

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Australian Children of the Digital Age (ACODA) Longitudinal Study

QUT Ethics Approval Number 6427

Centre Directorate:	Professor Susan Danby (Centre Director), Professor Sue Bennett (Centre Deputy Director), Lisa Walker (Centre Chief Operating Officer)
Project Leaders:	Professor Grace Sarra (Queensland University of Technology), Professor Daniel Johnson (Queensland University of Technology), Dr Juliana Zabatiero (Curtin University), Claire Enkera (Queensland University of Technology)

We invite you and your child to participate in a research project conducted by the Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child (Digital Child) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Curtin University, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, The University of Queensland, and University of Wollongong. This research has been funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Why is this study being conducted?

The purpose of the research project is to understand how children and their families interact with digital technology (i.e., television, tablets, smartphones, internet connected toys) and how such technologies have an impact on their lives, both positively and negatively. Digital technologies are certainly changing childhood as we know it, with implications for young children's health, education, and physical, social, and emotional wellbeing, and social connection. Understanding the impact and benefits of digital technologies is important for us to support children and families living in a digital world. Currently little is known about how young children are connected to digital ways of working and the implications for young children's education, health, and social connections, in Australia and beyond.

The study is known as the *Australian Children of the Digital Age (ACODA) Longitudinal Study*.

Who can participate?

We are looking for 3,000 families who have at least one child in their household aged **6 months to 5 years old**. If you have a child in your care in this age range, we invite you to take part.

The possible benefits to you, your family and society from this research

Your participation and your child's participation are not likely to be of immediate benefit to you or to your child. The study will reach a diverse cross-section of Australian families, providing us with rich data to inform research, policy, recommendations and identify potential opportunities for further study. We aim to understand the impact of digital technology use on children's health, social connectedness, and education.

Early insights from the data and resulting research will be shared with families.

Each household will receive a \$50 **eGift Card** when they complete the survey.

After completing the survey, Wallis Social Research will contact you on the phone number that you have provided to thank you for your participation and to confirm your contact details for the eGift card delivery. Your eGift card will be delivered using the email or postal address that you provide to us.

You can choose how to spend your eGift Card across many different retailers and charities.

Who is conducting the research?

This research is supported by the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child project number CE200100022.

The Digital Child Centre is a collaboration of Australian universities, led by QUT and including Curtin University, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, The University of Queensland and University of Wollongong. The Digital Child has partnered with a range of community groups, early childhood education and care providers, and national agencies. A full list of the Digital Child partners can be found at this link: [Our Partners](#).

[Wallis Social Research](#) are partnering with the Digital Child in participant recruitment and survey delivery and are conducting the data collection on behalf of the Digital Child. Wallis Social Research provided you with the terms of consent in the survey that contained a hyperlink to this Participant Information Sheet.

What will participation involve?

Your participation: Your participation will involve completing a 30-minute online survey once per year, at around the same time each year, for four consecutive years (i.e., in 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026). The survey can also be completed by phone with a trained consultant if required. Each year, Wallis Social Research or the Digital Child will send you information about the survey via your preferred contact method, and keep you updated on survey dates. We will also share early insights from the data and resulting research.

The survey asks questions about you and your family (i.e., demographics), your child, and digital technologies at home. The survey (and subsequent annual surveys) will focus on questions about your child and their engagement with digital technologies. For example, we ask about your child's use of different digital devices and apps, including how, when, and where they are used. We also ask about your child's health, education, and physical, social and emotional wellbeing, and how these may be affected by digital technologies.

Your child's participation: Depending on your child's age, the survey may invite you to ask your child some questions and record their responses. Or your child may be asked to answer some questions for themselves when they are able to read, or be read to, and understand. We are interested in knowing about your child's experiences and thoughts about digital technologies.

Your and your child's participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with any of the universities or research partners involved on the study. You can withdraw from the research project at any time without comment or penalty. If you choose to withdraw, no further information will be collected from you. Any information already obtained from you will be retained.

To reimburse you and your family for your participation and the time spent completing the survey, you will receive a \$50 eGift Card each time you complete the survey.

Are there possible risks if I take part?

There are some possible risks associated with taking part in the research project.

The first is inconvenience. We are conscious that we are asking you to do something that you would not normally do, such as reading emails and text messages and responding to survey questions about digital technology use. To make things easier, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure the study runs smoothly, we will make good use of your time, we will not contact you unless it is directly related to the research project, and we will ask only those questions that are necessary to ask.

The second is that the nature of some of the questions (e.g., related to digital technology use) may trigger discomfort if you or your child have had negative experiences in the past. Please be assured that you and your child (if applicable) need only answer those questions that you feel comfortable answering. In the survey, it will be possible to skip questions or return to them later.

