



Footprints in Time

**Two feet on the ground –
standing proud**

Findings from Wave 2 of *Footprints in Time*



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ISBN 9781 921647 642

For more information please contact the
Footprints in Time Team on the free-call number 1800 106 235.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are warned
That this booklet may include photos of deceased persons.



Footprints in Time

**Two feet on the ground-
standing proud**

Findings from Wave 2 of *Footprints in Time*



This booklet is the second in a series of books that gives feedback to the community about *Footprints in Time*, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC), undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The first booklet *Finding our feet* gave the results from the first wave, or first interviews, of the study, while this booklet *Two feet on the ground – standing proud* looks at results from the second round of interviews.

We would like to thank the parents and families who continue to participate in the *Footprints in Time* study. By allowing us to be part of your child's life, we will learn what makes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up strong. We are committed to a study that is transparent, respectful and appropriate.

Special thanks go to the LSIC Steering Committee who have provided expert advice to assist in the study's development. Many of the members gave their time freely outside of committee meetings and their support to the FaHCSIA research team has been genuinely and greatly appreciated.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the research team who are out there knocking on doors and getting to know you and your family and collecting data.

Behind this data are true, living stories, showing the commitment parents and families have to grow up their children strong. As the years go by and we continue to interview *Footprints in Time* families, we will develop a clear picture of how the children are growing up.

There is enormous support for *Footprints in Time* across our study sites and a great deal of interest in the data from policy makers, researchers, service delivery agencies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Ethics approval for this study has been obtained through the Department of Health and Ageing's Ethics Committee, and state and territory Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs).

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Foreword by the Chair, Professor Mick Dodson

First of all, thank you for participating in the *Footprints in Time* study.

We are all interested to see how this research can make a difference for our children's future. Be reassured, I would not be here if I did not believe that this will make a difference.

In the second year, we interviewed nearly everyone who was in the study for the first interview. Some we missed because we couldn't find you or you had moved to another area that we just couldn't get to. We hope that next year we will be able to reach those who have moved to other areas but we can only do this if you keep in touch with us.

Everything takes time, same way as you needing time to trust us, we need time for the story to grow over the years. This study is different to any other study that has happened before. This study looks at everything that affects our children growing up stronger, not just health or education. It also collects information about culture, language, housing, services that you use and the

importance of extended family. Family relationships are very important for our children. Being connected to family history increases resilience and positive bonding for our young people.

We need every piece of the puzzle for this story to develop over time so that it can be used to make changes for the future. It is vital that you are interviewed every year, as without each and every one of you having a voice in the study, we may miss some important information. If your child is at school, I would encourage you to remind your child's teacher to fill in the survey as this information is another part of the story.

It will take time for us to understand and develop the story over the years. The information collected by *Footprints in Time* brings together pockets of information from many different areas scattered across Australia. I would like to thank you for your involvement in the *Footprints in Time* research. It is a valuable contribution to help close the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and better the lives of our future generations.





Introduction

What is *Footprints in Time*?

Footprints in Time is a study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It is the first study in Australia that follows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children over time on a large scale. Nearly 1,700 children and their families were in the study when it started in 2008.

The study focuses on 11 sites across Australia. These sites come from every state and territory, except Tasmania and the ACT. They are divided between cities, regional country centres and more remote towns and outstations. *Footprints in Time* sites are:

- Western Sydney – Campbelltown to Riverston (New South Wales)
- Dubbo, Wellington, Gilgandra (New South Wales)
- South Coast – from Eden to Kiama (New South Wales)

- Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Inala, Gold Coast, Bundaberg (Queensland)
- Mount Isa, Mornington, Doomadgee, Normanton, Cloncurry (Queensland)
- Torres Strait Islands – Thursday, Hammond, Horn, Badu and Moa Islands and the Northern Peninsula Area which includes Bamaga, Seisia, Injinoo, New Mapoon, Cairns, Umagico (Queensland)
- Darwin, Katherine, Galiwinku, Minyerri, Binjari, Beswick, Rockhole Community, Kalano, Barunga (Northern Territory)
- Alice Springs, Hermannsburg (Northern Territory)
- Derby, Broome, Fitzroy Crossing, One Arm Point (Western Australia)
- Greater Shepparton (Victoria) incorporating regions between Wangaratta, Seymour, Cobram, Barmah, Mildura, Bendigo, Ballarat
- Adelaide, Port Augusta (South Australia).

