

CHILD

COHORT STUDY

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021

Dear CHILD Cohort Study kids, parents and families:

As the world slowly returns to normal,

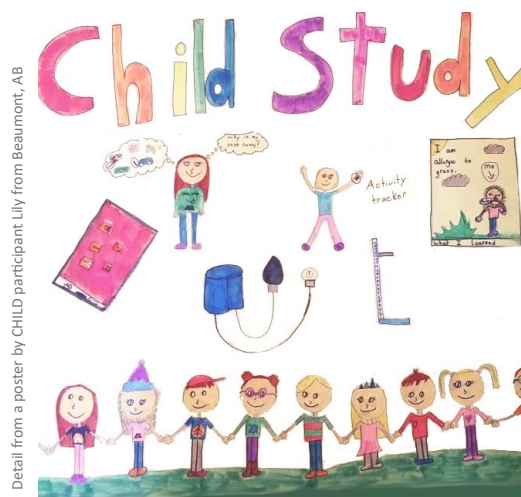
I would like to thank all our wonderful CHILD families for your resilience during these unprecedented times. Many of you have met new demands over the past 16 months, from managing your children's online education to working remotely, moving, and caring for relatives, neighbours and members of the broader community.

Our study, too, has adapted. When the pandemic hit, we had to stop the 8-year clinical visits midway, and then modify visits and the collection of data and samples.

Quickly, we realized that our cohort offered a remarkable opportunity to study COVID-19, with years of pre-pandemic data and samples from thousands of families across the country committed to supporting health research.

We received several grants to study COVID-19 in our communities and how the pandemic has affected adults and children nationwide.

In April 2021, we launched the CHILD COVID-19 add-on study and nearly 1,500 CHILD households (5,300 individuals) volunteered to participate.



THANK YOU for making such an important contribution to pandemic preparedness and the ongoing fight against COVID-19.

We were also grateful to receive funding from a generous private donation made to McMaster University to support allergy research. Part of the funding given by Walter and Maria Schroeder and family will support the storage of CHILD's biological samples and help us maintain a new database housing CHILD's 53M data points!

In August, we will wrap up our 8/9-year-old clinic visits. If you haven't had a chance to see us for your in-person (or virtual) visit yet, contact your site coordinator right away. We look forward to "seeing" you!

Again, thank you for your incredible dedication over the past year. I'm excited about what we can accomplish together in the remainder of 2021 and beyond!

Padmaja (PJ) Subbarao
MD, M.Sc.
CHILD Cohort Study Director

Summer is here & it's time to GET ARTSY!

Announcing CHILD's 2021 National Arts Contest!

The contest is open to kids up to 14 years of age who are part of the main CHILD Cohort Study or CHILD's COVID-19 add-on study.

Create an original work of art to share about:

- what CHILD means to you;
- something cool CHILD has discovered; or
- what being part of CHILD's COVID-19 study is like.

What to make? You can create a drawing, painting, collage, 3D craft, sculpture, photograph, song, dance, poem, or video.

A prize for EVERY submission plus 4 awesome regional prizes and 1 national prize!

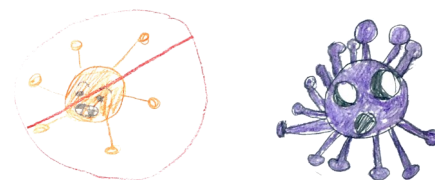
[Click here](#) for more information and to submit your art.

Entry deadline is **Friday, September 3, 2021.**

Some study participants have created examples of the types of art you can make!



New COVID-19 "Rapid Results" Data



Depictions of the COVID virus from posters by CHILD participants.

CHILD's new [CHILD COVID-19 Rapid Results](https://childstudy.ca/covid-rapid-results/) webpage (<https://childstudy.ca/covid-rapid-results/>) shares the latest results from our COVID-19 add-on study quickly with policymakers, other researchers – and most importantly, our CHILD families.

Data is self-reported from the baseline questionnaire, collected since January 11, 2021.

Highlights include:

- 1.5% of children and 2.1% of adults reported testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 infection at some point since the pandemic began.
- 50% of parents were moderately to extremely worried about becoming infected themselves, and 70% were worried about their family members becoming infected.
- 45% of working adults switched to working remotely and nearly 25% reported that their jobs put them at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- The most common change in daily routine for both children and adults was an increased screen time for non-educational purposes.

