

THEME 2 CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PATTERNS OF CARE

Research on children, youth and patterns of care focuses on three main areas: family influences on children's development; non-parental care for children; and family influences on the extent to which children and young people engage with society. These three areas all stem from the recognition that the family environment influences children's development. While the family influences how children develop, children also spend time in places where others are responsible for their care and influence their lives, such as childcare centres and schools. Children are also influenced by the neighbourhoods and the communities in which they live. Understanding the influences of child and family characteristics, parenting practices, family structures and factors in the local community and social environment on children's development is crucial information for the development of policy and the provision of services to families.

Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

Growing Up in Australia: the longitudinal study of Australian children (LSAC) continues to be a major project for the Institute. This study was initiated and funded by FaCSIA and is managed by the Institute. The first main wave of the study commenced in 2004 and a second main wave of data collection has now been completed. More than 10,000 families were recruited to the study, with about half having an infant as the study child (B cohort) and the other half with a child aged 4–5 years selected as the study child (K cohort).

The main activities this year have been those associated with the conduct of the second wave of data collection (Wave 2), processing of the Wave 2 data in preparation for data release, development and testing for the third wave of data collection, release of data from the first 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 1.5) and development of a second 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 2.5).

Wave 2 data collection, undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), commenced in April 2006 and continued throughout the year, with most interviews being completed by November 2006. A small number of interviews were conducted in early 2007.

About 90 per cent of the Wave 1 respondents were interviewed for Wave 2. Interviews were obtained for 4,606 B cohort and 4,464 K cohort children. One per cent of families had opted out of the study prior to Wave 2, and a further three per cent refused an interview, although most of these families agreed to remain in the study. Five per cent of families were not able to be located, despite extensive efforts. The remaining families were away for the whole data collection period.

Wave 2 involved a 40-minute computer-assisted interview with the parent who best knew the child and self-completion forms for the child's resident and non-resident parents. Two 24-hour time-use diaries, about how the study children spend their day, were also completed. Interviewers undertook some direct assessments of the K cohort

and these children were asked about how they find school and their feelings more generally. Children in both cohorts were weighed and height and girth measurements were taken. Questionnaires were also sent to teachers and carers.

Just under 80 per cent of resident parent questionnaires were returned, as were over 75 per cent of the diaries. Questionnaires were received for 29 per cent of children with non-resident parents (only 70 per cent of resident parents provided contact details). Return rates of 71 per cent, 77 per cent and 84 per cent were achieved for centre-based carers, home-based carers and teachers, respectively.

There are now over 140 users of the data set, and anticipate that this will increase once Wave 2 data are available in September 2007.

Work began on the development of Wave 3 in early 2006 and continued throughout the first half of 2007. The main changes for Wave 3 are the extension of the child interview and the conduct of the Burt Word Recognition Test and the Applied Problems subset of the Woodcock-Johnson III for the K cohort, and the introduction of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the "Who am I?" assessments for the B cohort. We are also investigating using computer-assisted telephone interviewing for non-resident parents.

Data from the first 'between-waves' mail-out questionnaire (Wave 1.5) was released in November 2006 and provided the first opportunity to analyse LSAC data as a longitudinal dataset. The Wave 1.5 data included information covering aspects of the children's behaviour, development and general health issues, such as asthma, injuries and sleeping patterns. The areas of education, child care, stressful life events and parents' mental health were also covered, and parents were asked what they liked about their child. The B cohort dataset also included a nested study by Dr Gillian Whitehouse from the University of Queensland, with additional questions regarding service utilisation, parental employment history, maternity and other leave, and employment after birth.

In 2006, a decision was made to include an additional wave of data collection between Waves 2 and 3 using a mail-out questionnaire, as was done between Waves 1 and 2. The aims of the mail-out are to collect some additional data on children's use of media and technology, work and family issues, and child support payments via cohort-specific questionnaires, as well as to encourage families to inform us about changes to their contact details, and to locate as many participants as possible prior to the Wave 3 interviews.

During 2005, the Institute became involved with a Film Australia documentary series entitled *Life at 1*. This series recruited 11 families with children aged 0–1 years and is following them as they grow up. These families are not part of the main LSAC study, but undergo the same interview process as those in the main study. Results from the main study are used to inform the documentary commentary, which involves members of the Consortium Advisory Group. The first two parts to this series were screened on ABC TV in October 2006. During 2006–2007, the Institute has assisted with the development of a *Life at 2* website, and has undertaken the Wave 2 interviews for some of the documentary families.

