

## Early vulnerability and health outcomes for New Zealand children

JULY 2015

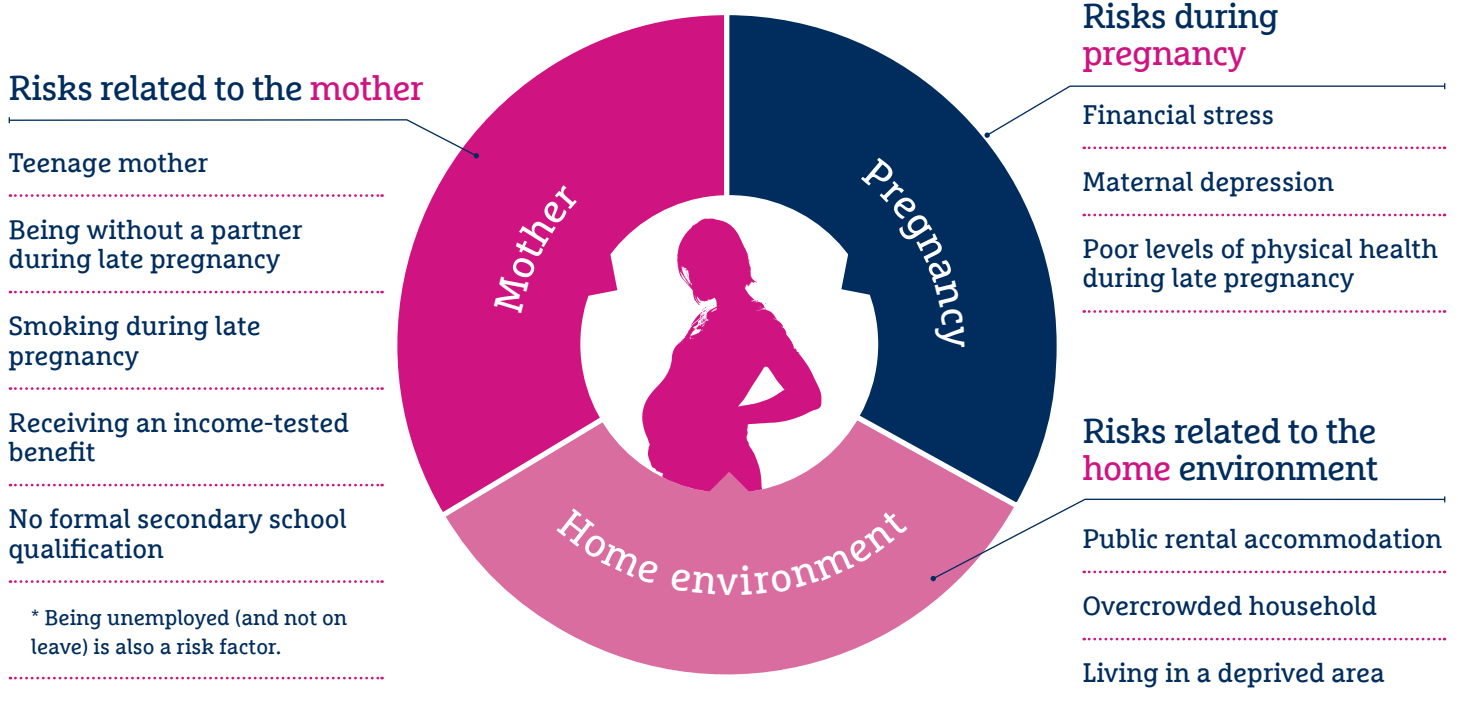
### THE FOCUS

Some New Zealand children are more vulnerable to poor health outcomes in their first two years of life. These findings are based on the 2014 *Growing Up in New Zealand* report, *Exploring the Definition of Vulnerability for children in their first 1000 days*.

### About *At a Glance*

Superu's *At a Glance* series uses infographics to illustrate research findings or key information about a priority topic.

### RISK FACTORS BEFORE BIRTH



### TIPPING POINT FOR VULNERABILITY

1/3 of children in the study were exposed to two or more risk factors by the time they were born. Children exposed to two or more risk factors are considered vulnerable and are more likely to have poorer health outcomes.



## HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

AT BIRTH



More likely to be born with low birth weight



More than five times as likely to be living with a smoker



More than twice as likely to sleep in a damp environment

BIRTH TO NINE MONTHS



More than three times as likely to be admitted to hospital with a respiratory illness



