



## 2013 Australia Post Let's Read Survey Summary

### Executive Summary

The 2013 Australia Post Let's Read survey aimed to explore how often and how early parents and caregivers are reading and sharing stories with children from birth to 5 years.

Overall, the survey findings revealed that:

- **51%** of parents and caregivers don't realise reading books and sharing stories with children from birth gives them the best start in life
- **only 47%** of parents and caregivers are reading to their children from 0-4 months old
- from birth to 5 years children are spending **8 hours a week** watching television compared to 4.4 hours a week reading books and sharing stories
- **34%** of parents and caregivers do not understand the importance of reading and sharing stories with their children from birth.

These findings indicate that while parents and caregivers understood the importance of reading and sharing stories with children in the pre-school years, many families across Australia still require additional information and access to resources that encourage and promote the importance of early literacy development with children from birth.

### Let's Read

Let's Read is an early literacy initiative that promotes reading with children from birth to 5 years. Let's Read was developed by the Centre for Community Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. The Murdoch Childrens Research Institute (MCRI) and The Smith Family (TSF) have partnered to implement Let's Read with communities across Australia.

In July 2012 the Australian Government funded MCRI to implement a 12 month Let's Read National Early Literacy Campaign (the Let's Read campaign). Building on existing evidence-based programs, the Let's Read campaign engaged families, professionals and communities to promote high quality early literacy environments for children from birth to 5 years. [Read more about the campaign here.](#)

### Australia Post and Let's Read Survey

An evaluation of parent and caregiver attitudes, knowledge and behaviours of reading with their children is of great importance to Let's Read. While evaluation research was not funded as part of the Let's Read campaign, Let's Read collaborated with Australia Post in 2013 to leverage off their existing data collection sources. As a result Let's Read was able to establish a baseline to enable any future analyses of a possible shift or increase in parents and caregivers awareness of the importance reading with their children from birth to 5 years.

The 2013 Australia Post survey data provided Let's Read with quantitative analysis of the number of parents and caregivers who read with their children from birth every day, as well as the attitudes and behaviours parents and caregivers have towards reading with their children from birth to five years. In addition to establishing a baseline, this data was also intended to increase our understanding of early literacy and early intervention of literacy development.

Let's Read is a registered Trademark of both Murdoch Children Research Institute and The Smith Family

The Australian Government is working in partnership with the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and The Smith Family to deliver Let's Read.

Project partners:



Affiliated with:



[www.letsread.com.au](http://www.letsread.com.au)

The survey was conducted online by Australia Post in March 2013 with 1,107 responses received across all states and territories. The survey consisted of 18 multiple choice questions relating to early childhood and early literacy. All respondents had a child aged five or under in their care at the time of the survey. Where respondents also had children in their care who were 6 years or older, they were asked to answer the survey reflecting only of their younger children 0 to five years. The basic demographics of the survey respondents are presented in Table 1 below:

