



Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form

Parents

Title	<i>Early data to decisions: Examining the relationship between the neighbourhood built environment and early childhood outcomes</i>
Chief Investigator	Prof Hannah Badland
Researchers	Dr Karen Villanueva, Dr Amanda Alderton, A/Prof Melanie Davern
Principal Research Student(s)	Samantha Porter, Jessica Strah, Tasma Eddy

What does my participation involve?

1 Introduction

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called *Early data to decisions: Examining the relationship between the neighbourhood built environment and early childhood outcomes*. You have been invited because you live in <<suburb>> and are the carer of a young child (ages 8 years or younger). Your contact details were obtained by/from <<name of playgroup or community centre or local council>>.

This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend.

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to.

If you decide you want to take part in the research project, you will be asked to sign the consent section. By signing it you are telling us that you:

- Understand what you have read
- Consent to take part in the research project

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information and Consent Form to keep.

2 What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to understand parents' and children's views on how their cities and neighbourhoods play a role in young children's development and wellbeing.

The early years of life are important for setting a foundation for wellbeing. From birth to the first year of school, children grow and develop rapidly. Children's development during these years is shaped by a number of things, including where they live.

Today, a growing number of families live in cities. However, little is known about how the cities and neighbourhoods where children live are related to wellbeing during the early years. Most of what is currently known about child wellbeing in cities is based on research with older children and teenagers. Since young families use the city and neighbourhood differently, it is necessary to explore this topic with young children and their parents.

This research aims to fill this gap in knowledge, by exploring what it is about neighbourhoods that parents and their young children feel are important to their wellbeing. This research will also produce knowledge that can help local governments and urban planners design cities using a more child-friendly and family-centred approach.

3 What does participation in this research involve?

After reading this form and asking any questions about the study, if you decide to participate, we will first ask that you sign the consent form. If you also grant permission for your child to participate, we will explain the research to your child and ask if he or she would like to participate.

Part A face-to-face activity for children and their parents: Total time commitment is an estimated 1 hour.

Parents or primary caregivers: Parents or caregivers who wish to take part will be asked to map important places in their local neighbourhood using a web-based software. This software allows places to be labelled on a map, along with comments about that place. Discussions and mapping activities will take place at <<location>>.

Child participants: In the same session, children who wish to participate (and with their parents' consent) will also take part in a one-off small group discussion of 5-8 children. Children will be asked to draw a picture of their neighbourhood and things they like or think are important about where they live. In small groups, children will share their drawings and what they think is important about their neighbourhood. As part of the discussion, they will also be asked to talk about things they like, dislike, or find important about where they live. This could include things like: the types of places where they prefer to play, what they like/dislike about local parks. With participants' (parents' and children's) permission, these discussions will be audio-recorded to make sure the research team has an accurate account of what was discussed. Children will also be asked to map important aspects of their local neighbourhood using a web-based software. This software allows places to be labelled on a map, along with comments or descriptions of that place.

Part B follow-up activity for parents only: Total time commitment is an estimated 1 hour.

As a follow-up to the Part A activity, parents will be invited to a one-off group discussion (groups of about 5-8 parents) about which aspects of their neighbourhood they feel are important to their child's and their family's wellbeing. This might include discussing things like: how easy it is to access local services, the type of housing available, the quality of local parks, and so on. With participants' permission, these discussions will be audio-recorded to make sure the research team has an accurate account of what was discussed.

I don't want my child to be involved but I want to take part. Can I complete the mapping activity online?

Yes. If you only wish to participate in the mapping activity online and do not consent to your child participating in Part A, you can access the mapping activity online using this link: [\[insert link here\]](#).

What will my information be used for?

The group discussions and activities with parents and young children will be used to identify the most important things about cities and neighbourhoods for families. It will also help researchers understand how young families use their neighbourhoods. This new knowledge will help future researchers study the health impacts of cities. For example, it will add new knowledge to the Child Liveability Research Programme at RMIT University.

The new knowledge gained from this research will also be used to help decision-makers understand what it is about cities that supports families, and what changes are needed to make cities more family-friendly.

Are there any costs involved with participating?

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project. However, you may be reimbursed for any reasonable travel, parking, meals and other expenses associated with the research project visit. For parents/primary caregivers participating in Part A (child and parent face-to-face activities), a gift certificate of the value of \$50 will be given in recognition of their time, irrespective of whether their child participates.

