

Parent Link



Parent Link Trial – Participant Information Sheet

What is the Parent Link trial?

Parenting is a learned skill that requires practice. The Commonwealth Government, in partnership with the Queensland Government, is trialling better ways to inform new and expectant parents about parenting and support services.

Through the Parent Link trial, parents and carers of children in the first 1000 days of life (from pregnancy to age two), who live in trial locations, can volunteer to receive text messages providing information about parenting, child development and support services.

Local Coordinators in each trial site will work with local organisations to distribute this information, establish service referral points and provide training to professionals working with new and expectant parents. They will be available to provide additional support to participating parents and carers in their trial region as needed.

Who is conducting the Parent Link trial?

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) is funding the Parent Link trial.

Three community organisations, UnitingCare Community (Queensland), Livingstone Shire Council and Mercy Community will coordinate the trial locally in each trial region and provide additional support to participants as required.

Horizon Communications Group works in partnership with Upwire to build and maintain the text message system.

The Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR), The University of Queensland has been engaged to evaluate the trial.

What is involved in participation in the Parent Link trial?

In order to participate in the Parent Link trial you must:

- Be aged 18 years or older
- Have a mobile phone
- Be a resident in Ipswich, Toowoomba or Rockhampton / Livingstone
- Provide regular care (at least five hours in a typical week) to a child aged less than 21 months, or
- Be expecting a child (at 20 weeks gestation or later)

As a participant in the Parent Link trial, you will receive text messages providing information about parenting, child development and support services. Everyone will receive text-messages, however the frequency of the messages you receive may vary between once per three months up to twice per week. You will also be asked to complete two surveys about your experience. You can complete the survey online from any computer, tablet or smart phone. The surveys will each take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Your participation in the trial will help us to assess text messaging as a way to inform new and expectant parents and carers of young children about parenting and child development. For the evaluation to be representative of the views of parents participating in the Parent Link trial, it is important to get feedback from as many participants as possible.

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As a thank you for your time, all participants who remain enrolled in the trial will receive a \$10 Coles/Myer voucher at the time of being invited to the follow-up survey. To ensure that we are able to provide the voucher to you, please inform your local coordinator of any changes to your contact details.

What will my data be used for?

Data collected as part of your participation in the Parent Link trial will be used to produce a report to DSS, which will assess the effectiveness of the Parent Link trial in informing parents and carers of young children about the first 1000 days of life. Subject to approval by DSS, the data may also be used by the evaluation team at ISSR to produce academic publications.

Will I be able to find out about the results of the trial?

All participants will be emailed a summary of key findings once the final evaluation report has been completed, in March 2020.

Are there any risks?

We do not anticipate participation in this research will put you at any risk of harm. Some survey questions are of a sensitive nature. You can contact the Local Coordinator in your region, the research team or a crisis support service (see contact details below) if any aspect of the surveys or the Parent Link trial itself distresses you.

What if I change my mind?

Participation in the Parent Link trial is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. Your participation in or withdrawal from the Parent Link trial will not influence your participation in any other government programs or provisions you access either in the present or the future. You can withdraw from the Parent Link trial and stop receiving the text messages by replying "STOP" to any Parent Link text message. You can withdraw from a survey by exiting or closing your browser. When you withdraw from the trial, we will contact you by email confirming that you are no longer a participant in the research and checking whether you are in need of further support at this time. If you have been enrolled in the trial for at least three months, the email will also invite you to complete the follow-up survey. If you have been enrolled for less than three months, the email will invite you to complete a short exit survey instead of the follow-up survey. You may also be removed from the trial at any time without further notice.

You may request at any time that data provided by you for the Parent Link trial be removed from the evaluation by contacting the evaluation manager Dr Martin O'Flaherty (contact details overleaf).

Privacy and your Personal Information

Any party involved in conducting the Parent Link trial that handles your personal information is subject to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth) and the Australian Privacy Principles. All survey data will be de-identified and stored securely by The University of Queensland for the duration of the trial and evaluation. It will then be delivered to DSS upon completion of the evaluation.

The contact details used to contact you for the Parent Link trial and information about the stage of your pregnancy and/or age of your child will be passed on to the Local Coordinator in your region and to Upwire to facilitate the text messaging system.

The Local Coordinator in your region will also receive information about any potential vulnerabilities you disclose in the sign-up or survey process to ensure duty of care.

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The privacy policies of organisations involved in handling data of participants in the Parent Link trial can be found at the following links:

- Upwire <https://www.upwire.com/legals>
- UnitingCare Community (Queensland) <https://uccommunity.org.au/privacy-policy>
- Livingstone Shire Council <https://www.livingstone.qld.gov.au/documentcenter/view/2585>
- Mercy Community <http://www.mercycs.org.au/privacy-policy>
- University of Queensland <https://www.uq.edu.au/rti/privacy-management>
- DSS <https://www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy>

Beyond this, your personal information will be kept confidential and not passed on to anyone outside of the Parent Link trial research team.

Does the evaluation have ethical approval?

The evaluation of the Parent Link trial adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The research has been approved by the University of Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 2018000412) and the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number HREC/18/QTDD/46921).

Who can I contact if I need help or have questions?

If you have questions about the Parent Link trial text messages, or if you need assistance with signing-up to the Parent Link trial or additional support, please contact the Local Coordinator in your community:

Community	Organization	Telephone	Email
Ipswich	UnitingCare Community (Queensland)	(07) 3816 9609 / 0448 812 507	parentlink.ipswich@uccommunity.org.au
Rockhampton / Livingstone	Livingstone Shire Council	0409 108 125	parentlink@livingstone.qld.gov.au
Toowoomba	Mercy Community	0437 667 390	parentlink@mercycommunity.org.au

If you have any questions about the surveys or evaluation of the Parent Link trial by The University of Queensland you may contact:

Dr Martin O'Flaherty
Evaluation Manager
parentlink@uq.edu.au
(07) 3365 4808

Alternatively, if you would like to speak to an officer of The University of Queensland not involved in the evaluation, you may contact the Ethics Coordinator on (07) 3365 3924 (approval number 2018000412).

Thank you for your time. We really appreciate your cooperation and effort!