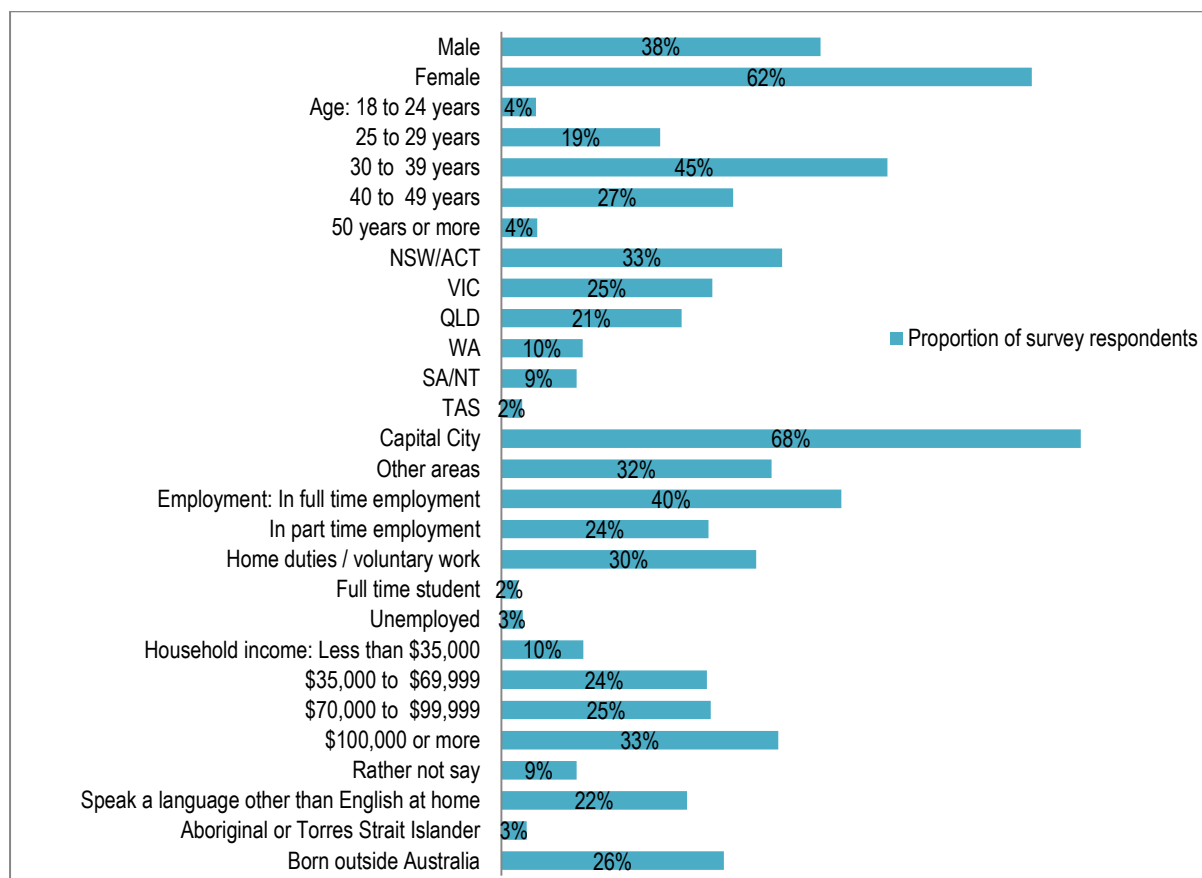


Table 1 Overview of survey respondents

## Research findings

The key findings from the Australia Post Let's Read survey are presented below under the survey themes:

### ***Understanding of the importance of reading with their child:***

- Over half (51%) of the parents and caregivers didn't realise that sharing books with children from birth gives them the best start in life
- Almost half (44%) of parents and caregivers indicated they had read with their children at least every day in the week
- Over half (46%) of parents and caregivers agreed that sharing books from birth helps children become better readers for life

### ***How early are parents and caregivers starting to read to their children?***

- Under half (47%) of parents are reading to their children aged 0-4 months

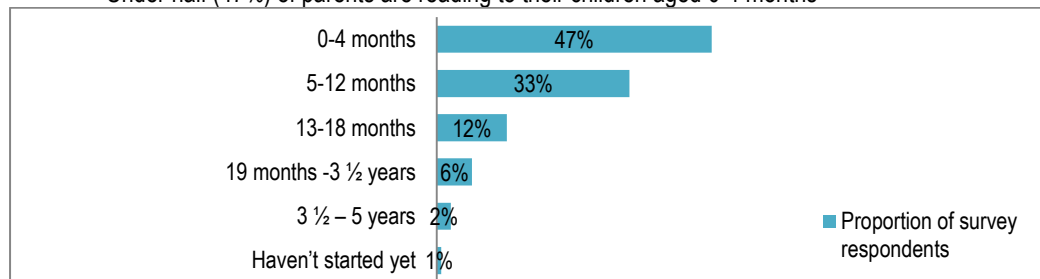


Table 2 Age at which parents and caregivers started reading with their child

**What are the most common activities for children from birth to 5 years?**

- 85% of parents and caregivers said that their children from birth to 5 years enjoyed watching television
- children from birth to five years are spending 8 hours a week watching television compared to 4.4 hours a week reading books and sharing stories.
- 85% of parents and caregivers understand the importance of pointing out words and letters in books and naming them
- 80% of parents and caregivers understand the importance of asking children to name words or make the sounds a word makes

