



Healthy Development Adelaide  
A Research and Innovation Cluster in South Australia



To all our Partners, Members and Supporters we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We have reached a milestone of 15 years and we thank you for being a part of HDA.

We look forward to another year of HDA activities in 2020!

....To read our 2019 Progress Report go to our website....

....To renew or become a new HDA Member see next page for details....

Anne, Claire, Pammi & Carol

## OUR PARTNERS

### PLATINUM



### GOLD



### SILVER



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education



Government of South Australia

Women's and Children's Health Network



Flinders  
UNIVERSITY



SAHMRI  
South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute

Women and Kids

### BRONZE



## HDA MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT HDA - JOIN HDA

2019 has been a special year for Healthy Development Adelaide (HDA), marking our milestone of 15 years. 15 years of helping South Australia's child healthy development researchers come together to meet and share their important research with the SA community.

### **We've delivered:**

- ◆ ~150 events, with over 18,000 registrations,
- ◆ 28 PhD Scholars supported financially by the Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation
- ◆ over \$120,000 in conference grants for PhD students and early career researchers
- ◆ HDA School Scholarship program, awarding \$1,000 and research career mentoring to high school students (supported by the Department for Education)

So far, we've been able to deliver this at no cost to our members due to the generosity of our many sponsors and partners. However, times are changing, and to continue to bring you a great calendar of events, scholarship opportunities, and new initiatives, we need to ask for a small financial commitment from our members.

**In 2020, HDA membership will be \$20 (excluding GST) for 1 year or \$50 (excluding GST) for 3 years.** This is still vastly subsidized and offers great value for money, unlocking the following benefits:

- ◆ Access travel grants (PhD students and ECRs)
- ◆ Access to PhD scholarships for your students
- ◆ Eligibility to apply for HDA awards
- ◆ Attend HDA events for free (there will be a non-member charge for HDA events in 2020)
- ◆ Build relationships with people working in areas relevant to the health and development of young children and adolescence
- ◆ Contribute your knowledge and expertise to make a difference
- ◆ Support HDA into the future

Join us in fostering South Australian multidisciplinary research, policy and practice at basic, clinical, social and population levels to enhance the healthy development and wellbeing of Australia's future generations.

To Join - Links below or visit <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/healthy-development-adelaide/get-involved>

### **University of Adelaide Staff and Students:**

[https://shop.adelaide.edu.au/konakart/Subscriptions-%26-Publications/Memberships/Faculty-Health-Sciences/Healthy-Development-Adelaide-%28HDA%29---Membership/Healthy-Development-Adelaide/2\\_2719.action?cust-sign-in-method=uoa](https://shop.adelaide.edu.au/konakart/Subscriptions-%26-Publications/Memberships/Faculty-Health-Sciences/Healthy-Development-Adelaide-%28HDA%29---Membership/Healthy-Development-Adelaide/2_2719.action?cust-sign-in-method=uoa)

### **Not from University of Adelaide:**

[https://shop.adelaide.edu.au/konakart/Subscriptions-%26-Publications/Memberships/Faculty-Health-Sciences/Healthy-Development-Adelaide-%28HDA%29---Membership/Healthy-Development-Adelaide/2\\_2719.action?cust-sign-in-method=public](https://shop.adelaide.edu.au/konakart/Subscriptions-%26-Publications/Memberships/Faculty-Health-Sciences/Healthy-Development-Adelaide-%28HDA%29---Membership/Healthy-Development-Adelaide/2_2719.action?cust-sign-in-method=public)

# HDA TRAVEL GRANTS 2020, ROUND 1 NOW OPEN

## Goals

To enable final year PhD students and Early Career Researchers (up to 5 years post PhD):

- (i) to present their research at an international conference
- (ii) to seek advice about their research from other senior international researchers
- (iii) to seek international career opportunities

## Eligibility

- PhD students must be currently enrolled in a South Australian university and to have been a member of HDA for at least 6 months at the time of their application
- Early Career Researchers must be current HDA research members: applicants must be members of HDA for at least 1 year at the time of application
- Applicants must be presenting either a research poster or an oral research presentation at the conference
- Previous recipients of travel grants will not be excluded from consideration, but preference may be given to first-time applicants
- Open to paid members. Membership is \$20 (excluding GST) for 1 year or \$50 (excluding GST) for 3 years <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/healthy-development-adelaide/get-involved>

As a general rule, support to attend overseas conferences is the aim of this particular scheme. Applicants must demonstrate the international status of the proposed conference, if they are seeking support to attend a conference being held in Australia.

## Selection Criteria

Applicants will be judged on the basis of:

- (i) The quality of their application (see attached application form)
- (ii) The extent of their contributions to HDA (e.g. participation in HDA events)
- (iii) Their track record of research output, funding success and contribution to their discipline and/or community (volunteering, conference organisation) and will be judged relevant to career stage

Applications close 5.00pm Tuesday 31 December 2019.

For full details and application process and form go to the HDA website.

