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NEW RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACT OF PARENT FATIGUE ON FAMILY LIFE

New Australia-wide research with parents of young children will investigate the impact of fatigue on family life, as well as exploring links between fatigue and depression.

According to Associate Professor Jan Matthews, Director of Research and Practice at the Parenting Research Centre, "We know that when parents are coping with fatigue it can have an impact on their ability to raise children. This survey of parent wellbeing will help us determine the level of fatigue that families are coping with on a daily basis, as well as to identify any potential impact on parenting. The research findings will be of real value in developing information and strategies to help support families".

The research project with parents of children under six years of age builds on an earlier PRC survey in which 40% of 210 maternal and child health nurses said that more than half of the parents they see are so fatigued that it impacts upon their ability to parent. Other results of the survey, conducted at the 2006 Maternal and Child Health Services Conference in Melbourne, indicated that:

- parent fatigue is common, impacts upon parenting and is an important issue to address with parents
- 85% of nurses felt that addressing fatigue with parents is as important, if not more important, than other issues such as child-related factors
- over 50% of nurses felt parents are less interested in discussing their wellbeing than other issues related to their child.

According to Jan Matthews, "Previous international research has shown that fatigue can get in the way of parent-child and partner relationships, which has implications for a child's emotional, physical and cognitive development, as well as for people's physical and emotional health. Fatigue may even be a trigger in post-natal depression so there is a major need for resources to help parents address their fatigue".

We would like to hear from any parents of children aged 0-6, whether they are feeling fatigued or not, who would like to participate in the parent fatigue and wellbeing survey:

- visit www.parentingrc.org.au to complete the survey online or to print a copy.
- email parentwellbeing@parentingrc.org.au for a copy of the survey or
- phone (03) 8660 3500 and ask for a copy.

For media enquiries, please contact Sandy Watson, Director of Communications at the Parenting Research Centre, 0427 027 059 or email swatson@parentingrc.org.au