

Family life

Satisfaction with life

According to Biddle (2011), there are two main types of wellbeing data collected in large scale surveys—emotional wellbeing and life satisfaction. Emotional wellbeing data has been collected in *Footprints in Time* in several waves and in Wave 5 data about life satisfaction is available for the first time.

Primary carers were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of life as well as their overall satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 on which 0 indicated total dissatisfaction and 10 indicated complete satisfaction. The *Footprints in Time* questions are the same as those asked in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, a nationally representative survey of the general Australian population. Biddle (2011) noted that earlier research (Shields et al. 2009) identified a number of individual and area level characteristics that were associated with life satisfaction. These included age, partnership status, health, unemployment, neighbourhood characteristics and income. Many of these correlates have been found to vary considerably between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Given that Indigenous Australians are more likely to be unemployed, single parents and living in comparatively disadvantaged areas, it would therefore seem likely that they would report lower levels of life satisfaction (Biddle 2011).

However, when compared with HILDA responses from 2012, it appears that this is not the case.

Table 7: Average satisfaction in HILDA and Footprints in Time, scores out of 10

Satisfaction	HILDA	Footprints in Time
The home in which they live	8.0	7.6
Employment opportunities	7.0	6.5
Financial situation	6.5	6.9
They feel safe	8.2	8.8
The community in which they live	6.7	7.6
Their health	7.3	7.8
Their relationships [^]	8.3	8.6
The neighbourhood in which they live	7.8	8.1
The amount of free time they have	6.7	6.1
Overall life satisfaction	7.9	8.4

[^] Footprints in Time asks about relationships in general, whereas HILDA asks about satisfaction with their current partner.
Source: HILDA Wave 12 weighted averages and Footprints in Time Wave 5.

Footprints in Time primary carers have higher levels of overall life satisfaction than that of the general population. Of the nine specific areas asked about, *Footprints in Time* respondents rated their satisfaction higher than their HILDA counterparts in six. The three areas they were not as satisfied with were their homes, their employment opportunities and the amount of free time they had. These differences may in part be due to the characteristics of the *Footprints in Time* sample. The HILDA sample is representative of the whole population aged 15 years and older, whereas the *Footprints in Time* sample primarily includes mothers with young children. It is not surprising that mothers of young families feel more time poor relative to the population overall. Many primary carers choose not to work so they can look after their children and therefore there is a high rate of item non-response to the question about employment opportunities. A high proportion of *Footprints in Time* families live in areas with high

disadvantage and many reported problems with their house. Another possible reason for this seeming paradox of greater satisfaction despite higher levels of disadvantage is the way in which the questions are asked. Anecdotal evidence from the *Footprints in Time* interviewers indicates that many Indigenous people, especially in more remote communities, find the questions that use 10 point scales difficult to respond to. The difficulty in interpreting the scale by Indigenous people was also mentioned by Biddle. There is likely a combination of reasons that explain why Indigenous people report having higher levels of overall life satisfaction. Biddle suggests there may be specific Indigenous factors that are related to the determination of life satisfaction for Indigenous peoples that are not necessarily captured by this set of questions (Biddle 2011).

Do men and women report the same levels of satisfaction? Although the majority of primary carers are women, their responses can be compared with those of the men asked in the Dads Survey. Table 8 compares the average scores of men and women in *Footprints in Time*. In *Footprints in Time* there are 180 responses in the Dads Survey and 30 male primary carers and 1,228 female primary carers. Comparisons of satisfaction by sex are also provided for HILDA.

Table 8: Average satisfaction in Footprints in Time and HILDA by sex, scores out of 10

Satisfaction	Footprints in Time women	Footprints in Time men	HILDA women	HILDA men
The home in which they live	7.6	8.0*	8.0	8.0
Employment opportunities	6.5	7.1*	7.0	7.1*
Financial situation	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.5
They feel safe	8.8	9.1*	8.3	8.2*
The community in which they live	7.6	7.7	6.6	6.8*
Their health	7.8	7.9	7.4	7.3*
Their relationships [^]	8.6	8.8	8.5	8.2*
The neighbourhood in which they live	8.1	8.5	7.8	7.8*
The amount of free time they have	6.0	6.6*	6.8	6.6*
Overall life satisfaction	8.4	8.6	7.9	7.9

[^] In Footprints in Time the majority of fathers for whom there are data live with the primary carer, whereas a large proportion of women report not having a partner in the household.
* There is a statistical difference between men and women at $p < 0.05$ (comparisons are within surveys only).
Source: HILDA Wave 12 weighted averages and Footprints in Time Wave 5.

With the exception of their financial situation, men in *Footprints in Time* report higher levels of satisfaction than women. However, these differences are only significant in relation to the homes in which they live, their employment opportunities, their safety and the amount of free time they have. While both men and women in HILDA report the same average levels of overall life satisfaction there is more significant variation between the sexes in different aspects of their lives. Men in HILDA are on average more satisfied with their employment opportunities and the communities in which they live and women are on average more satisfied with their safety, health, relationships and the amount of free time they have. Women in HILDA are also on average marginally, but nevertheless significantly, more satisfied with the neighbourhoods in which they live.

Footprints in Time primary carers rated their overall life satisfaction very highly with 39.1 per cent rating it as 10 out of 10. However, there were quite significant differences depending on the level of isolation of the areas in which they live. For the most part, primary carers in areas of higher isolation were happier across all areas of life with 59.0 per cent of all

primary carers in areas of moderate isolation rating their overall satisfaction as 10 and 51.3 per cent in areas of high or extreme isolation compared with only 30.0 per cent in urban areas and 36.4 per cent in areas of moderate isolation. Generally, differences between moderate and high/extreme were not statistically different. People in urban areas were the least satisfied with all areas of their lives, especially with the amount of free time they had. Table 9 shows the average levels of satisfaction for each aspect of life by the level of relative isolation.

Table 9: Average levels of satisfaction by level of relative isolation, per cent

Satisfaction with...	Urban	Low	Moderate	High/extreme
The home in which they live	7.4	7.6	7.9	7.5
Employment opportunities	6.1	6.3	#7.4	#7.2
Financial situation	6.2	#6.7	##7.8	##8.1
They feel safe	8.6	8.8	9.0	9.0
The community in which they live	6.8	#7.5	##8.7	##9.0
Their health	7.2	#7.8	##8.4	##8.5
Their relationships	8.3	#8.6	##9.2	##8.9
The neighbourhood in which they live	7.9	8.1	8.5	8.3
The amount of free time they have	5.3	#6.0	##7.4	##7.2
Overall life satisfaction	7.9	#8.4	##9.0	##8.7

Note: The difference between categories is statistically significant if the number of # symbols is different.

