

Getting to the point of parenting

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Why do people really have kids?

While most parents might think they know the answer, research suggests this age-old question, in fact, remains mostly unanswered.

In response, and as ABS statistics indicate the number of children born in Australia has been on the rise over the past decade, researchers from

Flinders University want to examine the drivers behind the biggest decision most people ever make.

Dr Damien Riggs, who is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow at Flinders, wants to discover the hopes and aspirations which drive parenting – and whether or not the reality lives up to the hype.

"We really want to try and understand how men and women experience the wish to have a child, how this is shaped by their own family experiences, and how [couples](#) plan for and negotiate having children," said Dr Riggs.

"Many Australian couples are choosing to have children in their late 30s, while other couples are choosing to marry and have children in their early 20s.

"These differing choices possibly indicate some of the different values and hopes that couples place upon having children, and these are the kinds of areas we really want to explore."

Dr Riggs believes his team's research could inform how we understand family planning into the [future](#), and even influence the future provision of services which are more responsive to the real needs of new and future parents.

"It is a little too late to begin talking with people about their beliefs about children and parenting once they have already had children," Dr Riggs said.

"We are suggesting that outcomes for parents and [children](#) might be improved if [service providers](#) can have discussions with people ahead of time, and help them to think ahead about the realities of the journey to come."

More information: Dr Riggs' team is currently recruiting South Australian heterosexual couples planning for a first child. Couples who match that description, and who are willing to be interviewed about their experiences, can find more information at www.australianparentingstudy.com or by calling 08 8201 2786.

Provided by Flinders University

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