

# The Australian Temperament Project

## December 2022 e-Newsletter

### From the Chief Investigator

Thank you again to all our amazing families for yet another year of extraordinary research contributions! We are one of the longest running intergenerational studies in Australia and one of only five similar studies in the world. So you are certainly all contributing to a very rare piece of research. Next year is a special year too because the study turns 40 years of age, which means many of you will be planning 40th birthday celebrations! To recognise this important transition, we are planning a cohort celebration (COVID allowing), with a 40th birthday cake, at the Royal Children's Hospital.

As we enter this important new decade, we are also planning to reconnect with the full cohort of participants to start to understand what middle life involves, both for you, your children, and also your parents. To do this, we are currently setting up new surveys with the aim of looking at mental health and wellbeing and connections between the generations. This will see some changes to the research team, most notably Sophie Barker, who is back from maternity leave and who many of you will know from years prior. We are also saying goodbye Lacey, who has done an outstanding job of holding the cohort in place while Sophie has been away. Lacey will be moving to the US to take up a new position at Stanford University. We wish her the very best for this exciting new phase of her career. For now, we wish you a happy and fun Christmas and New Year. It remains a privilege and pleasure to continue our journey with you all – a journey that started in 1983.

- Craig Olsson

## Welcome to the team

The ATP has welcomed some new faces to the team this year: Vanessa Burton, interviewer (right) and Khya Marabel-Whitburn, student (left).



We bid farewell to Felicity Painter, who was working with us as a student and will be continuing her studies in 2023, and Lacey Chetcuti, who was filling in as Project Manager while Sophie Barker was on parental leave. We look forward to welcoming Sophie back in 2023.

## Generation 3 Update



With only a handful of Gen3 children left to celebrate their 4th birthdays, Life@4 is coming to a close.

Life@9 is in full swing; a big thank you to the 237 of you who have already taken part!

Life@4



Life@9





# New findings on COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about serious financial impacts all around the world. One of our recent ATP studies looked specifically at how these impacts were experienced by Australian parents with young children.

A striking one in three ATP Gen2 parents reported some form of financial difficulty in both the early and later stages of the pandemic. This was despite the Australian Government's efforts to ease the pandemic's financial impacts. The most common financial difficulty experienced was job loss or reduced capacity to earn money. But why were these negative impacts experienced by some families and not others?

Taking a deeper dive into this, we looked at data from both ATP Gen1 grandparents and Gen2 parents before the pandemic to see whether socio-economic background – including level of education and job type – contributed to financial difficulties experienced during the pandemic.

We found these factors were in fact linked. Gen2 parents experienced greater financial struggles in the COVID-19 context if they had higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage before the pandemic. We also found some evidence that the socio-economic disadvantage of Gen1 grandparents led to greater financial difficulties of Gen2 parents during COVID-19, however this link was weaker.

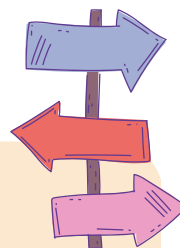
The flow-on effect of financial impacts for families has been linked to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for children. This highlights the importance of looking into factors associated with vulnerability of families to contexts involving extreme stress, such as the pandemic. Doing so means we are better able to minimise risk for future, similar periods of crisis.

**Read the full research paper here:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.13010>

## New directions

In our last newsletter we told you about our plans to follow up on all three generations of ATP families, to undertake new research on positive development and ageing across the lifespan. We are looking into options for funding this work and hope to have it up and running in 2023.

In the meantime, we are still seeking participants to be part of a focus group so we can get a better understanding of your priorities, preferences, and experiences being a participant with the ATP. Register your interest by emailing us at [atp.nextgen@rch.org.au](mailto:atp.nextgen@rch.org.au)



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