



What is data linkage?

Data linkage is the process of joining together data from different sources.

There are 3 main data sources we want to link for your child.

1. Services Australia health data: MBS (Medical Benefits Schedule), PBS (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme) and Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).
2. Hospital data: Any hospital admissions and Emergency Department visits your child may have had.
3. Educational data: NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) and AEDC (Australian Early Developmental Census) records.



How is data linked?

With your consent, we send your child's identifiers, such as name, date of birth and an ID number not linked to their survey, to the organisation responsible for the other data source (the data custodians). This data is sent back to us with only the ID number – not your child's identifiers.



Why is it important to link my child's data?

Linking data helps us find out more about your child than we can ask in a survey. Trying to remember dates of appointments or names of medications can be tricky and hard to get right. By linking your child's data, we can get more accurate information and ask fewer questions.

Data linkage also allows data that has already been collected to be used in new ways to help improve the lives of young people. For example, by putting MBS data together with survey data, we can see what issues young people are facing, and whether existing health services are or aren't being used. Then, we can find ways to help young people access existing health services, or identify new services that are needed.



Is data kept private?

Yes. We make sure your child's data is secure. We have strict privacy and confidentiality rules and won't share any data that can identify your child. This process is approved by the responsible Human Research Ethics Committees.



Do I have to agree to link my child's data?

No, you or your child can still take part in the survey and say no to data linkage. You can also choose which data sources are okay to link. You don't have to agree to all of them.

You can also change your mind later and withdraw your consent for one or all data sources at any time. Please contact MatCH 2 on 1800 068 081 (Freecall) or email alswh@newcastle.edu.au or info@alswh.org.au



How do I consent?

You will need to read and sign the consent form. You need to tick 'Yes' or 'No' for each data source. Depending on your child's age, they may also need to give their consent.

1. Services Australia health data: If your child is under 14 years old, you need to complete a consent form for us to access this data. If they are 14 years or older, only your child can give consent - your child will need to complete a consent form.
2. Hospital data: If your child is under 18 years old, you need to complete a consent form for us to access this data. If your child is 14 years or older, your child also needs to complete a consent form.
3. Education data: If your child is under 18 years old, you will need to give consent for us to access this data. Your child does not need to sign a consent form for us to access this data.



Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Women's Health Australia
Phone: 1800 068 081 (Freecall)
Email alswh@newcastle.edu.au or info@alswh.org.au