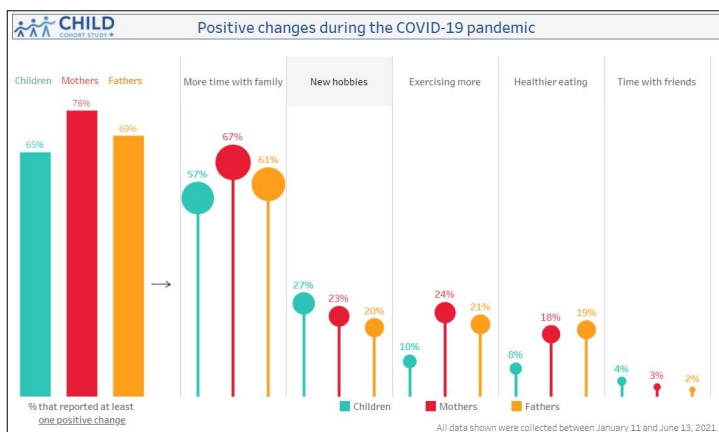
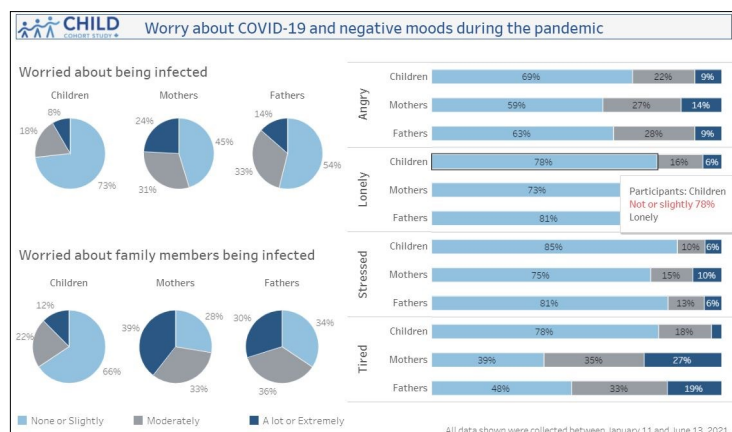
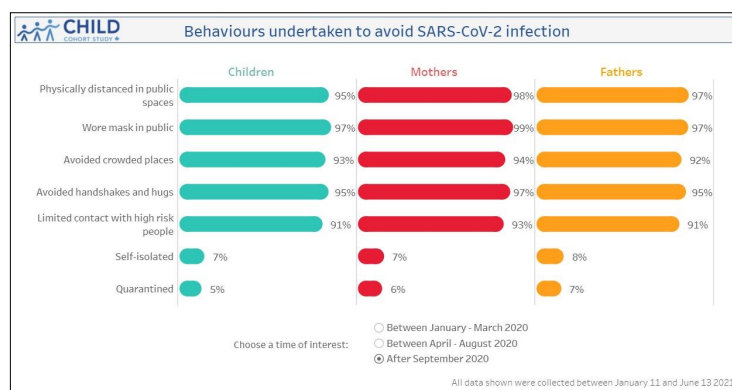
Information on the COVID-19 Rapid Results page will be updated regularly with results from follow-

up questionnaires, biweekly text message surveys and infection data based on blood sample collections.

"We also plan to do more in-depth analysis to understand why some families are more stressed or resilient, and why some people get symptoms of the virus while others don't," says **Meghan Azad**, who is leading the COVID-19 add-on study.

"This rapid collection and sharing of data will help us develop pandemic responses and recovery strategies across the country."

— Deborah McNeil,
Alberta Health Services



The easy-to-read graphs show how the pandemic is affecting the health and lifestyle of Canadian families.

CHILD COVID-19 documentary

Are you interested in being part of a documentary film about CHILD families and the impacts of COVID-19?

Canadian filmmaker Peter Findlay is looking to film several families who are participating in CHILD's COVID-19 add-on study to chronicle how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the lives of adults and kids. Participation involves 3 in-person filming sessions over several months.

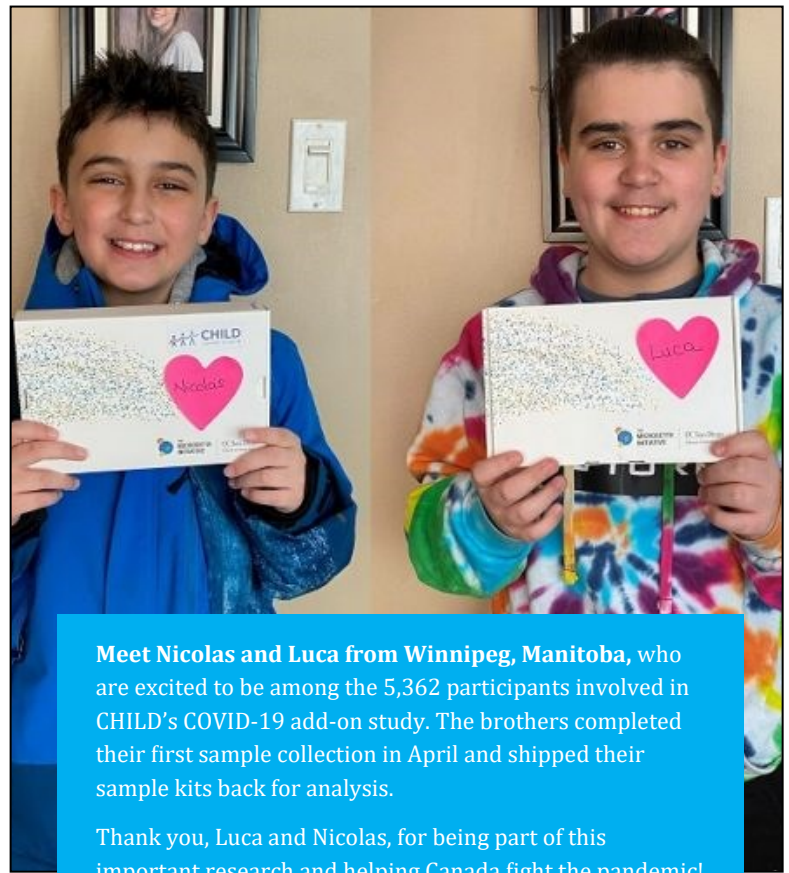
If you are interested in participating in this documentary, contact your CHILD site coordinator for more information.

