

Child Study



CHILD

COHORT STUDY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

Dear CHILD Cohort Study kids, parents & families:

We are thrilled to be seeing you again.

We've started the 12/13-year visits and it is amazing to see the CHILD kids becoming teens! Can you believe that they (and the Study) have reached this milestone age?

This newsletter will catch you up with CHILD news and plans, and will fill you in on the current round of visits.

By the way, we plan to send you newsletter updates more often. We'd also like to feature submissions from families in up-coming issues—please see the invitation on this page, and consider sending something in to share.

We are also looking into other fun ways to connect with you, so stay tuned! And feel free to reach out to us anytime with your ideas or requests.

So far, 2023 has been a great year for CHILD.

A bunch of wonderful new folks have joined the team at CHILD headquarters (you'll meet them in this newsletter). New research findings are being published regularly,

Max (Vancouver) with Dad at his 12/13 year visit.



and the Study has solid support, including from a generous [private donation](#).

We're in good shape for the busy times ahead!

Thanks to our joint commitment to building a healthier world, CHILD is still going strong as its participating children enter adolescence.

It is truly a privilege for us to be sharing this journey with your families. We can never thank you too often for being the heart and soul of CHILD.

Padmaja (PJ) Subbarao

MD, M.Sc.

CHILD Cohort Study Director



WHAT'S MISSING from this newsletter?

You are.

And we want to change that.

We invite kids participating in CHILD to submit content for upcoming newsletters—something about yourself.

The submission can be anything that can be printed in a newsletter: writing, a drawing, or a photo, and it should be about you, the things you like, or what's important to you.

Please include with the submission:

- first name, age, & location (can be kept confidential if preferred)
- favorite hobby/activity (optional)
- pet peeve or favorite thing about CHILD (optional)

Please send your submissions to child@mcmaster.ca

PS. This is not a contest with prizes; it is just about sharing. If we receive many submissions, we may not include them all in the next newsletter - but we will share them on the CHILD website, social media and/or in future newsletters.

HERE WE GO!

CHILD 12-13 YEAR VISITS

CHILD clinical visits with participating kids in the 12-13 year age range began in August 2022. The last round of CHILD visits started four years before, when participants were 8, in August 2018.

A pivotal time

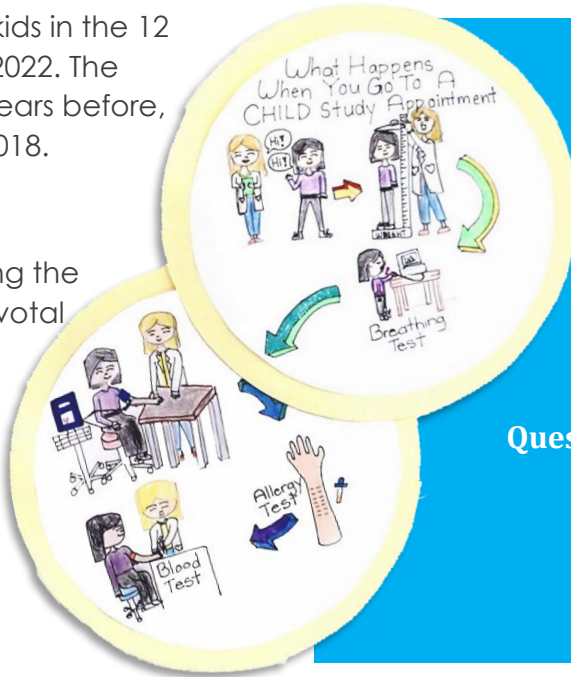
"With participating youth now reaching the critical years of adolescence, it is a pivotal time for the Study," comments CHILD Director Dr. Padmaja Subbarao.

"From this round, we expect to gain insight into changes in health and development that accompany the early teen years. We have also expanded the Study to collect information especially relevant to this phase of life, including things like gender identity, screentime and mental health."

What's new?

With each round of data and sample collection in CHILD, small changes are introduced to gather new information relevant to participants' stage of development. In the 12-13 year round, new things you may notice include:

- use of an app to collect information about what you are eating
- at some CHILD sites, use of new equipment to measure pulse wave velocity (the strength of your arteries)
- questionnaires for kids to complete about: media and technology use; age-related changes in the body; gender identity; and behaviours like smoking, vaping or alcohol use
- a questionnaire for parents to complete about physical coordination and motor skills