We would like you to read this information carefully. It will help you to decide if you would like to take part. If you agree to take part, we will ask you to provide your consent before completing the survey.

QUT provides free psychology, family therapy or counselling services for research participants of QUT research projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please call the Clinic Receptionist on **07 3138 0999** (Monday–Friday 9am–5pm), QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic, 44 Musk Avenue, Kelvin Grove, and indicate that you are a research participant. Additionally, we have provided a list of Support Services and agencies that are available to help on our website – acoda.org.au.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

Your personal information collected in the survey is protected by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Wallis' Privacy Policy can be viewed on the [Wallis Social Research website](#). The information collected in the survey will be collated by Wallis Social Research and analysed by researchers at the Digital Child. Wallis holds participant information on secure servers in Australia. As per Wallis' Data Retention policy, for a standard project Wallis only retains personal information for no more than 12 months after study completion before purging it from our systems. Given that this is a four-year longitudinal study, the data from continuing participants may be retained for up to five years. Data collected as part of this research project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of Research Data Policy.

Personal information (e.g., full name, address, phone numbers, email address, the child/ren's name, date of birth, gender and ethnicity) that can identify you will be stored separately from all your survey responses. A codebook that links your identity to your survey responses will be stored separately and will be accessible only to key people in the research team. This will never be made public or reported in any publications, presentations, or reports arising from the study. Because this is a study that will continue for many years, information collected from you and your child during the study will be permanently retained and securely stored as per QUT's Management of Research Data Policy to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines.

We will only use your personal information to contact you about the study. Access to this information will be restricted to key project staff in the Digital Child as named in the ethics application. None of your personal

identifying information will ever be made available to researchers writing papers or preparing reports. Although the outcomes of the study are likely to be published in scientific papers, your identity as a research participant will not be disclosed. Your data can only be disclosed if it is to protect you or others from harm, if specifically required by law, or if a regulatory or monitoring body such as the ethics committee requests it.

In the longer term, de-identified survey data obtained from you (but **not** your personal identifying information) will be made available for use by the researchers in related projects within the Digital Child. Data may also be made available to other researchers for future projects that are an extension of, or closely related to, this project (i.e., studying about digital technologies) in accordance with paragraphs 2.2.14 to 2.2.16 of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023](#).

The research project is funded by the Australian Research Council, and they will not have access to participants' personal details or data.

Possible future data linkage

We may contact you in the future regarding the possibility of linking your data and your child's data with selected organisations. Linking data allows researchers to analyse information collected by other organisations with the data collected through your participation in the ACODA Longitudinal Study.

Please note, we are not asking you to consent to this now. We are asking if you consent to be contacted in future.

Examples of the datasets where data linkage may be useful to this study include State Departments of Education, Services Australia, and NAPLAN. Detail regarding the types of data linking and the organisations selected will be reviewed at a later stage. Participants will be provided with full details of the selected organisations and reasons for requesting data linkage at the relevant time. Participants can choose which data linkage/s they are willing to consent to or provide no consent at all.

What should I do if I have further questions about the research project?

Wallis Social Research can assist you with questions you may have specifically about the survey. You can contact Wallis using the [Contact Us](#) form on the ACODA website, by email acoda@wallis.social or phone 1800 879 210.

If you have questions or require further information about the ACODA study, please contact the project team at acoda@digitalchild.org.au or phone 07 3138 0628.

If you are interested in reading more about the ACODA Longitudinal Study, please visit acoda.org.au

For more information about the Digital Child, please visit [the Digital Child website](#).

What if I have a concern or complaint about the research project?

If you would like to speak to an officer of QUT not involved in the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Advisory Team on (07) 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au.

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of Queensland University of Technology and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. The confidentiality of all evaluation related records will be maintained in accordance with the Australian Research Council (ARC) guidelines. Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), Queensland University of Technology has reviewed and approved this information sheet and consent form.

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. Should you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on 07 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au. The QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Opportunities for future research involvement

There may be opportunities to participate in other research studies conducted by the Digital Child. At the end of each survey, we will ask if we could contact you regarding opportunities as they arise. This information will be stored separately from the responses provided on the survey.

Details about these opportunities will be provided by the researchers involved in the relevant research project. Please visit <https://www.digitalchild.org.au/research> for information about the research conducted by the Digital Child. **We are not asking you to consent to this now, but asking if you are happy to be contacted about this in future.**

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS IMPORTANT RESEARCH.
THIS INFORMATION AND THE TERMS OF CONSENT CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT THE END OF THE
SURVEY, FROM THE WALLIS WEBSITE, OR VIA EMAIL ON REQUEST.**