The # and ## symbols in the table indicate which levels of relative isolation are significantly different from each other. For example, the aspects of life that are not statistically different across different levels of relative isolation (i.e. there are no # symbols across the row) are the home in which they live, feeling safe and the neighbourhood in which they live. The difference in satisfaction with financial situation between urban areas and areas of low isolation is statistically significant, and satisfaction with financial situation for people in areas of moderate and high/extreme isolation is statistically different from low and urban but not from each other. It is worth noting that *Footprints in Time* respondents living in urban areas have the same average overall life satisfaction as the average of all HILDA respondents, the majority of whom live in urban areas, reflecting the overall population distribution of Australia. People in urban areas in *Footprints in Time* also report average levels of satisfaction with their safety, health, relationships and neighbourhoods that are more closely aligned to those reported in HILDA than those reported for more isolated areas in *Footprints in Time*.

Parenting efficacy

Measuring parenting efficacy in *Footprints in Time*

The quality and stability of a child's human relationships in the early years lay the foundation for a wide range of later developmental outcomes that really matter (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2004). In the early years, the most important relationships children have are with their parents. Strategies for supporting parents are recognised as an effective way to improve the health, well-being and development of children. Parenting is influenced by many factors, including the behaviour and characteristics of the child, the health and psychological well-being of the parent and the contextual influences of stress and support. Parenting difficulties are a major source of stress for parents, and parenting self-efficacy has been shown to be an important buffer against parenting stress (Bloomfield & Kendall 2012).

This article examines how self-reported parenting efficacy is measured in *Footprints in Time* and how primary carers see themselves in the role of parents.

The Parent Empowerment and Efficacy Measure (PEEM) (Freiberg, Homel & Branch 2014) was developed during the Pathways to Prevention project: a research–practice partnership between Griffith University, Mission Australia and Education Queensland. The PEEM was used as a core outcome measure in the Pathways to Prevention family support service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up approximately 16 per cent of the more than 1,000 families who participated in the Pathways to Prevention project.

The PEEM aims to measure carers' sense of personal agency with respect to their parenting role. Parents' responses indicate the degree of confidence with which they approach and manage the challenges of raising children and feel empowered to find and make use of formal services and informal support systems in order to achieve their goals as a parent and help their children thrive.

In its full form the PEEM consists of 20 items that measure parent empowerment as a general construct, but the measure also provides an indication of efficacy along two distinct dimensions. These two subscales (Efficacy to Parent and Efficacy to Connect) measure (i) confidence to make parenting decisions and carry out parenting responsibilities, and (ii) confidence to access parenting support and resources when needed, and to participate as part of mutually supportive networks to meet one's own and one's children's needs.

The *Footprints in Time* Wave 5 data collection included a subset of 14 of the 20 PEEM items.¹ These 14 items included 10 of the 11 items from the 'Efficacy to Parent' subscale and 4 of the 9 items from the 'Efficacy to Connect' subscale.

Table 10 shows the questions used in the *Footprints in Time* PEEM scale and the average responses based on a 10 point scale with 1 being 'this sounds nothing like me' and 10 being 'this sounds exactly like me'. Primary carers are least likely to feel they can stay calm and manage even when it is stressful and most likely to feel that their children feel secure.

¹ © Griffith University, Parenting empowerment and efficacy measure (PEEM), *Footprints in Time* adaptation.

Table 10: Average responses to PEEM questions, score out of 10

Measure	Average response
I find it easy to talk to people like teachers, doctors and nurses about my children	8.8
I know how to get useful information about how my children's needs change as they grow	9.0
I feel good when I think about the future for my children	9.0
I can work out what to do if any of my children have a problem	9.2
We have clear rules and routines in my family	8.6
I can find services for my children when I need to	9.2
In my family there is more to enjoy than worry about	9.0
I stay calm and manage life even when it's stressful	8.2
I believe my children will do well at school	9.3
I feel that I am doing a good job as a parent	9.2
I feel good about myself	8.7
I feel good about the way my children behave	8.5
I can make time for my children when they need it	9.3
I know my children feel secure	9.5

The responses to the questions can be combined to form a parenting efficacy score² ranging between 14 and 140, where higher scores indicate greater self-reported parenting efficacy. Scores for the *Footprints in Time* carers ranged from 32 to 140 with an average of 125.6. Compared to the responses to the same questions administered for the Pathways to Prevention project, *Footprints in Time* primary carers rate their parenting efficacy as relatively high. Using the same 14 questions used by *Footprints in Time* the Pathways to Prevention project had average scores of 110.7, a difference of nearly 15 points.

However, the Pathways to Prevention sample differs from the *Footprints in Time* sample in two important ways. Firstly, the Pathways to Prevention included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents and secondly, the project was conducted wholly within Brisbane. The average score for the Indigenous sample within Pathways to Prevention was 119, much higher than the 110.7 of the whole sample. Among the *Footprints in Time* sample, primary carers from Brisbane had the second lowest average scores (121 points), a difference of only two points from the Pathways to Prevention Indigenous sample. Additionally, the *Footprints in Time* data also show that primary carers in urban areas have lower average scores than their counterparts in more remote areas. While the *Footprints in Time* results remain slightly higher than those from Pathways to Prevention, this difference is small enough to suggest that results from the two studies are comparable.

As PEEM is a self-reported measure, there are a number of factors to consider when evaluating its use. It does not tell us whether the respondents are good parents, if indeed there is any agreed-upon definition of a good parent. It does tell us how the respondents see their own parenting skills in terms of producing their desired outcomes in their children. The literature shows that parenting self-efficacy is important when exploring differences in parenting skills (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser 2010).

As noted in the discussion above, there is a large difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents in the overall scores on this measure. There are a number of possible reasons for this, the first and most obvious one being that Indigenous parents do in fact have

² Using the *Footprints in Time* data, this scale has a Chronbach alpha of 0.88 and a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy of 0.93.

higher levels of confidence in their parenting skills. However, there may also be cultural and historical factors underlying this difference.

One difficulty with measuring abstract concepts with rating scales occurs because cultures differ in their tendency towards nay-saying (Hofstede 1980). In other words, some cultures are more likely to select responses in one area of the scale—such as predominantly in the middle or either end. There is certainly clustering around 10, ‘this sounds exactly like me’. For all questions except for the question about managing stressful situations, more than 50 per cent of respondents selected the top category and 15.3 per cent of respondents who answered all questions have ‘perfect’ scores of 140. While responses are spread across all steps of the scale for each question, the distribution is far from normal, which is not surprising for these types of questions.