## NEW HDA MEMBERS

**Prof Sally Robinson**, Disability Community Inclusion  
College of Nursing & Health Sciences, Flinders University  
*Focus - disability studies: sociology and social policy*

**Prof Tim Green**, Principal Nutritionist  
SAHMRI Women and Kids  
*Focus - maternal and infant nutrition*

**Hayley Leake**, PhD Candidate  
School of Health Sciences, UniSA  
*Focus - adolescent chronic pain*

**Bridgette Minuzzo**, PhD Candidate  
School of Art, Architecture & Design, UniSA  
*Focus - environmental psychology*

**Amber Bidner**, PhD Candidate  
School of Health Sciences, UniSA  
*Focus - rural remote health*

**Dr Katrina Li**  
School of Health Sciences, UniSA  
*Focus - intergenerational health, respiratory*

**Christina Ambrosi**, PhD Candidate  
School of Psychology, Social Work & Policy, UniSA  
*Focus - child emotional development*

**Mohamed Amen**, PhD Candidate  
School of Pharmacy & Medical Sciences, UniSA  
*Focus - biomedical engineering, preeclampsia*

**Arezoo Dadashzadeh**, PhD candidate  
School of Pharmacy & Medical Sciences, UniSA  
*Focus - biomedical engineering, placenta on a chip*

**Sarah Halliday**, PhD candidate  
School of Psychology, University of Adelaide  
*Focus - bullying, cyberbullying*

## HDA RESEARCH MEMBER PROFILE - DR CAROLYN BERRYMAN ROBINSON RESEARCH INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE



Since completing her PhD, Carolyn has been a National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC) Early Career Fellow at the University of Adelaide where she is using non-invasive brain stimulation techniques to investigate neuroplastic changes in the brain in people with persistent pain. The focus of her research is on understanding the mechanisms that contribute to neuroplasticity and discovering how to reliably drive plasticity by harnessing those mechanisms and translating them into novel clinical applications.

In a career spanning 30 years, Carolyn has worked on under- and post-graduate Physiotherapy programs as a musculoskeletal clinical tutor and pain sciences lecturer at the University of South Australia, run her own physiotherapy practice (18 years), and given over 20 public and professional presentations. Carolyn has won several prizes for communication including best rapid communication at the Australian Pain Society Annual Conference (2014).

Carolyn is passionate about promoting better knowledge and understanding about persistent pain, including co-convening an annual symposium for the awareness of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) for clinicians, carers and people with CRPS, and chairing the Education Committee for PainRevolution ([painrevolution.org](http://painrevolution.org)). Since 2017 she has served on local and international committees for the peak pain bodies (Pain Group (SA) and the International Association for the Study of Pain) and been a mentor to local and interstate health practitioners who are building capacity to effectively manage persistent pain in their communities. In particular, Carolyn has a deep interest in building capacity to effectively manage persistent paediatric pain in South Australia. In collaboration with Dr Nicky Ferencz and the Paediatric Chronic Pain Service at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Carolyn is investigating scalable methods of effective pain management and learning lots from the key players in Adult Chronic Pain Services delivery in South Australia, who have been generous with time and constructive advice.

☎ 8313 1305

✉ [carolyn.berryman@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:carolyn.berryman@adelaide.edu.au)

### HDA MEMBER NEWS - AWARDS

#### University of Adelaide Women's Research Excellence Awards

Congratulations to Dr Kathy Gatford and Dr Jodie Avery for being awarded University Women's Research Excellence Awards, and will receive \$5,000 each to further their research.

#### Research Australia Data Innovation Award

Congratulations to Professor John Lynch (Health and Medical Sciences, University of Adelaide) who has received the Research Australia Data Innovation Award. Professor Lynch is an internationally recognised scholar in epidemiology and public health with a focus on child health and development. The award recognises an individual who has developed impactful new data innovations in the health and medical research sector.

### HDA MEMBER NEWS - RESEARCH REPORT

**A/Professor Sue Nichols - Associate Head of School Research, School of Education, UniSA**

Nichols, S., Leach, M., Trenholm, S. & Jones, M. (2019) *Parents' Health Literacy, Health Numeracy and Health Information Seeking: Project Report*, Adelaide: University of South Australia.

Supporting a child's healthy development is determined, in part, by a parent's ability to seek, access, interpret and effectively utilise health information. This aspect of parenting draws on a set of skills often referred to as health literacy and health numeracy. The study described herein, set out to assess the level of health literacy, health numeracy and health information utilisation among parents living in a South Australian regional city.

The report can be found here <https://doi.org/10.25954/5d9449b9824f7>

## HDA Partner News - Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation 2020 Grant Funding - HDA Members

The Channel 7 Children's Research Foundation has been supporting the researchers of South Australia for over 40 years by providing grants to advance the knowledge, capability and outcomes of South Australia's world-class research organisations in the fields of children's health, education and welfare. Today, it is especially committed to building knowledge and capability in the critical areas of child protection, mental health, the effects of obesity and understanding the impacts that social determinants have on a child's life. Community-based studies, clinical studies, or basic science projects are also supported.

**Chief Investigator:** Associate Professor Parimala Raghavendra, Flinders University

**Project Title:** Can LEGO® robotics therapy improve the mental health and social skills of adolescents on the autism spectrum? A Phase 1 trial

**Research Area:** Improving children's mental health and the impact of developmental disorders

**Funding Amount:** \$99,277

**Overview:** Nearly 40% of children and adolescents on the autism spectrum experience mental health issues such as social anxiety and difficulties with interactions. This has a significant effect on everyday participation, including attending school, meeting friends, and using public transport. To date, there is limited research in using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and other therapies to treat anxiety in adolescents on the autism spectrum. Interventions that pique an adolescent's natural interests, may provide opportunities for engagement and reducing anxiety. This project aims to investigate whether collaborative LEGO® robotics therapy can reduce anxiety and increase social skills in adolescents on the autism spectrum.

**Chief Investigator:** Dr Catherine Chittleborough, University of Adelaide

**Project Title:** Young parents and child protection: the intergenerational story

**Research Area:** Improving child protection and its effects

**Funding Amount:** \$96,571

**Overview:** On 31st December 2018 there were 3,515 children in out of home care (OOHC) in South Australia. There is a widely acknowledged need to stem the flow of children entering OOHC. The potential for prevention is high. Our research has shown that while only 6% of all young parents had a child enter OOHC, 58% of all children in OOHC were born to a young parent. This project will investigate the intergenerational child protection experiences of young parents, to understand the prevention potential of breaking this cycle on risk of entering OOHC.

