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The MESSI Study: Seeking Participants for a National Online Survey

We are conducting a national online survey about children and young people's participation in social research about sensitive issues, and are looking for the following people to participate:

- Young people aged 12 - 17 years
- Parents of children aged 7 – 14 years
- Professionals who work with children aged 7 – 14 years

The survey is voluntary, anonymous, and you can go in the draw for a \$200 voucher. For more information and to complete the survey, visit www.acu.edu.au/messi

This survey is part of a three-year study, which is being conducted by the Australian Catholic University, University of New South Wales, University of Melbourne and Southern Cross University.



News from the Director

I commenced as the Director of ICPS in February 2017, and I'm delighted to be leading a team of dedicated researchers and staff who are passionate about and committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor and founding Director of ICPS, Professor Morag McArthur, and extend my sincere gratitude for her ongoing support as an Associate of ICPS.

This has been a busy period for ICPS with the completion of several projects, including the **Kids Safety Studies for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**. This critical research has directly engaged children and young people about issues of safety in institutions, and will inform the Royal Commission's recommendations and future policy and practice.

In addition, the **MESSI: Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues** study has launched a national online survey of young people, parents and professionals, about involving children in social research. I'd encourage you to participate in this valuable research and share it with your networks. More information is provided in this issue. These research studies, and our current research and evaluation work highlights the key strengths of ICPS; in promoting children's participation, strengthening service systems and informing practice, and supporting child safe communities.

Professor Daryl Higgins
Director, Institute of Child Protection Studies



Project Spotlight:

Kids Safety Studies for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

About the Studies

ICPS has significantly contributed to the research program of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which was established in 2013 and concludes in 2017. The Royal Commission has explored the extent to which children and young people have been exposed to child sexual abuse, and considered some of the reasons why institutions have failed to actively prevent child sexual abuse and appropriately respond when children and young people have been harmed.

The Royal Commission commissioned ICPS, with colleagues from the Queensland University of Technology and Griffith University, to conduct two important studies with children and young people, about the views, perceptions and experiences of safety in institutions. These studies have been the first of their kind to directly engage with children and young people about issues of interpersonal safety in institutions.

The first study, conducted between 2013 and 2016, aimed to develop an understanding of how children perceive safety and consider it within institutional contexts. It included a literature review, focus groups with children and young people in a range of settings, and a national online survey of young people. It also prompted a nested study conducted by Southern Cross University, which spoke to children and young people with disability.

The second study, conducted from 2015 to 2016, spoke directly to 27 children and young people in residential care, and asked them to conceptualise safety, identify their key safety concerns and discuss the ways that they believed residential care units were preventing and responding to abuse-related issues. With little literature exploring how children and young people perceive safety from abuse or peer sexual violence in residential care, this study provided new and valuable insights.

Findings

The findings of these studies identified significant implications, to inform institutions about how they could better ensure children's safety. **Children and young people need adults to pay attention when they raise concerns about their safety;** and highlighted the critical need for adults to listen to and work with children to identify, prevent and respond to safety issues, including child sexual abuse.

These studies have helped to inform local and national initiatives that aim to enhance the safety of children and young people. For example, a number of Children's Commissioners have promoted children's voices in their Child Safe literature. We are also working with Cornell University to guide measures capturing young people's level of safety in residential care and have engaged with media to promote our findings to the broader community.

Although these studies for the Royal Commission have concluded, ICPS is continuing work to support programs and organisations to improve their capacity to keep children safe. We are working to engage partners in rolling out a second wave of the ASK-YP survey, measuring children's safety in institutions; providing expert advice to organisations on implementing Child Safe Standards and other Child Safe approaches; and providing training and sector support. Daryl Higgins and Tim Moore are also advising the development of ACU courses for practitioners.



Project Spotlight:

Kids Safety Studies for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

In The Media:

Young people reluctant to report sexual abuse, royal commission research finds

By Ursula Mahone
October 29, 2016, 1:28pm

1 in 10 say nothing
1 in 5 if it involves a peer

VIDEO: Statistics about child safety from the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) News

Children and young people are reluctant to speak out about sexual abuse, according to a survey for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

MAP: Australia

Home > Australia

Royal commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse

Involving children in decisions 'will help protect them from sexual abuse'

Royal commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse

By Suzanne Sherry
Monday 7 May 2017 10:00 AM AEST

Young People Feel Unsafe in Residential Care

The majority of young people in residential care do not feel safe and believe "drastic changes" need to be made to improve their safety, according to a new report.



Monday, 20th December 2016
at 10:46 pm
Wendy Williams, Journalist

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released the findings of a study on Monday exploring the experiences of children and young people in residential care.

