

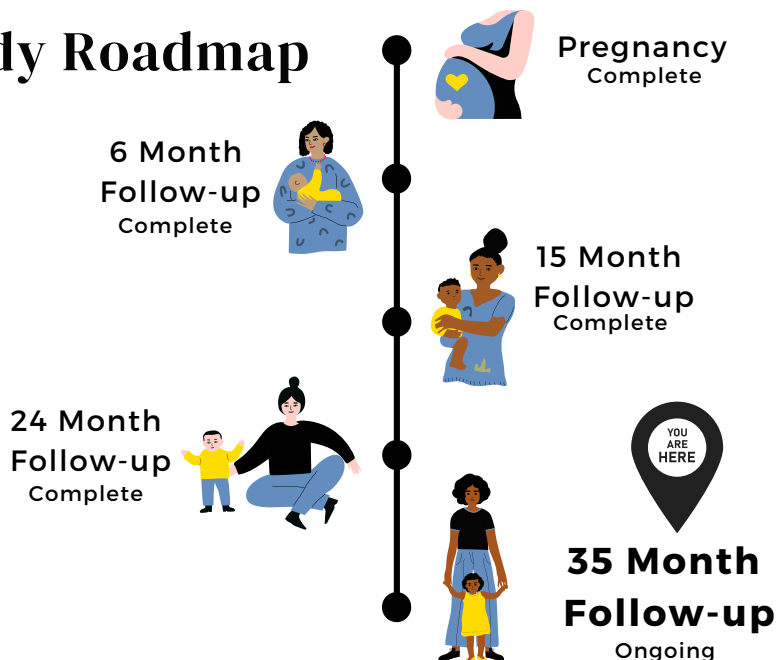
COVID-19 and Family Wellbeing Study

July 2023

Newsletter



Study Roadmap



In This Issue...

- **Study Progress**
 - 15 Months
 - 24 Months
 - 35 Months**
- **Strategies & Resources**
 - Managing Stress in Parents
 - Managing Stress in Children
- **Publications**
- **Investigators**

Study Progress

35-months (Phase 6)

In Progress!

- Survey
 - Zoom observation
 - Hair/Saliva samples
-

24-months (Phase 5)

- 186 surveys completed



- 103 Zoom observations completed



- 20 home visits completed



- 65 maternal hair samples collected
- 51 child hair samples collected
- 84 maternal saliva samples collected
- 76 child saliva samples collected

15-months (Phase 4)

- 190 surveys completed
 - 146 Zoom observations completed
 - 81 maternal hair samples collected
 - 65 child hair samples collected
 - 88 maternal saliva samples collected
 - 76 child saliva samples collected
-

Why hair and saliva samples?

We are using hair and saliva samples to measure stress levels. We are doing this by assessing cortisol levels in hair, and telomere length from saliva.

Cortisol - primary stress hormone

Telomeres - protective ends of chromosomes



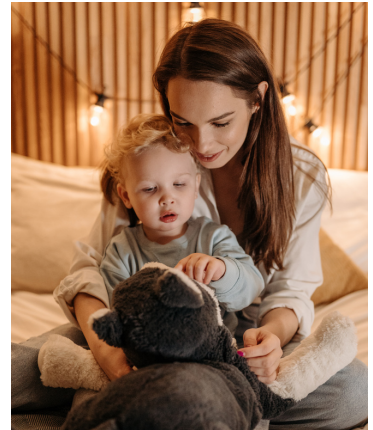
Click [HERE](#) to access hair and saliva collection instructions

Study Progress

Child Development

Stress during pregnancy may affect infant stress levels and later **child development**. In addition to providing saliva/hair samples, we have asked you to report on aspects of your child's behaviour and development at each study time point.

This information is helping us understand *how* COVID-19 may have impacted child development, as well as which factors are reducing, and even **eliminating**, risk.



Upon completion of the 24-month timepoint...



91%

Social-Emotional Skills:

91% of participating children are developing typically in terms of skills such as **attention**, **empathy**, **prosocial peer relations**, and **mastery motivation** (persistence).



95%

Personal-Social Skills:

95% of participating children are developing typically in terms of skills such as **self-help** and **interaction with others** (e.g., solitary play & playing with other children).



94%

Communication Skills:

94% of participating children are developing typically in terms of communication skills such as **language production and comprehension**, vocalizing, listening, and understanding.

Strategies & Resources

Managing Stress in Children

By **recognizing, acknowledging, and managing stress**, we empower children to navigate life's challenges effectively, nurturing their long-term **mental and physical health**.

Here are some quick and easy mindfulness activities to try!

