

How will adults be involved?

All carers including relative and kinship carers, foster carers, residential care workers, adoptive parents and birth parents (if the child is restored) will be invited to participate in face-to-face interviews. The interview is programmed in a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system and a Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI) system for the more sensitive questions.

The adult interview is expected to take about one-and-a-half hours and carers will receive a \$50 gift voucher for every interview to thank them.

How will children/young people be involved?

Children aged 0-35 months old are not directly involved in this study.

Children aged 3-17 years old will be invited to participate in standardised measures of language development (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - PPVT) and a non verbal reasoning Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV) Matrix Reasoning Test.

Children and young people aged 7-17 years old will be invited to participate in a self complete interview with the assistance of an interviewer if required. The Audio Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (ACASI) system has a number of special features to make it appealing including: an iPad, a space theme; the ability to select the order of question modules; and the voice recording was done by young person who grew up in care.

To thank them for participating in the study, 3-6 year olds will receive a picture book and 7-17 year olds will receive a \$20-\$30 gift voucher depending on their age.

Data Analysis and Reporting

After each wave of data collection, reports will be published providing information about children and young people's circumstances and development outcomes. The reports will investigate key policy area.

Ethics approval

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of NSW and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW Ethics Committee. Participation in this study is voluntary.

Who is conducting *Pathways of Care*?

The NSW Department of Family and Community Services is conducting the study with the assistance of a consortium of Australian researchers through the Australian Institute of Family Studies <http://www.aifs.gov.au/> and Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago <http://www.chapinhall.org/>.

The interviews are being conducted by I-view <http://www.i-view.com.au/> who are social research data collection experts.

Where do I find more study information?

The study webpage holds information for researchers and participants including the study DVD: www.community.nsw.gov.au/pathways

To contact FACS researchers who are managing the study phone 1800 997 960 (free call) or email Pathways@facs.nsw.gov.au



About the study

Pathways of Care

A study of children and young people in out-of-home care

The artwork was created by a young person who grew up in care.

It shows many pathways through the care system with a carer or caseworker acting as a guide, ultimately leading to independence for every young person - "whether we live with family or strangers, study, work, or just try our best, the paths we choose are guided through in our youth are what we use to prepare ourselves for the happiest adulthood we can achieve". Billy Black



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Pathways of Care study

This is a representative longitudinal study of children and young people aged 0–17 years old in out-of-home care (OOHC) in NSW on Children’s Court orders.

This study is about how to improve the lives of children and young people who are or have been in OOHC. The findings will be used to inform the services and support offered to children and young people and those caring for them.

What are the study objectives?

- To describe the characteristics, child protection history, development and well-being of children and young people at the time they enter OOHC on Children’s Court orders for the first time.
- To describe the services, interventions and pathways for children and young people in OOHC, post restoration, adoption and on leaving care at 18 years.
- To describe children and young people’s experiences and outcomes from growing up in OOHC, post restoration, adoption and on leaving care at 18 years.
- To understand the factors that influence the outcomes for children and young people who grow up in OOHC, are returned home or adopted, and on leaving care at 18 years.
- To inform policy and practice to strengthen the OOHC service system in NSW to improve the outcomes for children and young people in OOHC.

What are the key research questions?

The key research questions are outlined on the study webpage. They address children and young people’s:

- Characteristics and circumstances on entry to care
- Experiences during and post OOHC
- Developmental outcomes (socio-emotional wellbeing, cognitive/learning and physical health)
- Progress in comparison to their peers not in OOHC.

The key research questions will address the OOHC population in general as well as the key sub-populations in OOHC including: Aboriginal children and young people; children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and those with high needs and/or disabilities.

What is the study’s sample?

A census of all children and young people aged 0–17 years who entered out-of-home care in NSW for the first time between May 2010 and October 2011 (18 month recruitment period) and have final Children’s Court orders. Approximately 2,800 children and young people are in the study’s sample.

Children and young people will be selected for this study from the Community Services administrative database.

What are the data sources?

The study will be based on data from:

- Interviews with carers, parents, children and young people
- Survey of caseworkers, childcare workers and teachers
- Existing Community Services child protection and OOHC administrative databases
- Record linkage (e.g. education, development, health, juvenile justice)
- NSW Health Blue Book (electronically scanned for children aged up to 5 years old).

For primary data collections, the study will use existing standardised measures and validated questions used in other studies, such as the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). Qualitative data will also be collected to add richness to the quantitative data. See webpage for details.

The study measures and questions, along with administrative data available through record linkage, will provide robust comparison groups for this study population.

Study timelines

The recruitment of study eligible children and young people began in February 2011. Carers, parents, children and young people will be invited to participate in three interviews about 18 months apart. The interviews started in May 2011. The data collection will be completed in 2016.