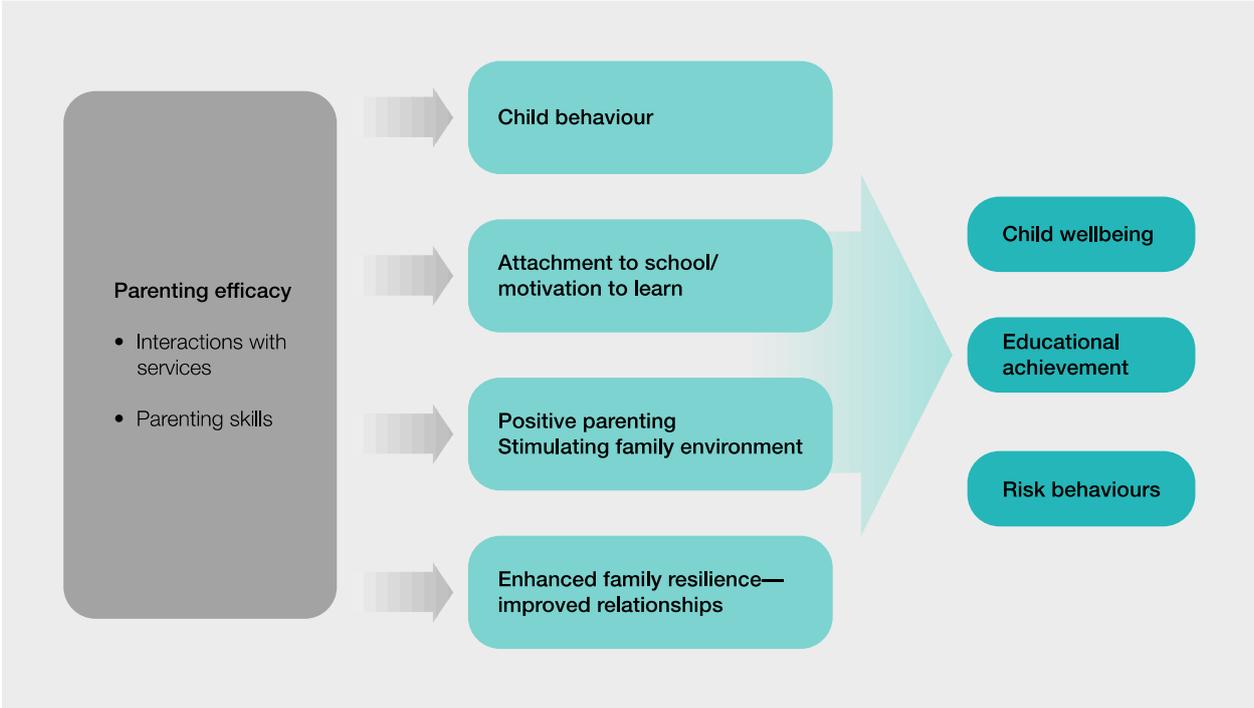
This analysis attempts to draw out what is important in predicting self-reported parenting efficacy within a sample of parents of Indigenous children.

What helps parents of Indigenous children see themselves as effective and empowered parents?

This analysis uses PEEM as an outcome measure to examine what characteristics are associated with changes in self-reported parenting efficacy.

Much of the literature around ‘parenting self-efficacy’ primarily relates to articles about measures of parenting self-efficacy, programmes to improve parenting efficacy, evaluations of such programmes or literature about how service providers can provide assistance. Sevigny and Loutzenhiser (2010) comment that little is known about the predictors of parenting efficacy. Much of the literature on parenting efficacy discusses the relationship between parenting efficacy and parenting skills, demonstrating that parents with better parenting efficacy have better parenting skills, which in turn lead to better outcomes for the child.

Figure 2: Parenting efficacy and empowerment



Adapted from Homel, Freiberg & Branch 2013.

Footprints in Time data does not demonstrate a significant association between children's learning outcomes and self-reported parenting efficacy; neither PAT Reading scores for the older cohort nor Renfrew Vocabulary scores¹¹ for the younger cohort were significantly associated. This may suggest that self-reported parenting efficacy is not related to educational attainment in Indigenous children, but it is more likely that the results are due to the measures used or possibly the early stage of children's education.

The only outcome that showed a significant association with self-reported parenting efficacy is children's social and emotional difficulties, as measured through Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ),³ which showed a significant association ($p < 0.01$). Using pre-release Wave 6 data (the SDQ was not available in Wave 5), a one-point increase in self-reported parenting efficacy scores is associated a 0.04 point decrease in children's social and emotional difficulties scores, resulting in a possible variation of up to 5 points on the 40 point difficulties score. Children's abilities to interact socially were also significantly associated with self-reported parenting efficacy; a one-point increase in self-reported parenting efficacy is associated with a 0.02 point increase in prosocial skills, resulting in a possible variation of up to 2 points on the 10 point prosocial scale.

This analysis now examines what factors may have an impact on self-reported parenting efficacy. Research using the first wave of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) found that parents had higher self-reported parenting efficacy if they had greater levels of community support, perceived themselves as better off financially, had higher levels of partner support and had enough help from family and friends (Yu 2011). However, this research does not discuss whether there was a statistical difference between categories nor does it discuss the relative importance of these factors.

Table 11 uses PEEM in *Footprints in Time* to look at the same factors Yu found to influence self-reported parenting efficacy in relation to an Indigenous sample. It is not possible to exactly replicate Yu's work in the *Footprints in Time* context as the same variables are not available. The self-reported parenting efficacy measure in LSAC is based on a single question asking parents to rate their efficacy as a parent rather than a scale such as PEEM.

The *Footprints in Time* data does not include a variable about whether primary carers receive help from family and friends. For the purpose of this analysis, two different measures are examined: Strong Souls and satisfaction with relationships. Strong Souls (Thomas et al. 2010) is a scale measure of cultural, social and personal resilience that includes questions about family and friends and has been used here as the closest measure to that used by Yu. It is an Indigenous-focused construct that covers not only people's inherent capability to recover from negative events and adapt to stress but also the family and community support mechanisms they have around them to help in such situations. It has a possible range of 12–48, with higher scores indicating higher levels of resilience. (Refer to Appendix B for more information about this measure.) Satisfaction with relationships is a single question asking primary carers to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10.

³ This measure is described further in Appendix B.

Table 11: Relationship of selected factors to PEEM scores in LSAC and Footprints in Time

LSAC measure	Footprints in Time measure	Results— bivariate	Results— multivariate
Greater levels of community support	Satisfaction with feeling part of your local community	1.9***	0.2***
Perceived financial status	Perceived financial status (Not enough or just enough/can save some)	1.0*	n.s.
Partner support	Partner in the household	1.4	n.s.
Help from family and friends	Satisfaction with relationships	2.5***	0.2***
	Strong Souls	0.9***	0.2***
*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; *p<0.05; n.s.—not significant			

The results in the bivariate column show the relationship between each variable independently and the self-reported parenting efficacy measure. All except having a partner in the household show a positive association with self-reported parenting efficacy.

The multivariate column shows what happens when all the variables are included in the model but with no other control variables included. The results show the standardised coefficient that equalises the scales of the independent variables to allow easier comparison. Perceived financial status becomes not statistically significant when other factors are taken into account. Of the three variables that remain significant, all have the same effect size.

Having a partner in the household and perceived financial status are not significant when the other variables are held constant. However, using other finance-related measures, such as the number of financial stress indicators experienced, demonstrates that financial considerations are an important factor in relation to self-reported parenting efficacy for primary carers in *Footprints in Time*. With scores ranging between 0 and 7, higher numbers of financial stress indicators experienced are associated with lower self-reported parenting efficacy scores.

There are potentially many other factors that could be associated with self-reported parenting efficacy in general and Indigenous parents in particular. Coleman and Karraker (2000) found that higher parenting efficacy was found in mothers of more social children⁴ and among mothers who were better educated and had higher family income. Heath et al. (2011) make several references to the importance of communities as well as safety in their discussion on Indigenous parenting styles.

