

OBS NEWSLETTER

Research Updates

The Ontario Birth Study Science Forum

In October 2023, the OBS invited a number of researchers who have worked with OBS data and samples to present their findings to researchers interested in pregnancy and early childhood development. It has sparked new interest in our resources and consideration of how these results might influence clinical care. The first presentation was about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and how it could be connected to brain development. This was followed by two presentations related to COVID-19, one about preschool children's cognitive and emotional well-being before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is described further below. The other is on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternal depression and anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum. Two presentations were about using blood markers to predict hypertensive (high blood pressure) disorders of pregnancy and preterm birth. Finally, there was a discussion on the mechanism behind the long-term effects of multiple courses of drugs given to those with preterm birth risk.

Full summaries can be found on our website [here](#).



Study Progress

Total number of pregnancies in OBS:
4281



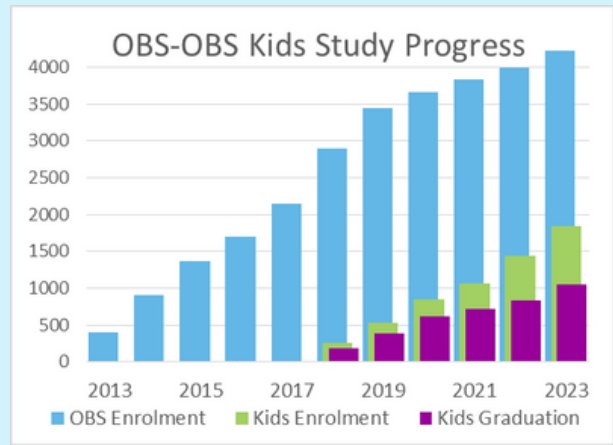
Total number of children in OBS Kids:
1873

Total number of publications:
25

Total number of children who have graduated from OBS:
1109



Congratulations to the children who have graduated! Thank you for all your time and support!



Thank you!

Recent Findings

Cognitive and emotional well-being of preschool children before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic raised concerns about possible impacts on children. This study took advantage of ongoing recruitment in the OBS to compare children who were assessed in the same way before and during the pandemic. It found that during the pandemic, children in the OBS had better problem-solving and working with their hands at 24 months of age, although they had lower social skills. At 4.5 years, OBS children had higher overall cognitive skills during the pandemic compared to before. Although there were fewer social opportunities, some OBS parents may have had more opportunities to spend time with their children and help them learn. However, results may be different in less economically secure families.

To read the full article, click [here](#).



Meet an OBS Researcher

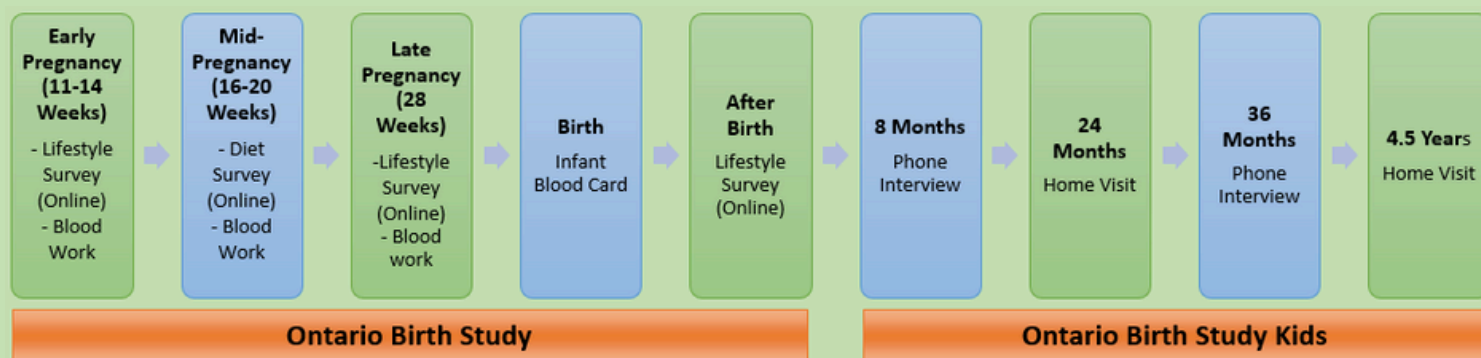
Harmoni Watson

Harmoni is a research assistant with the Ontario Birth Study team and a master's student in the School and Clinical Child Psychology program at the University of Toronto. Her broad research interests include examining how discrimination affects the well-being and academic performance of youth from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds, especially from an attachment perspective. Harmoni is working on her master's thesis, which will use OBS data to study mother-child interaction styles. She aspires to continue her school and clinical psychology studies as a doctoral student next year!



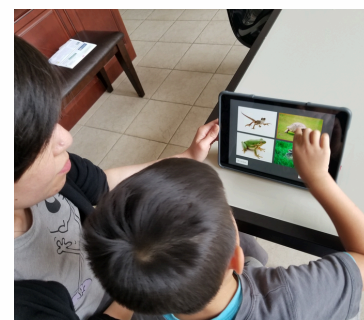
OBS Follow-Up Timeline

The OBS is a long-term research project investigating pregnancy and child health outcomes. As shown below, OBS continues into OBS Kids to provide the team with information about what influences child development, particularly during pregnancy and the neonatal period. At each follow-up, caregivers and their children participate in various research activities.

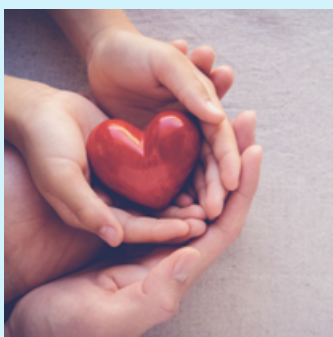


Why does the OBS team do home visits?

A home visit is important because it allows the OBS team to gather child health information that would otherwise not be possible over the phone. This includes a sorting game mothers and children play together at 24 months to explore mother-child interactions, and at 4.5 years old, children will play four digital brain games on an iPad that examine attention, memory, and vocabulary. With the caregiver's consent, we also collect saliva samples from children at 24 months and 4.5 years. The saliva sample can be used for genetic studies, as well as to see if children have been exposed to certain types of viruses.



Family Resources



The OBS aims to provide families with resources to ensure well-being and positive health outcomes. Below is a link to a list of family resources in the Greater Toronto Area for caregivers and their children. Please contact the OBS team if you have questions or want further information about specific support programs or services.

[Click here for Family Resources](#)

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the OBS research or would like to provide feedback, please get in touch with us at:

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OBS Kids Research Team

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OBS Website

<https://ontariobirthstudy.com/>