LSAC now has an international presence. In September 2006, the first International Conference on Child Cohort Studies was organised by the UK Centre for Longitudinal Studies and held in Oxford, UK. A number of presentations using LSAC data were featured. LSAC data have also featured in other international forums through meetings and presentations undertaken by members of the Consortium Advisory Group.

Publications

Edwards, B. (2006). Views of the village: Parents' perceptions of their neighbourhoods. *Family Matters*, 74, 26–33.

Hayes, A. (2006). Maintaining the gains. *Family Matters*, 75, 66–69.

Hayes, A. (2006). Foreword. *Early childhood education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children* (A. Elliot). Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Hayes, A. (2007). Early childhood and care in Australia. In R. S. New & M. Cochran (Eds.), *Early childhood education: An International Encyclopedia: Vol. 4 The Countries* (pp. 867–871). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Hayes, A. (2007). Why early in life is not enough: Timing and sustainability in prevention and early intervention. In A. France & R. Homel (Eds.), *Pathways and crime prevention: Theory, policy and practice* (pp. 202–224). Devon, UK: Willan Publishing.

Commissioned reports

Project Operations Team (2006, July). *Project report on Wave 2 fieldwork*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2006, July). *Project report on preliminary Wave 3 development and testing*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2006, December). *Project report on 2007 workplan*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D. (2007, January). *Psychometric issues for LSAC wave 3 child self report at 8–9 years of age (typically grade 3)*. Report prepared for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, March). *Project report on proposal for Wave 3 dress rehearsal content*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, May). *Project report on Wave 2 data collection*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Project Operations Team (2007, May). *Project report on Wave 2.5 proposed content*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Misson, S. (2007, June). *LSAC discussion paper no. 5: Wave 2 data management issues*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Submission

Crettenden, I., Dean, J., Dunlop, B., Goodspeed, S., Allbon, P., Goss, J., Kim, C., Hayes, A., Smart, D., Goldfeld, S., Richardson, S., & Izmir, G. (2006, October). Confidential working party submission on 3 and 5 year old measures to the COAG Human Capital Working Group, Data Sub-Group.

Conference presentations

Sanson, A., & Gray, M. (2006, 1–2 July). *Planning longitudinal research for public access and secondary analysis: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Pre-conference Workshop, Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2006, 2–6 July). *Residential mobility and neighbourhood effects: A possible mechanism for explaining the effects of single parents on children's social and emotional outcomes?* Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Gray, M., Misson, S., & Hayes, A. (2006, 2–6 July). *Parental separation and the role of grandparents in young children's lives*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Sanson, A., & Soloff, C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Sample recruitment and maintenance for 'Growing Up in Australia'*. Poster presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C., Sanson, A., Ungerer, J., Harrison, L., & Wake, M. (2006, 12–14 September). *Enhancing longitudinal studies by linkage to national databases: 'Growing Up in Australia', the longitudinal study of Australian children*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Wake, M., Bittman, M., Brown, J., Canterford, L., Carlin, J., Hardy, P., Sanson, A., Sawyer, M., & Soloff C. (2006, 12–14 September). *Preschool overweight/obesity in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Prevalence, socio-demographic correlates and future data possibilities*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford, UK.

Soloff, C. (2006, 5–8 December). *Growing up in Australia: A study of change in children and their families*. Paper presented at the Australian Population Association 13th Biennial Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Baxter, J. (2006, 10–13 December). *Children's time use in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Data quality and analytical issues in the 4-year cohort*. Paper presented at the ACSPRI Social Science Methodology Conference. University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW.

Sanson, A., Misson, S., and the LSAC Research Consortium (2006, 10–13 December). *Derivation and Validation of the LSAC Outcome Index*. Paper presented to the ACSPRI Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Soloff, C. (2006, 10–13 December). *Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: Study methodology*. Presentation to the ACSPRI Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Edwards, B. (2006, 6 June). *How much N is enough? Planning quantitative research projects using statistical power analysis*. Statistics Discussion Group, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Soloff, C. (2006, 4 August). *Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to the New South Wales Department of Health and Ageing (Epidemiology Special Interest Group), Sydney, NSW.

Bencic, L. (2006, 22 August). *Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*. Presentation to the Office for Children, Melbourne, Vic.

Hayes, A. (2006, 8 September). *Response to Minister Bishop's address on National investment for the early years*. Speech at Macquarie Bank/Good Beginnings/NIFTeY Early Years Forum, Sydney, NSW.

External representation

Edwards, B. (2006, 24 October). Invited participant, The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) ARC/NHMRC Network Program workshop on Understanding Community Level Factors (including the physical, social and service environments) that influence children's outcomes in disadvantaged areas across Australia and Canada, Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2007, 27 February). Invited participant, National Roundtable on Children's Lived Experience of Poverty, ARACY ARC/NHMRC Research Network – Future Generation Program of Support for New Collaborations, Sydney, NSW.