The analysis next explores the association between self-reported parenting efficacy scores with the primary carers' social and emotional wellbeing, their cultural, personal and social resilience (Strong Souls measure), satisfaction with relationships, satisfaction with feeling part of their local community, perceived community safety, and the number of financial stress indicators experienced by the family in the previous 12 months. This last is a different measure of financial stress to the one used in Table 11.

Table 12 presents these variables in a bivariate model with PEEM scores. The effect shows the strength and direction of the association and the asterisks indicate the level of statistical significance.

⁴ Sociability of children was examined but did not demonstrate statistical significant in a bivariate regression model with PEEM. As a child outcome, it is not further analysed in this research.

Table 12: Factors associated with PEEM scores—bivariate regression analysis

Characteristic	Coefficient
Strong Souls	0.9***
Primary carer social and emotional wellbeing ⁵	0.6**
Satisfaction with relationships	2.5***
Satisfaction with feeling part of their community	1.9***
Community is quite or very safe	4.3***
Financial stress	-1.2***
*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05.	

Unlike perceived financial status, financial stress is significantly associated with self-reported parenting efficacy; for each additional financial stressor experienced (range: 0–7), PEEM scores decrease by 1.2 points. Primary carers who report living in a quite safe or very safe community have average PEEM scores 4.3 points higher than those who report living in a community that is not safe.

The effects of some variables are stronger than others and reduce or negate the association of other variables with self-reported parenting efficacy when used in combination. Table 13 shows the results for a model using all of the variables from Table 12 together and controlling for other demographic characteristics; study child sex, primary carer health, primary carer partner status, primary carer education and socio-economic advantage. The latter is measured by IRISEO, which is explained in Appendix B. This model has a sample of 1,012 and accounts for 24.7 per cent of the variance in scores.

Table 13: Factors associated with PEEM scores— multivariate regression analysis

Characteristic	Standardised coefficient
Strong Souls	0.2***
Social and emotional wellbeing	-0.0
Satisfaction with relationships	0.2***
Satisfaction with feeling part of their community	0.2***
Community is quite or very safe	0.1**
Number of financial stress indicators	-0.1*
Socio-economic advantage (IRISEO) (deciles)	-0.1**
Study child is female	0.0
Primary carer health is excellent	-0.1***
Primary carer has partner in household	0.0
Primary carer education (Year 12 or University degree)	-0.1*
*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; *p<0.05.	

Of the main variables of interest all but parental social and emotional wellbeing remained significant in a multivariate model. The table shows that Strong Souls, satisfaction with relationships and satisfaction with feeling part of the community all have the same standardised effect size (0.2) on variation within the PEEM scores.

PEEM scores also increase with community safety and better parental health and decreases with greater financial stress. However, living in areas of greater advantage and having a higher level of education results in lower PEEM scores when holding all other variables constant. This could be explained by the various interactions between PEEM, Strong Souls, education and IRISEO. People with stronger social networks have higher self-reported parenting efficacy and

⁵ See Appendix B for information about this measure

live in more isolated areas, which in turn tend to be of lower socio-economic status. People with higher education also tend to live in more urbanised areas and may be less likely to have strong social support.

While primary carer social and emotional wellbeing is significant in a bivariate model, once the Strong Souls measure is controlled for, it is no longer significant.⁶

It is worth mentioning that the strength in this model comes primarily from the variables of interest, and even after removal of the control variables the model still accounts for 22.9 per cent of the variance in scores.

The analysis so far has looked at primary carers of Indigenous children without taking account of the Indigenous status of the primary carer. In the sample from the above model, 16.9 per cent of the primary carers are non-Indigenous. Excluding these from the model does not change the relationships significantly.

One further point to mention is the effect of the stolen generation policies. In Wave 5, primary carers were asked whether they had anyone in their family who was adopted, fostered or removed from country. Of the 1,258 respondents in Wave 5, 2 refused to answer, 49 (3.9 per cent) said they did not know, 508 (40.4 per cent) said that someone in their family had been adopted, fostered or removed from country and 699 (55.6 per cent) said that no-one in their family had. This variable was tried in the model but showed inconsistent results with different sample groups so was not included.

In conclusion, it appears that for Indigenous primary carers, resilience (as measured by Strong Souls), satisfaction with relationships, feeling part of the community and community safety are important in explaining variance in self-reported parenting efficacy.

Qualities valued by Indigenous primary carers

Values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile, enabling a sense of identity. They vary between cultures, not only between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people but within different Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. According to the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's values and beliefs are based on an understanding of the world that integrates the spiritual with the material and emphasises the individual's relationship to community (SNAICC 2013a).

Understanding the values Indigenous parents have may provide an insight into understanding children's outcomes. Indigenous parents may place importance on letting children know who they are, defining a child's identity through their connections to everything in life (SNAICC 2013a).

The World Values Survey (WVS) is run by a worldwide network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life. It carries out nationally representative surveys in 97 societies. Representative national samples of each society are interviewed about a range of values, including a series of questions about what values parents consider most important for their children to develop (World Values Survey 2014). These questions were included in Waves 2 and 5 of *Footprints in Time*. Primary carers were asked to select five of the ten options they considered the most important. It should be noted that non-selection of a particular quality does not mean that the primary carer does not consider that value important; only that they rate other values more highly. Using the WVS data, it is possible to compare responses from Australia in general to those of the *Footprints in Time* parents. The

⁶ The correlation between these two variables is 0.34.

data used is from the 2012 wave of the Australian WVS and the *Footprints in Time* data is from Wave 5, collected in 2012.

Table 14: Top five values parents wish to develop in their children, Australia (WVS) and Footprints in Time in Wave 5

Australia (World Values Survey)	Footprints in Time
Tolerance and respect for other people	Tolerance and respect for others
Feeling of responsibility	Independence
Independence	Feeling of responsibility
Hard work	Hard work
Determination and perseverance	Unselfishness

Both datasets show that Australian parents value tolerance and respect above the other values. The top four values selected by both groups are the same but independence is rated slightly more highly by Indigenous parents. Thrift/saving, obedience and religious faith were least likely to be selected by both groups. How different people interpret or define these values may vary considerably across cultural backgrounds. The Australian responses may come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds whereas the *Footprints in Time* responses come from a primarily Indigenous background. However, even within the *Footprints in Time* sample, there are Indigenous and non-Indigenous primary carers who make slightly different choices on average and Indigenous carers who come from many different Indigenous cultural backgrounds.

Table 15 shows the difference in selection patterns by levels of relative isolation. In any row, # symbols indicate where there is a statistically significant difference between levels of relative isolation. Rows in which there are no # symbols show no statistical difference between any of the categories.

