

How the results are used

Results from GUS help the Scottish Government and other agencies like Local Authorities and Health Boards to:

- Find out about the important issues facing families with young children in Scotland today and to find out about the needs and priorities of those families
- Track how issues and priorities change over time as children get older
- Develop policies and services to address these needs and priorities
- Check that policies are working well and, if not, how they can be changed for the better

Findings from the study help all of us to make sure that we give our children the 'best start in life'.

Lots of people and agencies, including Susan Deacon, the Scottish Government's Early Years Champion, and Tam Baillie, Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, have been using findings from GUS to show how important the early years are for a child's development and their future.

What next?

The sixth year of GUS is almost complete and most of you will now have taken part in your age five interview. As you may remember, GUS collects information about children every year until they reach the age of 6 but less frequently after that. This means that we will next hope to speak to you just before your child's eighth birthday. However we will stay in touch with you in the meantime and will keep you up-to-date with news about the study. At the next interview, as well as speaking to parents and carers, we also hope to speak to your child about topics like school, friends and what they like to do in their free time.

In 2011 the study is also starting to follow a new group of babies in Scotland. This will allow us to compare your child's experiences with those of children born around six years later.

Any questions?

There is more information about the Growing Up in Scotland study on our website: www.growingupinScotland.org.uk

But, if you have any other questions, you can contact us at:

Scottish Centre for Social Research
73 Lothian Road
Edinburgh
EH3 9AW
Tel: 0131 228 2167

Alternatively, call our **FREEPHONE**
number **0800 652 2704** or e-mail us:
gus@scotcen.org.uk



News

The Growing Up in Scotland study

Update 6 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

▶ Where we are now • Findings from year 5 • Keep in touch

New findings from the first five years

This year we used information from the first five years of GUS to try to answer these questions:

- **Service use and support during the early years**
What services do parents use when their children are young and how do patterns of service use vary between parents and over time? What is the role of support from family and friends?
- **Parenting and children's health**
Which aspects of day-to-day parenting are likely to be important in influencing children's health?
- **Child development during the pre-school years**
What factors help children's development during the pre-school period (between the ages of three and five)?
- **Change in early childhood**
During the first five years of their lives, how many children in Scotland experience changes such as their parents separating, moving house, a parent losing their job or their mother having health problems? What effects do these events have on young children?

As a GUS family you are part of a research study following the lives of 8,000 children from birth through to their teens.



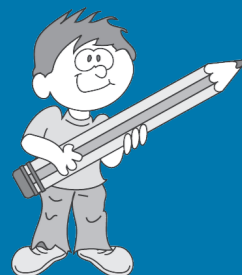
Thanks!

The GUS team would like to thank you again for your contributions so far. Your continued support and participation is crucial and ensures the success of this important and uniquely Scottish study.

www.growingupinScotland.org.uk

Please keep in touch

We really value your contribution to the study. If this newsletter has been forwarded to you at an address that is different from the one we have on record or if you are moving home, please give us your new details by calling us on **Freephone 0800 652 2704**, e-mailing gus@scotcen.org.uk or completing the change of address form on our website: www.growingupinScotland.org.uk



Growing Up in Scotland: Findings from the first 5 years

To read about any of these new findings in more detail please visit the GUS website www.growingupinscotland.org.uk
You can also follow us on Twitter @growingupinscot



Child development during the pre-school years

Rules and routines have a positive impact on a child's development

Your children have been taking part in exercises to look at their language and problem solving skills. We found large differences in ability between children from different backgrounds.

The level of parents' education affects the development of these skills in their children. At age 5, compared with children whose parents have no qualifications, children whose parents

have some qualifications are, on average, ahead in their vocabulary and problem solving abilities.

When looking at factors that can help improve these abilities between the ages of 3 and 5, we found that good parent-child relationships, having consistent rules and routines, and regularly doing 'home-learning activities' like reading and singing together have a positive impact on a child's development.

Service use and support during the early years

Younger mums are less likely to go to antenatal classes

Parents reporting low use of services do not always have the support from family and friends which might compensate for this. Mothers who reported lower levels of support were more likely to have lower educational qualifications, to live in a household with no-one in employment and to live in urban areas.

Change in early childhood

During the first five years of their lives:

- 2 in 5 children moved home at least once while 9% moved twice or more
- One in ten children experienced their parents separating
- 84% of mothers were in good health with only 2% experiencing the onset of health problems
- Lone parent families were much more likely than couple families to experience job loss or a significant reduction in working hours



Compared with 31% of GUS families overall, low income was experienced by:

- 55% of separated families
- 47% of families who moved home twice or more
- 47% cent of couple families and 81% of lone parent families who had experienced job loss
- 55% of families experiencing the onset of maternal health problems



Parenting and children's health

Most of you (95%) rated your child's health as 'good' or 'very good'.

However, at 5 years old:

- 17% of children had some tooth decay
- More than one third (38%) were not doing enough physical activity (less than the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day)
- 39% had 'high screen time' (more than 2 hours of TV or electronic games on a term time weekday)
- 35% consumed unhealthy snacks (like sweets and crisps) more than once a day
- 69% were not eating their '5 a day' (portions of fruit and vegetables)

The ways in which we look after our children can have an impact on their health, but there are lots of other factors that influence child health. GUS suggests that programmes to support parents may have a positive effect on children's health and on other aspects of their development.