**Chief Investigator:** Dr Catia Malvaso, University of Adelaide

**Project Title:** The crossover of children from OOHC into youth justice: identifying opportunities for early intervention

**Research Area:** Improving child protection and its effects

**Funding Amount:** \$95,850

**Overview:** The cross-over of children from out-of-home care into youth justice detention is striking. However, detention is a last resort reserved for the most serious offenders, with ~80% of the youth justice population supervised in the community. Characteristics of children and out-of-home care experiences that influence different pathways through the youth justice system remain unknown. This will be the first Australian study to investigate when, how and for whom different out-of-home care experiences lead to community- and detention-based youth justice supervision and will generate the evidence needed to inform and target interventions that can alter higher risk pathways.

**Chief Investigator:** Dr Kathryn Gafford, University of Adelaide

**Project Title:** Testing the first treatment to protect babies of asthmatic women from lung disease – a pilot study.

**Research Area:** Basic Science

**Funding Amount:** \$85,000

**Overview:** Babies of mothers who have asthma are more likely to have problems breathing at birth, including respiratory distress syndrome. There are NO treatments available to protect babies of asthmatic women from neonatal lung problems. We have provided the first evidence that maternal asthma delays fetal lung maturation, and we will now use our pre-clinical model to test whether a clinically-used therapy to promote lung maturation protects babies of asthmatic mothers from neonatal lung disease. If this therapy is effective, it will reduce the numbers of Australian babies requiring admission to special care or neonatal intensive care units by 945-1075 /year.

## HDA Travel Grant 2019 - Recipient Report

Damian Adams – Flinders University, College of Nursing and Health Sciences



From the 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> November, I attended the 27<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility (COGI), in Paris with the assistance of a Healthy Development Adelaide Travel Grant. I was there to do an oral presentation of results from one of my studies from my PhD thesis. This presentation was titled “Self-reported Health Outcomes of Donor Conceived and Spontaneously Conceived Adults.”

COGI is a conference that is specifically designed to address controversial issues in the areas of obstetrics, gynecology, fetomaternal medicine and ART/IVF, and is held in partnership with the journal Reproductive BioMedicine Online (RBMO). Considering that this study was the first of its kind to address the issue of the physical health of donor conceived adults, because previously no-one had considered the area to be an issue; my topic was certainly controversial and therefore the conference was the right venue to present the findings. We found that donor conceived adults were statistically more likely to self-report that they had been diagnosed with a range of health issues than their spontaneously conceived peers.

Talks from other scientists covered a wide range of topics. Selected highlights include: Hans Hanevik (Norway) whom asked the question “Can IVF influence human evolution?” which is an interesting question for all readers to ask themselves. His conclusion was that it can and something that I completely agree with. Michael Eisenberg (USA), demonstrated how male infertility is the canary in the coal mine as male infertility is associated with higher mortality rates. Not that it is causative but rather is a comorbidity of other issues and therefore can potentially be a warning sign of other issues. Anja Pinborg (Denmark), showed that children born after ART (typically IVF modalities) can have some poorer health outcomes. While Kypros Nicolaidis (UK) provided evidence that the good old common household medication aspirin can be used to help reduce preterm preeclampsia.

It was great to see so many Australians presenting their research at such a large international conference as COGI. The opportunity to be able to present results from my PhD on such a large international stage as well as the opportunity to network and communicate with other researchers from the around the world was invaluable.

The COGI conference concluded my European speaking tour which starting with an invited presentation at the United Nations 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, for the session on Children’s Rights in the Age of Biotechnology which was a few days prior to COGI. Children in the age of biotechnology was focused on the rights and welfare of donor conceived and surrogacy born children which is the core ethical framework for my PhD thesis. Being able to speak in front of members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was an experience completely unlike a standard conference presentation and is admittedly a lifetime highlight. This is especially so considering the workshop that followed allowed myself and others to work on recommendations that were presented to the UN to improve the rights and welfare of those conceived with donated gametes/embryos/surrogacy and that will hopefully influence international policy in the coming years.

**FILL THIS SPACE WITH...**

**MEMBER NEWS—AWARDS, PAPERS, PROFILE  
EVENTS**

**MEDIA RELEASES**

**CONTACT [ANNE.JURISEVIC@ADELAIDE.EDU.AU](mailto:ANNE.JURISEVIC@ADELAIDE.EDU.AU)**

## RECENT HDA EVENTS

HDA held a Thematic Evening on **Research and Developments in Autism: A SA Perspective** held on 30 October with speakers that included Ms Niki Welz, Autism SA; Dr Emma Goodall, Department for Education; Ms Kristy Logan, Novita; Dr Kobie Boshoff, UniSA; and Ms Lisa Porter, UniSA.



HDA held a Grand Round in conjunction with the Women's and Children's Hospital on **Early infant feeding to prevent allergy: Are parents feeding their babies differently?** held on 6 November presented by Dr Merryn Netting and Professor Tim Green, SAHMRI Women and Kids.



HDA held a Thematic Evening on **Youth Homelessness in South Australia** held on 20 November with speakers that included Dr Tammy Hand (UniSA), David Wark (Vinnie's), Liz O'Connell (SYC), and Gary Storkey (South Australian Housing Authority).

**Talks and/or videos can be found on the HDA website.**

## HDA MEMBER NEWS DR JUDITH THOMAS - TRAVEL VISIT

I had the pleasure of visiting Dr Ramtohul to discuss our common research interests at the University of Mauritius during my recent holiday to Mauritius. **Diversity, Multiculturalism and Gender** are the key foci for her research in Mauritius.