Table 15: Qualities by level of relative isolation, per cent

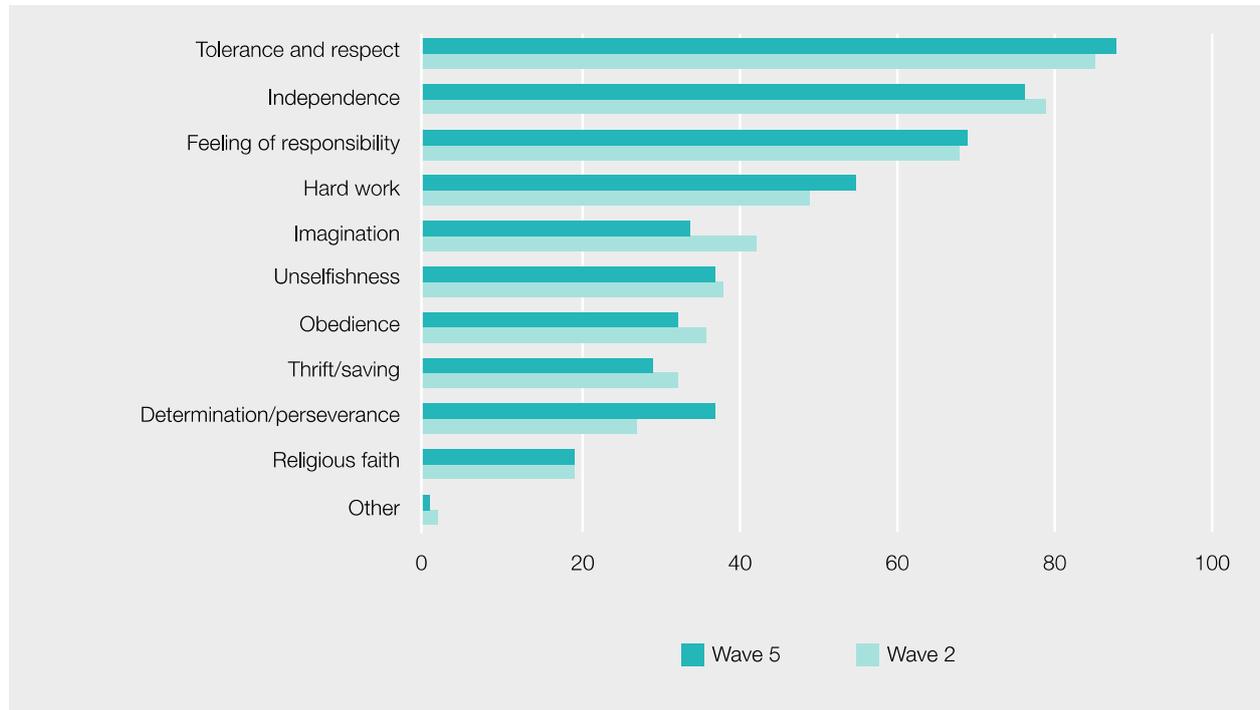
Quality	Urban	Low	Moderate	High/extreme
Tolerance and respect	88.4	89.4	84.2	83.9
Independence	81.6	77.0	#65.5	#63.4
Feelings of responsibility	70.3	68.1	63.6	74.1
Hard work	45.0	#54.2	##64.9	###78.6
Imagination	40.8	37.9	#18.8	#9.8
Unselfishness	40.5	41.3	#25.5	#22.3
Obedience	32.3	#30.2	33.3	#41.1
Thrift/saving	27.5	28.8	33.9	27.7
Determination/perseverance	47.6	#37.4	##26.7	###16.1
Religious faith	12.5	14.8	#29.7	#42.9

Note: The difference between categories is statistically significant if the number of # symbols is different.

The proportion of respondents selecting tolerance and respect, responsibility, and thrift and saving is not statistically different by level of relative isolation. Independence, imagination, determination and unselfishness are valued more highly by primary carers living in areas of lower isolation. Religious faith and hard work are qualities valued more highly by primary carers living in areas of higher isolation. The likelihood of selection of obedience by primary carers living in urban areas and areas of moderate isolation are not significantly different from any of the other categories. There is however a significant difference between primary carers in areas of low isolation and those in areas of high isolation.

By comparing responses between Waves 2 and 5 of the *Footprints in Time* data, it is possible to see whether there was any change in attitudes between 2009 and 2012.

Figure 3: Values primary carers wished to develop in their children, per cent



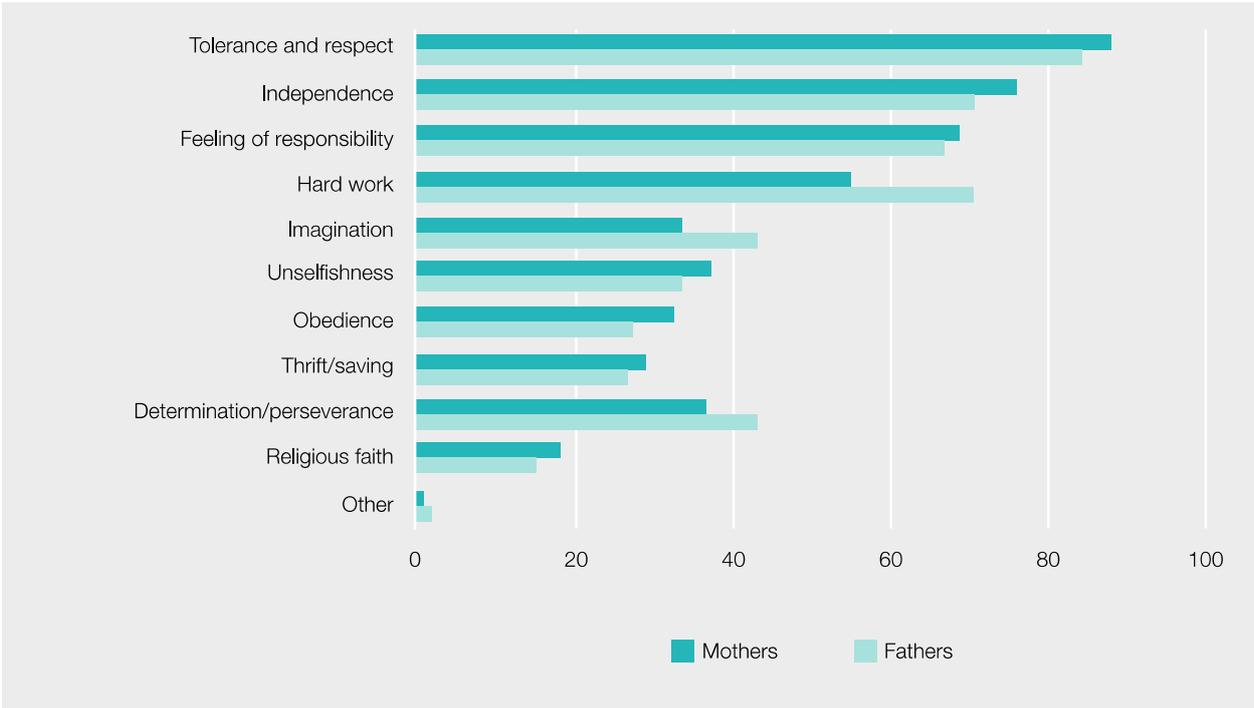
Tabular version of figure 3

Quality	Wave 2	Wave 5
Tolerance and respect	85	88
Independence	79	76
Feelings of responsibility	68	69
Hard work	49	55
Imagination	42	34
Unselfishness	38	37
Obedience	36	32
Thrift/saving	32	29
Determination/perseverance	27	37
Religious faith	19	19
Other	2	1

By looking at the responses in cases where the same primary carer provided responses in both waves (1,042) it is possible to examine the stability of responses. For all qualities, 60 per cent or more primary carers responded in the same way for both waves. The most consistent were religious faith (82.7 per cent), tolerance and respect (77.8 per cent) and independence (70.4 per cent). Respondents were most likely to change their responses in terms of unselfishness (39.2 per cent). The qualities most likely to be chosen in Wave 2 but not Wave 5 were imagination, unselfishness and obedience and the qualities most likely to be chosen in Wave 5 but not Wave 2 were hard work, determination and perseverance and feeling of responsibility. This variation between waves suggests that different values may be emphasised more depending on the child's age.