Wave 2 of *Footprints in Time*

The second round of *Footprints in Time* interviews took place in 2009. Some of the families had moved and we did our best to contact them. Most of the families were happy to be interviewed again and they let us know what had been happening with their children. Some new families wanted to join the study, but we did not have many openings, so we could only include a small number of them. Between now and the next few years, we will not be including any new families, as we need to concentrate on our existing families.

We successfully interviewed 86 per cent of the 1,700 families who took part in the first round of interviews. In our third round of interviews, we will be trying to contact those families that we could not reach or who did not respond in the second round.

Most of the questions in the second round of interviews were similar to those in the first round. We need to repeat these important questions because of the nature of study – we want to see whether things have changed over time. We do have some new questions each year. This is because the children are getting older and also because we need new information.

Results from some of the new questions in the second round of interviews are reported in this booklet. We hope you will enjoy reading about them.



Footprints in Time children said they liked:

"Swinging on the monkey bars, playing with all the kids and hiding."

"Playing with the big ball and painting and playing with my friends in the sand and playing dress-ups."

"I like going on the computers; playing with the play dough."

"Going to the library and playing sport."

"Being the leader in line, writing letters of the alphabet, writing my name on the back of my work."

"I like to learn and play and read books, and use words."

Learning and sharing

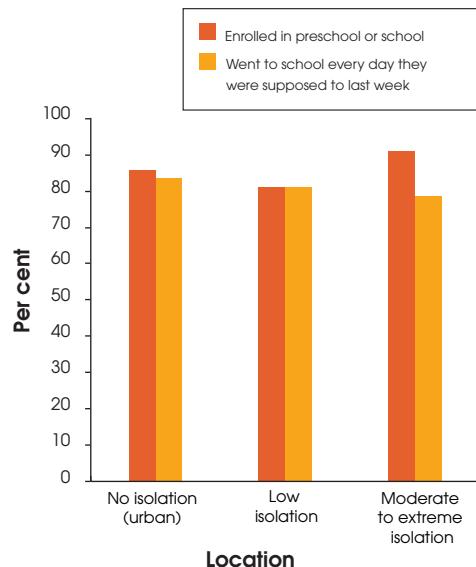
Starting school or preschool

Last year, some of our *Footprints in Time* children went to school for the first time. Eighty-six per cent of the children over the age of 4 years were going to school or preschool in 2009. The rate of school enrolment for children over the age of 4 years old was higher in remote areas than in urban areas (92 per cent, compared with 85 per cent). However the proportion of children who went to school every day they were supposed to in the previous week was higher in urban areas (83 per cent) than in remote areas (78 per cent). Overall, 82 per cent of children enrolled had gone to school every day they were supposed to in the previous week.

Parents told us that their children liked their teacher quite a bit or a lot (90 per cent) and almost all children (95 per cent) looked forward to going to school or preschool most days. Almost all parents (95 per cent) felt comfortable talking with their child's teacher and most (83 per cent) felt that the teacher was good at letting them know about their child's progress in class.

How children travel to school varies with where they live. In urban areas, 60 per cent of children are taken to school in a car, but in remote areas, only 16 per cent of children go to school by car.

Figure 1: Four and five year olds – preschool and school attendance



Parent's aspirations for their children's education

Parents were asked what they thought a good education for their children would be. Some parents talked about finishing Year 12 while others talked about children being confident, happy and reaching their own goals.

"Learn how to read and write and keep up with others in the class and feel confident to express himself and be proud of his achievements."

"Finishing Year 12 with the opportunity to go further, with good teachers caring and respectful of his culture."

"To complete school with no bullying or racism."

"I want her to grow up and be able to achieve anything she wants right through her education from primary school, high school, even if she wants to go to uni."

"Learn to read and write and finish Year 12 and get a tertiary qualification."

"To enjoy her schooling and finish Year 12 and then I'll support whatever decision she makes after that in regards to uni."

"Want all of his main skills to be addressed at school, like speech, numbers, colours, if he wants to go on to college to get a degree or an apprenticeship, I will support him in all that."