Involving children in decisions 'will help protect them from sexual abuse'
The Guardian Australia, 1 May 2017

Young people feel unsafe in residential care
Probono Australia, 19 December 2016

Young people reluctant to report sexual abuse, royal commission finds
ABC News, 29 October 2016

How schools can make their students feel safer
The Educator, 9 September 2016

An alarming number of kids feeling uneasy talking to adults about safety
Huffington Post, 8 September 2016

Report calls for greater focus on child safety concerns
ABC RN Drive, 7 September 2016

Students don't trust schools to protect them from abusers
Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 2016

Survey shows children's abuse concerns
ABC PM with Mark Colvin, 7 September 2016

What do children and young people have to say about safety in institutions?
The Conversation, 18 August 2015

Australian children say adults need to listen to their concerns about safety
ABC The World Today, 4 August 2015

Animations and children's reports:

SAFE
Children and young people feel as that they thought about...
COMFORTABLE RELAXED HAPPY
PROTECTED LISTENED TALKED ASKED
PEOPLE CHECKED PETS FOR KIDS
READING MUSIC CAMP BEDROOM
LIBRARY SCHOOL YOUNG POLICE
DOCTORS BUS BIKE RIDING

UNSAFE
Children and young people feel as that they thought about...
CONFUSED WORRIED SCARED FURRY
UNKNOWN CHALLENGE STRESS
SILENTLY ASKED AT NIGHT
LARGE PRESSURE SAYS
CYBERBULLYING WOUND ANGRY
WANTS YOU FEEL WOUND

IT SIGNS THAT AN ORGANISATION IS SAFE
Children and young people feel as that they thought about...
There are several signs that an organisation is safe:
1. The organisation values children and young people's safety concerns.
2. The organisation listens to children and young people's views and makes changes to improve their safety.
3. Staff feel necessary to listen to children and young people about safety concerns and what they are doing to keep them safe.
4. Children and young people are given a say on what should happen about their safety and what they are doing to keep them safe.

Children's Report on the findings of focus groups: Have a Say on Safety



Animation from the Kids Safety Study:
What do children and young people think about safety?

Animation from the Residential Care study:
The Safety of Young People in Residential Care

Project Spotlight:

Kids Safety Studies for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Research Reports



Taking us seriously: Children and young people talk about safety and institutional responses to their safety concerns
 2015, Tim Moore, Morag McArthur, Debbie Noble-Carr, Deborah Harcourt



Our safety counts: Children and young people's perceptions of safety and institutional responses to their safety concerns
 2016, Tim Moore, Morag McArthur, Jessica Herde, Steven Roche, Patrick O'Leary



Safe and sound: Exploring the safety of young people in residential care
 2016, Tim Moore, Morag McArthur, Steven Roche, Jodi Death, Clare Tilbury

Research to Practice Issues



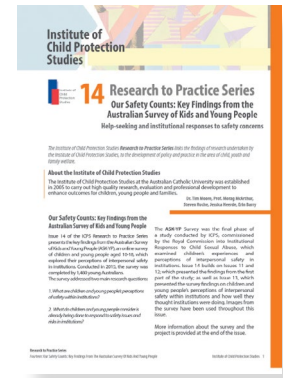
Issue 11:
 Not everything is imaginary: Children's conceptualisations of Interpersonal Safety



Issue 12:
 Children's views about safety in institutions



Issue 13:
 Our Safety Counts: Key findings from the Australian Survey of Kids and Young People – Perceptions of interpersonal safety and characteristics of safe institutions



Issue 14:
 Our Safety Counts: Key findings from the Australian Survey of Kids and Young People – help-seeking and institutional responses to safety concerns

Selected Research Updates

[Click Here](#)

for more information about these projects and other current studies.



kContact: Keeping Contact between Parents and Children in Care

This 3 year ARC Linkage Project has developed and trialled an enhanced model of managing and supporting contact between children in care and their birth parents, and is being conducted in the ACT and Victoria. NSW FACS has funded an extension of the project into NSW.



MESSI: Managing Ethical Studies on Sensitive Issues

This 3 year ARC Discovery Project aims to better understand and address the tensions between the protection of children and young people and their participation in social research about sensitive issues. Phase two is currently underway and seeking participants to conduct a national online survey of young people, parents and professionals. Visit www.acu.edu.au/messi for more information.

Encouraging and sustaining quality care to improve outcomes for children and young people in care

This 3 year project is being conducted in collaboration with the Australia Foster Care Association, and seeks to help address the difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled foster carers, by identifying the most effective strategies to attract, support and retain successful foster care families. The second phase of the project, a qualitative study to identify successful and new approaches to recruitment, support and retention of foster care and kinship carers, is close to completion.

