to <http://tvnz.co.nz/keep-calm-and-carry-on/s1-ep6-video-5093420>.

Other recognition

Our research team represented *Growing Up in New Zealand* at an international conference held at the end of October in Paris. The theme of the European Child Cohort Network (EUCCONET) Conference was "Childhood and Beyond: tracing cohorts across the lifecourse" and Dr Polly Atatoa Carr and I presented about *Growing Up in New Zealand* as part of a symposium I was asked to chair called "A healthy start to life? Contemporary cohort studies".

We were able to share insights with members from other similar studies, including *Growing Up in Ireland*, *Growing Up in Australia (LSAC)*, and the *Millennium Cohort Study*. It was wonderful to see how important our New Zealand research is on the world stage.

We recently received news that several of our manuscripts have been accepted for publication. An example of one of these is the paper "*Too many left at risk by current folic acid supplementation use: evidence from Growing Up in New Zealand*" (Morton SMB, Grant CC, Atatoa Carr P) which has been accepted by the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

All of this exposure excites us and reinforces that the work we're doing is being recognised by health and science experts both within New Zealand and globally. So again, from me and the entire *Growing Up* team, thank you for your continued support and we wish you a very safe and happy Christmas holidays.

With kind regards,

Dr Susan Morton

GROWING UP IN NEW ZEALAND TIMELINE

(based on your child's age)

Pre-school
face to face
interview

45-month
phone call

31-month
phone call

Two-year
face to face
interview

16-month
phone call

Nine-month
face to face
interview

Next Steps

The next stage of our research is to interview our families by phone when the children reach 45 months, or three months before their fourth birthday. Our Leading Light families have recently helped us with this interview and we're looking forward to talking to you all during 2013 and 2014.

Following this, our field workers plan to visit all of our families before the children reach the important milestone of starting school. This

visit will be when the children are four and a half years old. For some of you this will be later in 2013; for others it will be during 2014.

During 2013 and 2014 we will be releasing further findings based on the amazing data we have been able to collate thus far. These will include further papers as well as formal reports similar to the previous reports "Before we are born" (2010) and "Now we are born" (2012).

Update and Progress

We are currently working hard on the information from the interviews conducted in 2011/12 when your children were two years old. The information, once compiled and published, will provide a detailed perspective across all the information collected to date from before birth to two years of age.

No longer babies, many of our Growing Up children celebrated their third birthdays this year. Some have even had new baby brothers and sisters enter their lives and are enjoying the excitement that comes with being an older sibling.

Our participation rate is currently sitting at over 90%, which is fantastic for a study of this kind. We appreciate the ongoing commitment and cooperation of our Growing Up families and encourage you to stay involved. The research you're helping us gather will be used by government policy makers in future decision making that will affect the lives of all of our

children. By continuing to participate, you are helping to influence future decisions that will make New Zealand a great place to live. Together, our teamwork with policy makers will help turn research into real change and improvement for the lives and development of our children.

The importance and value of this study has recently prompted the Prime Minister's Office to take a real interest in *Growing Up in New Zealand*. In conjunction with the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, a review is being conducted to look at how the information being collected on and from our children might be used to help shape government policy. This review is being led by an international health expert, UK-based Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, and we are grateful for this high level of interest in what we do. We expect to be able to share the key outputs from this review with you early in the new year.



Moving Overseas or Moving House?

That's no problem.

Just give us a call on 0508 Growing Up (0508 476 946) before you go and we'll make a note of it. Even if you move overseas we would still love it if you could continue participating in the study so let us know what your new contact details will be.

Please email us on contact@growingup.co.nz.

If you are overseas and wish to call us the number is +64 9 923 9972.

Summer Safety

Summer is a great time to enjoy outdoor fun with your children, but it's important to keep them safe – in the sun and in the water.

Slip, Slop, Slap

It's time to be extra diligent with the sunscreen, hats and sunglasses – for children of all ages.

Skin cancers are primarily caused by too much exposure to UV radiation from the sun, with melanoma being the most serious type. However it can be prevented by covering up and protecting ourselves from the harmful UV rays of the sun.

Before your children are old enough to care about looking bronzed and having a tan, get them used to applying sunscreen before they leave the house and wearing their sun hats whenever they go out. Teach them good habits at an early age and they'll be more likely to make wise choices later in life.



