

All Our Families Study

Understanding Development Across the Lifecourse

Spring 2023

Greetings, participants!



It's spring of 2023, and I hope you are enjoying the fine weather as much as I am. I returned from my sabbatical in March feeling refreshed and looking forward to what's next for the All Our Families study. While I was away, I turned my attention to the literature on flourishing, thriving and resilience. My hope was to develop a working framework to better understand the risk and protective factors for these qualities, recognizing that the human journey includes challenges and adversity. You will see in our future questionnaires some questions related to flourishing and resilience. What we learn from you will be shared to inform programs and practices to help all families.

Thanks to all of you who have completed the AOF 12-14 year questionnaire. I am hoping all of you have seen our request in your email, and will consider completing the questionnaire. One of the reasons AOF has been able to influence guidelines and practice is because the majority of you have completed the questionnaires, so the quality of the research is very high. An example of the influence of the research is the inclusion of a number of references from the AOF team in the newly released position paper from the Canadian Pediatric Society on early adversity, titled [From ACEs to early relational health: Implications for clinical practice](#). Thank you again for your contribution - it has really mattered, and will help all Canadians.

We will not be doing another survey for 2-3 more years and we are hopeful you can find the time to complete this 12-14 year questionnaire, so we can continue to inform strategies to help youth, parents and families.

This edition brings you news about an exciting paper about maternal mental health using All Our Families data, as well as some more interesting findings from the last COVID-19 survey. We have a couple of exciting prize draws for completion of the 12-14 survey; you will have received notification of that by email. We have a few staffing announcements as well; we will have a new summer student joining us, as well as a new addition to Tona's family.

The All Our Families team is looking forward to spending some time together, in person. We will have our usual team activities and mini-retreats to reconnect and recharge over the summer.

May you have sunshine and laughter, and a Happy Mother's Day!

Suzanne

Principal Investigator, All Our Families

What keeps you in the study? What would keep you more engaged? A Short Reader Survey

We are interested in knowing what keeps you motivated. [Here is a link to two short questions](#) to tell us more about your feelings and motivations to stay involved. The responses are anonymous (but you will have the option of adding contact information if you would like us to follow up).

Staff News

Our PhD trainee Tona, and his wife, Michelle welcomed a baby boy on February 26 at 10:38 am. Here is Kyler at 7lbs 11oz. All three are doing well and adjusting to a new adventure.

Congratulations to you both!

All Our Families will welcome a new student this summer to work on AOF projects. Welcome Rowan!

My name is Rowan Chetner. I grew up in Toronto but will have finished Second Year at Tufts University in Massachusetts this summer. I am getting a BS in Psychology and am minoring in Child Studies & Human Development and Hebrew. I am interested in Positive Psychology, family dynamics and child development. Some of my hobbies include swimming, skiing, running, creative writing, and video making.

Zahra, our postdoctoral trainee, was recently awarded the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Postdoctoral Fellowship Award. Her research is titled: **FROM LANGUISHING TO FLOURISHING: A MIXED-METHODS APPROACH TO OPERATIONALIZING MATERNAL AND CHILD COMPLETE MENTAL HEALTH AND ASSOCIATED RISK AND RESILIENCY FACTORS**. This research will focus on data from the AOF study and focus group interviews with mothers and children from AOF, as well as from equity-deserving communities in Calgary, to study whether or not they are flourishing and which factors contribute to their flourishing. Congratulations, Zahra!

In more award news, Tona was awarded the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canada Graduate Scholarship Doctoral Award. His research is focused on **THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY LIFE BUILT ENVIRONMENT EXPOSURES ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH**, which will focus on how the neighbourhood environment throughout childhood affects mental health and physical activity. Congratulations, Tona!



Study Updates

How many 12-14 Year Surveys completed so far?

