



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

FOOTPRINTS IN TIME 2015



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area

Introduction

Welcome to the 2015 *Footprints in Time* community fact sheets update, sharing the latest findings from the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children for your community. Interviews for Wave 7 of the study were completed in 2014 with the help of 1,253 families like yours. Our seventh year of interviews included 71 families from the Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area (this also includes other towns and communities on Cape York Peninsula such as Weipa). This fact sheet looks at the *Footprints in Time* families living in the Torres Strait and the NPA and compares them with families in other sites of the study.

We thank all the children and their families who continue to participate in the *Footprints in Time* study. Allowing us to be part of your life helps us learn more about what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need to have the best start in life and grow up strong.



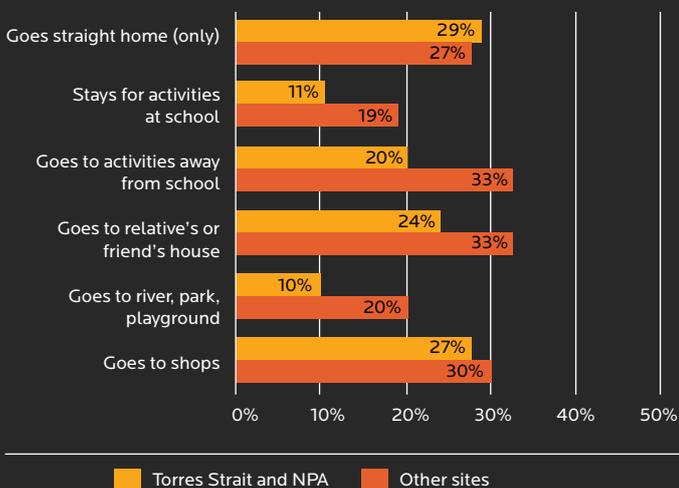
School

All children in our study were of school age in 2014. The younger group of children (born in 2006–2008) were mostly in Year 1 or Year 2 at school, and most of the older children (born in 2003–2005) were in Year 4 or Year 5.

Most study children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region attended a government school (76%). In addition, slightly more than one in 10 (14%) children in the Torres Strait and NPA went to an independent or private school, and the remaining few (8%) went to a Catholic school. Children in the Torres Strait and the NPA were less likely to go to a public school and more likely to attend an independent or private school than children in other locations of our study.

After-school activities

Kids lead busy lives both in school and out. We asked parents what the children usually did on weekdays after school. Some of the children went straight home every weekday and didn't go to any other activities – 29% of children in the Torres Strait and the NPA did this. However, most children in our study usually did some activities after school at least once a week. Many children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region went to the shops after school (27% of children did this at least once a week), and about two out of 10 children (24%) went to a friend's or relative's house. Children in other locations of the study were more likely to go to a relative's or friend's house, rivers, playgrounds or parks, do activities away from school or stay for activities at school, compared to children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region.



Did you know?

Children are pretty **happy about going to school**:

Nearly seven out of 10 (67%) of children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region said they are happy to go to school most of the time, and a quarter more (26%) said they are happy to go to school sometimes.

However, sometimes children **wish they didn't have to go to school**:

Seven out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA (73%) said they sometimes wish they didn't have to go to school.

Children thought that **their teacher is nice** to them:

Seven out of 10 children (73%) in the Torres Strait and the NPA said their teacher is nice to them.

Children also said that other **children at school are nice** to them:

Six out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region (61%) said other children at school are nice to them most of the time, and three out of 10 children (27%) said other children are nice to them sometimes.

But overall, most children said that they feel **safe and secure at school**:

More than nine out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region (93%) said they feel safe and secure at school most times, and a few said they feel safe and secure sometimes (6%). Only one child (1%) said they do not feel safe at school.



Be active for life!

Being physically active is good for children's health, and creates opportunities for making new friends and developing physical and social skills. The Department of Health recommends for all children aged 5-12 years:

- > At least one hour of moderate to intensive physical activity every day.
- > On at least three days per week, activities that strengthen muscle and bone (such as jumping, running, playing tug-o-war, or climbing).
- > Minimise the time the children spend sitting every day:
 - Limit use of electronic entertainment (e.g. TV, seated electronic games and computer use) to no more than two hours a day – lower levels are even better!
 - Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

Source: Department of Health 2014, *Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children (5-12 years)*, available from www.health.gov.au.



