It’s been over two years since we began inviting families to participate in our study, so our oldest babies are turning two years old! Here’s the latest news from our study:

The Families
About 300 families are already taking part in the study. We are continuing to recruit families into the study until April 2008. We will be recruiting primarily at University Hospital Wales and Llandough Hospital, where most first-time mothers attend antenatal clinics. However, families who are being seen at other clinics in Cardiff, Caerphilly and Newport are welcome to join the study.

We have interviewed nearly 300 parents about their hopes and plans for their babies. In most cases we have interviewed fathers as well as mothers. This is providing a much richer picture of family life than has been obtained in earlier studies. Our sample of first-time parents is a cross-section of the communities into which the babies are being born. In our sample, many parents were born in the area, but others have moved to South Wales from other parts of the UK and other countries. A number of languages are spoken, in addition to Welsh and English. The mothers range in age from 16 to 42, with an average age of 28. Fathers range in age from 18 to 56, with an average age of 31.

The families in the study come from many different backgrounds and walks of life—but there are two things they all have in common. All the parents we have interviewed are concerned about striking a good balance between work and family life. All parents are trying to make decisions about child care arrangements that are best for their families. In quite a few families, fathers as well as mothers will be looking after their infants on a regular basis. In other families, extra help comes from grandparents, friends, childminders or day nurseries.

The Babies
It has been an absolute delight for us to see the babies at home and in the birthday parties at the School of Psychology. So far, we have seen about 200 babies at home, at 6 months of age. Nearly 100 have come to the first birthday party. The oldest babies in the sample are now being seen at home, at 18 months of life, and we are busy planning the second birthday party.

The babies have many things in common. At 6 months they are interested in the turtle and piano toys, and they enjoy the games they play with the researchers and their mothers. At the first birthday party, they are very interested in the games, and they do very well at finding hidden toys and
baby turns two, and then ring to book you in for a party at some point before your baby is 2 ½ years old, at your convenience.

Changes in our Team
Our project administrator, Cerian Farmahan, has had her own baby, and is now on maternity leave. Cerith Spooner and Jane Graves are working as project administrators while Cerian is on leave. Sarah-Louise Hurst and Naomi Swift have moved on to new posts as assistant psychologists. Dr. Oliver Perra, Jessica Lazo and Gabriele Cammarata have now joined Lisa Donaldson, Kathryn Hudson and Siwan Roberts.

Our contact details remain the same.
• Ring us on 02920 876191
• Email us on CCDSteam@cardiff.ac.uk
• Text us on 07870 681552

If your own contact details have changed, please ring, email or text us with your new phone numbers and address.

THANKS!

We are very grateful for all your help with our study. We look forward to seeing you at the next visits. Best wishes from Professor Hay and all the CCDS Team!

Plans for the Second Birthday Party
As the babies get older, families get busier. Some of the babies already have younger sisters or brothers, so of course that makes family life even more complicated. We have decided to be flexible about scheduling the second birthday party. We will be sending you a questionnaire when your baby turns two, and then ring to book you in for a party at some point before your baby is 2 ½ years old, at your convenience.

But, although the babies are alike in many ways, each baby in the study is already a distinct individual. Each baby copes with everyday challenges, like being strapped into the car seat at 6 months, or taking part in the teddy bear picnic at the birthday party, in his or her own distinctive way. This means we are learning a lot about babies in general but also about the early development of distinct personalities.

playing ball with our researchers. The babies are very interested in each other when they meet up in the playroom; they watch each other closely, show each other toys and often copy what the other babies do. They all seem to love the Lucky Dip at the end of the party.