"Go to school every day and have good teachers."

"Be in a place where he will feel safe with good teachers and resources and a good school community where he will feel safe."





Getting along with others

To get a fuller picture of what helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow strong, *Footprints in Time* collects information on children's emotional and social development.

Parents of the older *Footprints in Time* children said they were very helpful and had lots of friends. Over three-quarters (80 per cent) of our older children had been helpful if someone was hurt, upset or feeling ill. Most children had at least one good friend (89 per cent) and were liked by other children (88 per cent).

According to their parents, when sharing their things, children who had brothers or sisters or other children living with them tended to share a little bit more than households with only one child. For children with two or more brothers or sisters, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) readily shared their things with other children. For children who had

no brothers or sisters or no children living with them, less than two-thirds (63 per cent) had readily shared their things.

Bullying

As *Footprints in Time* children move through different environments, like school, they may experience bullying. For *Footprints in Time* school children, 10 per cent had been bullied by other children at school and mostly this bullying was teasing. This was four times more common among children in quite remote areas than for children in urban or inner regional areas. Nearly all of the parents dealt with bullying by talking to the teacher or the principal and many said that the teacher was able to stop the bullying. This shows a high level of activity and engagement by parents in relation to this issue, which is important to support children to stay in school.

Strong, healthy and safe

Health

Every year we ask parents about their child's health and common health conditions.

Footprints in Time parents reported that children are generally in good health. In the second round of interviews, over two-thirds (69 per cent) of primary carers rated their child's health as **excellent** or **very good**, 28 per cent as **good** and only 3 per cent gave a rating of **fair** or **poor**. Most (73 per cent) of the study children who had **fair** or **poor** health in the first round of interviews had **good** or **better** health in the second.

In the second round of interviews, over 40 per cent of parents reported that their children had no health problems since the last interview. For those who did have health problems, the most common conditions were ear problems

(20 per cent), chest infections (16 per cent), asthma (13 per cent) and eczema (12 per cent).

Many health problems go away and more than 70 per cent of children who had ear problems, eczema or chest infections in the first interview did not have these problems in the second. Some health problems like asthma can carry on longer, but over half of children (56 per cent) who had asthma in the first interview did not report having it in the second.

Sixteen per cent of *Footprints in Time* children had a stay in hospital in the last year. A very small number (around 1 per cent) stayed in hospital more than once. The reasons children stayed in hospital varied, with the main reasons being chest infections, diarrhoea, asthma, ear problems and fever.





Teeth

As they get older, *Footprints in Time* children are brushing their teeth more often. In the second round of interviews, 72 per cent of our older children were brushing their teeth at least once a day compared to 64 per cent in the first interviews. Over three-quarters of children (78 per cent) had no problems with their teeth or gums during the last year.

Injuries

In the second round of interviews, we asked you if *Footprints in Time* children had got hurt or had an accident. Since the last interview, 13 per cent of children got hurt or had an accident that needed medical attention. The most common types of injury were serious cuts or grazes (4 per cent of children), broken bones (1 per cent) and burns (1 per cent).

Nineteen per cent of children in city areas had an accident or injury needing

medical attention compared to 11 per cent of children outside cities. Having access to medical assistance may have some bearing on these figures.

Children can get hurt or have an accident in a range of different places. For *Footprints in Time* children, slightly less than two-thirds of injuries (65 per cent) occurred at home and 15 per cent occurred at a friend's home.

Child safety

Living in safe communities contributes to children's safety. We asked families whether they felt their communities were safe. Over half (54 per cent) said it was very safe or quite safe, while 31 per cent said it was OK. The remaining 16 per cent thought their neighbourhood was not very safe and even dangerous. The reasons communities are not safe include drug and alcohol problems, fighting, gangs and living too close to a highway or heavy traffic.

Work and home life

Work and child care

In a quarter of families (24 per cent), a parent got a job or returned to study between the first and second interviews.

Mums who were not in paid work were asked why, and they could give more than one reason:

- 81 per cent preferred to look after their own children
- 23 per cent were too busy with their family
- 7 per cent had had another baby
- 4 per cent were still breastfeeding
- 2 per cent didn't work because of child care costs

Families in urban areas are the most likely to have jobs – nearly 60 per cent are earning an income, compared to nearly 40 per cent elsewhere. Sixty per cent of families in regional areas like Shepparton,

Dubbo, NSW South Coast, Mount Isa, Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs are relying solely on government benefits.