More likely to have had an accident or injury

NINE MONTHS TO TWO YEARS



Increased likelihood for respiratory illness requiring hospital admission



Increased likelihood of doctor-diagnosed skin infections




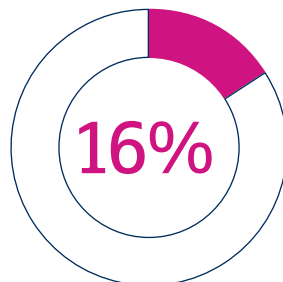
By age two


92% of all the children in the study were fully immunised

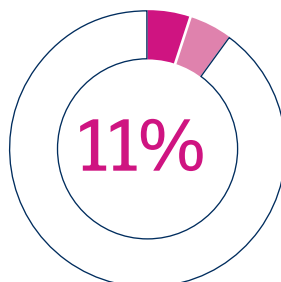
## CHANGES IN RISK FACTORS OVER TIME

### Maternal depression


**DURING PREGNANCY**   
16% of all mothers experienced symptoms of maternal depression.

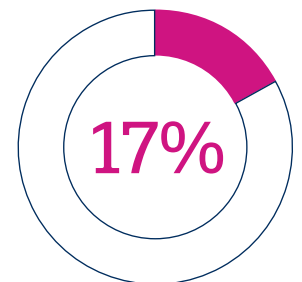


**AT NINE MONTHS**   
Only one-third of mothers with symptoms of maternal depression in late pregnancy continued to show symptoms postnatally. Approximately two-thirds of mothers with symptoms in pregnancy appeared to have recovered. Approximately half of the mothers with maternal depression symptoms postnatally were new.

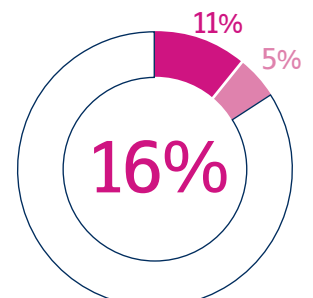


### Income-tested benefit

**AT NINE MONTHS**   
17% of all households were receiving income support.



**AT TWO YEARS**   
11% of all households continued receiving income support, and a further 5% who were not receiving income support at 9 months were now receiving it.



## THE MOST VULNERABLE TO POOR HEALTH OUTCOMES

Māori and Pacific children experience **greater exposure to vulnerability risk factors** in the first nine months of life compared to New Zealand European and Asian children.

In relation to the **home environment**, Pacific children are exposed to more vulnerability risk factors due to living in public rental accommodation, in overcrowded conditions and in high deprivation areas.

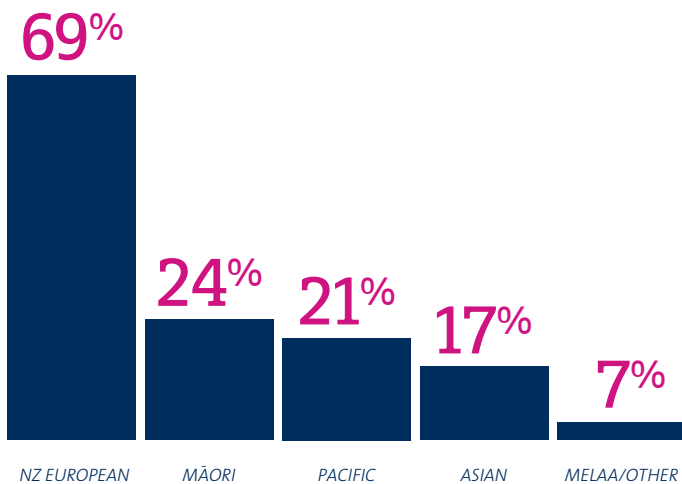


- Children living in public rental accommodation
- Overcrowded conditions
- High deprivation areas

## PARTICIPANTS

Characteristics of *The Growing up in New Zealand* children at 9 months.

### ETHNICITY



Multiple response(s) possible, therefore percentages total more than 100%.

MIDDLE EASTERN, LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN

63%  
TWO PARENTS ALONE



25%  
PARENT(S) WITH EXTENDED FAMILY



5%  
PARENT(S) WITH NON-KIN



7%  
PARENT ALONE



48%  
GIRLS



52%  
BOYS



## Our purpose

To increase the use of evidence by people across the social sector so that they can make better decisions - about funding, policies or services - to Improve the lives of New Zealanders, New Zealand's communities, families and whānau.

## What we do

We work across the wider social sector to:

- **promote** informed debate on key social issues for New Zealand, its families and whānau, and increase awareness about what works
- **grow** the quality, relevance and quantity of the evidence base in priority areas
- **facilitate** the use of evidence by sharing it and supporting its use in decision-making.

### Related Superu publications:



At a Glance: Families and whānau on the move (February 2015) . Available at: [superu.govt.nz/growingup](http://superu.govt.nz/growingup)

### Source reports:



Morton et al. (2014). *Growing Up in New Zealand: A longitudinal study of New Zealand children and their families. Vulnerability Report 1: Exploring the Definition of Vulnerability for Children in their First 1000 Days.* Auckland: Growing Up in New Zealand.



Morton et al. (2012). *Growing Up in New Zealand: A longitudinal study of New Zealand children and their families. Report 2: Now we are born.* Auckland: Growing Up in New Zealand.

## ABOUT GROWING UP IN NEW ZEALAND



SAMPLE OF NEARLY  
**7,000**  
CHILDREN

Growing up in New Zealand (GUINZ) is a longitudinal study following nearly 7,000 children in New Zealand from before birth to adulthood. GUINZ provides a contemporary picture of what it's like to be a child growing up in New Zealand in the 21st century.