**What are parents and caregivers motivations for reading with their children from birth to 5 years?**

- 38% of parents and caregivers say that building a closer relationship with their children from birth to 5 years is the strongest motivation for spending more time reading and sharing stories
- only 6% of parents and caregivers are motivated to read to make sure their children are ready for school

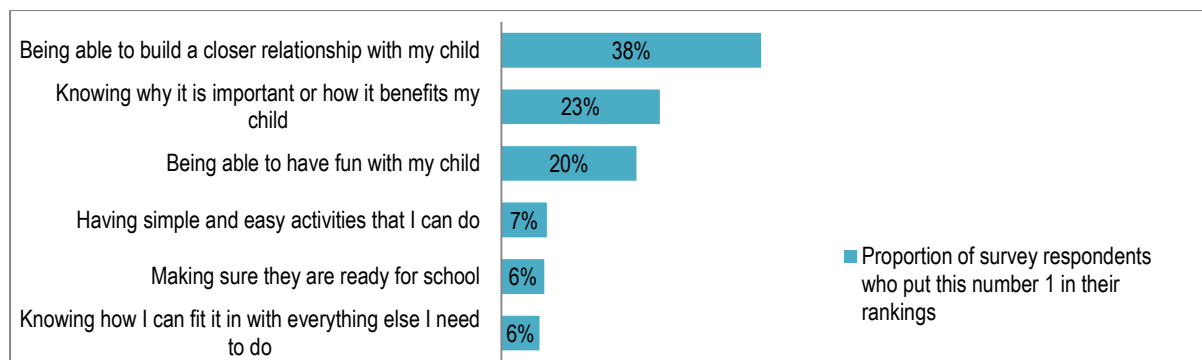


Table 3 Key motivations identified by parents and caregivers for reading with their children from birth to five years.

**What supports are**

- 56% of parents and caregivers indicated there was 'some' or 'not much' information available to them about how to actually read or talk with their child from birth to 5 years
- 44% of parents and caregivers received information and support about reading with children from friends and family more than services such as libraries, community centres etc.
- 13% of parents pointed to a deficiency in information available for childhood development.

**What is getting in the way of parents and caregivers reading with their child?**

- 61% of parents and caregivers said that household duties get in the way of spending more time reading with their child from birth to 5 years
- 50% of attribute it to tiredness
- 37% said work responsibilities limit their time.

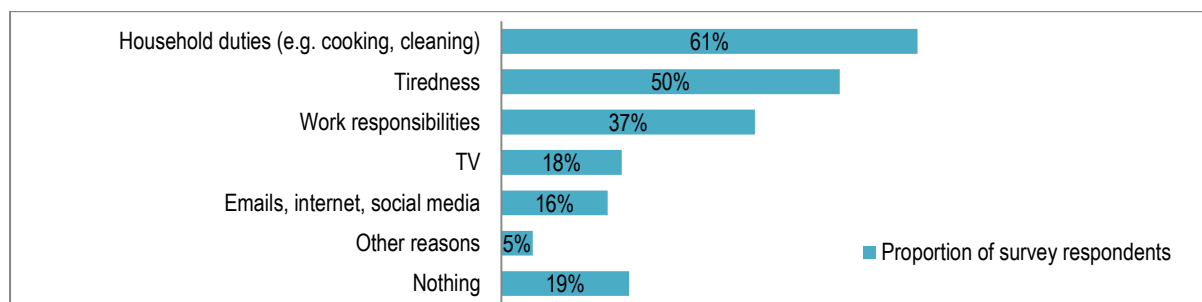


Table 4 Activities identified as getting in the way of parents and caregivers being able to read more with their child

During 2013-14, with the support of the Australian Government, Let's Read will continue to engage families, professionals and communities throughout Australia to promote reading with children from birth to 5 years. *Let's Read 2013-14* builds on over 9 years' experience implementing Let's Read in disadvantaged communities across Australia in partnership with TSF, as well as on the success and experience gained from the success of the 12 month Let's Read campaign.

Join us and stay up to date for all future research updates:

- [Visit our website](#)
- [Sign up to our mailing list](#)
- [Like us on Facebook](#)
- [Follow us on Twitter](#)