In Wave 5, the same series of questions was also asked of the fathers in the Dads Survey. By limiting the primary carer responses to women only, we can compare the responses of mothers and fathers. In examining the results, a number of caveats should be borne in mind, not least of which is the much smaller sample of fathers (179 compared with 1,185 mothers). Additionally, the vast majority (88.9 per cent) of fathers in this sample are living in the same household as the primary carer, whereas only 64.3 per cent of mothers have a partner living in the household. Figure 4 shows that for both mothers and fathers tolerance and respect is the most important value to pass on to their children, followed by independence. While hard work is seen to be equally important as independence for fathers, mothers see it as less important than responsibility.

Figure 4: Values mothers and fathers wished to develop in their children, per cent



Tabular version of figure 4

Quality	Mothers	Fathers
Tolerance and respect	88.0	84.4
Independence	76.0	70.6
Feelings of responsibility	69.0	66.7
Hard work	54.7	70.6
Imagination	33.8	42.8
Unselfishness	37.2	33.3
Obedience	32.4	27.2
Thrift/saving	29.0	26.7
Determination/perseverance	37.0	42.8
Religious faith	18.7	15.0
Other	10.1	1.7

As the children in the study get older, it will be interesting to undertake research into whether the values held by their primary carers are associated with the children’s schooling.

Housing and mobility

There is a commonly held view that the Australian Indigenous population is highly mobile (Biddle & Markham 2013). A comparison of 2006 and 2011 census data shows that in the five year period between the two censuses, 43.7 per cent of Indigenous Australians had changed usual residence. However, when examined by age group, Biddle and Markham found that the proportion of children aged 5 to 9 years moving house in this period was slightly higher, at around 48 to 49 per cent. Each year *Footprints in Time* respondents are asked if the child has moved house since the previous interview. The *Footprints in Time* sample, the majority of who are in the 5 to 9 year age group at the time of Wave 5 interview, follow a very similar trend with 48.1 per cent of children having moved in the five years between Waves 1 and 5.⁷

People move house for a wide range of stated reasons, such as wanting a better home, moving close to family or friends or tenancy problems. Some people move to take up employment opportunities, while others move following a relationship breakdown. When people do decide to move, they need to take into account issues such as moving their child from one school to another or the stability of their housing tenure and consequent upheaval. The literature (Biddle & Markham 2013) also demonstrates that people move more often when they are younger than when they are older. So what are the drivers for those who move out of their area compared to those who stay in their own area? And how are these different from families who choose to move locally when compared to those who stay in the same home. Of the 909 children whose families have been interviewed in all five waves, 51.9 per cent had had no moves over the period, 26.4 per cent had had one move, 16.2 per cent had two, 4.5 per cent had three and 1.0 per cent had four, in total 693 moves.⁸

Families are asked the main reason for moving. The reasons may be grouped into five categories; housing (such as wanting a bigger or smaller home, cheaper rent or purchasing their own house), employment (such as moving to be closer to work or better job opportunities), health and education (such as to be nearer medical or education facilities), family (such as moving to be closer to or further from family) and lifestyle (such as changing neighbourhood or being closer to homelands).

Table 16: Reasons for moving

Reason for moving	Number	Percentage of total
Housing	392	56.6
Employment	15	2.2
Health and education services	23	3.3
Family	140	20.2
Lifestyle	63	9.1
No reason specified	60	8.7

Footprints in Time families most commonly move for housing reasons and among these reasons, moving to a bigger or better home was the most often cited, accounting for more than one-fifth of all housing related moves. The next most common reasons were the landlord asking the tenant to leave and being allocated public housing. Of those families who said they had moved for family reasons, the most commonly cited reason was to be close to family and friends.

⁷ This includes only children about whom data was collected in every wave.

⁸ As data is only recorded about whether the child's family has moved since the previous wave interview and not about the number of moves, this number is likely to underestimate the total number of moves.

Using five waves of data longitudinally, it is possible to identify up to four moves for each child in the dataset. There are a range of factors that are significantly associated with higher or lower odds of moving locally or moving out of area.⁹ In this analysis, 'area' is defined as Indigenous area (an ABS classification of Australia into areas with a minimum of 250 Indigenous usual residents).¹⁰ The first analysis compares all people moving out of the Indigenous area, to all people who stayed within their own area (both moving locally and non-moving), with a total of 4,885 observations and 1,571 respondents. The second analysis uses only the data of participants who stayed within their local area (3,581 observations and 1,130 respondents). After dropping cases of respondents who move out of area, families that moved locally are compared to those who stayed in the same home. All results reported below are significant at the 95 per cent confidence level.

People who had a new job or returned to study were significantly more likely to move to a new area. They may have moved to a new area in order to take up a particular job, or found work after having moved. However, starting a new job or returning to study was not related to moving within the local area. Primary carers were more likely to move house both locally and out of area after splitting up with their partner.

Families were also less likely to move house if the study child was old enough to attend school. In line with this, parents were also less likely to move house as they got older.

Torres Strait Islander parents were significantly more likely to move away from their local area than any other group, but significantly less likely to move house within their local area.

Type of housing tenure had a very significant effect on moving house. Compared to those who are paying a mortgage or own their home outright, families renting from a community organisation or renting government housing were almost twice as likely to move out of their area, while those renting privately were three times as likely to move away. Families living rent free, or in alternative housing arrangements such as living in a shelter or hostel, or with family, were four and a half times more likely to have moved away from their area by the following year. Those in government/community housing were not significantly more likely than home owners to move around within their local area, but private renters were more than five times as likely to move locally and those in alternative housing were more than eight times as likely to move, compared to home owners.

Families living in moderately or highly isolated areas were one and a half times as likely to move locally, but were no more likely than urban and regional families to move out of their area.

Housing conditions

Are *Footprints in Time* primary carers satisfied with their home? The earlier article in this report on life satisfaction showed that *Footprints in Time* families were less satisfied with their home than the average Australian but were happier with their neighbourhoods. In Wave 5, respondents were asked whether their homes needed any major repairs and if so how easy it was to have things fixed. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that their home did not need any major repairs. Of those whose houses needed repairs, nearly one-half identified only one type of problems, although some unfortunate householders identified up to 13 different types of

⁹ A preliminary analysis to investigate sources of variation in the data associated with the clustering of observations within areas and within individuals (repeated responses over time) showed that the odds of moving varied significantly between areas and between people within areas. It was therefore necessary to control for these sources of variation using a 'multilevel' or 'mixed effects' logistic regression analysis before introducing explanatory variables into the analysis.

