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Growing up in Australia: A unique data resource for researchers

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Abstract

Growing Up in Australia is the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children being conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) with a consortium of eight other research organisations. Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Family and Community Services, the study aims to inform social policy debate, and identify opportunities for early intervention and prevention strategies for children.

The study will follow the development of two cohorts (5000 infants and 5000 four year olds) over seven years. Study informants include the parents, carers and teachers of the child, and, when of an appropriate age, the children themselves. First wave data is being collected in 2004. The wealth of data collected includes information on multiple aspects of children's development (social, emotional, intellectual and physical) and their social environment (home, childcare, pre-school and school).

This rich dataset will be warehoused at AIFS and made widely available to researchers in 2005 allowing them to address a myriad of research questions. Given its larger scale, longitudinal structure, and considerable breadth, it will be a unique opportunity to shed light on many critical issues concerning children's development in the current social, economic and political context. This paper will provide an overview of the study focusing on the breadth of data available to researchers, including a preview of findings.

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