Whilst Mauritius has enjoyed 'sustained democracy and political stability following independence' in 1968, there are serious 'gender dimensions of insecurity' affecting women and girls in this patriarchal society.

Despite equal suffrage and rights to free education, there is a culture of 'silence'; street harassment, domestic violence and backstreet abortions.

Dr Ramtohul's publications include:

Ramtohul, R. (2015). Intersectionality and women's political citizenship: the case of Mauritius. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 33(1), 27-47. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2015.1024008>;

Ramtohul, R. (2016). Contested Terrain: Identity and Women's Suffrage in Mauritius. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1-15. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2016.1253928>

Ramtohul, R. (2017). Gender and insecurity in Mauritius. In M. Izarali, O. Masakure & E. Shizha (Eds.), *Security, Education and Development in Contemporary Africa* (pp. 105-118). London: Routledge.

Gender is a common link in part of my research which compares coping mechanisms employed by South Sudanese refugee boys and girls in school, peer groups and in society in general in Australia.

Thomas, J. (2017). *From Southern Sudan to Adelaide: learning journeys of refugee secondary students*. PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, Australia. Retrieved from <https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/handle/2440/111486> and Thomas, J., & Sabir, F. (2017). *Investigating Refugee Secondary Student Perspectives on Models of Engaged Learning & Teaching*. Paper presented at the I-MELT 2017 Conference Proceedings, Adelaide South Australia.

### Dr Judith. S. Thomas



BA (Melb); Grad Dip Teaching (Sec) (TCAE); M. Litt (UNE); M. ED(TESOL) (Deakin); PhD (Adel).  
Education Specialist/Youth Justice/Project Management/ Researcher/  
International Students/Humanitarian  
Mob: 0404 842 910

Meeting Dr Ramola Ramtohul, Senior Lecturer in Sociology & Gender Studies, University of Mauritius, September 2, 2019

FILL THIS SPACE WITH...

MEMBER NEWS—AWARDS, PAPERS, PROFILE  
EVENTS

MEDIA RELEASES

CONTACT [ANNE.JURISEVIC@ADELAIDE.EDU.AU](mailto:ANNE.JURISEVIC@ADELAIDE.EDU.AU)

## PARENTING RESEARCH - SURVEY HDA MEMBER: CHRISTINA AMBROSI

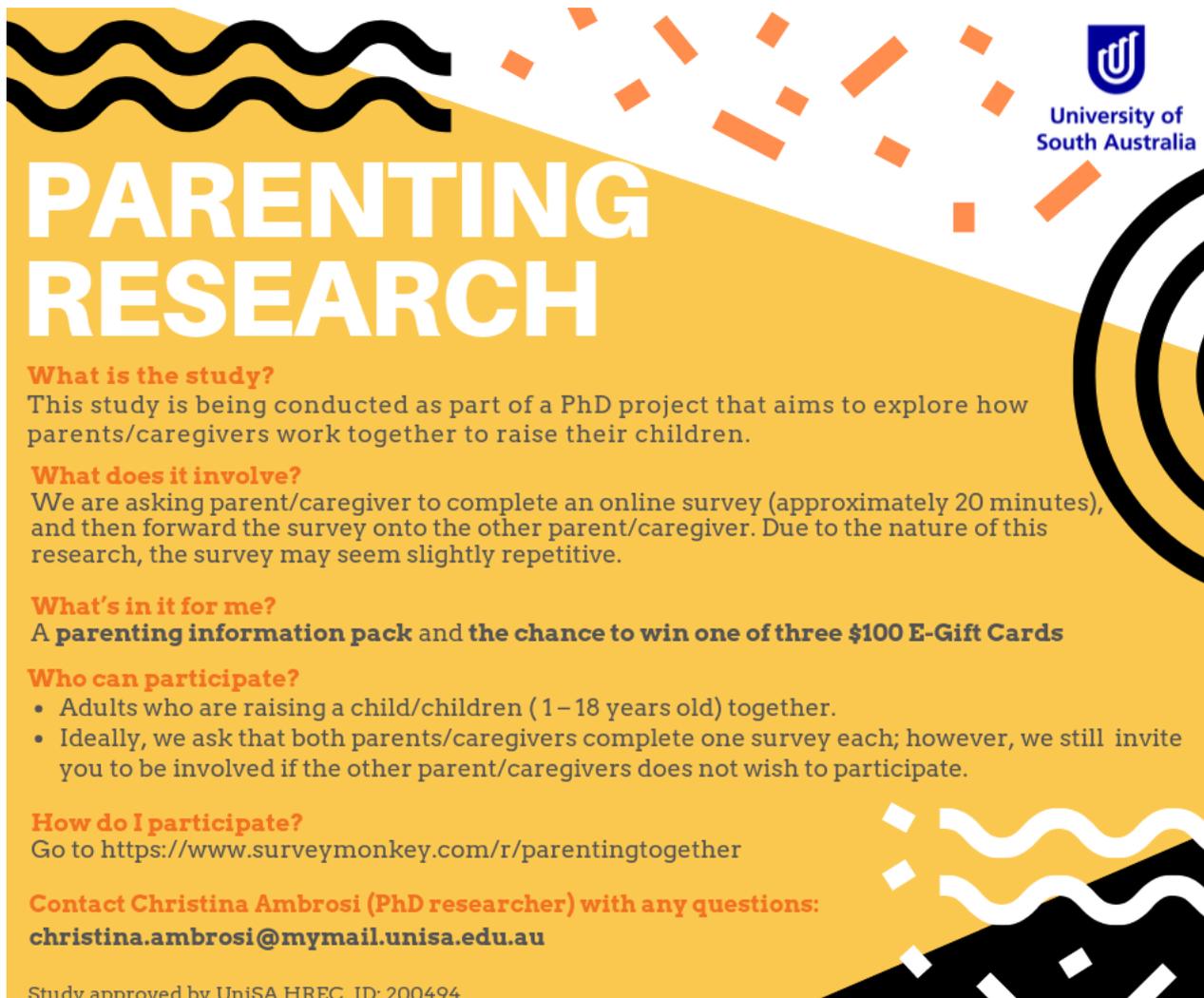
Would you, or someone you know, like to participate in a study about parenting?

