

Contact us

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Longitudinal Experiences and Adjustments in Parenthood Study (LEAPS)

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Expectant Parents,

We would like to invite you to take part in a new research project looking at the changes mothers and fathers experience as they become parents.

Parents go through many changes throughout pregnancy, physically, mentally and emotionally as they prepare to become new parents. We would like to learn more about how these changes are happening for you.

We are also interested in the changes that happen when the baby enters your world. What changes were you expecting and what things are new and challenging / exciting?

We are also hoping to follow some parents throughout their parenthood journey. This will help us to understand how parenthood changes over time.

We hope you might be interested in taking part in this exciting research. You will find more details inside. We are happy to answer any questions you have.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alejandra Perez

Dr Elena Panagiotopoulou

Dr Ruth Roberts

Ms Maria-Christina Vourda



Who is conducting the study?

The study is being led by Dr Alejandra Perez, Dr Elena Panagiotopoulou and Dr Ruth Roberts who will be conducting interviews and gathering data with Research Assistant, Maria-Christina Vourda, and fully trained post-graduate students. All researchers from this study are fully DBS checked and are affiliated with both University College London (UCL) and Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families (AFNCCF), a mental health charity for children and families. This study forms part of UCL postgraduate programmes that run in conjunction with AFNCCF, such as the MSc in Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology.

What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you decide to take part, you will complete a remote video-recorded interview and online questionnaires. This interview will ask you questions about your experience of pregnancy. We will also ask you to tell us a bit about your past and present relationships. We will ask you about your feelings as you prepare for the arrival of your baby. This interview will take approximately two hours and it can be done in one session or two, depending on your preference. The interview will take place on the secure video platform, Microsoft Teams. You will be sent an online link and detailed instructions to allow you to complete the questionnaires online. We will be available to assist you with the questionnaires if any difficulties should arise.

Follow-up

At the first meeting we will arrange a follow-up remote interview with you within four weeks of giving birth. This session will be shorter and we will conduct video-recorded interviews about your experience of being a new parent and you will complete short online questionnaires which can be done in your own time. We will also conduct short audio and video-recorded observations of you and your baby together. If you do not wish to be audio or video-recorded you can still take part by completing the questionnaires.

Afterwards, we would like to follow-up again when the baby is 6-months and 1-year old. These follow-ups will help us to understand how parenting experiences change as your baby gets older and reaches different milestones. We will be interested in hearing about what things have become easier and what is becoming more challenging. If you wish to continue participating, we will invite you to take part in further research, for up to 10 years. This will help us to learn how parenting changes over time.

Who can take part?

We are seeking expectant mothers and/or fathers who are expecting a baby in the next three months. Our only inclusion criteria for the study is that at least one parent participates and that parent is a first-time parent. There are no other exclusion criteria.

Do I have to take part?

This study is voluntary. It is completely up to you to decide if you want to take part. You can talk about it with others before making a decision. A decision not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way.

If you do decide to take part, it is fine for you to change your mind. You are free to stop participation at any point, for any reason, and you do not have to share that reason with the researchers. You are free to withdraw your data up to four weeks after it has been collected. If you decide to withdraw your data within this time period, all of your data from that session will be securely deleted.

If you do choose to take part, you will sign a consent form for yourself. If your partner also decides to take part, they will sign a separate consent form for their participation. If you are happy for your baby to take part, you and/or your partner can indicate consent for your baby in the form.

Will my information be kept confidential?

The information we collect is kept strictly confidential. You will be identified with a code number only. All information, including video-recordings, is stored safely in accordance with GDPR legislation for up to a maximum of 20 years.

Please note, that in certain circumstances we may have to break confidentiality if you report a risk of harm to you or your child. We would refer you to an appropriate source of support.

If two parents decide to take part, they will do all parts of the research separately. No information that is provided by one parent will be shared with the other parent.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for those taking part, some parents have found it helpful to reflect on their parenting experience. We hope this research will be of benefit to other parents. We hope that the knowledge gained from this study will help us to understand how parenting experiences change as the child grows from infancy to childhood. We would like the information to be used to support families while they make various transitions. We will keep you up to date on relevant research findings in an annual newsletter.

Are there any risks in taking part?

We do not anticipate any risks in taking part. There may be times when you share difficult experiences which can be upsetting. If you do become upset, the trained research team will be on hand to help you manage your distress.

If you feel, either during or after your participation, that you have been treated unfairly or would like to raise a complaint, please contact the study's Principal Investigator, Dr Alejandra Perez. (phone: 020 7794 2313; email: alejandra.perez@annafreud.org). Should you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, please contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee (email: ethics@ucl.ac.uk)

What will happen to the results?

We would like to publish the results in reports and scientific journals. We would only ever report data from all participants as a group – no identifiable individual data will be reported nor will you or your child be identified in any reports or publications.

Ask questions!

We would love to hear from you. You can ask questions or tell us about any concerns you have about the study. All of our contact information is on the back of this leaflet. If you have a question that you did not think of now, you are welcome to ask us later.



Privacy Notice

This note is to outline what we do with the information you share with us as part of this project and your rights about our use of that information. These rights are as set out in the "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)".

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy-notice>

This research project will hold 2 types of data about you:

- Your interview audio recording and (anonymised) interview transcript; your audio-video recording
- Your name, age, gender, and ethnicity, email address, address, phone number

The lawful basis that would be used to process your personal data are: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research Purposes' for special category data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. We will keep the pseudonymised information, where individuals won't be readily identifiable, for a 10 year period while the research project is active. This anonymous information may then be used for research for another 20 years. After this, the information and data will be securely destroyed. We will delete audio and video recordings at the end of the project (April 2031).

We will not be moving any information which could identify you outside the EU and will ensure it remains safe at all times.

If you have any concerns or questions about our research, the data processing, and/or your involvement in the project please contact UCL in the first instance at data-protection@ucl.ac.uk.

Contact for further information

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers whose details are below.

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