Australian Temperament Project

The Australian Temperament Project (ATP) is an ongoing, longitudinal study following young people's psychosocial development from infancy into adulthood, investigating the contribution of personal, family, peer and broader environmental factors to adjustment and wellbeing. The Institute has managed and taken the lead in the study since 2000, in conjunction with researchers from the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, and the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

The study began in 1983 with the recruitment of 2,443 families and infants aged between 4 and 8 months from urban and rural areas of Victoria. Fourteen data collection waves have been completed across the first 24 years of life, annually for the first four years and bi-annually up to 2002, with a four-year interval thereafter to the latest data collection in 2006–2007. Using mail surveys, parents, maternal and child health nurses, primary school teachers, and from 11 years onwards the young people themselves, have completed questionnaires about the children's development and adjustment. The aspects assessed range from attributes and assets such as temperament style, social skills, family and peer relationships, and school adjustment; to problems and difficulties such as antisocial behaviour, substance abuse, anxiety and depression. The focus has widened in recent years to encompass employment and career development, relationship formation and dissolution, marriage and parenthood aspirations, and social and civic participation.

The 14th data collection at age 23–24 years has recently been completed. Information has been collected about young people's educational and occupational participation; psycho-social attributes and strengths; physical health; relationships with parents, peers and partners; attitudes towards marriage and parenthood; adjustment problems and risk-taking behaviours; and pro-social behaviour and civic engagement. Young people and their parents have reported on these aspects of life. As well, parents have provided information about their own family life, their conceptions of their parenting role now their ATP child is an adult, and retrospective reports of various aspects of their ATP child's experiences while growing up.

The next tasks are to complete data entry and data cleaning, to undertake cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis, and to prepare reports and papers for publication. It is anticipated that the first areas to be focused on will be: (a) the nature and levels of positive development in this cohort of young Australians, and the longitudinal and contemporaneous factors that promote positive development; and (b) young people's and parents' perspectives of their roles, relationships and aspirations in the early adulthood period.

As well as undertaking the 14th data collection, statistical analysis and the dissemination of findings from the longitudinal dataset continued during 2006 and 2007. For example, ATP data informed and underpinned *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 4, Tailoring parenting to fit the child*. There has been considerable media interest in the ATP, with the study being publicised in newspaper articles and radio interviews.

Publications

Chipman, P., Jorm, A. F., Prior, M., Sanson, A., Smart, D., Tan, X., & Easteal, S. (2007). No interaction between the serotonin transporter polymorphism (5-HTTLPR) and childhood adversity or recent stressful life events on symptoms of depression: Results from two community surveys. *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part B (Neuropsychiatric Genetics)*, 144, 561–565.

Smart, D., Hayes, A., Sanson A. V., & Toumbourou, J. W. (2007). Mental health and wellbeing of Australian adolescents: Pathways to vulnerability and resilience. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 19, 263–268.

Smart, D. (2007). Tailoring parenting to fit the child. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 4*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D., & Sanson, A. (2006, November). A comparison of children's temperament and adjustment across 20 years. *LSAC 2005–2006 Annual Report*, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 35–37.

Smart, D. (2006). *Year 2006 ATP Newsletter for Young Adults*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Smart, D. (2006). *Year 2006 ATP Newsletter for Parents*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Vassallo, S. (2007). Article review: Is Sure Start an effective preventive intervention? *Family Relationships Quarterly*, 3, 6–8.

Conference presentations

Richardson, N., Smart, D., Sanson, A., & Dussuyer, I. (2006, 4–7 July). The role of environmental characteristics in changing the pathways to adolescent antisocial behaviour of high- and low-risk children. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Smart, D., Letcher, P., Toumbourou, J. W., Williams, I., & Sanson, A. (2006, 4–7 July). *The value of longitudinal studies for identifying and explaining developmental trajectories*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Dussuyer, I., & Smart, D. (2006, 5 September). *Linking up research, policy and practice: Lessons from a collaborative crime prevention project*. Paper presented at the Australian Evaluation Society's International Conference, Darwin, NT.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Smart, D. (2006, 21 August). *The Australian Temperament Project*. Invited paper presented at the ARACY Workshop: Mature Australasian longitudinal studies of children and youth: Celebrating achievements, making connections, planning for the future, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation

Hayes, A., & Smart, D. (2006, 15 September). Attendance at the COAG Human Capital Working Group, Data Sub-Group Meeting, Adelaide, SA.