¹⁰ There are 429 Indigenous areas in Australia and *Footprints in Time* respondents live in 146 areas.

problem. Table 17 shows the types of housing problems experienced by *Footprints in Time* families.

Table 17: Housing problems

Type of problem	Families experiencing	Number of problems identified
Structural and electrical	176	311
Major plumbing	178	261
Roof/doors/windows	186	209
Outdoor	95	115
Essential services	72	98
Other	76	76
Total	421	1,070

The table highlights the fact that many families are experiencing multiple housing problems. The most common individual problems identified were problems with windows, doors, screens or locks, plumbing problems with the bath or shower, major electrical problems and major cracks in the walls or floors. Of those who provided a response to whether it was easy to get these problems repaired, 31.5 per cent said 'yes', 33.5 per cent said 'not always' and 35.0 per cent said 'no'. The most common reason given for difficulties in getting repairs done was the landlord, council or housing commission taking a long time to do repairs. Expense was the next most commonly cited reason.

Primary carers were also asked whether the houses they lived in had a range of amenities. Of the amenities asked about, families were most likely to not have a heater or an air-conditioner. However, many of the families without these live in areas in which the climate makes them unnecessary. The majority of houses had working cooking facilities, a fridge, a flushing toilet, a bath or shower, a washing machine, a kitchen sink and a laundry tub. Around 86 per cent of families had all seven amenities. This was more prevalent in urban areas and areas of low relative isolation. In these areas less than 10 per cent did not have one or more of these amenities, whereas in areas of moderate isolation this rose to 26.6 per cent and to 33.0 per cent in areas of high or extreme isolation.

Of those who did not have all amenities, two-thirds were lacking one amenity, the most common being cooking facilities. There were 15 families who were missing four or more of these basic amenities.

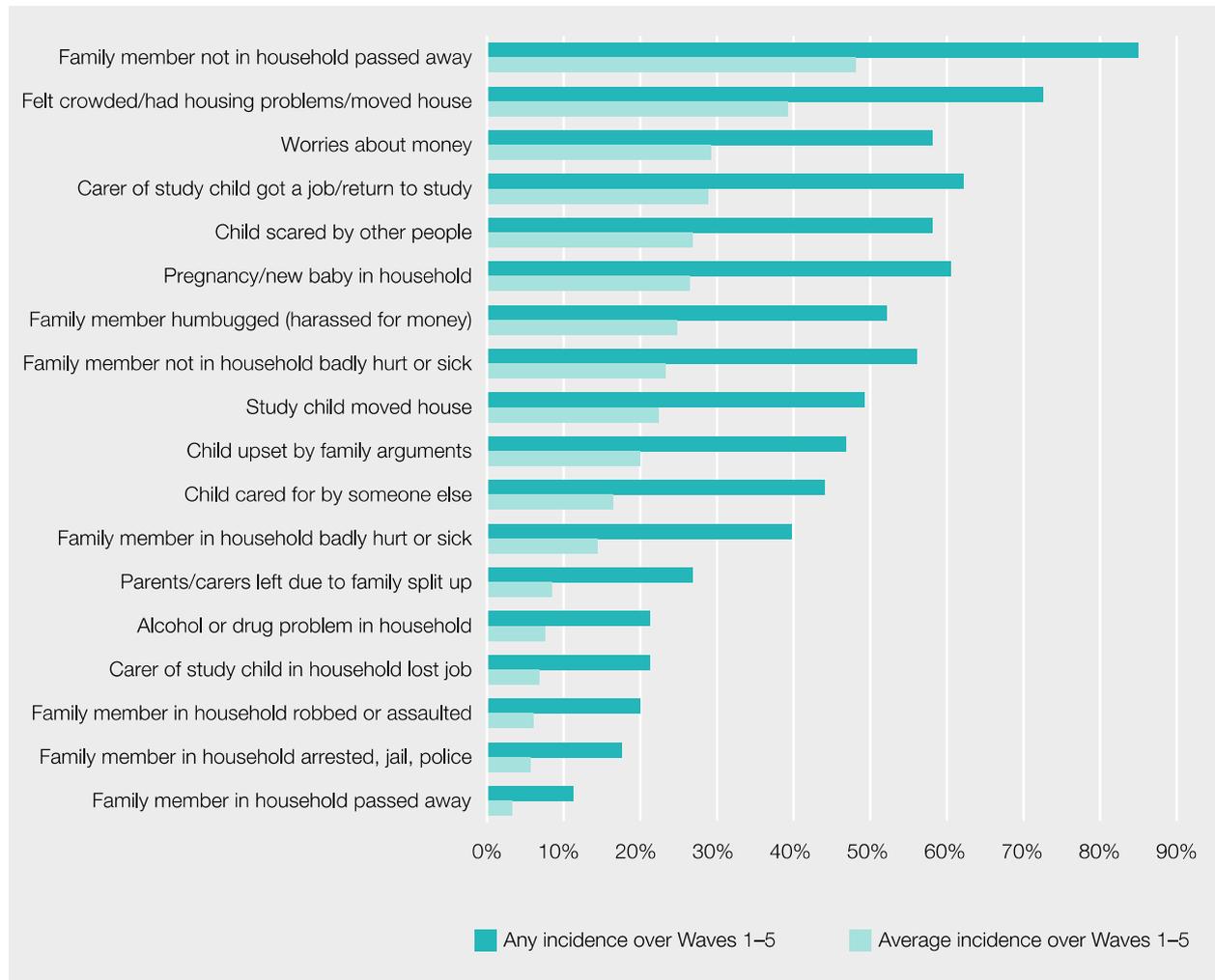
Primary carers were asked what they thought about the communities in which they lived in Wave 4 and those who had moved were asked about their community in Wave 5. The questions covered three aspects of the community; whether it was a good community in general, whether it was safe for children and whether there were good places for children to play. On the whole most people thought they lived in a 'good community for little kids' with 73.1 per cent responding it was very good or good. Safety was more of an issue with 61.5 per cent saying their neighbourhood was very safe or quite safe. In terms of places to play, 54.2 per cent said there were at least a few good places to play.

Major life events

Previous *Footprints in Time* reports (FaHCSIA 2012, 2013) have included information about major life events that the families have experienced in the previous 12 months. This time we examine the prevalence of these events over the five-year period between 2008 and 2012. Figure 5 shows the proportion of *Footprints in Time* families reporting each of these events

averaged over the five-year period as well as the proportion of families experiencing each event at least once over the five-year period.

Figure 5: Prevalence of major life events over the 2008 to 2012 period, per cent



Note: Two events about moving house are included; the variable 'felt crowded/had housing problems/moved house' changed from Wave 3 to additionally specify crowding and moving rather than just housing problems; moving house is also included as one of the questions asked about in the series of questions about major life events. The variable 'study child moved house' is derived from address data.