Additionally, couple families are two and a half times more likely to be earning a wage than single parent families. Three quarters of single parents are relying entirely on government benefits.

It can be difficult balancing work and family life. Out of families where the main carer works or is studying, the majority of parents relied on their family to provide child care.

Many parents used more than one child care arrangement to enable them to work or study. Thirty-three per cent relied on their partner, 31 per cent used child care centres, 29 per cent had grandparents available for care, 16 per cent used other relatives and 11 per cent looked after their child themselves while studying or working.



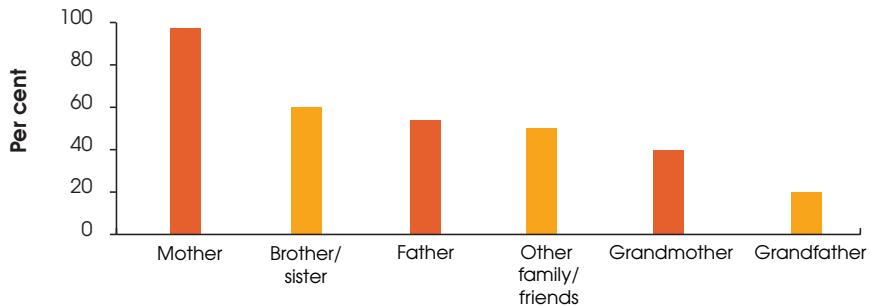


Family involvement

Footprints in Time children do lots of activities with their families. One of our research questions is about how *Footprints in Time* children are raised. There are many different family types in our study, including mum, dad and children, single parents with one or

more children, and children who live with members of their extended family. We can see in the graphs that there are quite a number of different family members involved in raising *Footprints in Time* children.

Figure 2: Family involvement in children's lives

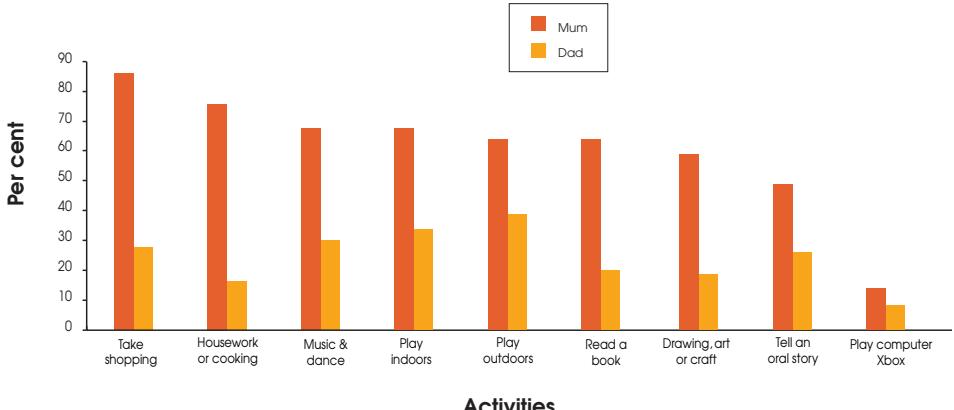


- The graph above shows which family members did at least one activity with children in the previous week
- Other family and friends include: aunties, uncles, cousins, friends and others

Activities

We asked parents questions about the sorts of activities they or family members did with *Footprints in Time* children like reading, shopping, playing outside, playing Xbox or telling stories. In the last week, most children went shopping with their mum (85 per cent) or helped mum with the housework and cooking

Figure 3: Activities with mum and dad



(75 per cent). With their dads, children were more likely to play outdoors and sing songs and dance. We can see that more children do activities with mums than dads. This may be because there are a number of families where children only live with mum. In our study, almost half of families (40 per cent) had a parent living elsewhere.



