

Now we are born: Second report of the Growing Up in New Zealand longitudinal study ^[1]

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Format: Report

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Report 1: Before we are born in pdf ^[3]

Study homepage ^[4]

Abstract:

Growing Up in New Zealand is a longitudinal study that provides an up-to-date, population relevant picture of what it is like to be a child growing up in New Zealand in the 21st century. Approximately 7,000 children and their families are taking part in a study that aims to provide a complete picture of the pathways that lead to successful and equitable child development, therefore improving outcomes for all children - now and into the future.

Our second report, *Now we are born*, was released on 23 March 2012. This report is especially exciting because it is the first to provide a truly longitudinal perspective on the development of our children, rather than just a cross-sectional snapshot of their lives. The information is collated from face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews with the mothers and partners of the Growing Up in New Zealand children over a 12 month period. It also presents information about the children's birth and immediate postnatal period, which has been brought together from multiple routine data sources to add to the information provided by the parents.

Now we are born provides details about the beginning of the children's journeys, in the context of their families and their wider environments. The children are not yet one year old, but already their developmental pathways are being established. We know how critical the first 1000 days of life (from the beginning of pregnancy until two years of age) are for ensuring that all children have a good start in life and therefore can look forward to a healthy future. Our second report details how our children are doing at the halfway point in this important developmental period.

Excerpts from the summary:

Parental leave

The majority of parents who were working at the time of the antenatal interview and intended to take leave after their babies were born had managed to take leave. Of those mothers who were in paid employment when pregnant, over 80% had taken some leave. Of those mothers who had taken leave, 30% were still on leave when their children were nine months old. The leave taken by mothers was most likely to be a combination of paid parental leave (87%), unpaid parental leave (55%) and annual leave (34%).

These findings are preliminary as many mothers were still on leave at the time of the nine month interview. Later data collections will complete parental leave information and allow a more comprehensive examination of factors that contribute to, or are affected by, decisions regarding parental leave when children are very young.

Early childhood education and child care

Comprehensive information on child care provision, access and quality is being gathered longitudinally from this cohort and will be described in further detail over time as more families engage with formal and informal child care providers. Importantly, this study will be able to assess the impact that engagement with early childhood education has on preschool health and development for this cohort as well as preparedness for school entry. When their babies were nine months of age:

- over a third of mothers reported using non-parental child care, for an average of 20 hours per week. Returning to work (or study) was the main reason given for why they used child care;
- the most commonly used forms of non-parental childcare were early child care centres (such as daycare, Kohanga Reo, or Pacific Island early childhood centres) and grandparents. Early differences in choices and patterns of child care provision were already evident by the time the children were nine months old. Grandparents were the most common type of child care used by mothers who identified as Asian or Pacific, while mothers who identified as Māori or New Zealand European were more likely to use early child care centres.

Related link: Use of childcare growing ^[5]

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[6]

Tags: child development ^[7]
outcomes ^[8]

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Links

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