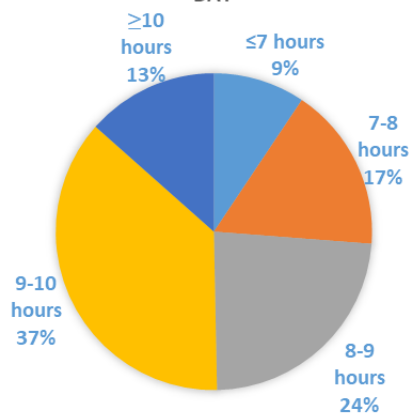
Thank you to all of you who have completed and submitted your 12-14 year surveys. Currently, we have received completed surveys from 53% from our moms and 45% from our youths. These surveys will remain open until late spring.

In addition to the familiar gift cards, a few new incentives have been added, including draws for prepaid Visas and Apple Store gift card. **As an added bonus, all surveys completed by May 15, 2023 will be included in our Early Bird Prize Draw for an iPad.** All prize draws will be completed when the 12-14 year surveys close and winners will be notified by our team this summer.

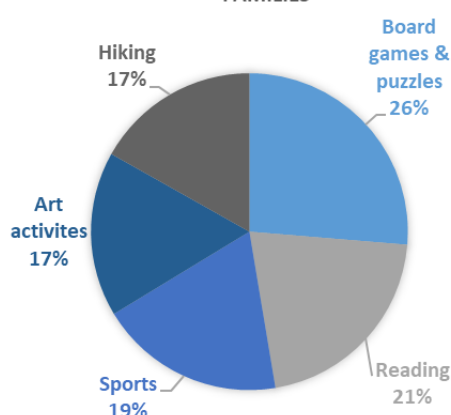
COVID-19 III Survey: Fun Facts

We selected a few more fun facts from the COVID III Youth Survey. Our youth reported:

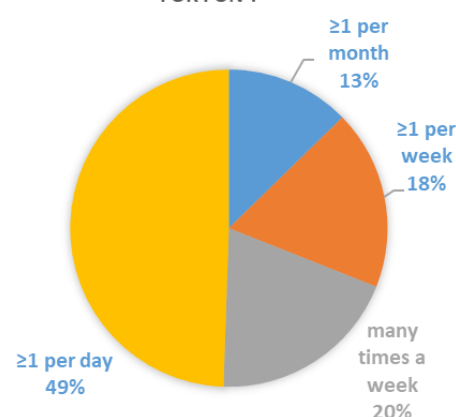
HOURS OF SLEEP YOUTH REPORTED PER DAY



TOP ACTIVITIES YOUTH DID WITH THEIR FAMILIES



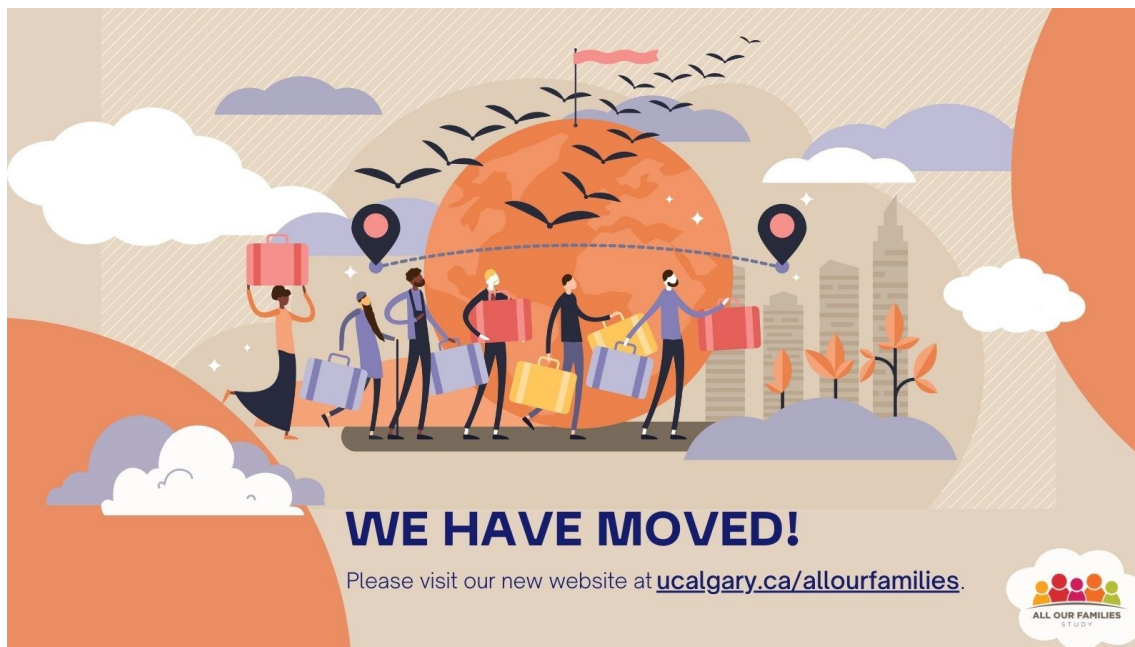
HOW MANY TIMES DID YOUTH 'READ FOR FUN'?