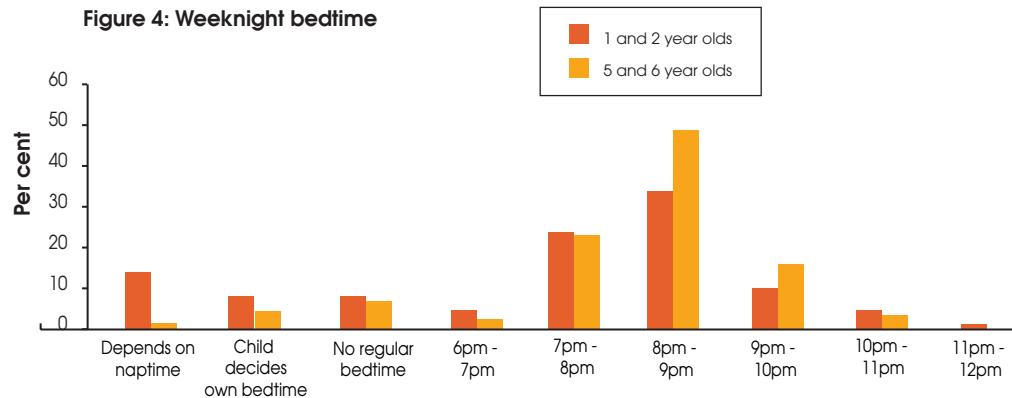


Going to bed

In our second round of interviews, we asked families if they had a bedtime routine or pattern for *Footprints in Time* children. During the week, the majority of *Footprints in Time* children, both older and younger, go to bed between

7pm and 9pm each weeknight. Sometimes our children don't have a set bedtime as it can depend on their naptime (12 per cent for 2 year olds) or what time they decide to go to bed.

Figure 4: Weeknight bedtime



We asked parents to talk about their bedtime routines so we could share them with all our families. Here are some examples of what you told us:

"I'll tell her it's nearly bedtime, and start settling her, then she'll get a glass of water, kiss everybody good night then she'll jump into bed herself and go to sleep."

"Have dinner, sit down with parents and relax, give a bath and then goes and hops into bed with a book and then a bottle of water."

"Goes to toilet, brushes teeth, go for a walk to look at moon and stars, sings song, gets into bed and reads a book and then goes to sleep."

"He goes to bed at 8.30pm, granny reads a book and rubs his head."

"Gets his tickly pillow goes and sits in chair in front of TV and he goes to sleep."





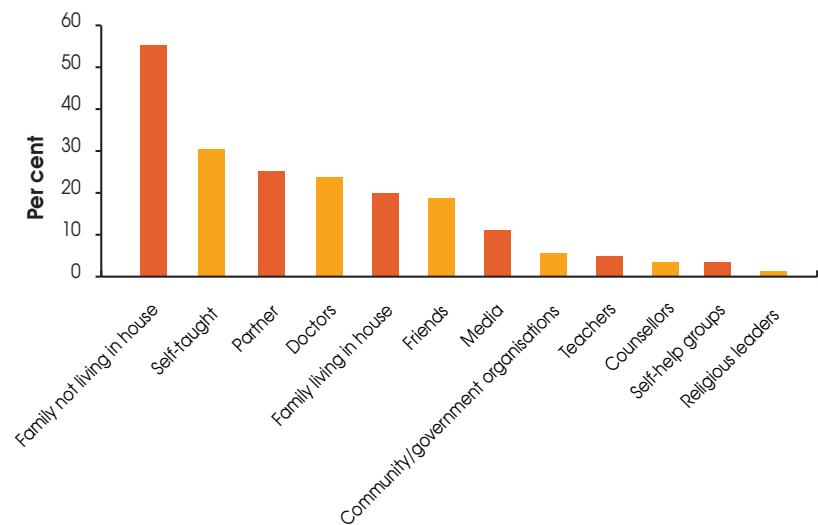
Parents and extended family

Getting advice

Parenting can be one of the most rewarding and challenging jobs. We asked parents questions about where or who they go to for advice and information on looking after their children. Family members not living in the

household was the most popular choice (56 per cent). The second most common response was self-taught. Many of the parents in our study have older children and have learnt their parenting skills through practice.

Figure 5: Where parents go for advice about looking after their children



Coping with stress

You might remember we asked some questions about how parents were going and how they coped with stress. *Footprints in Time* parents had many suggestions of positive things they do to unwind and look after themselves.

