



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE



# Newsletter

## December 2017

Greetings from our Canberra kContact Headquarters to all. We cannot believe its already the end of the year - feels like yesterday when I started as the Project Manager for kContact but believe it or not, its already been 12 months.

The main events since our last Newsletter in September include (1) finishing ALL the baseline interviews (yippee!); (2) training the two NSW intervention sites for the kContact Practice Model; (3) starting the intervention at the two final NSW sites that will be implementing the intervention until March 2018. It is very exciting to finally have all the baseline information about the study participants.

We are busy analysing the baseline interviews for carers, parents and workers and I have included some of the first snapshots about the profiles of children and carers in this newsletter, based on the carer interviews. There will be a lot more of that coming to your way next year.

Most importantly – now that we are approaching the final year of the study – I would like to send my sincerest gratitude to everyone who has supported kContact along the way. We have already had a significant amount of interest from the State and Territory governments as well as individual services about the project. There is a growing interest in the intervention that is the first evidence-based model in Australia that aims to improve contact experience for children in out-of-home care.

Needless to say, we are very enthusiastic to finalise the study in the second half of next year. As the main stakeholders of the study, we will be keeping you up-to-date with the information about the study along the way.

I hope you find this newsletter enjoyable to read. As always, do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions or comments you may have.

On behalf of the research team,  
Happy Holidays!!!



*Aino*



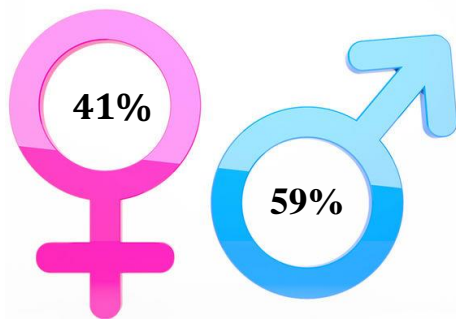
### FINAL NUMBER OF BASELINE INTERVIEWS

	NSW	ACT	Vic.	Total
Parents	22	26	42	<b>90</b>
Carers	31	47	59	<b>137</b>
Workers	44	65	72	<b>181</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>408</b>
Children*	44	65	74	183

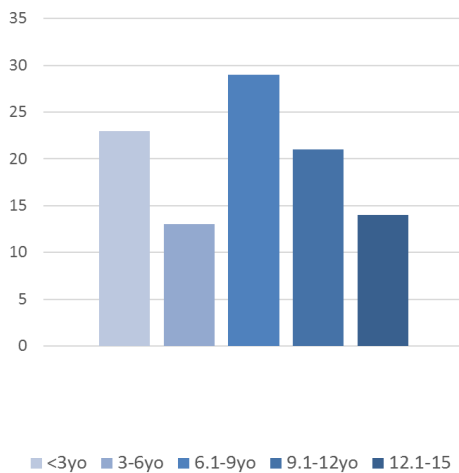
\*Number of children with at least 1 of the 3 interviews

### CHILDREN'S PROFILES (from the carers interviews n=137) †

#### Gender

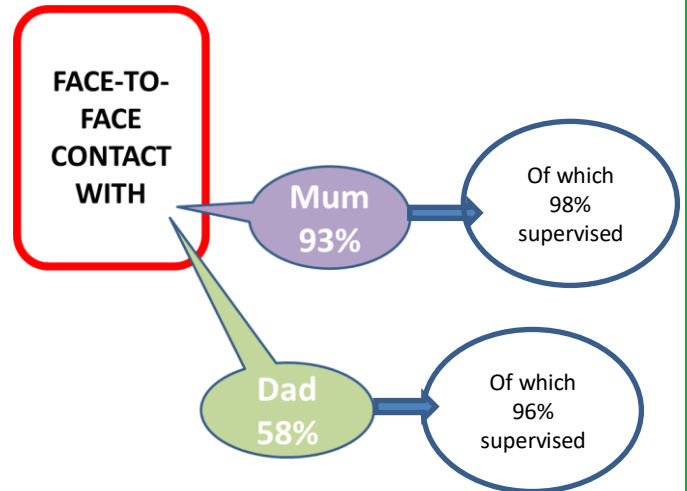


#### Current age (years)

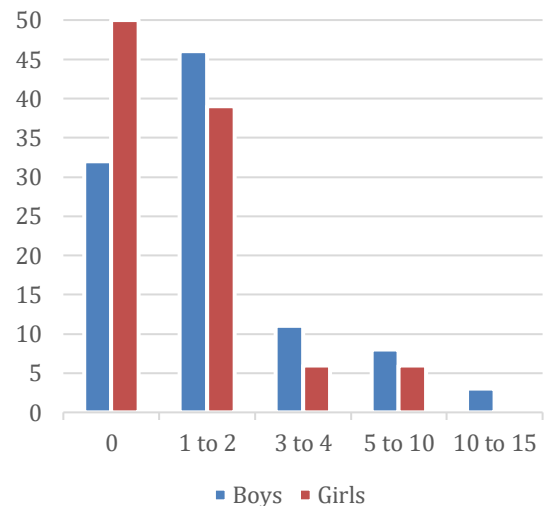


†Aggregate data of the three states, not reflective of the OOHc population in any single state

