**Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)**

**Overview**

LSIC follows the development of around 1,700 Indigenous children and their families across urban, regional and remote Australia.

The study provides a data resource that can be drawn on by government, researchers, service providers, parents and communities.

LSIC is funded by the Australian Government and managed by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

It is one of the largest longitudinal studies of Indigenous people worldwide.

**Purpose of the study**

LSIC aims to improve the understanding of, and policy response to, the diverse circumstances faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and communities.

**Key research questions**

The key research questions, formulated under the guidance of the LSIC Steering Committee, chaired by Professor Mick Dodson AM, are:

* What do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need to have the best start in life to grow up strong?
* What helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children stay on track or become healthier, more positive and strong?
* How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children raised?
* What is the importance of family, extended family and community in the early years of life and when growing up?

**Survey methodology**

Planning for the study started in 2004, and data collection started in 2008, building on two years of consultation with Indigenous communities and two years of trials and pilots.

Information is collected annually by Indigenous interviewers from parents and carers, the study children themselves and their school teachers.

LSIC follows two groups of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children who were aged 3 to 18 months (B cohort) and 3½ - 5 years (K cohort) when the study began.

Qualitative responses are collected about a range of aspects of the child’s life including study children’s aspirations, role models and cultural strengths.

Data is linked with the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

Ethical clearance is sought annually from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Ethics Committee, which was chosen as the primary Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for the study.

**Footprints in Time locations**

The LSIC sample is not nationally representative. However, it does broadly reflect the distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged between 0 and 5 years (at the study’s commencement in 2008) among urban, regional and remote areas.

**More information about the survey** is available at [https://www.dss.gov.au/lsic](https://www.dss.gov.au/ncld)

**Data access:** you can apply for the data via the Australian Data Archive: <https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/lsic>

Releases include: a data user guide, a data dictionary, and questionnaires with data labels.

**Data user workshops** can be arranged to assist users of LSIC data to understand and navigate the LSIC datasets. Please email: [NCLDresearch@dss.gov.au](mailto:lsicdata@dss.gov.au)

**Ad hoc data requests** are available for small requirements. Please email your request to:NCLDresearch@dss.gov.au

**Bibliographic research repository for longitudinal analysis**: see <http://flosse.dss.gov.au>

**STUDY content overview**

**Household**

* Household demographics: sex, age, Indigenous status, relationship to Parent 1, relationship to Study Child

**Child’s physical development**

* Global physical health
* Height, weight, BMI
* Puberty

**Housing**

* Dwelling type and street traffic
* Relocating
* Number of bedrooms
* Housing quality

**Child’s learning and cognition outcomes**

* Language development
* Matrix reasoning
* School readiness
* Reading
* Writing
* Numeracy

**Child’s social and emotional outcomes**

* Behaviour
* Emotional development
* Social development
* Temperament
* Social skills

**Infant health and development**

* Maternal health and care
* Alcohol, tobacco and substance use in pregnancy
* Birth and birth weight
* Post-natal depression
* Early diet and feeding

**Child health status**

* Global health
* Disability
* Medical conditions
* Oral health
* Injuries
* Hospital stays & health visits
* Sleeping problems
* Nutrition

**Parental Health**

* Ongoing health conditions
* Personal, social and cultural resilience
* Social and emotional wellbeing
* Smoking habits and child exposure
* Alcohol habits

**Parenting**

* Parental warmth, monitoring, discipline
* Parental involvement
* Parental self-efficacy

**Parent living elsewhere**

* Child support
* Contact with child
* Quality of relationship with other parent

**Youth risk behaviours**

* Smoking, vaping, drinking and drugs

**Relationships**

* Couple relationships
* Family cohesion
* Family violence
* Closeness of relationships

**Major life events for close family & friends**

* Pregnancy
* Illness
* Funerals
* Money worries
* Humbugged
* Housing issues
* Alcohol or drug problems
* Robbed or assaulted
* Family split up

**Language, culture, identity**

* Parent, child & household languages & proficiency
* Learning language at school
* Household Aboriginal English use
* Indigenous cultural events, practices, arts
* Connection to country
* Connection to tribe, language group or clan
* Racism, discrimination, prejudice
* Family history, stolen generations

**Parent & partner education & employment**

* Highest school year & qualification
* Labour force status
* Hours & conditions of work
* Job duties and responsibilities
* Cultural leave entitlements

**Finances**

* Financial stress
* Government benefits
* Income management
* Money management

**Community**

* Community/neighbourhood liveability/facilities
* Neighbourhood safety
* Trust

**Early education & care**

* Formal/informal care
* Time in care
* Playgroup

**Education**

* School type
* School liking & avoidance
* School belonging
* Absenteeism
* Teacher relationship
* Parent engagement
* Living away from home for school
* Cultural safety at school

**Child’s home environment**

* Activities at home & away
* Activities with family
* Education expectations
* TV, electronic games, computer use and mobile phone
* Internet use
* Cyber safety

**Education (asked of teacher)**

* Child characteristics
* Class characteristics
* Teacher characteristics: including Indigenous status, Indigenous education, training & experience
* School characteristics: including Indigenous cultural approach

**Thinking of the future**

* Inspirations and aspirations

**Other**

* Contact with justice system
* Life satisfaction
* Caring responsibilities
* Gambling

**Verbatim responses include:**

* What is it about being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander that helps your child grow up strong?
* What would you like to change at your school?

**Future topics….**

* Cultural identity
* Self-harm and suicide ideation