CHILD Vancouver: [Linda Warner](mailto:lwerner@bcchr.ca) lwerner@bcchr.ca

CHILD Edmonton: [Joyce Chikuma](mailto:chikuma@ualberta.ca) chikuma@ualberta.ca

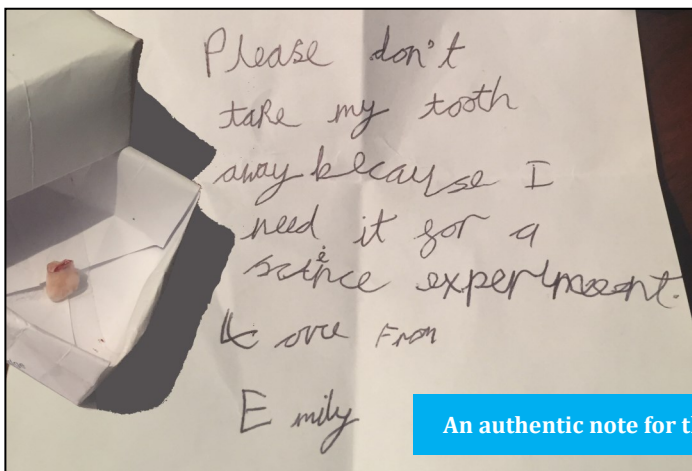
CHILD Manitoba: [Scarlet Salas](mailto:CHILD@chrim.ca) CHILD@chrim.ca

CHILD Toronto: [Yaminee Charavanapavan](mailto:child.study@sickkids.ca) child.study@sickkids.ca



Meet Nicolas and Luca from Winnipeg, Manitoba, who are excited to be among the 5,362 participants involved in CHILD's COVID-19 add-on study. The brothers completed their first sample collection in April and shipped their sample kits back for analysis.

Thank you, Luca and Nicolas, for being part of this important research and helping Canada fight the pandemic!



An authentic note for the tooth fairy from a CHILD participant

CHILddb

In June 2021, CHILD launched CHILddb – an interactive database that will help researchers across the world make new discoveries using CHILD data.

CHILD has stored over **53 MILLION** datapoints from 500,000 questionnaire responses and 600,000 biological samples.

CHILddb offers a way for researchers to explore what data CHILD has collected and to see a list of research projects that have been approved since

CHILD's Tooth Fairy

We want your baby teeth!

Your teeth are so valuable to our study. Even if you have collected just one tooth so far, that's terrific! We will use that tiny tooth to look at past exposures to chemicals.

Please mail any teeth you have on hand to your CHILD site coordinator as soon as possible.



2008. Researchers may then submit a scientific proposal for their own project, which is carefully reviewed by the CHILD Access & Publications Committee.

CHILD's National Participant Engagement Committee



NPEC members answer questions from CHILD researchers at the 2019 AllerGen conference, Toronto, ON

CHILD's National Participant Engagement Committee (NPEC) is a group of CHILD participant families (parents and children) who work together to help make the study a positive experience for all families across the country.

Their goal is to bring the research participant's voice and perspectives to CHILD research and priorities. They give input on protocols for clinical visits and add-on studies (like the COVID-19 study); help to plan and organize participant activities; and provide ideas for sharing knowledge from the study with stakeholder groups near and far.

Most of all, this committee wants to engage with families across the sites to help everyone feel connected and proud to be part of this amazing national study!