UCALGARY.CA/ALLOURFAMILIES

We have a new website! We have been working hard this past year to upgrade our website to align with the University of Calgary format. It will have a fresh new look but will contain the same great information for participants, investigators, and other interested parties.

The old site will redirect to our new one for approximately 1 year. Please feel free to [visit our new site](https://ucalgary.ca/allourfamilies) and see the improvements!



Research to Real Life

In 2022, members of our team, led by Dr. Kamala Adhikari, published an article in the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. Entitled [Women's Mental Health up to Eight Years after Childbirth and Associated Risk Factors](#), this paper used data from the All Our Families participants.

Kamala looked at the prevalence of moms' levels of anxiety and/or depression from 4-months postpartum up to 8 years, and the influence of partner relationships and daily roles on their mental health.



The research found that almost half of mothers experienced high anxiety and depression symptoms at least once between 4 months postpartum and when their child was eight years of age. In addition, around 20% of moms faced challenges around financial crunch, time constraints, family responsibilities and relationships when their child was between 3 and 8 years of age. Overall, about 10-15 % of women experience anxiety and/or depression, but when financial crunch, time constraints and challenging relationships are added on, the risk of anxiety and/or depression increases 2-3 times.

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The good news is finding time for family and friends, or taking a break to unwind, and using community resources like the library, help families manage in difficult times. Healthy moms mean healthy families, so giving yourself permission to step back and enjoy your family, friends or a good book helps everyone. As you have heard from us before, routines, resources and relationship all contribute to family resilience.

Check out our graphic abstract on page 4 summarizing these research findings.

Women's Mental Health Up to Eight Years After Childbirth and Associated Risk Factors

Adhikari et al. (2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/07067437221140387>

Background:

- Previous research has shown that almost 1/4 of women have elevated depression symptoms at some point in the 3 years after childbirth (21%).
- Some women will have elevated depression (12-16%) or anxiety (11%) symptoms for up to 7 years after birth.
- **Maternal mental health impacts child social, emotional and cognitive development.**
- Distal factors that indirectly impact maternal health include poor social support, previous mental health difficulties, low socioeconomic status, and history of adverse childhood experiences.
- Proximal factors that directly impact maternal health include time, finances, and marital stress.

Study Goals:

- (1) Determine **prevalence of elevated maternal anxiety and/or depression up to 8 years** after childbirth, and
- (2) Determine the **association between role/ relationship strains** during parenting **and mental health challenges** from 3 to 8 years after childbirth.

Methods:

- Women with a singleton pregnancy (N=2398) completed self-report questionnaires at 4 months, 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 year after childbirth.
- Outcomes = maternal depression and anxiety.
- Exposures = time crunch, financial crunch, family/work responsibility, and partner relationship.



Results:

- The predicted probability of maternal anxiety and/or depression was higher among women who experienced:
 - High levels of time crunch (21%)
 - High levels of financial crunch (22%)
 - Difficulties juggling family, work and other responsibilities (23%)
 - Poor partner relationships (23%)

Women who experienced **frequent difficulties juggling responsibilities** were **3.5 times** more likely to experience anxiety and/or depression than women without these difficulties.

Women with **stressful partner relationships** were **2.4 times** more likely to experience anxiety and/or depression symptoms.