Smart, D. (2006, 26–27 October). Member of concluding discussion panel, ARACY Creating Child Friendly Cities Conference, Sydney, NSW. Member, Brotherhood of St Laurence Life Chances Project Advisory Committee (D. Smart).

Member, Longitudinal Study of Australia's Children Wave 3 Child Functioning design team (D. Smart).

Member, Youth Information Advisory Group, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (D. Smart).

Member, Local Organising Committee for the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development 2006 Conference (D. Smart).

Member, Parentline Reference Group (D. Smart).

ATP/TAC/RACV collaboration

The collaboration between the Institute and the Transport Accident Commission of Victoria (TAC) and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) has entered its second phase. The first phase of the project collected data in the 2002 ATP survey on young people's learner driving experiences, recent driving experiences, and road safety behaviours. It then made use of the ATP longitudinal dataset to investigate the personal, family and wider environmental factors associated with differing types of driving behaviours. The findings from this first phase were disseminated through an Institute research report, journal articles and conference presentations.

The second phase of the collaboration has involved the collection of data on the driver history and experiences of the 23- to 24-year-old ATP study members as part of the 2006 ATP survey. Data similar to that obtained in 2002 has been collected, along with new data pertinent to young people's current driving careers. The data will be analysed in 2007–2008 and a report prepared for an anticipated release in 2008.

Publication

Vassallo, S., Smart, D., Sanson, A., Harrison, W., Harris, A., Cockfield, S., & McIntyre, A. (2007). Risky driving among young Australian drivers: Trends, precursors and correlates. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, *39*, 448–458.

External representation

Vassallo, S., & Smart, D. (2007, 27 June). Attendance at the launch of the Monash University Accident Research Centre's 'Going Solo' resource kit. Monash University, Melbourne, Vic.

Child Care in Australia: Wave 1 thematic paper

In collaboration with project co-directors from the School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University and the Department of Psychology, Macquarie University, and project representatives from the Centre for Developmental Health, Curtin University, the Discipline of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Newcastle, and the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, the Institute analysed the LSAC Wave 1 dataset to examine relations between patterns of child care and early education, family demographics and development of infants and 4-year-old children. The final report, *Child Care in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Wave 1 thematic paper*, which includes a review of the literature concerning the effects of child care on development, was submitted to FaCSIA in April 2007.

Commissioned report

Harrison, Ungerer, J., Smith, G., Zubrick, S., & Wise, S., with Press, F., & Waniganayake, M. (2007, April). *Child Care in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children Wave 1 thematic paper*. A report to the Office for Women, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Child Care in Cultural Context

The focus of this study is young children's experience of continuity between home and day care and caregiver-parent relationships, with an emphasis on children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who use mainstream child care services. A paper concerning the differential treatment of children from culturally diverse backgrounds across home and child care environments was released in February 2007, and a paper that describes cultural differences in parents perceptions of child care quality was published in the *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* in September 2006. Findings that address the effect of discontinuity between home and child care on child adjustment are planned for release in 2007. Collectively, these papers will inform government, policy development and educators about how the child care experiences of children from culturally diverse cultural backgrounds can be optimised.

Publications

da Silva, L., & Wise, S. (2006). Parent perspectives on child care quality among a culturally diverse sample. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(3), 6–14.

Wise, S. (2007). Building relationships between parents and carers in early childhood. *AFRC Briefing Paper No. 5*, Melbourne: Australian Family Relationship Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Wise, S., & da Silva, L. (2007). *Differential parenting of children from diverse cultural backgrounds attending child care*. (Australian Institute of Family Studies, Research Paper No. 39). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Child Care Choices

A consortium involving Macquarie University's Psychology Department and the Institute of Early Childhood, Charles Sturt University's School of Teacher Education and the Institute received an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage grant in 2002–2004 to conduct a longitudinal study designed to investigate the use of multiple and changeable care and the impact of such care on children, families and care providers. The New South Wales Department of Community Services is an industry partner on this project. In its first wave of data collection, undertaken in 2002–2003, 689 families with children aged 0 to 3 years were recruited to the study. Early in the current reporting period the third wave (2004–2005) of data collection was completed. Analysis of the data is continuing, and a number of conference presentations and written papers have arisen as a result. Although the New South Wales Department of Community Services provided additional funding to extend the study in a further two projects (The Longitudinal Extension to eight years of the Child Care Choices Research Project and The Child Care Choices of Indigenous Families Research Project), Institute involvement is limited to the analysis and presentation of findings from the first three waves of data collection.