Exploring the contemporary causes of family conflict that contribute to experiences of youth homelessness

Melbourne City Mission commissioned ICPS to explore the contemporary social and cultural factors that contribute to family conflict and breakdown that may lead to young people experiencing homelessness, as well as the risk and protective factors for family conflict and breakdown. Focus groups have been conducted with young people, parents and services, and the final report is being developed.

Help-seeking and primary prevention research project

Commissioned by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, this project investigated the help-seeking behaviours, needs and potential service responses for a range of target groups who are concerned about potentially sexually harmful or sexually abuse behaviours. The final report was released by the Royal Commission in early 2017.

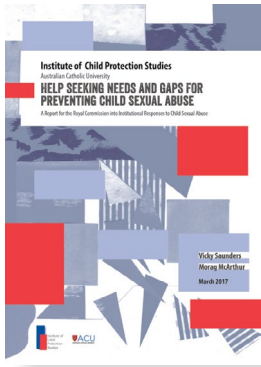
A meta-synthesis of children's qualitative evidence

The Department of Social Services funded ICPS to conduct an analysis of the available evidence to explore and synthesise knowledge from qualitative studies of children's views and experiences of family and domestic violence. The meta-synthesis aimed to assess the extent and nature of children's qualitative evidence to inform social policy and practice in the domain of family and domestic violence. A draft report has been submitted to DSS.

Youth Hope Evaluation

ICPS and the Australian Institute of Criminology were commissioned by NSW FACS to undertake a process and outcome evaluation, and economic assessment, of the Youth Hope Program. A literature review is currently underway, and a qualitative survey of service providers is also being completed.

New Publications

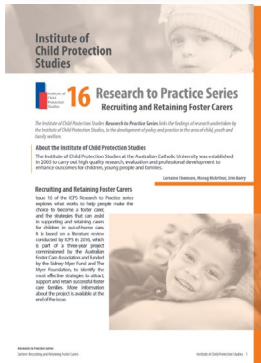


Research Reports:

Help-seeking needs and gaps for preventing child sexual abuse

2017, Vicky Saunders, Morag McArthur

A report for the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



Research to Practice Issues:

Recruiting and Retaining Foster Carers

2017, Lorraine Thomson, Morag McArthur, Erin Barry

Journal Articles:

Moore, T., & McArthur, M. (2017).

You Feel It in Your Body: How Australian children and young people think about and experience feeling and being safe. Children & Society, 31(3), 206-218.

Moore, T., McArthur, M., & Noble-Carr, D. (2017).

More a marathon than a hurdle: Towards children's informed consent in a study on safety. Qualitative Research.

Noble-Carr, D., & Woodman, E. (2017).

Considering identity and meaning constructions for vulnerable young people. Journal of Adolescent Research.

Roche, S. (2017).

Child protection and maltreatment in the Philippines: A systematic review of the literature. Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies, 4(1), 104-128.

Roche, S., & Noble-Carr, D. (2017).

Agency and its Constraints among Biological Children of Foster Carers. Australian Social Work, 70(1), 66-77.

Saunders, V. (2017).

Children of prisoners - children's decision-making about contact. Child & Family Social Work, 22(S2), 63-72.

Taplin, S. (2017).

Prenatal reporting to child protection: Characteristics and service responses in one Australian jurisdiction. Child Abuse & Neglect, 65, 68-76.

Thomson, L., McArthur, M., & Camilleri, P. (2017).

Is it 'fair'? Representation of children, young people and parents in an adversarial court system. Child and Family Social Work, 22(S2), 23-32.

ICPS Staff

[Click Here](#)

for more information about ICPS research and professional staff.

Professor Daryl Higgins
Director

Associate Professor Stephanie Taplin
Associate Director

Dr Tim Moore
Senior Research Fellow

Dr Justin Barker
Research Fellow

Debbie Noble-Carr
Senior Research Officer

Dr Aino Suomi
kContact Project Manager

Bianca Hoban
MESSI Project Manager

Steven Roche
Research Officer

Chloe Gordon
Research Officer

Rhys Thorpe
Research Officer

Dr Jane Koerner
Research Manager

Erin Barry
Communications Coordinator

Paola Tretow-Loof
Administration Assistant

Contact Us

ICPS is located within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Australian Catholic University, and has offices in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) at the Australian Catholic University aims to enhance outcomes for children, young people and families through quality research, evaluation, training and community education. ICPS research strengths include promoting children's participation, strengthening service systems and informing practice, and supporting child-safe communities.

Phone: (02) 6209 1228

Email: ICPS@acu.edu.au

Web: www.acu.edu.au/icps

Twitter: [@ACU_ICPS](https://twitter.com/ACU_ICPS)

Postal Address: PO Box 256,
Dickson, ACT 2602

Canberra Office: Level 2, Building
302, 223 Antill St, Watson, ACT

Melbourne Office: Level 5, 215 Spring
St, Melbourne, Vic

