

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND WELLBEING



Results from Waves 11 and 12 (2018/19)

Footprints in Time Study Youth have many important people in their lives. As they are transitioning into adolescence, family continues to be the most important relationship at this time of their life. Strong family relationships support Study Youth to grow up strong.

Family relationships were important to *Footprints in Time* youth.

The majority of *Footprints in Time* youth reported a good relationship with their Mum and Dad. Most Study Youth felt they spent the right amount of time with their Mum (73%) and Dad (61%).

They trust their parents, feel understood and know they can go to them when they need help with a problem.

7 in 10



Said Mum spent enough time with them

6 in 10



Said Dad spent enough time with them

Footprints in Time youth trusted their Mum and felt understood.

Most *Footprints in Time* youth said they trust their Mum 'always' or 'most of the time' (93%) and they felt understood by their Mum 'always' or 'most of the time' (90%). Almost 9 in 10 *Footprints in Time* youth felt they could go to their Mum if they had a problem. Spending time with their Mum was important to them, and 8 in 10 felt their Mum spent time with them 'always' or 'most of the time'. The majority of *Footprints in Time* youth felt they could talk with their Mum about how they felt (71%).



71%
Male



64%
Female

of youth believe that their Mum 'always' understands them



56%
Younger (B) Cohort
(11-14 yrs)



44%
Older (K) Cohort
(14-16 yrs)

will 'always' speak to their Mum about their feelings

Dad can be asked for help and is trusted.

Footprints in Time youth said that relationships with their Dads were also important to them. Study Youth rated their relationships with Dad strongly when asked if they trust their Dad 'always' or 'most of the time' (86%), feel understood (81%) and can ask for help (75%). Younger *Footprints in Time* youth (B cohort; aged 11 to 14 years in 2019) were more likely to talk to their Dad about their feelings (42% vs 32%) than older *Footprints in Time* youth (K cohort; aged 14 to 16 years in 2019).



64%
Male



54%
Female

of youth believe that their Dad 'always' understands them



42%
Younger (B) Cohort
(11-14 yrs)



32%
Older (K) Cohort
(14-16 yrs)

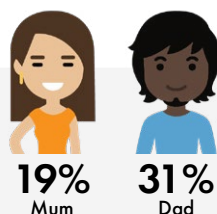
will 'always' speak to their Dad about their feelings

Footprints in Time families balance work and family responsibilities.

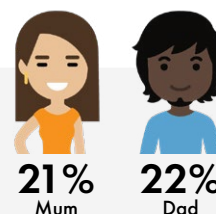


Footprints in Time youth were more likely to say that they spend about the right amount of time with Mum (73%) and Dad (61%). Many *Footprints in Time* youth reported living in a household with 2 or more adults (83%), highlighting the important role of kin and broader family supports. This suggests the supportive nature of these relationships.

**Inner Regional Areas
NOT ENOUGH time
with...**



**Remote/Very Remote
areas TOO MUCH time
with...**



Several items were related to the strength of relationships between *Footprints in Time* Study Youth and their family. Increasing geographic remoteness was related to stronger relationships with Mum and Dad. Parents and caregivers reported challenges when balancing work commitments and family responsibilities. This highlights the dedication of parents to maintain strong family ties while balancing other commitments.

70%
**Parents agreed
having a job has a
positive effect on
their children**

43%
**Parents said they
miss out on home
or family activities
due to work**

Strong family relationships were related to higher reports of wellbeing.

Footprints in Time youth who have stronger relationships with parents and siblings reported higher wellbeing. They were better able to recognise and regulate their emotions, focus on tasks and work through issues with peers.



Higher wellbeing
(fewer emotional and behavioural problems, less hyperactivity and fewer relationship problems)

Families and young people can be supported to continue to build and maintain healthy relationships through:

- Providing culturally appropriate education and support for parents and caregivers to recognise their strengths and learn more about maintaining supportive relationships with their children
- Flexibility in workplaces and services that understands families' need to balance family and work commitments
- Recognising and supporting the important role family and community plays in supporting the wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people

DISCLAIMER This factsheet uses unit record data from *Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)*. LSIC was conducted by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS). We acknowledge the role and support of state and territory departments of education and Catholic dioceses in the collection of LSIC data. The findings and views reported in this factsheet, however, are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Australian Government, DSS, or the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and their communities involved in this study.

FULL REPORT

Footprints in Time, The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, Report from Wave 11 and 12. The Kids Research Institute Australia.

For more information on the *Footprints in Time* study <https://www.dss.gov.au/lsic>

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