Conference presentations

Bowes, J., Neilsen-Hewett, C., Fiora, M., Taylor, A., Simpson, T., & Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Young children's social skills with peers: Reports from primary carers at home and in childcare*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Ungerer, J., Harrison, L., Taylor, A., Bowes, J., Wise, S., & Sanson, A. (2006, 2–6 July). *An evaluation of child care factors in young children's social-emotional development*. Paper presented at the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD) Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Other (non-conference) presentation

Edwards, B. (2006, 1 August). Cross-sectional person centred analysis: Using latent class analysis to develop typologies. Statistics Discussion Group, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Children and Family Life

The Children and Family Life study examines the family environment, development and wellbeing of approximately 1,200 children aged between 5 and 12 years growing up in intact-couple, single-parent, step and blended families. It was designed to provide information about the family life and development of children reared in non-traditional family forms.

Analysis of the data has begun, and differences across family types on parenting dimensions were reported in a poster presentation to the Biennial Meeting of the Society for the Study of Behavioural Development in July 2006. A paper was also presented at this meeting that examined the differential effect of parenting dimensions on child behaviour problems in three family settings. Future analysis is planned to assess the relation between key aspects of the family environment and family structure to measures of child adjustment. This should provide information as to whether the physical composition of families affects development over and above family environment factors, and should emphasise where interventions and supports need to be targeted to enhance family and child wellbeing.

Conference presentations

Vassallo, S., & Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Parenting in three family structures*. Poster presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Wise, S. (2006, 2–6 July). *Differential consequences of parent nurturance, restrictiveness and involvement in three family settings*. Paper presented at the 19th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Melbourne, Vic.

Follow-up of Children Conceived through Donor Insemination

Preparation of a final report comparing the family life and development of children conceived through donor insemination technology (DI children) with children raised in different family settings (non-DI children) is in progress. The data were collected on behalf of Professor Gabor Kovacs from Monash Medical School, Box Hill Hospital (renowned for his contribution to the IVF research field from its early days), using instrumentation developed for the Children and Family Life study. Findings to emerge from this study are expected to have implications for families accessing donor insemination technology, and children born as a result.

Families Caring for a Person with a Disability

The Institute has been funded by FaCSIA to investigate the perceived impact on carers and their family of caring for a person with a disability. This collaborative project with staff from the Carers Branch will document the physical, emotional, social and financial impact on families of caring for a relative with a disability. Labour force participation and the effect of caring on family relationships within the family are also the focus of the study.

A total of 1,002 carers of a person with a disability were interviewed from around Australia via computer-assisted telephone interviews. The interview schedule has been developed through examination of the research literature and consultation with experts from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the disability support sector and the university sector.

The final report has been submitted prior to publication and a paper focusing on the social lives of carers has been published in *Family Matters*.

Publications

Edwards, B., Higgins, D., & Zmijewski, N. (2007). The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study and the social lives of carers. *Family Matters*, 76, 8–17.

Higgins, D. J. (2007). Families caring: Diverse care-work of families in Australia. *Family Matters*, 76, 4–7.

Commissioned report

Edwards, B., Higgins, D. J., & Zmijewski, N. (2007, June). *Final report: The families caring for a person with a disability study*. A report to the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. (2006, 11 September). *The 'Families Caring for a Person with a Disability' joint study between AIFS and FaCSIA*. Presentation to the National Policy Working Group (Carers Australia), Melbourne, Vic.

Edwards, B. (2006, 12 December). *The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study: preliminary findings*. Presentation to the Disability and Carers Branch, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

Edwards, B., & Higgins, D. (2007, 16 February). *The Families Caring for a Person with a Disability Study: preliminary findings from the field*. Presentation to Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

External representation

Member, Australian Bureau of Statistics Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group (B. Edwards).

Reviewer, Children and Youth Services Review (B. Edwards).

National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The National Child Protection Clearinghouse (NCPC) serves as an interchange point for information, research and initiatives supporting work in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention. The clearinghouse is funded by FaCSIA, and has operated from the Institute since 1995. It collects, produces and distributes information and resources, conducts research, and offers specialist advice on the latest developments in child abuse prevention, child protection and associated violence. The goal of the clearinghouse is to inform policy, practice and research into child abuse prevention and child protection.

Evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse

The Institute contracted Associate Professor Paul Delfabbro (Adelaide University) through Adelaide Research and Innovations to undertake an independent evaluation of the clearinghouse. The evaluation was completed and provided to FaCSIA under the clearinghouse project contract in June 2007. It is anticipated that the evaluation report will be made available to the public early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that:

There was clear evidence from feedback with stakeholders that the Clearinghouse has been actively involved in a number of endeavours that had influenced policy and decision-making... (Delfabbro, P. H., & Borgas, M. (2007). National Child Protection Clearinghouse Evaluation Report, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, pp. 73, 76.

