

Surveying Children in longitudinal studies

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Organisers: James Williams, Principal Investigator and Co-Director, *Growing Up In Ireland* (Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin, Ireland)
Kate Smith, Survey Manager, Millennium Cohort Study (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, UK)

Abstract

As the child members of longitudinal birth cohort studies age, the focus of the studies becomes more about them rather than their parents. However, little work has been done to look at the best practice in and ethical approaches to interviewing children in these large-scale studies during the transition stage between them leaving childhood and becoming adults. This workshop will bring together longitudinal studies which are interviewing children and will share experience and best practice in developing different approaches in surveying children aged 9-15, including data collection mode and ethical and practical issues of recruiting and retaining children in a longitudinal study.

Scientific Summary

This workshop will focus on issues related to different approaches to and best practice in surveying children aged 9-15. These include data collection mode and ethical and practical issues of recruiting and retaining children into a longitudinal study.

There is much literature which focuses on the practical and ethical issues involved when carrying out research with children (e.g. Alderson & Morrow, 2004 & 2011; Tisdall et al, 2009) However much of this work is qualitative in nature and focuses on small-scale and one-off studies.

There is an increasing awareness that information should be taken directly from children, giving children a voice (the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). However there is little evidence on the different approaches that large-scale longitudinal studies are taking as the children in these cohorts are growing up and become actors in their own right, but before they have reached legal adulthood.

These issues cover the areas of: data collection mode, what is the best way of engaging young people and what use can these studies make of new technologies?

With regards to the ethical and practical issues of surveying children, best practice highlights the importance of informed consent, however how is this practically implemented with a cohort of young people who have yet not reached the age of legal responsibility?

As these children grow, how do these studies ensure their cooperation and participation for the future?

The workshop will bring together those running longitudinal studies around the world in order to share experiences and best practice in relation to these issues.

The programme for the two-day workshop includes substantive presentations. The vast majority of the presentations will be from child cohort studies based in Europe () and one from the USA (1). There will also be presentations from a longitudinal study of school aged young people based in Europe (1). The rationale for the inclusion of this study as well as cohort studies is that they have already encountered many of the issues that the Eucconet cohort studies will be experiencing and can share their knowledge.

This workshop offers a forum for different types of longitudinal studies from around the world to learn from each other.

References:

Alderson, P. and Morrow, V (2004), *“Ethics, social research and consulting with young people”*, Essex: Barnardo’s.

[Alderson, P. and Morrow, V \(2011\), “The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People, A Practical Handbook”, London: Sage](#)

Tisdall, K., Davis, J. And Gallgher, M. (eds) (2009), *“Researching with children and young people: research designs, methods and analysis”*, London: Sage