Research at the University of South Australia is exploring how parents/caregivers work together to raise their children, with a specific focus on emotions. It simply involves completing a 20-minute online survey!

Upon completion of the survey, participants will have the opportunity to receive a parenting information pack (e-version) and enter a prize draw for one of three \$100 E-gift cards.

Adults who are raising a child/children together are invited to participate! Ideally, we ask that both parents/caregivers complete one survey each; however, we still invite you to be involved if the other parent/caregiver does not wish to participate.

If you're interested in being involved, please follow the link to complete the online survey: <https://surveymonkey.com/r/parentingtogether>



**PARENTING RESEARCH**

**What is the study?**  
This study is being conducted as part of a PhD project that aims to explore how parents/caregivers work together to raise their children.

**What does it involve?**  
We are asking parent/caregiver to complete an online survey (approximately 20 minutes), and then forward the survey onto the other parent/caregiver. Due to the nature of this research, the survey may seem slightly repetitive.

**What's in it for me?**  
A **parenting information pack** and **the chance to win one of three \$100 E-Gift Cards**

**Who can participate?**

- Adults who are raising a child/children (1 – 18 years old) together.
- Ideally, we ask that both parents/caregivers complete one survey each; however, we still invite you to be involved if the other parent/caregivers does not wish to participate.

**How do I participate?**  
Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/parentingtogether>

**Contact Christina Ambrosi (PhD researcher) with any questions:**  
[christina.ambrosi@mymail.unisa.edu.au](mailto:christina.ambrosi@mymail.unisa.edu.au)

Study approved by UniSA HREC, ID: 200494

**ARE YOU, OR HAVE YOU BEEN,  
A BREASTFEEDING MOTHER? - SURVEY**  
*HDA PARTNER: ROBINSON RESEARCH INSTITUTE*



**Are you, or have you been, a breastfeeding mother?**

The Robinson Research Institute at the University of Adelaide wants to better understand what women think about using medications or other substances (such as herbs) for boosting breast milk supply.

If you would like to share your thoughts or experiences on this topic, the institute invites you to take part in an online survey.

The survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. You can choose to keep your survey responses anonymous and all responses will be de-identified for publication purposes.

If you would like more information about the study, or have any questions, please contact Dr Luke Grzeskowiak at [luke.grzeskowiak@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:luke.grzeskowiak@adelaide.edu.au).

The survey is online at <http://j.mp/2Q8bkNR>

This study has been approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee (Study ref: H-2019-33934).

**DO YOU HAVE AN INFANT AGED 6-24 MONTHS?**  
*HDA MEMBER - HANNAH WHITTALL*



**Do you have an infant aged 6-24 months?**

The Child and Adolescent Sleep Clinic at Flinders University are recruiting mothers of good and poor sleeping infants for a study on daytime performance.

Your participation will be required for one occasion only and you will be reimbursed with a \$30 voucher for your time.

If you are interested in participating or require further information contact the clinic on 8201 7587 or email

[casc.enquiries@flinders.edu.au](mailto:casc.enquiries@flinders.edu.au).

# Commissioner for Children and Young People South Australia Reports

## ***Leave No One Behind: what SA's children and young people have said about living in poverty.***

This report is the culmination of consultations I have undertaken with more than 1400 South Australian children and young people aged 7 - 22 between December 2018 and June 2019. These children and young people spoke with me about what living with poverty is like and what they think needs to be done to address its impact right now.

They include a proportion who have a 'lived experience' of poverty, with the remainder drawing on their observations of those in their schools and the broader community who they see living with the impact of poverty every day.

Many of the personal stories I heard were heartbreaking. These children and young people told me that they want to live in a society that 'leaves no-one behind' and that we must stop thinking about poverty as something that happens to 'others' 'overseas'. Instead they want us to find a way to work together to address poverty across our community so that it can be eradicated completely by 2030 in line with the international Strategic Development Goal that has been set by the United Nations.

My report contains six recommendations. In the short term they include delivering free public transport for those children and young people who are in receipt of a school card; increasing access to free Wi-Fi 'hotspots' to support children and young people without access to the Internet at home; introduction of a free non-stigmatising sanitary products distribution program; and expansion of telecommunication hardship programs to include an Internet voucher system.

In the longer term they include the establishment of a dedicated Child Poverty Expert group and development of an audit tool to measure the real costs of education at an individual and school level, both of which would be reported upon annually.

The recommendations have been made in consideration of what steps could reasonably be taken to alleviate poverty in ways that will make a practical difference to the lives of South Australia's poor children and young people now. I encourage you to work with me to bring about the recommendations with the commitment and determination required if we are to call ourselves an inclusive and caring community. If there is anything in this report that you wish to discuss with me, please get in touch via the email below.

## ***First Port of Call: Supporting South Australia's health care system to better meet the needs of trans and gender diverse children and young people.***

The report was compiled following consultation with trans and gender diverse children and young people, their families, advocates and therapists.

South Australia's trans and gender diverse children and young people told me that they want their health care needs to be a priority for the government. Other jurisdictions throughout Australia already deliver models of care that cater to their specific needs and delays and barriers to accessing services can worsen health outcomes for these children and young people.

My report contains four key recommendations to government. They range from providing more visibility for trans and gender diverse children and young people, to provision of better information and training for our health care professionals, so they can deliver gender-affirming services.