Research

The clearinghouse undertakes primary and secondary research projects related to child abuse prevention, child protection and out-of-home care. A number of clearinghouse research reports are available for downloading from the clearinghouse website (www.aifs.gov.au/nch/pubs/reports).

Indigenous Out-of-home Care

As part of its contract with FaCSIA, the clearinghouse undertook a study following up the research undertaken for the Australian Council for Children and Parenting in 2005–2006, which investigated the recruitment, assessment, training and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers. The project aimed to profile and disseminate in a culturally appropriate way promising practices in out-of-home care for Aboriginal children, their families and carers. The research has been completed and it is anticipated that project resources will be disseminated early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

In addition, the Institute has undertaken several other projects relating to child protection that were managed and disseminated through the clearinghouse.

Research Utilisation

Commissioned by the Australian Centre for Child Protection and undertaken in collaboration with researchers from the Centre, the project comprised a two-stage survey to examine the barriers and facilitators of research utilisation by policy makers and practitioners in the fields of child abuse prevention and child protection. The research has been completed and it is anticipated that project resources will be disseminated early in the 2007–2008 financial year.

National Approach for Child Protection

Commissioned by the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC), this project aims to provide a very broad overview of directions and trends in child protection in Australia. Specifically, the project comprises a discussion of background and context, including international comparisons for measures of child protection and general community wellbeing. With the input and participation of all of the states and territories and the Commonwealth, the project team conducted national comparisons of strategic directions in government with regard to child protection services, provisions for 'breaking down the silos', legislative principles, and approaches to intervening early to prevent entry or re-entry into care and protection services. Commenced in 2006–2007, the project is scheduled to be completed in the 2007–2008 financial year.

Comparability of Child Protection Data

Commissioned by CDSMAC through the National Child Protection and Support Service (NCPASS), this project aims to analyse the differences in key child protection indicators between jurisdictions and, over time, within individual jurisdictions; and to identify and assess factors that may explain these differences. The

project is being conducted in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. The project commenced in June 2007 and is expected to be completed in 2007–2008.

Knowledge base

The clearinghouse currently holds 13,722 records in its catalogue related to child abuse and neglect. The catalogue is widely accessible via the Institute's website. The resources of the Institute's bibliographic database Australian Family & Society Abstracts (AF&SA) are also available to the clearinghouse and are used to respond to stakeholder inquiries, and also to produce bibliographies for the clearinghouse website. The AF&SA database identifies and indexes the research, policy and practice literature about families, family life and social issues that impact on families, such as child abuse and child protection, in journal articles, conference papers, research reports and government documents.

Communication

The knowledge base is used to generate a number of communication activities including the clearinghouse website, an information and advisory service, and the production and dissemination of publications and presentations related to child abuse prevention and child protection.

The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that:

The vast majority of stakeholders who were contacted during the course of the evaluation identified information dissemination as a great strength of the clearinghouse because of its ability to distribute information through multiple methods: electronic email lists, the website, downloadable publications, and face-to-face forums. Feedback from stakeholders showed clear links between the different media, e.g., people had learned about the website from clearinghouse publications. The independent evaluation of the National Child Protection Clearinghouse concluded that: Clearinghouse publications were considered well researched, professionally produced, and relevant to both policy and services because of a specific focus on the application and relevance of findings (Delfabbro & Borgas, 2007, p. 74).

Website

The clearinghouse website continued to be well used during the year with 1,532,373 hits and 767,735 downloads (including 287,265 downloads of NCPC publications). The electronic Resource Sheets continue to be very popular, as do the clearinghouse's *Child Abuse Prevention Issues* and *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*. Although most requests were received for resources that were full text publications, other areas of the website continue to be well utilised, including the bibliographies and information on getting help. This includes such topics as reporting child abuse, government departments responsible for dealing with child protection, Internet safety advice, help lines for children and parents, counselling services, guidelines for police checks for people working with children and adolescents, and links to other sites that provide information on child abuse prevention.

Information and advisory service

A key role for the clearinghouse is to provide information and advice on child abuse prevention and child protection policy and practice issues to the Australian Government, state and territory governments, agencies and practitioners working in the field.

A free information and advisory help desk is staffed to answer general queries by telephone, fax, mail, email, or in person. Experienced librarians respond to queries by drawing on the extensive resources of the research library and in-house databases, but they can also access external online and Internet services when necessary. Requests for more specialised information are referred to the clearinghouse research staff. This may include the detailed analysis and interpretation of current issues in child protection and child abuse prevention, informing program development and professional practice, and providing advice on research methodology and program evaluations.