42%

Of women had elevated anxiety and/or depression **at least once** 4 months to 8 years after childbirth.

9% of women experienced **persistent** anxiety and/or depression symptoms (3 or more time points).

Implications:

- High levels of time and financial crunch, challenges with family or work responsibilities, and partner relationships could be targets for prevention/ management to help prevent and alleviate anxiety and depression symptoms in mothers, which in turn supports healthy child development (healthy mom -- healthy offspring).
- **Assessing maternal mental health continuously** after childbirth is important to support healthy child development and maternal well-being (e.g., integrated into primary care pathways).
- Future research should examine maternal mental health challenges as children enter adolescence; exactly which factors have time-dependent effects on maternal and child development outcomes?



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Participant Recognition

We appreciate you!

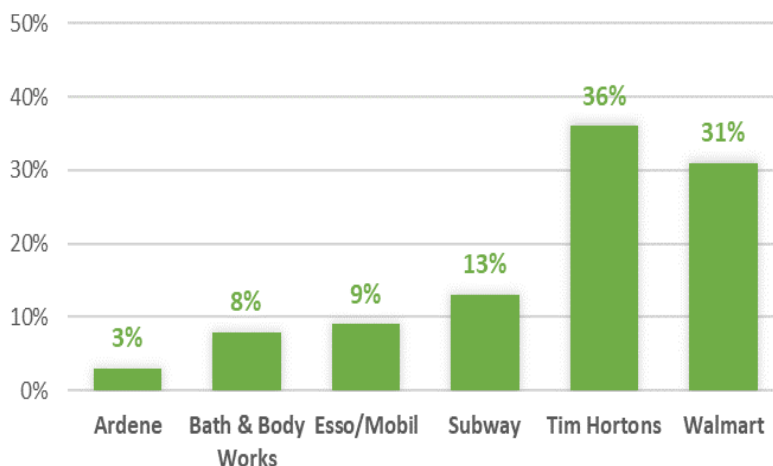
As always, we want you to know how much we appreciate any and all contributions you and your All Our Families child make to the study.

In longitudinal studies, keeping participants in the study is important for sound science. As AOF study participants, you represent the population of a mid-size Canadian city, and future populations will benefit from your data. Losing some participants over time is expected. That said, more participants leads to larger amounts of data which will better 'represent' the population. It is for this reason we value your contributions so much.

Last year, we offered our participants a small gift to thank them for over 10 years of contribution to the All Our Families study. This was also the first time we were able to offer a number of choices for a gift card. These are the results.

We use this information to help guide us on future participant incentives. We are always open to your feedback, please drop us a line at allourfamilies@ucalgary.ca.

GIFT CARDS BY POPULARITY



What is done with your data?

AOF findings have been shared with organizations in the community and Alberta Health Services, providing local data that has supported the development of programs and supports around maternal mental health and child development. Information from AOF was essential to the development of a series of handbooks about children's self-regulation. Your data also helped us quantify how much you relied on childcare providers for specific information, which facilitated the inclusion of material about literacy in childcare training programs. In addition, AOF data contributed to the development of policy and guidelines for maternal mental health screening in public health clinics across Alberta.

Information from the AOF COVID-19 surveys have been shared with provincial leaders and will be used in a national evidence review for the Public Health Agency of Canada around future pandemic preparedness and response. These findings highlighted that although some families face unique challenges, all families, wherever they lived, experienced tremendous stress that was made worse by numerous competing demands on time and resources.

National organizations like the [Canadian Pediatric Society](#) have looked at AOF data to help develop position statements.

This, plus the over 150 papers the team have published on your data, over 100 students that have been trained, and over 300 presentations given on the local, national and international level – all reinforces the value of your participation.

Let's Connect!

If you have any questions about this newsletter or want to connect about something else, we would love to hear from you!

Email: allourfamilies@ucalgary.ca

Twitter: [@allourfamilies](https://twitter.com/allourfamilies)

Facebook: [@allourfamiliesstudy](https://www.facebook.com/allourfamiliesstudy)