Universally, children and young people said that they want health care services that respond well to their particular needs, and which affirm their identity. A health care system that is inclusive, welcoming and affirming will enable trans and gender diversity to be 'normalised'. It will also allow these services to be available when they're needed, taking into account the significant impact delays in treatment can have on a trans or gender diverse child or young person as they reach adolescence, and all that that entails in terms of physical and psychological development.

We know there is much more that needs to be done for our LGBTQIA+ children and young people. This report aims to bring their voices front and centre. It is our responsibility to find solutions that keep up with social change so that these children and young people's rights to health services are upheld.

**Helen Connolly**

**Commissioner for Children and Young People South Australia**

Email: [CommissionerCYP@sa.gov.au](mailto:CommissionerCYP@sa.gov.au)

To read the reports go to <https://www.cyp.com.au/reports/ccyp-reports>

## OFF A CLIFF, WITHOUT A PARACHUTE: PARENTS LEFT IN THE COLD WHEN IT COMES TO KIDS WITH AUTISM

Media Release - 21 October 2019, UniSA



First-line health professionals must vastly improve their communication and engagement with parents if they are to help address the growing prevalence of autism among children, say researchers from the University of South Australia.

Undertaking a meta-synthesis of 22 international studies, researchers consolidated the voices of 1178 parents advocating for their children with autism, finding that parents feel ignored and dismissed by medical practitioners as they navigate initial concerns for their child, further investigations, and finally, a formal diagnosis of autism.

Researchers say that medical practitioners need to adopt a family-focused approach to ensure that parents' concerns, perspectives and observations are taken seriously so that their child has appropriate & timely access to early intervention services.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a persistent developmental disorder characterised by social difficulties, restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviour, and impaired communication skills. The symptoms can range from mild to severe, with early signs often evident from early childhood.

Autism is one of the most prevalent developmental conditions among children, with one in 70 people in Australia on the spectrum, an estimated 40 per cent increase over the past four years. Internationally, statistics are higher with one in 59 children on the spectrum.

UniSA lead researcher, Dr Kobie Boshoff, says the parent advocacy role is critical and must be taken more seriously by medical practitioners.

"Parents are natural advocates for their child, making them an invaluable source of information when it comes to complex diagnoses for invisible disabilities like autism," Dr Boshoff says.

"Yet parents are increasingly finding the diagnosis process overly stressful and complicated.

"In this study, parents commonly reported their concerns for their child were not being heard or taken seriously by medical professionals. They said they felt confused, stressed and frustrated at the lack of support and understanding.

"They also reported lengthy delays in receiving a diagnosis for their child, as well as a variety of unsatisfactory explanations as alternatives to autism. As access to early intervention services is essential for improving the development outcomes of children with autism, this too is unacceptable."

Dr Boshoff says first-line medical professionals and service providers must recognise both the role of parents as advocates for their child, and the importance of the parent-practitioner role, which can significantly impact future relationships with other professionals.

She says to build trust medical practitioners must reassess the way they talk and engage with parents.

"First line health professionals and diagnostic services must ensure emotional support is provided to parents throughout the diagnosis process, engaging parents as partners and taking their concerns seriously," Dr Boshoff says.

"Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong developmental condition. A positive experience in the early stages of diagnosis can deliver better relationships with future professionals, and most importantly, secure better outcomes for the children."

**Dr Kobie Boshoff presented this research at a HDA event on 'Research and Developments in Autism: A SA Perspective', held on 30 October.**

## DOES GROWTH BEFORE BABY ALTER ALLERGY RISK IN HUMANS?

Media Release - 14 October 2019, The Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide



It is increasingly clear that genetics alone do not explain risks of developing allergies, and that environmental exposures before and around birth can program individuals to increased or decreased risk of allergies.

Restricted growth before birth in preclinical studies appears to protect the offspring against allergic responses. However, whether prenatal growth predicts subsequent risk of allergy in humans is unclear.

Many studies in humans use birth weight as a measure of fetal growth, but do not correct for gestational age, so effects of premature birth may confound those of fetal growth.

In an article recently published in *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (JACI)*, Wooldridge and co-authors report the results of a systematic review assessing the relationship between prenatal growth and allergic disease in humans.

They screened more than 15,000 publications from 11 databases and reference lists, and read nearly 1,900 full papers which identified 42 studies that met inclusion criteria. Importantly, they included studies only where birth weight, the most common measure of fetal growth, was corrected for gestational age.

The researchers analyzed the associations between birth weight corrected for gestational age and the incidence of allergic diseases in children and adults.

The analyzed studies included over 2.1 million individuals with data for allergic dermatitis, commonly known as eczema, nearly 70,000 people with data on food allergy and over 100,000 people with data for allergic rhinitis or hayfever. Most of the studies were in children from developed countries, and most were European.

The authors found that heavier birth weight was associated with increased risk of food allergy and allergic dermatitis, but not allergic rhinitis, in childhood. Insufficient data were available to assess relationships between fetal growth and allergic asthma, and between fetal growth and incidence of many allergies in adults.

The authors' findings suggest that faster fetal growth, resulting in a baby who is heavy for their gestational age at birth, is a risk factor for some but not all childhood allergies. Given that most of the allergies were assessed in young children, further studies investigating allergies in older children, adolescents and adults are needed to help inform how and when IUGR alters immune development and susceptibility to allergic disease.

*The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (JACI)* is an official scientific journal of the AAAAI, and is the most-cited journal in the field of allergy and clinical immunology.

### The Family Matters Report 2019

The Family Matters Report 2019 launch took place on 17 October at Old Parliament House on Ngunnawal Country.