Clearinghouse staff draw on the knowledge base to provide advisory services. The use of the information and advisory service remains high, with a total of 315 enquiries coming to the clearinghouse 'help desk'. In addition, there were 649 subscribers to the *childprotect* e-discussion list at 30 June 2007. The *childprotect* list provides service providers, government agencies, policy makers and researchers with a venue to discuss research, policy and practice issues, and facilitates discussion and dissemination of good practice knowledge. In 2006–2007, there were 309 messages posted on *childprotect*.

As a key aspect of its advisory function, clearinghouse research staff participate in workshops, conferences and related activities, presenting papers and seminars, and carrying out other promotional work as required. They also sit on a number of state-based and national advisory groups and committees committed to child abuse prevention or the improvement of the child protection system.

Newsletters

National Child Protection Clearinghouse. (August, 2006). *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 14(2).

National Child Protection Clearinghouse. (February, 2007). *Child Abuse Prevention Newsletter*, 15(1).

Publications

Bromfield, L. M., & Ryan, R. (2007). National comparison of statutory child protection entry-level training. *Children, Communities and Families Australia*, 2(1), 59–72.

Burchill, M., Higgins, D. J., Ramsamy, L., & Taylor, S. (2006). 'Workin' together': Indigenous perspectives on community development. *Family Matters*, 75, 50–59.

Delfabbro, P. H., & Borgas, M. (2007). National Child Protection Clearinghouse Evaluation Report, Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Vic.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Richardson, N. (2006). Protecting Indigenous children: Views of carers and young people on 'out-of-home care'. *Family Matters*, 75, 42–49.

Hayes, A. (2007). A great partnership begins. *Access* 23, 19–20.

Irenyi, M., Bromfield, L. M., Beyer, L. R., & Higgins, D. J. (2006). *Child maltreatment in organisations: Risk factors and strategies for prevention*. (Child Abuse Prevention Issues No. 25). Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Electronic publications

Boyd, C., & Bromfield, L. M. (2006). Young people who sexually abuse: Key issues. *Practice Brief*, 1.

Submissions

Wise, S., Bromfield, L. M., & Higgins, D. J. (2006, October). Response to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Discussion Paper, *Improving permanency planning for children in care*.

Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., Morrison, Z., Robinson, E., & Weston, R. (2007, March). House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into the impact of illicit drug use on families: Submission from the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Conference presentations

Bromfield, L. M., & Higgins, J. R. (2006, 14–18 August). *Carers of Indigenous children: Findings from a national study*. Paper presented at the Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies Conference, Sydney, NSW.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 30 September – 1 October). *Ten years of out-of-home care research: Evaluating the Australian evidence-base*. Paper presented at the Australian Foster Care Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M., & Williams, S. (2006, 30 September – 1 October). *Promising practice in Indigenous foster care: A collaborative project between AIFS & SNAICC*. Paper presented at the Australian Foster Care Conference, Adelaide, SA.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 14–15 November). *Finding and using research in child protection practice*. Workshop co-facilitated with Leanne Black, Senior Practitioner, Rockhampton North CSSC, Department of Child Safety and presented at Child Safety Research Conference: Child protection: Integrating research policy and practice, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 20–21 May). *Child protection in Australia: Current challenges and future directions*. Paper presented at the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Other (non-conference) presentations

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 4 August). *Child protection, sexual assault, families and communities, and caring*. Presentation to the Governor-General of Australia, His Excellency, Major General Jeffrey and Her Excellency, Mrs Marlena Jeffrey. Melbourne, Vic.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 21 August). *The 2006–2008 Research Plan and the current work of the Institute*. Address to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Strategic Policy and Research Branch, Brisbane, Qld.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 21 August). *The National Child Protection Clearinghouse and the role of the Institute in translating and disseminating research*. Address to the Queensland Department of Child Safety Strategic Policy and Research Branch, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 28–29 August). *National comparison of entry-level training for statutory child protection workers*. Paper presented at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 30 August). *Child protection and out-of-home care: An update from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Paper presented at the Department for Community Development, Community Skills Training Centre, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 11 September). *Child abuse prevention: Everyone's responsibility*. Paper presented at the Wendouree Rotary Club Meeting, Ballarat, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 11 September). *Child abuse prevention: Everyone's responsibility*. Paper presented at the Lara Lion's Club Meeting, Lara, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. (2006, 12 September). *Child protection in Australia*. Paper presented at the Australian Council of Children and Youth Organisations Accreditation Training Forum, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 29 September). *Child abuse prevention, Child protection and out-of-home care: A snapshot of recent research by the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Paper presented at Families SA, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 29–30 November). *Research design in Australia: What did we learn from the national audits?* Paper presented as part of a panel on reunification research design at the Australian Reunification Research National Workshop co-hosted by Families SA and the Australian Centre for Child Protection, Adelaide, SA.