“Go out and do my hobbies like fishing and hunting or just hang around the kids and watch them smile.”

“Exercise or turn TV off and listen to birds, music or didgeridoo and try and eat well.”

“Have a glass of wine and watch a movie, talk to husband.”

“Talk to counsellor, write in diary.”

“Try to relax by playing and enjoying time with the kids.”

“Listen to calming music, have bath with candles, gardening.”

“I exercise or go to the beach swimming, or go for a walk.”

“Mellow out with a hot shower and a cup of coffee.”

“I have a yarn to my aunty to unload the stress.”

“Talking with friends, and just get out of the house and go for walks to the beach, parks.”

“Cuddle my children.”

“Give the kids to mum take time out for myself, have a smoke and a cuppa.”

“Sit down somewhere quiet, close my eyes, think about peaceful things in my life and picture myself in my homeland/country.”

“Go to art class.”

“Yarn up with people.”

“I talk a lot and pray.”

“Go bush with the kids, sit down and cook food in the ground.”





Family histories

In the second interview, we asked families about their history and the Stolen Generations. We wanted to understand how and if families have been affected by the Stolen Generations. Over a third (34 per cent) of *Footprints in Time* families said that either they or their relatives had been taken away from their families.

The *Bringing Them Home* report of the 1997 *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* was dedicated to telling the story of all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been affected by forcible removal from their families, preventing them from learning their culture and growing up in their country.

The report tells of the hardships and abuse children endured and the deep grief and loss their parents, kin and communities experienced. The impact of forcible removal lives on in families today.

When *Footprints in Time* asked if families knew of any services that could help them find family members and relatives affected by Stolen Generations, a lot of families had no knowledge of where to go. Of the families directly affected, 14 per cent had personally used services themselves and 19 per cent knew of family members that had used services. But over a third of families (35 per cent), had no knowledge of services that could help them get in touch with family members.

Link-Up provides services for people over 18 years who have experienced enforced separation from their families through adoption, fostering, removal or institutionalisation. Services are also available for family members who may also have been impacted upon by a person's removal. Link-Up can provide:

- * family history research and family tracing to locate family members
- * financial assistance for supported family reunions, return to country, community or graveside
- * social and emotional support before, during and after a reunion
- * healing activities e.g. camps, support groups, counselling, art therapy
- * linking with other agencies
- * community events and education sessions.

Details of Link-Up Services can be found on the internet

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/bringing-them-home-linkup>, or by ringing 1800 200 855.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) also provides information and tips on things like:

- * how to trace your family history
- * what area your family is from
- * searching Aboriginal names.

For more information visit their website: www.aiatsis.gov.au and click on the *Family History* tab.

For those who do not have access to the internet, most public libraries throughout Australia provide internet access. Assistance with computers can be requested from library staff.



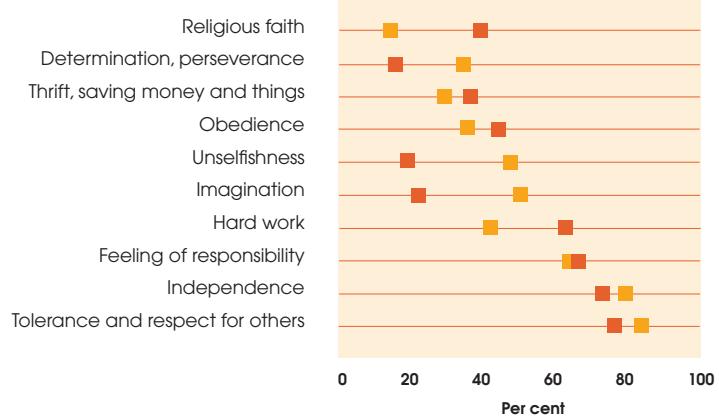


Values

Parents were asked to choose from a list of qualities, five qualities that they believed were especially important for children to learn at home. The top three qualities chosen by parents in both urban areas and remote areas were the same – **tolerance and respect for others, independence and feeling of**

responsibility. But the other two qualities were different. In remote areas the next two qualities chosen by parents were **hard work** and **obedience.** In urban areas the next two qualities chosen by parents were **imagination** and **unselfishness.**

Figure 6: Qualities parents want their children to learn at home



Children's world

Names

We thought you might like to know some interesting facts about *Footprints in Time* families. The most popular first names for *Footprints in Time* children were Chloe and William. Overall, there were 1,166 different children's names in our study.