This year's report highlighted the continuing crisis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being over-represented in out-of-home care. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are now 10.2 times more likely to be removed from their families than non-Indigenous children.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up 37.3% of the out-of-home care population but are only 5.5% of the total number of children in Australia.

The Family Matters Report 2019 projects that the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care will more than double in the next 10 years if current trends continue.

For further information go to <https://www.familymatters.org.au>

## BABIES (AND MOBILES) CAN LEAD TO 'DAYTIME DYSFUNCTION'

Media Release - 22 October, Flinders University



Parents of infants with sleep trouble have increased risk of daytime dysfunction, including work and driving performance.

The study found sleep-deprived parents are three times at risk of experiencing daytime dysfunction compared to the parents of infants without sleep problems.

Further, as infants continue to have sleep problems, the likelihood of parents reporting daytime dysfunction increases by 14% per month. Daytime dysfunction can impede activities including driving and occupational performance and, with sleep problems prevalent in 20-30% of infants, potentially impacts a significant portion of parents.

Flinders University sleep researchers partnered with New York-based tech company Nanit for this new sleep research study that links infant sleep troubles and daytime dysfunction among parents.

The paper – titled “Are parents of infants with sleep problems at risk for daytime dysfunction?”, by lead author Meg Pillion from Flinders University – was presented at the World Sleep 2019 Conference.

The study used Nanit’s smart baby monitors to track infant sleep quality across 619 families and automatically analyse the data with its computer vision algorithm. A Brief Infant Sleep Questionnaire was then used to measure the presence of infant sleep problems as reported by parents. To measure parents’ daytime dysfunction, researchers utilised a sub-component of the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI).

Co-author Professor Michael Gradisar, Clinical Psychologist at the Child and Adolescent Sleep Clinic at Flinders University, says using the Nanit camera system and AI allows for objective measurement of both the infants’ sleep quality and parents’ behaviour.

“This is going to give researchers insights that we’ve not had on this scale before. It will ultimately lead us to provide parents with the best advice to improve their infant’s sleep health,” says Professor Gradisar.

Flinders University and Nanit are collaborating on another study to provide objective evidence demonstrating the link between parental involvement and deficient infant sleep, finding that parental night-time visits were more frequent for younger infants, as well as for infants with poorer sleep quality.

“We have so many questions that can now be answered by leveraging Nanit’s technology,” says Dr Michal Kahn, a co-author on the study and a postdoctoral fellow at Flinders University. “We’re looking forward to doing many more innovative projects together.”

# YOUNG MUMS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE KIDS WITH ADHD

Media Release - 24 October, UniSA



Young mothers have a greater chance of having a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) according to new research from the University of South Australia.

Published in Nature's Scientific Reports, the research explored the genetic relationship between female reproductive traits and key psychiatric disorders, finding that the genetic risk of ADHD in children was strongly associated

with early maternal age at first birth, particular for women younger than 20.

In Australia, ADHD affects one in 20 people. ADHD is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder which impacts a person's ability to exert age-appropriate self-control. Characterised by persistent patterns of inattentive, impulsive, and sometimes hyperactive behaviour, individuals find it hard to focus, concentrate, and regulate their emotions.

Using genetic data of 220,685 women via the UK Biobank, the study examined genetic correlations between five female reproductive traits (age at first birth, age at first sexual intercourse, age at first occurrence of menstruation, age at menopause, and number of live births) and six common psychiatric disorders (ADHD, autism, eating disorders, depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia).

UniSA researcher, Associate Professor Hong Lee says the findings could help improve reproductive health in women and deliver better outcomes for

their children. "Young mums can have it tough, especially as they're adjusting to becoming a parent while they're still young themselves," Assoc Prof Lee says.

"By understanding the links between becoming a mother at a young age and having a child with ADHD, we're able to better educate and support families sooner.

"The approach is twofold. Firstly, we're able to inform young women about the high genetic risk of having a child with ADHD if they give birth at a young age. This may caution and prevent them from giving birth at an immature age, which not only improves their reproductive health but also the maternal environment for their baby.

"Secondly, we're able to educate young mothers about the features of ADHD, such as impulsivity and inattentive behaviours, which may help mothers better recognise the condition in their child and seek treatment sooner than later.

"ADHD is treatable, but early diagnosis and interventions are key to a successful outcome."

Assoc Prof Lee says while the findings are significant, there are some latent complexities.

"It's important to understand that while there is a clear genetic link between ADHD and young mothers, this is not necessarily a causal relationship.

"ADHD is a highly heritable disorder which means that a young mother may also have the genes affecting ADHD risk which is then inherited by her child.

"Knowing a woman has a genetic predisposition for ADHD can be recorded in her family medical history then used to monitor her health and the health of her offspring. In this way, we're able to ensure both mother and baby receive the support and help they need."

## HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR KID'S TANTRUMS, BED-WETTING OR WITHDRAWAL. HERE'S WHEN TO GET HELP

### THE CONVERSATION, 4 DECEMBER

Every child grows and develops differently. Some will change at a steady pace and amaze us each day with a new skill or word, whereas others appear slow to change before taking a huge developmental leap.

These differences make us all unique – but they also make it a challenge to know when the worry is justified and when to seek help.

To read further go to [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)

# ORAL HEALTH PLAN 2019-2026 RELEASED

Media Release - 9 October, Stephen Wade MLC



Healthy mouths are the focus of the next seven-year South Australian plan for oral health being launched today.

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Stephen Wade said the South Australian Oral Health Plan (2019-2026) sets out priorities to improve the oral health of the State's residents, particularly those most at risk of poor oral health.

"Overall oral health care in South Australia has improved in recent decades, however, the evidence shows that there are still areas of unmet need," Minister Wade said.