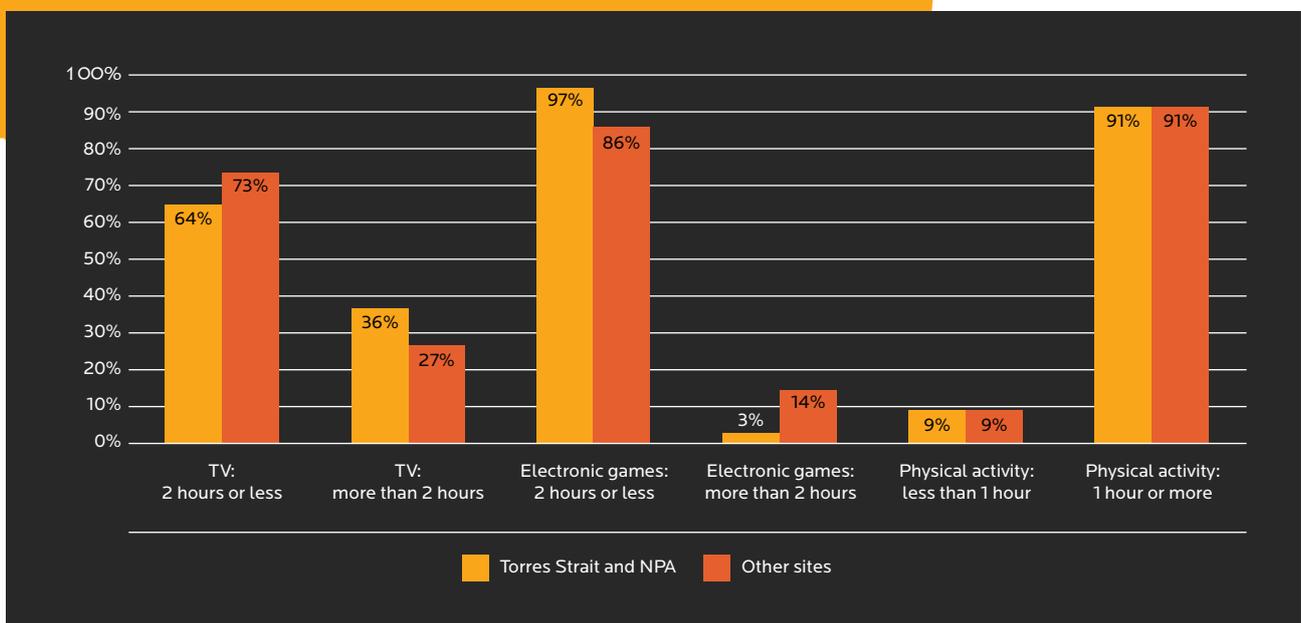
We asked parents in our study how many hours a day the children watched TV, played electronic games, and did physical activities.

More than six out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA (64%) watched TV for 2 hours or less on a weekday, and a little less than four out of 10 (36%) watched TV for more than 2 hours. This is similar to the amount of time children in other locations of our study watched TV. We also found that older children in our study watched TV for about the same amount of time as the younger children.

Most children in our study played electronic games for less than 2 hours on a typical weekday, and in the Torres Strait and the NPA region almost none of the children (3%) played electronic games for more than 2 hours on a weekday. Compared to other locations of the study, children in the Torres Strait and the NPA spent less time playing electronic games. We also found that older children spent more time playing electronic games than younger children.

Most study children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region (91%) spent at least one hour on a weekday in active play, sport or exercise, and only about one in 10 children (9%) were active for less than one hour a day. This is a great result, and very similar to other locations of our study.

TV, electronic games and physical activity on a weekday





Did you know?

We asked the older children in our study about their parents and family. Here is what they told us.

Children told us that **parents expect them to follow family rules:**

Eight out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA (81%) said their Mum or Dad expect them to follow family rules. This was very similar in other locations of the study.

Children also said that **Mum or Dad show or tell them how to do better:**

More than eight out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA region (84%) said this, similar to other study sites (82%).

Mums and Dads like to know when something is wrong:

Nine out of 10 children in the Torres Strait and the NPA (90%) said that Mum or Dad want to be told when the children are worried or have a problem. In other study locations, 86% of children said so.

When the children are doing well, **parents will praise them:**

Most children in the Torres Strait and the NPA (87%) said that Mum or Dad will tell them when they have done something well. This is the same as in other study sites.

What children do for fun with their parents

We asked the older children in the study what they like to do for fun with Mum or Dad. Here are some of the things the children told us.

- > We go to the beach and fishing with Mum
- > I yarn with Mum about school
- > Dad and I sing and go in the car for drives
- > Mum and I go fishing, play tiggy, and watch TV
- > I go hunting, dinghy fishing, diving for crayfish and horse riding with Dad
- > Watch movies, go walking, and play basketball with Mum
- > Dad and I make up our own games and play together
- > We go for a walk, go on trips, shopping and I help Mum with cooking
- > Chill and watch DVDs with Dad, go fishing, make funny faces and jokes
- > Mum does braids in my hair
- > Dad and I do cultural things

Footprints in Time data in policy development

More than 200 researchers from government departments and universities all over Australia have used *Footprints in Time* data for interesting and important research projects. This research adds to our knowledge about what helps Indigenous children grow up strong. The findings are then used in reports which the government responds to in various ways to introduce new policies and programs. Some of the topics that governments have looked at using the *Footprints in Time* data include health, human rights, paid parental leave and income management. For example, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2014 Report* includes research you have contributed to. *Footprints in Time* becomes more valuable for both researchers and policy makers each year you answer our questions.

Did you know that *Footprints in Time* is only one of four longitudinal studies run by the Department of Social Services? The Department of Social Services has recently established the National Centre for Longitudinal Data to make sure we have the best evidence possible from longitudinal data.

Keeping in touch

If you are a *Footprints in Time* family, we need to keep in touch with you. If you have moved or are going to move, please let us know on the free-call number 1800 106 235 or contact your local RAO.