

**Title:** Inequities in children’s mental health: evidence to inform precision policy responses

**Primary supervisor:** Professor Sharon Goldfeld

**Co-supervisor 1:** Associate Professor Susan Woolfenden

**Co-supervisor 2:** Dr Sarah Gray

**Summary** (1-2 sentences): The project will use a mixed-methods approach to investigate how evidence related to the modifiable social determinants of inequities in children’s mental and developmental health can inform policy decision making and action. The project will involve quantitative analysis of existing data and interviews with stakeholders.

**Project description** (max 300 words):

Inequities in children’s health and development refer to differential outcomes that are unjust and preventable. Australian children exposed to disadvantage from infancy are at higher risk of poor mental, physical and academic outcomes by late childhood. These inequities track forward into adulthood, where they carry high costs for individuals and society. Reducing child inequities is a public health priority. While Australian governments are committed to reducing inequities, the translation of currently available evidence into effective action continues to be challenging.

The Changing Children’s Chances project works collaboratively with policymakers to generate evidence that identifies clear and actionable policy pathways to reduce inequities in children’s health and development. A Changing Children’s Chances scholarship is available for a PhD candidate to contribute a mixed-methods study. The project will investigate how evidence related to the modifiable social determinants of child mental and developmental health inequities can inform policy decision making and action. The project will involve quantitative analysis of existing data (e.g. the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children) and interviews with stakeholders. The outcomes will help to inform how researchers can better deliver evidence to meaningfully inform policy, and are expected to be of high relevance to efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 on children’s mental and developmental health.

The PhD will be conducted through the University of Melbourne and the successful candidate will be based at the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute. The candidate will be supported by the Changing Children’s Chances team and the broader research environment of the Centre for Community Child Health.

Key reading: Goldfeld S, Gray S, Azpitarte F, et al. Driving precision policy responses to child health and developmental inequities. *Health Equity*. 2019; 3(1): 489-494.

[UoM project submission - Your Project Asset ID is #3458207]