"A healthy mouth is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. It enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort or embarrassment.

"Poor oral health impacts on social interactions and work productivity. Poor oral health impacts on general health. It is with a range of health problems and conditions, some which are among the most common and costly health problems experienced by Australians.

Reflecting this Government's focus on preventative health, the oral health plan will guide coordinated action over the next seven years to improve oral health, and help to deliver innovative, world-class care to improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians."

SA Dental Service Executive Director, Mark Chilvers, said the hope was to better target at-risk adults and children, and improve their access to dental care and overall oral health outcomes.

"Around one-in-five adults experience moderate to severe gum disease, and tooth decay is among the most common causes of potentially preventable hospital admissions in children under ten," Mr Chilvers said.

"The priorities of the plan include promoting oral health and nutrition, improving accessibility, and increasing the capacity of our workforce to meet the community's needs.

Already we've been able to make inroads, such as formalising a data sharing arrangement with the Department of Education to facilitate increased access to dental care for children at greater risk of poor oral health.

We have also recently formed the Rural and Remote Oral Health Coalition focused on the planning and provision of oral health services in these communities."

The Plan was developed in conjunction with dental and community representatives. A group of stakeholder representatives will be established to track its implementation and progress.

Dr Alan Mann, from the Australian Dental Association SA Branch (ADASA), said the ADASA looked forward to the implementation of the oral health plan and developing strategies in particular which improve the oral health of residents in aged care facilities.

"Our elderly can then receive the standard of care they deserve, and ensure they are able to eat and speak for the betterment of their overall general health and wellbeing," Dr Mann said.

Professor Andrew Zannettino, Interim Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences said the University of Adelaide is committed to working closely with the South Australian Dental Service and the wider private dental sector to meet the current and future workforce requirements for South Australia.

"Maintaining the established high standards of our dentist, oral health therapist and specialist dental graduates is essential to improving the oral health of our community," Prof Zannettino said.

For more information, go to [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/oralhealthplan](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/oralhealthplan)

# Parenting pre-teens: A pivotal time for children and parents

## Short Article

This short article explores the challenges and opportunities for parents of children in the pre-teen years, based on a recent survey.

**Summary:** The pre-teen years (10–12 years) are a phase of rapid change before the increased independence of adolescence. - Parents of children in the pre-teen years are well placed to meet the needs of their children. - Parents of pre-teens increasingly use talk to guide their children's behaviour – for example, around safe internet use. - These years offer the opportunity for parents to influence their children's behaviour before the challenges of teen years.

### Introduction

The pre-teen years (10–12 years) are a phase of rapid change for children, and include the onset of puberty, increased independence from parents and an increase in engagement with social media. There has been little focus on the pre-teen years in child development research. In particular, we know little about the experiences of parents in guiding and supporting children through this phase of development. Understanding how parents are faring is critical to delivering better outcomes for children, as evidence shows there is a powerful connection between parent wellbeing and child wellbeing (Davidov & Grusec, 2006; Davis-Kean, 2005; Repetti, Taylor & Seeman, 2002). The Parenting Today in Victoria Survey was a representative survey of 2,600 parents conducted in 2016<sup>1</sup>. The survey was the first in a series of surveys to be conducted every three years, aimed at exploring the behaviours, concerns and needs of Victoria's parents. To explore the challenges and opportunities faced by parents of pre-teens, the Parenting Research Centre completed secondary data analysis of the Parenting Today in Victoria Survey. The focus cohort of parents of children aged 10–12 yrs were compared to parents of younger (0–9 yrs) and older (13–18 yrs) children.

### Parents of pre-teens are confident about their parenting

Parents of children in the pre-teen years were well placed to meet the needs of their children. These parents reported using a range of strategies to keep their children safe, they knew where to seek help if needed and they were comfortable talking to their children's educators. Most of these parents reported they felt confident in their parenting. These findings are particularly important when considering the upcoming challenges of adolescence. The parents of teens reported that they: felt less confident about managing the transition into secondary school than parents of children transitioning into primary school; were more concerned about the time their children spent using electronic devices than the parents of all other age groups; were more concerned than the parents of 6–12-year-olds about their children's sleep; found it harder to know how to help their children do well at school compared to all other child age groups; were less sure about where to get professional help for their parenting compared to parents of 6–12-year-olds experienced lower levels of confidence in their parenting compared to parents of younger children.

### Signs of increasing independence

In guiding their pre-teens' internet use, parents reported a trend towards ways of parenting that reflected increased expectations of responsibility and independence. These parents supervised their children's device use less, had fewer ground rules and limited children's time less than parents of younger children. They were also less likely to use internet safety software or locks. And a significantly greater proportion of parents talked to their children about safe internet use at this age compared with parents of younger children. We also saw a trend towards these parents talking more to guide children's behaviour generally, in preference to other strategies like giving treats for behaving well or smacking. Talking about problems increases with age, peaks at 10–12 years, then drops slightly for parents of adolescents. In addition to talking more to their children to guide their behaviour, these parents also reported setting rules and limits on their children's movements in free time. These rules and limits were greatest in the pre-teen years compared to any other age group, and they dropped off significantly in the teenage years.

### Parenting opportunity in the pre-teen years

The pre-teen years represent an opportunity for parents to communicate expectations around personal safety and to establish patterns of behaviour while they still have some level of influence. It is also a potentially important time for governments and non-government service providers to support parents to learn and use new skills to prepare their children – and themselves – for the challenges ahead. Service providers are encouraged to access the free resources on the Raising Children website to assist them in supporting the parents of pre-teens.

### Acknowledgement

This short article is based on the longer paper 'Parenting pre-teens: A pivotal time for children and parents', by Wade, C., Almendingen, A., & Robinson, E. (in preparation).