SUNSMART

For more information visit www.sunsmart.org.nz

Water Safety

Staying safe around beaches, rivers and pools is a real issue for New Zealanders. In 2011, 131 people drowned in New Zealand. This is the highest annual toll since 2003 and an increase of 51% from the 2010 toll (87).

Growing up in New Zealand means growing up around water. So keep an eye on your children in and around water (better yet, get in with them) and if you can, enroll them in swimming lessons from an early age.

The following websites offer helpful information on topics such as teaching your child to swim, identifying rips, and safe boating:

Water Safety New Zealand • www.watersafety.org.nz

Surf Life Saving New Zealand • www.surflifesaving.org.nz

Sealord Swim for Life • www.sealordswimforlife.org.nz

Christmas fun for kids

Here are a few ideas to keep children busy on days when you're spending time indoors...

Bake & decorate Christmas cookies

Ingredients:

- 225g butter
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 cups plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar

Preheat oven to 180°C and line baking trays with non-stick baking paper. Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla extract.

Sift in the flour, baking soda and cream of tartar. Mix until a smooth dough has formed. Knead the dough lightly on a floured surface, make a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and put in the fridge for 30 minutes.

It is best to work quickly once the dough is out of the fridge. Roll the dough between two sheets of baking paper until 5mm thick. Cut out biscuits using Christmas shaped cutters and place on prepared baking trays. (If you don't have cookie cutters, simply use the rim of a glass or the opened end of an empty, washed food tin to cut out circle shapes.)

Bake for 10 minutes or until golden. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

Let the children get creative with writing icings, lollies and sprinkles.

Christmas tree idea: Using the blunt end of a wooden skewer, carefully make a hole in the biscuit before baking. After the decorations have set, thread some string/cotton/tinsel through the hole and hang on the tree.

Recipe from www.kidspot.co.nz



Christmas colouring-in pages

If you have access to the internet and a printer at home, enter the phrase 'Christmas colouring pages' into an internet search and you'll find pages and pages of Christmas themed pictures for colouring. Cut some of them out and you can make ornaments for the Christmas tree. One website we like is www.coloring-page.net (click on the 'Christmas' tab).

Christmas craft ideas

Do you save the Christmas cards you receive from year to year? If you still have the cards you received last year, give them to the children and let them practice their cutting and gluing. To encourage recycling, cut out Christmas shapes from last year's cards and glue them onto red paper to create new homemade cards, or large sheets of craft paper for creative and unique wrapping paper.

FAQ

Why are longitudinal studies like Growing Up in New Zealand important?

Growing Up in New Zealand is considered to be a longitudinal study. This term simply means that we have the privilege of talking to the same participants over time.

It is important that we continue to collect information from the same families consistently over time because this allows us to look at various factors that interact together over that time. This approach also helps to study the impact of experiences during infancy on an individual's physical, psychological, social and professional development.

Longitudinal studies have been successfully conducted all over the world. One notable study is the Millennium Cohort Study

which is currently following the lives of around 19,000 children born in the UK in 2000/01. The study has been tracking the Millennium children through their early childhood years and plans to follow them into adulthood.

There are also Growing Up studies happening in other countries, including Australia, Ireland and Scotland.

- www.growingup.co.nz
- www.growingupinaustralia.gov.au
- www.growingup.ie
- www.growingupinScotland.org.uk

Meet One Of Our Families



Photo by Dean Purcell; reprinted with permission.

Hamish Pranav Gosai turned three this year and is a busy and happy little boy. He lives with his parents and extended family in Manukau, Auckland.

Hamish is being raised with traditional Indian customs and the Hindi language, but is learning some te reo Maori at the kindergarten he attends.

Pictured left: 3-year-old Hamish Pranav Gosai with his dad Mukesh Kumar and mother Anjini Kumar.

We are enjoying getting to know the people behind the research, especially as the children are growing and developing their own personalities. If you would like to share some news and a photo of your child and/or family in future newsletters (a great keepsake for your child), please get in touch with us at: contact@growingup.co.nz

Keeping Us Up To Date

If your contact details or your alternative contact have changed please complete this form and return it to us.

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