Helping Children Identify & Label Emotions



5 Easy mindfulness crafts: [Mindful Little Minds](#) Modelling Emotions



Promoting Mindfulness in Children

Mindfulness is noticing our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and anything that is around us and happening *right now*.



Afternoon mindfulness activity:

Create a glitter jar!

[Mindful.org](#)

Practice **Changing Thoughts** to be More Positively Framed



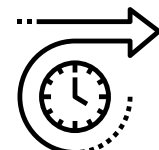
VISIT: [Pathway2Success](#)
for positive self-talk tips

Positive Self-Talk



A Mindful Minute!

1. One thing you're looking forward to
2. Say 2 positive things about you
3. Name 3 things you enjoy
4. List 4 things you see
5. Take 5 deep breaths



Strategies & Resources

Managing Stress in Parents

How you **interpret** stress determines how stress affects health

Cognitive reframing: Examine and challenge your thought patterns to gain different perspectives on situations, ideas, or relationships

Challenging Negative Thinking - Anxiety Canada



Mental Health Support (Wellness Together Canada):

Learn, Practice, Connect, Track, Talk



EarlyON Child & Family Centres Ontario



Practice Self-Compassion:

Mindfulness, Self-Kindness, Connectedness

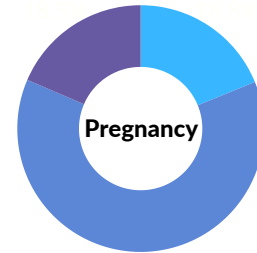
- Recognizing when you're stressed
- Being supportive and understanding of yourself
- Engagement > Isolation



Self-Compassion Resources, Events, & More!

Progress of parental stress levels from pregnancy to 2 years, as reported by study participants

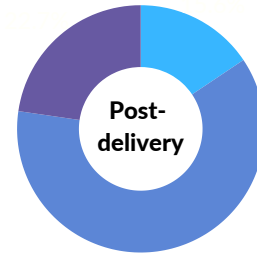
High Stress
18.5%



Low Stress
18.8%

Moderate Stress 61.1%

High Stress
23.0%



Low Stress
15.8%

Moderate Stress 62.7%

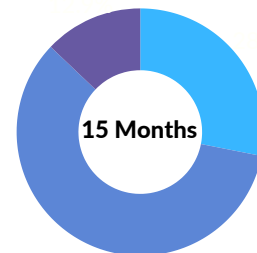
High Stress
19.9%



Low Stress
24.9%

Moderate Stress 55.2%

High Stress
12.9%

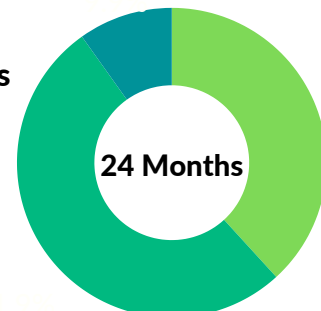


Low Stress
28.1%

Moderate Stress 59.0%

NEW

High Stress
9.7%



Low Stress
37.6%

Moderate Stress 51.1%

Selected Publications

from the COVID-19 and Family Wellbeing Study

Trajectories of distress from pregnancy to 15-months post-partum during the COVID-19 pandemic

Prenatal distress, access to services, and birth outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic: Findings from a longitudinal study

COVID-19 and mental health during pregnancy: The importance of cognitive appraisal and social support

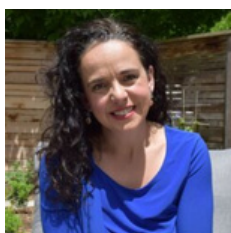
Coping strategies mediate the associations between COVID-19 experiences and mental health outcomes in pregnancy



Investigators



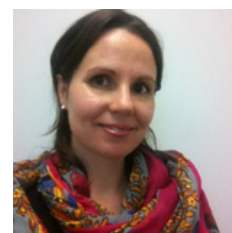
Dr. Jennifer Khoury
Mount Saint Vincent University



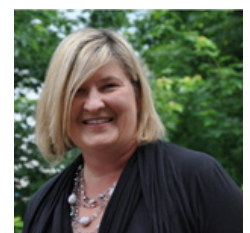
Dr. Andrea Gonzalez
McMaster University



Dr. Leslie Atkinson
Toronto Metropolitan University



Dr. Terry Bennett
McMaster University



Dr. Susan Jack
McMaster University

THANK YOU

for your continued participation!

Study Email: pregnancystudy.mcmaster@gmail.com

DPRC Research Website: <https://dpresearchcentre.com/> **DPRC Instagram:** DPRC_MSUV

DPRC Facebook: Developmental Psychobiology Research Centre - DPRC