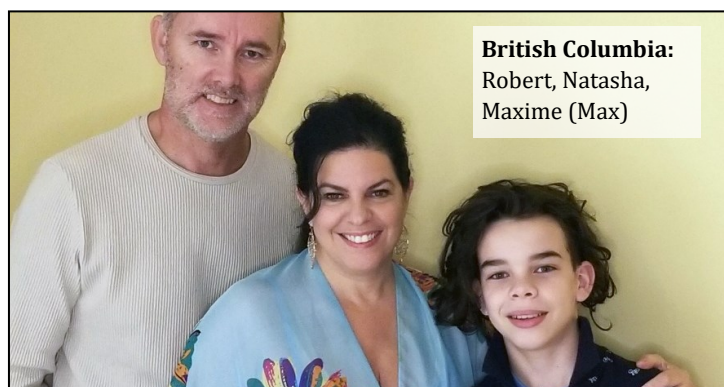
Do you have comments for the NPEC?

Email [Natasha](mailto:natasha.doucas@gmail.com) natasha.doucas@gmail.com.

Interested in joining the national or regional participant committees? Email your site coordinator.

Follow CHILD on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Meet the NPEC committee members



British Columbia:
Robert, Natasha,
Maxime (Max)



Manitoba: Eric, Harmoni, Lily



Alberta: Tatiana
(top), Sara (bottom),
Lucas, Reuben



Ontario: Cara, Kat, Brynn, Aaron



KEY DISCOVERIES

KEY DISCOVERIES



Thanks to the incredible commitment of our families over the past 10+ years, CHILD has been able to make many important discoveries about how kids grow and develop.

Visit our website's newly designed [Key Discoveries](#) page. Here, you can read about the fascinating findings that you and your family have contributed to across many areas of child health and wellbeing.

We now know things like:

- Children should eat **peanut** early to prevent peanut allergy
- Four **gut bacteria** help protect children against asthma
- Excessive **screen time** is linked to behavioural problems in preschoolers
- Chemicals trapped in common **house dust** can increase asthma risk

- Direct **breastfeeding** (at the breast) seems to provide the best protection against asthma
- Owning a **cat or dog** may protect babies from allergies and obesity
- Babies who **sleep** less may have lower cognitive and language skills
- **Fruit** consumption in pregnancy may boost a baby's cognitive development
- **Cesarean section** deliveries alter a baby's microbiome
- **Antibiotics** can disrupt a baby's microbiome but breastfeeding can minimize the effects
- Exposure to **cleaning products** may increase asthma risk

Changes at CHILD Manitoba

CHILD welcomes **Elinor Simons** as the new site leader for the CHILD team in Manitoba. Elinor is a pediatric allergist, researcher, and an assistant professor at the University of Manitoba. She has met many of the Manitoba families during their study visits since the three-year wave.

"I am excited to be the Manitoba site leader and I look forward to continuing to support the amazing CHILD Manitoba team and study families," she says.

Elinor takes over the role from **Allan Becker**, who was Manitoba site leader since CHILD began and who has recently retired, and **Meghan Azad**, who joined Dr. Becker as the Manitoba Co-Lead in 2016.



Dr. Elinor Simons (L) & Dr. Meghan Azad (R)

Meghan takes on the new position of CHILD's Deputy Director, working with the Study Director and Co-Director to represent CHILD nationally and internationally. Dr. Azad leads several CHILD research projects including the COVID-19 add-on study.

Congratulations to both Elinor and Meghan!

Sears Studentship

Vienna Buchholz, a medical student at the University of Alberta, is the 2021 winner of the [Sears Undergraduate Summer Studentship](#). The Studentship is a unique training award for an undergraduate university student to work with a CHILD research team for 12 weeks.

This summer, Vienna is working with Dr. Anita Kozyrskyj's lab in Edmonton to study how exposure to nature during the first year of life can influence a baby's gut bacteria and possible development of allergies later on.

Welcome, Vienna!



CHILD Research Success Stories

Did you know that CHILD has its own magazine?

CHILD Research Success Stories features articles about incredible discoveries the study has made in child health and development.

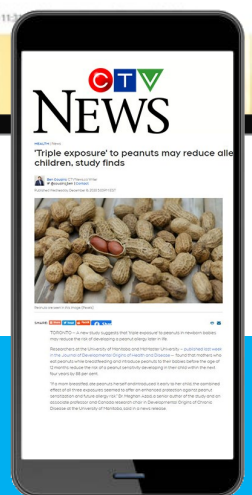
Check out the [2021 issue](#) and [past Success Stories](#) since 2010.



CHILD in the News

With new research published regularly using CHILD data, along with the COVID-19 add-on study, you may have seen CHILD in the news!

Here are just a few of the places you may have seen us:



We want your accelerometers!

If you have not mailed us your accelerometers yet, please remember to do so soon!



For the latest about CHILD research, activities, media coverage...

childcohort.ca

#FOLLOWUS: Join the other 1,200+ CHILD Twitter followers
@CHILDSTUDY

Let us know how you like this newsletter and send us suggestions for future stories: child@mcmaster.ca