

Participant Information Form (PIF)

You are invited to take part in a research project titled Bright Tomorrows Start Today - Empowering families to embrace early child mental health. Before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation would involve. Please read the following information carefully:

This project is led by the Chief Investigator (CI), Professor Francis Mitrou, Senior Principal Research Fellow and Team Head of Human Development and Community Wellbeing (HDCW) at The Kids Research Institute Australia. The CI is supported by the following research team; Dr Vu Vuong (PhD, Senior Research Officer), Johanna Rewa (BHSc Hons, HDCW Program Manager), Joanne Readman (BSc, Project Coordinator), Lilly Howes (Research Assistant), Briana Guerrini (M.Psych, Research Assistant) and Dr James White (PhD, App Developer and Director of ReachHPI).

What is this research about?

The Kids Research Institute Australia developed the Bright Tomorrows (BT) app in 2019. It offers over 1,000 interactive “meaningful moments” and parent tips to help turn everyday activities into brain-building opportunities for children aged 0–5.

This 6-week study will explore how parents use the app, which provides personalised tips to support early brain development and build parental confidence. Two new programs have been added to support children’s mental health and healthy eating which include:

- **Nurturing Minds:** Mental health information and support (informed by Emerging Minds Australia).
- **Fuel and Flourish:** Positive mealtime practices and food literacy (informed by Foodbank Western Australia).

*The app is not a substitute for medical advice; it is a tool to help parents support early brain development and learning in the early years. For any concerns about your child’s development, please consult a medical professional.

What are the aims of this research study?

- To better understand how parents and caregivers’ confidence in supporting their child’s mental health changes over time by engaging with evidence-based support programs.

- To measure the effectiveness of the new growth programs added to the BT app in enhancing parental self-efficacy.
- To explore how parents and carers engage with the new programs, including understanding some basic demographic information.

You are eligible to participate if you can answer yes to the following:

- I am a parent or primary caregiver of a child aged 0–5 years.
- I am 18 years of age or older.
- I live in Western Australia.
- I have an Apple or Android device with internet access to download the app.
- I am confident in reading and understanding instructions in English.
- I am willing to create a profile on the app so my email can be linked to my survey responses.
- I am willing to participate for the full 6-week study period.

Children will be excluded from the study if they:

- Were born prematurely (≤ 28 –32 weeks' gestation).
- Have a medical diagnosis (e.g., intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism, ADHD) or a chronic illness (e.g., hearing loss, visual impairment).

**To ensure accurate results, this study is currently focused on children without special needs, as additional supports may affect outcomes.*

**Acknowledging that you may have more than one child for the purpose of this study, please choose only one child to complete the research tasks with.*

What does participation involve?

Preparation

- Provide informed consent to participate and provide some basic demographic information.

Pre-Intervention

- Complete a 4-question survey (approx. 5 mins) and enter your email to link responses.

Using the new growth programs

- Sign up by creating a profile in the ‘Family’ tab in the app using your first name, email, and password.
- Over 6 weeks, complete a minimum of 10 moments from each growth program with your child. To get to the growth program in the app, follow these steps:
 - Tap the ‘Growth’ tab
 - Scroll down to see ‘Fuel and Flourish’ and ‘Nurturing Minds’.
- After each moment you completed, tap “We did it”. A checkmark will appear to show its completion.

Mid-Study Check-In:

- You will receive a check-in email from The Kids staff to remind you to continue with the study.

Post-Intervention

- Complete the same 4-question survey (approx. 5 mins) and enter your email to link responses.
- Upon completion, you will receive a \$50 Coles gift card.

Tracking of app usage

Researchers will collect data to understand how you are engaging with the app and identify areas for improvement. This may include:

- Average time spent on each growth program and moments.
- How many moments are saved.
- Support services accessed.
- Most frequently viewed parent tips.
- Most frequently viewed ‘background’.
- Search queries entered within the app.

Do I have to take part in this research project?

No, it’s completely your choice. You can stop at any time before your data is de-identified (that is, before personal details like your name or email are removed). You don’t need to

give a reason, and it won't affect your relationship with the referring organisation or your use of the BT app.

De-identification happens soon after data is collected. Once your data is de-identified, it can't be linked back to you, therefore it can't be removed from the study.

To withdraw, email the BT research team at brighttomorrows@thekids.org.au. A team member *may* follow up to confirm and learn how we can improve future research.

What are the possible benefits of this research project?

By joining the 6-week study, you may feel more confident supporting your child's mental health and nutrition. Your involvement will also help improve the app for parents and caregivers across Western Australia.

What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

Some survey questions may touch on personal or sensitive parenting topics, which could cause mild discomfort. This is a normal response when reflecting on your experiences.

Further Support

If you would like further support, please contact the services below or refer to the support section in the BT app.

- Ngala: Supporting parents, families and communities to enhance the wellbeing and development of children and young people. Visit <https://www.ngala.com.au> or call 0893 689 368.
- Child Health Nurses: Services for families with babies and young children. Visit https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Community-child-health-nurses or call 1300 749 869.
- Raising Children Network: Comprehensive online parenting and family resource. Visit <https://raisingchildren.net.au>.

A collection of helpful videos are available to guide you through the app. To find them, go to the 'Moments' tab, scroll down, select 'About Us', and then open the 'Using the app' section.

How will my data be used and protected?

Data Storage

Your survey responses will be stored securely using a protected research system. Only approved researchers will be able to access the data. All information will be kept

confidential and stored according to our Institute's data policy, which includes securely keeping the data for up to seven years before it is deleted.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your participant email address will be used to link pre-and post-intervention data. Once your data is linked, your identifiable information (name, post-code, gender, age, email) will be removed and all data will be analysed and stored in the de-identification format. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained, meaning each participant will not be personally identified in any data of the data reporting.

Who do I contact if I wish to talk about the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please do not hesitate to contact the Bright Tomorrows research team at The Kids on bright.tomorrows@thekids.org.au.

How can I access the results of the study?

Once the study has concluded and the results have been finalised, a summary of the findings will be emailed directly to all participants by a researcher at The Kids.

Who has reviewed the research project? Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Western Australia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time. In addition, any person not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the Human Ethics Office at the University of Western Australia on (08) 6488 3703 or by emailing to humanethics@uwa.edu.au. All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project.