For parents/primary caregivers participating in Part A (mapping activity) online, participants will go into a draw to win one of ten \$50 gift vouchers. For parents/primary caregivers participating in Part B, another gift certificate of the value of \$50 will be given to participating parents/caregivers in recognition of their time.

4 Other relevant information about the research project

The online mapping activity and focus groups are being conducted with parents and young children in four suburbs across the Melbourne metropolitan area. While it is not possible to give an exact number, it is estimated that around 30 parents and 30 young children will be participating in this part of the research. To be eligible to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age, and a parent or primary caregiver of at least one child aged 4-8 years. Families have had to live in the suburb for at least six months. These four suburbs were chosen to make sure that the study has a mix of diverse neighbourhoods across inner city and growth areas of Melbourne. This research is part of a larger Child Liveability Research Programme at RMIT University. The results of this study will appear in peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles, presentations at academic conferences, reports, layperson briefs, and Honours dissertations.

5 Do I have to take part in this research project?

Participation in any research project is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage.

If you do decide to take part, you will be given this Participant Information and Consent Form to sign and you will be given a copy to keep.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the researchers or with RMIT University or other organisations involved in this project (see Section 11).

If you decide you would also like your child to take part, then your child will also be asked whether he/she would like to take part. We will explain the research to your child using a child-

friendly picture book. We ask that you please hold your questions/comments to the end of this explanation to allow your child to make an independent decision.

If you and/or your child take part in a focus group you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

You can withdraw your responses (and/or your child's responses) to the mapping activity any time if you change your mind about having them included in the study, before we have analysed and published the results.

6 What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research; however, you may appreciate contributing to knowledge. Possible benefits may include helping create knowledge that local governments and urban planners could use to make cities and neighbourhoods more child-friendly and family-centred. You and your child may also appreciate having someone listen to your experiences.

7 What are the risks and disadvantages of taking part?

Discomfort

The questions we will ask are the types of questions you or your child may answer in your day-to-day life. However, it is always possible that we may ask something that makes you or your child feel discomfort or become upset. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go to the next question, or you may stop immediately. If you become upset or distressed as a result of your participation in the research project, members of the research team will be able to discuss appropriate support for you.

Focus group discussions

Whilst all care will be taken to maintain privacy and confidentiality, you may experience embarrassment if one of the group members were to repeat things said in a confidential group meeting. It is advisable that you do not reveal anything too personal or that you may regret later on.

Online mapping activity/survey

This project will use an external website to create, collect and analyse data collected in a mapping activity/survey format. The website we are using is Maptionnaire.com. If you agree to participate in this mapping activity, the responses you provide will be stored on their secure cloud hosting. Once we have completed our data collection and analysis, we will move the data to the RMIT server where it will be stored securely for five years.

8 What if I withdraw from this research project?

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the project, please notify a member of the research team. This can be done in person or by email.

You have the right to have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed, providing it can be reliably identified.

9 What happens when the research project ends?

Please let us know if you would like to receive a summary of the results of the research, and we will email these to you. The research project results should be available within about one year.

How is the research project being conducted?

10 What will happen to information about me?

By signing the consent form you consent to the research team collecting and using information from you for this research project and for other closely-related projects within the Child Liveability research programme at RMIT University. Information from the mapping activity and conversations from group discussions will be used to understand the most important things about cities and neighbourhoods for families and young children. Only the research team will have access to this information. The information you provide to this study will be considered 're-identifiable,' meaning that your name and identifying information will be replaced with codes or false names.

Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential and stored on password-protected folders on RMIT's secure server. The exceptions for this are (1) the information you provide on the mapping website (Maptionnaire.com) – this information will be stored on Maptionnaire's secure cloud hosting until data collection is complete, then moved to RMIT's secure server, (2) if your child draws a picture and chooses to leave this with the research team, the picture will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at RMIT. All information will be securely stored at RMIT for up to 5 years. Data will then be expunged.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission. For example, we will report common themes or topics that came up across focus groups. If we use any of your exact words or your child's exact words, we will not use your real names or any names of specific places in your neighbourhood.