This means there are lots of *Footprints in Time* children who don't have the same name as another child.

Here is a list of the top five most popular girls' names and the top five most popular boys' names of children in our study.

| Girl's names | | Boy's names |
|--------------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | Chloe | William |
| 2 | Emily | Luke |
| 3 | Jade | Jack |
| 4 | Lily | Jordan |
| 5 | Georgina | Riley |





Favourite animals

In the second interview, we asked *Footprints in Time* children about pets and their favourite animals. Most children picked a dog as their favourite animal. Some other favourite animals included a kangaroo, a giraffe and a horse.

Here are some responses from children when asked about their favourite animals:

"A rabbit – I like their fur. My friends have them."

"A tiger, because it can bite people."

"A tiny dog, then he could go to bed with me."

"Camel – because they have two humps and some have one."

"Cow, because it gives out milk for me."

"Giraffe, because he's got a big head and spots on him."

"Kangaroo, because they jump and I saw one who had a baby joey in her pocket."

"My favourite bird is the cockatoo because they talk back to you."

"A zebra – coz it has black and white stripes and I have shorts that are black and white."

"T-Rex, because they are so big and have sharp teeth and bite people that are naughty to them."

"Guinea pigs because when you get one you get to hold them for yourself and share them with people."

New experiences

At the beginning of the second interview, we asked families what new things happened during the past year. Most families told us about major events that happened to their families, new experiences the children had and developmental milestones achieved by their children. Lots of parents also talked about their children starting school.

“She is more independent, is starting to talk now, developed her own personality and enjoys getting involved in cooking especially cakes.”

“She is going to be a big sister and she talks a hundred miles an hour!”

“Learnt how to be confident in deep water swimming.”

“Started Aus kick and he’s doing a paper round now with his brother.”

“Has own spear to spear fish, good at hunting for bush food.”

“Is learning to write her name, cooking her own toast and makes herself Weetbix.”

“Can sing Twinkle Little Star by herself and knows all her colours.”

“Going camping for the first time.”

“Can count up to 20.”

“Talking more than last year, with sentences and loves to tell us stories.”

“Went to the beach for the first time.”

“She started school and she loves it.”

“He learnt to tie his shoe laces.”

“Plays footy now for Under 6 and got Man of the Match.”





Where to from here?

What type of research is *Footprints in Time* being used for?

The data from *Footprints in Time* is being used to tell governments and policy makers about the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. The study will provide some insight into the reasons why some children transition well into school, are healthy physically and mentally and grow strong in their culture and why some don't achieve these results. As the years go by, *Footprints in Time*'s value will increase as it provides information on longer term life outcomes and pathways to resilience.

At present, we have over 40 researchers using *Footprints in Time* data for interesting and important projects like:

- looking at children's education and how they develop
- going to preschool and day care
- how families respond to hardship
- types of housing conditions
- how families deal with major life events
- discrimination and its effects on children's health and wellbeing
- finding links between culture and feeling strong.

We hope that we will have your support in the years ahead to continue with this important and valuable study.

Next steps

By the time you receive this booklet we've probably seen you recently for your third interview, so we will not see you again until 2011.

In 2011, we are planning to do a special Dad's interview to find out what Dads have to say about raising up their children. We are also hoping to interview uncles, granddads and other important men in the children's lives. So watch out for us!

We will continue to report findings to communities and study families about what we have learned. Each year, we will go back to the same families to see how their children are doing.





Australian Government

Want to know more about *Footprints in Time*?

Go to www.fahcsia.gov.au/lsic

Study participants

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

To receive more copies of this booklet contact us on the free-call number 1800 106 235.

To access the *Footprints in Time* data

Footprints in Time data is made available to researchers approved by FaHCSIA. There are strict security and confidentiality protocols surrounding use of the data. Queries about the study or the data should be forwarded to <LSICdata@fahcsia.gov.au> and queries about applying for the data or licensing arrangements should be sent to <longitudinalsurveys@fahcsia.gov.au>.