### Current contact with parents



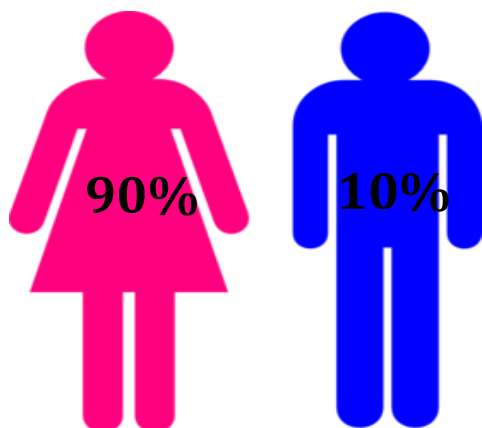
### Number of previous OOHc placements



There were more boys than girls included in the study. Most of the children were in their first, second or third placements. Boys in the study tended to have experienced a greater number of placements than had the girls. Most of the children were having regular contact with mums, but only just half of them were regularly seeing dads. Given the inclusion criteria for the study was that the child had supervised contact with at least one parent, it was not surprising most of the contact was supervised. There was more supervised contact for mums than for dads, however.

## CARER PROFILES (n=137)

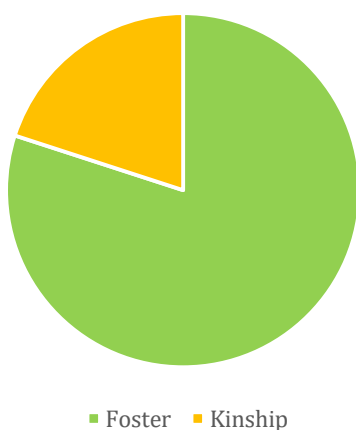
### Gender



### Carer characteristics

Characteristic	Range	Average
Age	21-71	50.1
Number of biological children	0-9	1.4
Number of kinship/foster children	1-10	2.2
Years of providing foster care	0.1-31	7.4

### Carer type



## Training in relation to contact

Have you ever received training re contact?		n (%)
<u>Yes</u>	It was neither helpful or unhelpful	18 (14.2)
	It was helpful	9 (7.1)
	It was very helpful	4 (3.1)
<u>No</u>	I wouldn't like to receive more training	40 (31.7)
	I'd like to receive more training	55 (40.5)
<i>Type of training the carers would like to receive</i>		<i>n (%)</i>
1	Basic info what contact looks like, what is involved, practicalities	21 (38.2)
2	Issues related to birth parents (D&A, MH, DV)	17 (30.9)
3	Child management/behaviours	9 (16.4)
4	What is the carers role?	7 (12.7)
5	Other (court process, managing own emotions)	4 (7.3)
<i>Total</i>		<i>55</i>

Most carers were females with ages ranging from 21 to 71 years of age. They had 1.4 biological and 2.2 fostered or kinship children - on average - currently in their care. The length of time as a carer varied between 1 month and 31 years with the average of 7.4 years. Most of the carers we interviewed were unrelated foster carers with only one fifth being kinship carers. The carers also reported on training and supports they had received and would like to receive in relation to parental contact. Most carers had not received any specific training about contact during their carer responsibilities and majority of them wanted more training, including basic information about what contact should look like, practicalities, how to deal with parents, child management/behaviours around contact and about the carers role.

## Next activities

- Continue supporting the kContact intervention at the two sites in NSW 'til March 2018
- First analyses and publications on the baseline interviews
- Draft up the analyses for follow-up interviews and for the main study outcomes
- Final follow-up interviews (NSW) will commence from March 2018

If you have any queries or comments about the project or if you would more information, please contact the project manager, Aino Suomi (details below)

## Project Team

### ACT/NSW

#### Chief Investigators

Associate Professor Stephanie Taplin  
Associate Director, Institute of Child  
Protection Studies (ICPS), ACU  
Ph: 02 6209 1319  
[stephanie.taplin@acu.edu.au](mailto:stephanie.taplin@acu.edu.au)

Professor Morag McArthur  
Australian Catholic University  
Ph: 02 6209 1225  
[morag.mcarthur@acu.edu.au](mailto:morag.mcarthur@acu.edu.au)

#### Project staff at ICPS

Dr Aino Suomi  
Project Manager  
02 6209 1331  
[aino.suomi@acu.edu.au](mailto:aino.suomi@acu.edu.au)

Dr Debbie Noble-Carr  
Training Officer  
02 6209 1209  
[debbie.noble-carr@acu.edu.au](mailto:debbie.noble-carr@acu.edu.au)

Rhys Thorpe  
PhD candidate  
[Rhys.thorpe@acu.edu.au](mailto:Rhys.thorpe@acu.edu.au)

### Partner Investigators

*Government organisations*  
ACT Community Services Directorate  
NSW Department of Family and  
Community Services  
*Non-government organisations*  
Barnardos (ACT)  
Marymead Child and Family Centre  
(ACT)  
Uniting (NSW)  
CareSouth (NSW)  
St Saviours (NSW)  
Life Without Barriers (NSW)

### VICTORIA

#### Chief Investigator

Professor Cathy Humphreys  
Department of Social Work  
University of Melbourne  
Ph: 03 8344 9427  
[cathy.humphreys@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:cathy.humphreys@unimelb.edu.au)

#### Project staff

Dr Margaret Kertesz  
Research Fellow  
Department of Social Work  
University of Melbourne  
Ph: 03 9035 8505  
[margaret.kertesz@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:margaret.kertesz@unimelb.edu.au)

#### Partner Investigators

*Non-government organisations*  
Baptcare  
Berry Street  
CAFS Ballarat  
Mackillop Family Services  
OzChild  
Salvation Army Westcare  
Wesley Mission Victoria  
Centre for Excellence in Child & Family  
Welfare