In accordance with relevant Australian and/or Victorian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. Please inform the research team member named at the end of this document if you would like to access your information.

Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is protect you or others from harm, (2) if specifically allowed by law, (3) you provide the researchers with written permission. Any information obtained for the purpose of this research project that can identify you will be treated as confidential and securely stored.

The information you provide is only being used for this project and closely-related future projects in the Child Liveability Research Programme at RMIT University. For example, it will be used for undergraduate (Honours) and postgraduate projects, and related research projects. The same privacy principles listed above will also apply to any future projects. This research does not establish any kind of databank.

11 Who is organising and funding the research?

This research project is being conducted by Dr Amanda Alderton and Dr Karen Villanueva. Dr Alderton is supported by an RMIT University Vice Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship.

The research Chief Investigators include Prof Hannah Badland (RMIT University), Dr Karen Villanueva (RMIT University and Murdoch Children's Research Institute), A/Prof Melanie Davern (RMIT University), Prof Sally Brinkman (University of South Australia), Prof Lise Gauvin (University of Montreal), and Prof Sharon Goldfeld (Murdoch Children's Research Institute). The research is funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth).

The Honours students involved in the project are Samantha Porter, Jessica Strah and Tasma Eddy.

12 Who has reviewed the research project?

All research in Australia involving humans is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This research project has been approved by the RMIT University HREC.

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

13 Further information and who to contact

If you want any further information concerning this project, you can contact the researchers:

Research contact person

Name	Dr Karen Villanueva
Position	Project Coordinator, Chief investigator
Telephone	0422 406 323
Email	karen.villanueva@rmit.edu.au

Name	Dr Amanda Alderton
Position	Research Fellow
Telephone	0432 687 141
Email	amanda.alderon@student.rmit.edu.au

Name	Prof Hannah Badland
Position	Lead Chief investigator
Telephone	03 9925 4128
Email	hannah.badland@rmit.edu.au

14 Complaints

Should you have any concerns or questions about this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers listed in this document, then you may contact:

Reviewing HREC name	RMIT University
HREC Senior Manager, Research Ethics, Integrity and Governance	Anita Arndt
Telephone	+61 3 9925 2138 (or on Teams)
Email	anita.arndt@rmit.edu.au
Mailing address	Research Ethics Co-ordinator Research Integrity Governance and Systems RMIT University GPO Box 2476 MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Consent Form: **Parent/caregiver** participation

Title	<i>Early data to decisions: Examining the relationship between the neighbourhood built environment and early childhood outcomes</i>
Chief Investigator	Prof Hannah Badland
Researchers	Dr Karen Villanueva, Dr Amanda Alderton, A/Prof Melanie Davern
Research Student(s)	Samantha Porter, Jessica Strah, Tasma Eddy

Acknowledgement by Participant

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the group discussion without affecting my relationship with RMIT.

I understand that the research team will be collecting and using information from me for this research project and for other closely related projects within the Child Liveability Research Program at RMIT University.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

I consent to participate in *Part A mapping activity as part of the child and parent activity session*:

Yes

No

I consent to participate in *Part B parent focus group**:

Yes

No

*Interview may be offered if participant cannot participate in a focus group

I don't want my child to participate but I want to complete *Part A parent mapping activity online*. Please access the Maptionnaire activity here: [\[QR code or link\]](#)

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Declaration by Researcher†

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Name of Researcher [†] (please print) _____	
Signature _____	Date _____

[†] An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning, the research project.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.

Consent Form: **Child** participation

Title *Early data to decisions: Examining the relationship between the neighbourhood built*

Chief Investigator Prof Hannah Badland

Researchers Dr Karen Villanueva, Dr Amanda Alderton, A/Prof Melanie Davern

Research Student(s) Samantha Porter, Jessica Strah, Tasma Eddy

Acknowledgement by Participant

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to my child's participation in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw my child's participation at any time during the group activities without affecting my relationship with RMIT.

I understand that the research team will be collecting and using information from my child for this research project and for other closely related projects within the Child Liveability Research Program at RMIT University.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

I consent to my child's participation in *Part A activity for children (drawing task, group discussion, mapping activity)*:

Yes

No

Name of Participant (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Declaration by Researcher[†]

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project, its procedures and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Name of Researcher[†] (please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

[†] An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning, the research project.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.