Tabular version of figure 5

Major life events in the last 12 months	Average incidence over Waves 1-5	Any incidence over Waves 1-5
Family member in household passed away	3.2	11.2
Family member in household arrested, jail, police	5.7	17.8
Family member in household mugged, robbed or assaulted	6.1	20.3
Carer of study child in household lost job	6.8	21.6
Alcohol or drug problem in household	7.6	21.4
Parents/carers left due to family split up	8.6	26.8
Family member in household badly hurt or sick	14.4	39.8
Child cared for by someone else	16.6	44.2
Child upset by family arguments	20.4	47.0
Study child moved house	22.5	49.4
Family member not in household badly hurt or sick	23.3	56.1
Family member humbugged (harassed for money)	24.9	52.2

Pregnancy/new baby in household	26.7	60.8
Child scared by other people	26.9	58.2
Carer of study child get a job/return to study	29.0	62.4
Worries about money	29.3	58.3
Felt crowded/had housing problems/moved house	39.5	72.6
Family member not in household passed away	48.2	85.1

Over the five-year period, the most commonly experienced event is a death outside the household with nearly half of all families experiencing this in any given year and 85.1 per cent of families experiencing the event at least once over the period. At the other end of the scale the event least likely to be experienced is a death of a family member in the household. On average in any year in the period, children were more likely to be in families who experienced worries about money than have a carer return to work or study. However over the five-year period, more children were in families in which the carer had returned to work or study. More than 60 per cent of children lived in families in which one of their carers had returned to work or study over the five-year period in contrast to only just over 20 per cent who lived in families in which their carer had lost their job.

All of these events can occur multiple times both across waves and within waves. While the data does not identify the number of times an event occurs for each family in a year, it is possible to look at the number of years in which families experience each event. Table 18 shows the proportion of children in families experiencing an event in one, two or three or more years.

Table 18: Frequency of experience of major life events over 5 years (2008 to 2012), per cent

Major life event	Once	Twice	Three or more times
Family member in household passed away	9.5	1.5	0.2
Family member in household been arrested, been in jail, or in trouble with the police	13.4	3.5	1.0
Family member in household mugged, robbed or assaulted	16.1	3.5	0.7
Carer of study child in household lost job	17.0	3.4	1.2
Alcohol or drug problem in household	14.9	4.0	2.5
Parents/carers left due to family split up	20.2	5.2	1.4
Family member in household badly hurt or sick	26.9	8.5	4.3
Child cared for by someone else	28.5	10.0	5.8
Child upset by family arguments	25.1	13.0	8.8
Family member not in household badly hurt or sick	30.6	16.0	9.5
Study child moved house	30.0	15.2	4.2
Child scared by other people	27.7	17.8	12.7
Family member humbugged (harassed for money)	24.9	14.1	13.2
Worries about money	25.0	16.1	17.2
Carer of study child got a job/returned to study	29.6	16.5	16.3
Pregnancy/new baby in household	28.8	18.2	12.7
Felt crowded/had housing problems/moved house	26.2	20.9	25.6
Family member not in household passed away	24.7	27.6	32.8

Most children experience events in only one year. The two exceptions to this are housing problems and a death outside the household.

Many of these life events are also asked of families in the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), allowing a comparison with a nationally-representative sample of families with

children of the same age. This means that we can compare the incidence of major life events experienced by Indigenous children in *Footprints in Time* and Australian children as represented by LSAC. At the time of Wave 4 in both studies, the older cohort from *Footprints in Time* and the younger cohort in LSAC were both aged around 6 to 7 years, so the following analysis used four waves of data rather than five.

There are a number of differences between the datasets that need to be taken into account when examining the data. Data is collected on an annual basis for *Footprints in Time* but every two years for LSAC. However, for LSAC most of the questions ask about the last 12 months. This means that the results for *Footprints in Time* are an average of four years over a four-year period (2008–2011) whereas for LSAC results are an average of four years over a seven-year period (2004–2010). While the children were the same age at Wave 4, their ages at Wave 1 are different for the two studies. In *Footprints in Time* the children were aged around 4 years and in LSAC the children were aged about 1 year. Additionally, the wording of the questions may also mean some of the questions may cover, either intentionally or through respondent interpretation, different scenarios. The wording of questions from both studies has been included in the table to enable identification of possible concerns with the comparison. Only events that are asked about by both studies are included; there are other events asked about in both studies that have not been included as they are not considered comparable.

Table 19: Comparison of prevalence (annual average) of major life events in *Footprints in Time* and LSAC, per cent

Footprints in Time 2008–2011		LSAC 2004–2010	
Major life events in the past 12 months		Life events in the last year	
Pregnancy/new baby in household	22.5	Pregnant/had a baby	19.0
Primary carer or partner badly hurt or sick	7.5	Illness, injury or assault to primary carer or partner	7.7
Other relatives badly hurt or sick	29.9	Illness, injury or assault to close relative	15.0
Family member in household passed away	3.8	Parent, partner or child died	3.8
Family member not in household passed away	49.4	Close friend or other relative died	22.5
Carer of study child in household lost job	6.7	Lost job but not from choice	6.4
Worries about money	30.9	Had a major financial crisis	11.0
One or more financial stress events 2010–2011*	45.6	One or more financial stress events 2004–2010*	24.6
Alcohol or drug problem in household	8.0	Household drug or alcohol problem	3.0
Family member in household mugged, robbed or assaulted	6.3	Valuable lost or stolen	5.7
Family member in household arrested, in jail, problem with police	5.4	Legal problems	2.3
Parents/carers left due to family split up	7.7	Relationship separation	3.5
Study child moved house	20.4	Study child moved house in last 2 years	28.5

* For more information about financial stress indicators refer to Appendix B.

It is worth noting the difference in average household size for the two groups. Over the period, the average number of people in *Footprints in Time* households was 5.2 and in LSAC it was 4.4.

The table shows a large difference between the studies. The only event that LSAC children experience more than *Footprints in Time* children is moving house but the time frame for this is one year in *Footprints in Time* and two years in LSAC. Loss of job by a primary carer and a death inside the household are experienced by similar proportions in both studies. For all other events *Footprints in Time* children have a much higher level of experience over the four-wave period than LSAC children. The question in the major life events series about financial concerns shows a particularly large difference and this may be due to the difference in the wording of the questions. To gauge whether this is the case, an additional measure has been calculated and

added to the table (one or more financial stress events 2010–2011). The financial stress measure is derived from a series of six questions that are the same in both studies. The proportion shown represents the proportion of children whose families have responded in at least one year that they have experienced one or more indicator of the listed financial stressors. While the proportional gap between the two studies lessens for this measure, there is still a much higher prevalence for the *Footprints in Time* children.

While death of someone not in the household remains the most commonly experienced event for *Footprints in Time* children, LSAC children are less likely to have experienced this than financial stress.

The impact of experiencing high levels of major life events on children is further discussed in the articles ‘Measuring disadvantage: does one size really fit all?’ and ‘Multiple disadvantage: what about the children?’ in Part B.

For references and appendices cited in this research, please refer to the full version of the *Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children I Report from Wave 5*.