2,968

estimated total visits to be completed by 2024

236

visits completed so far

Questionnaires completed

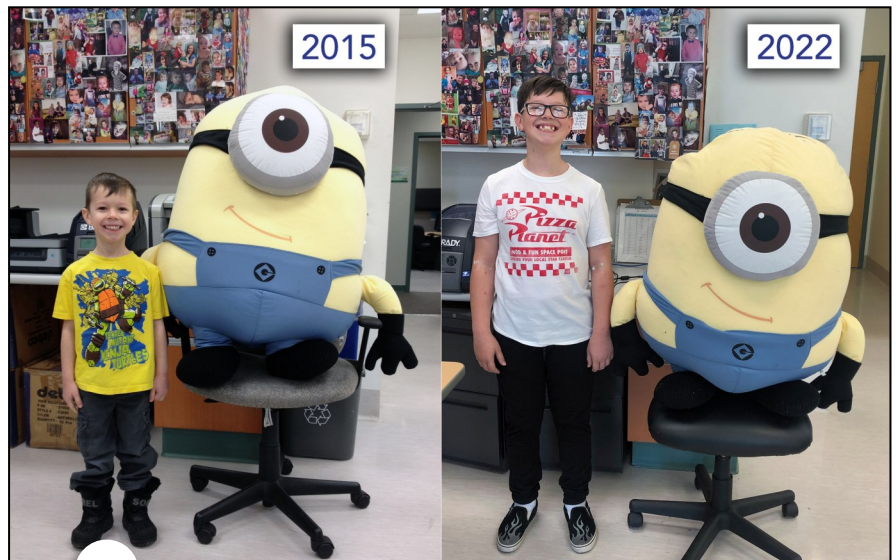
212 health

153 child

187 parent



Above: Fabiana conducts a skin prick test on Lila in Edmonton. **Below:** Nolin in Manitoba, across the years. See more pics of visits on the [CHILD website](#).



CHILD 12-13 YEAR VISITS

Your appointment

Kids must be at least 11 years and 9 months old to book a 12-13 year CHILD appointment.

Please:

- contact your site coordinator for visit details and to book your 13Y appointment
- bring your biological samples with you
- do your best to complete your questionnaires before your visit
- when possible, let us know 48 or even 24 hours ahead if you have to reschedule.

Why does your appointment take so long?

The length of your visit will vary according to Study site. Some sites collect extra information for special research projects, which takes longer. But even a relatively short visit takes a while. Why?

In general, the more information we collect during your visit, the more powerful the Study becomes. It takes a while to cover everything that makes CHILD such a respected and informative cohort.

Also, accuracy is vital. Research staff have to take their time and be careful. Mistakes or oversights from rushing would spoil the information we collect and mean we've wasted your time. It takes a while to do things right.

Each part of your visit has been carefully considered for inclusion based on research needs. CHILD researchers try to balance respect for your time with getting everything the Study needs to advance our knowledge and make your participation worthwhile.

We know we ask a lot, but we do our best to make your time count for as much as possible.

We thank you for your patience and continuing support!

Vancouver site

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The power of poop

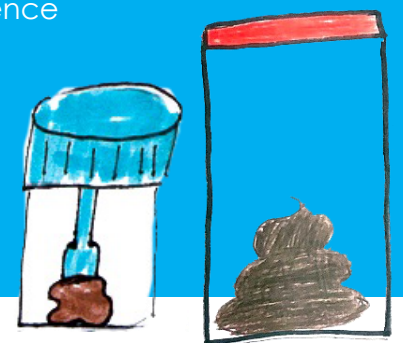
Gathering stool (poop) samples is not the most popular CHILD activity. But perhaps you will feel differently about this task knowing stool is one of the most important things the Study has collected.

Your stool is more than just waste from the food you have eaten. It also carries a host of passengers: a bunch of bacteria and other microscopic organisms that live in your guts. Most of these are helpful contributors to your health.

Only in recent years have scientists come to appreciate the role of these microorganisms—known as the microbiome. Thanks to your stool samples, CHILD has been at the forefront of research about the importance of the microbiome to health.

Your stool samples have provided vital clues about which microorganisms help prevent things like asthma, allergies, and obesity. In fact, your stool has helped build a whole new field of health science research.

So, thanks for putting up with our requests for these samples, and please just hold your nose and carry on.



COVID-19 Add-on Study

The worst of the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be over but the virus persists, the effects of the pandemic linger, and everyone wants to be better prepared for any potential future outbreak.

The data collected by CHILD's COVID-19 Add-on Study is helping us better understand the dynamics and impacts of the pandemic, and is helping policymakers to identify the steps that need to be taken next—to recover and to prepare.

The topics the study is currently exploring include:

- What made different children more or less likely to get sick with COVID.
- What factors influenced how effective the vaccines were at prompting the body to produce protective antibodies.
- The degree to which people were willing to be vaccinated against COVID.
- How life under the pandemic lockdown impacted people in various ways, from their nutrition, to their working lives, their childcare arrangements, and their mental health.

Study researchers have already shared preliminary insights from this work with other scientists and with policymakers, including through the study's [Rapid Results webpage](#). A paper on the methodology used in the study is also soon to be published, to help others doing similar work.