Bromfield, L. M., & Holzer, P. (2006, 12 December). *Child abuse prevention programs: What works?* Paper presented at the Australian Centre for Child Protection seminar series, Adelaide, SA.

Holzer, P. H. (2007, 6 February). *An overview of research regarding refugee child and family welfare*. Presentation to the Refugee Minor Program Reference Group Meeting, Department of Human Services, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 12–13 March). *Child protection Australia: Key challenges and future direction*. Keynote presented at the West Australian Ministerial Community Roundtable on Child Protection, Perth, WA.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 28 March). *National Child Protection Clearinghouse research one-day workshop* co-hosted by the Queensland Department of Child Safety and PeakCare Queensland, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M., & Fooks, S. (2007, 4 April). *Information Dissemination: Lessons learned from the National Child Protection Clearinghouse*. Discussion paper presented to the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare staff meeting, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 3 May). *Child Protection in Australia: Current challenges and future directions*. Paper presented for the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, ACT.

Higgins, J. R. (2007, 18 May). *Research findings from Promising Practices in Out-of-Home Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Carers and Children Project*. Presentation at a kinship care consultation with Aboriginal groups, Department of Human Services, Placement Support Unit, Office for Children, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 25 June). Chair for the *Current government thinking panel* at the Parental Substance Use and Child Protection: Developing National Guidelines and Strategies national forum co-hosted by Odyssey House Victoria and the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Hayes, A. (2007, 25 June). Welcome address to the National Forum on Parental Substance Abuse and Children Protection, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

External representation: Conference/meeting attendance and consultations

Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia (CAFWAA). (2006, 1 August). *National out-of-home care research forum: Report on forum proceedings*. Proceedings for the 'Out of home care research forum: From research into action' (Brisbane, 19 May 2006) compiled by a working group comprising: Judy Cashmore, Daryl Higgins, Brian Head, Cathy Humphreys, Coleen Clare, Dorothy Scott, Leah Bromfield, Jasmine Chee, Kristin Vink, Louise Debley, Michael Power and Tracie Young.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 22 August). Attendance at Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group Meeting and Research Forum, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2006, 28–29 August). Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Perth, WA.

Higgins, D. J. (2006, 14–15 November). Attendance at the Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Conference: Child protection – Integrating research policy and practice, Brisbane, Qld.

Higgins, J. R. (2006, 8 December). Attendance at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childhood Outcomes Seminar co-hosted by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care and the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 21 February). Attendance at the Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group meeting, Brisbane, Qld.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 26–27 March). Attendance at the Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning Group Meeting, Brisbane, Qld.

Holzer, P. (2007, 3 May). Attendance at the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth launch of Commitment to Young Australians, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M. (2007, 18 May). Attendance at the Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group meeting, Brisbane, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., Holzer, P., & Irenyi, M. (2007, 20–21 May). Attendance at the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners Conference, Melbourne, Vic.

Bromfield, L. M., Higgins, J. R., & Irenyi, M. (2007, 25 June). Attendance at the Parental Substance Use & Child Protection: Developing National Guidelines and Strategies national forum co-hosted by Odyssey House Victoria and the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, Vic.

Irenyi, M. (2007, 29 June). Attendance at the Rainbow Families Council Interdisciplinary Symposium, Melbourne, Vic.

Higgins, D. J. (various dates). Lectures and seminars presented at Deakin University, School of Psychology, Vic.

External representation: Board and Committee Membership

Member, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Victoria – Management Committee (L. M. Bromfield).

Editorial board member. *Communities, Children & Families Australia*. Journal of the Australian College of Child and Family Protection Practitioners (L. M. Bromfield).

Editorial committee member. *Developing Practice*. Journal of the New South Wales Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (L. M. Bromfield).

Member, Australasian Statutory Child Protection Learning and Development Group (L. M. Bromfield).

Editorial Board Member. *Child Maltreatment*. Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (D. Higgins).

Editorial Board Member. *Journal of Religion & Abuse: Advocacy, Pastoral Care & Prevention*. Haworth Pastoral Press (D. Higgins).

External reviewer. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Journal of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (D. Higgins).

Member, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault Reference Group (D. Higgins).

Member, Queensland Department of Child Safety Research Advisory Group (D. Higgins).

Member, National Child Protection Clearinghouse Reference Group (D. Higgins)

Member, National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Victoria – Advisory Group (until December 2006) (D. Higgins).