RESEARCH UPDATES

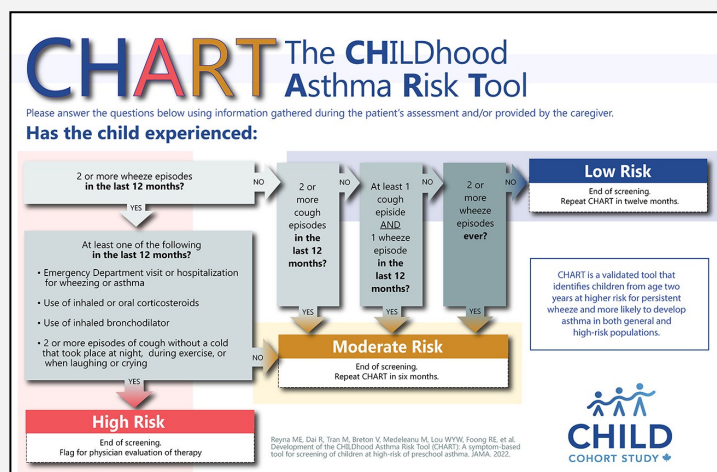
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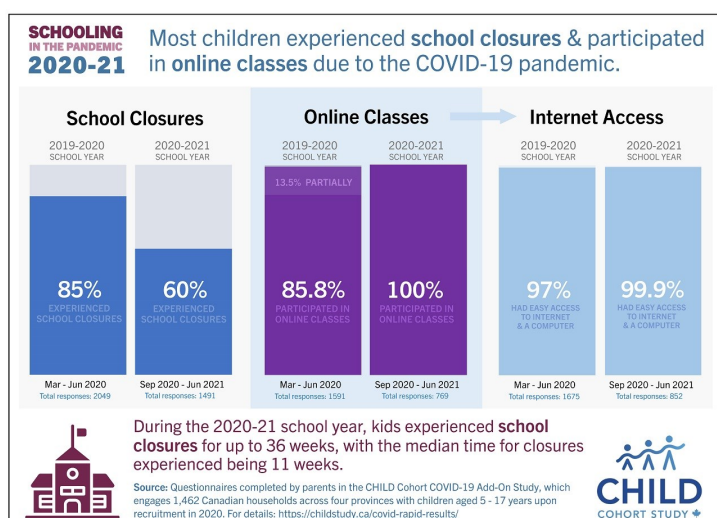
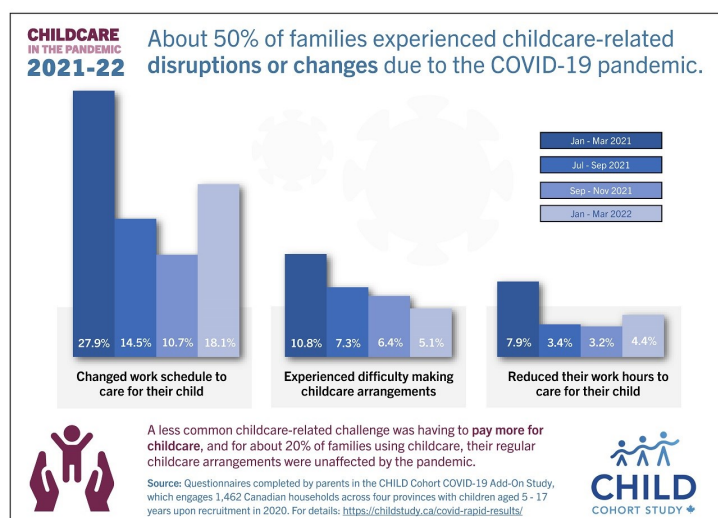
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Research using CHILD data is continuously generating new scientific knowledge. Since the last newsletter, CHILD researchers have published papers on the following topics:

- [Fungi in babies' guts influence later risk of obesity](#)
- [Preterm babies have lower BMI in infancy but catch up later](#)
- [Breastfeeding can offset the asthma risk caused by a baby's exposure to antibiotics](#)
- [Simple new tool allows primary caregivers to detect young kids at high risk of asthma](#)
- [Excess screen time, short sleep linked to obesity in preschool kids](#)



Simple tool for detecting asthma early: a recent CHILD output.



Two infographics—on childcare & schooling during the pandemic—recently shared on the COVID-19 Rapid Results webpage.

New faces at CHILD headquarters

In 2022, there was a changing of the guard in the national headquarters of CHILD—the National Coordinating Centre (NCC) based at McMaster University in Hamilton, ON.

Some members of the CHILD team followed their career paths elsewhere, but the NCC was fortunate to attract a group of highly capable and enthusiastic new teammates to carry on the work, pictured at right.



[Michelle Helm](#)
Managing Director



[Bassel Dawod](#)
Research Associate



[Dianne Tran](#)
Administrative Assistant



[Elissa Brookes](#)
Program Manager



[Xiao Xiao](#)
Data Analyst

New Coordinators at Toronto & Vancouver sites

Two of the study sites have also seen a change in personnel. In Toronto, **Eshwari Nanjappan** is replacing Yaminee Charavanapavan while Yaminee is on maternity leave to August 2023. In Vancouver, **Erika Sifuentes** has replaced former coordinator Conrado de Guzman.



[Eshwari Nanjappan](#)
Toronto site



[Erika Sifuentes](#)
Vancouver site

Questions?

If you – as a CHILD family parent or kid – have anything more you'd like to know about the Study, its researchers or the science involved, please send us your questions.

We're going to take your questions to CHILD researchers and then publish their answers in upcoming newsletters.

Ask away.

child@mcmaster.ca

Subject line: "Ask CHILD"

In other news...



Click on the image to watch the news story.

