



Mobility & Accessibility  
for Children in Australia

## UNCOVERING NEW INSIGHTS INTO FAMILIES' ROAD SAFETY CHALLENGES

Groundbreaking Australian research aims to shed new light on the day-to-day transport challenges faced by families of children with disabilities.

In a partnership between Mobility and Accessibility for Children in Australia Ltd (MACA) and Monash University, researchers are immersing themselves in the lives of families to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of transport arrangements on their daily life.

This involves conducting interviews with families in Melbourne VIC, Tamborine QLD, Theodore ACT, Launceston Tasmania and Bathurst NSW to learn about how they go about everyday transport. The families also keep video, photographic and written diaries of their experiences.

MACA Chief Executive Helen Lindner said thousands of Australian children with disabilities are unable to travel in regular, 'off-the-shelf' car restraints, and a trip in the car to safely get from A to B is often no easy feat for their families.

"MACA's national survey revealed stark challenges, with more than half of caregivers reporting that their child had gotten out of their child restraint or their seatbelt while they were driving, and more than two-thirds of caregivers reported never receiving information on safely transporting their child," Helen said.

"We've had parents share with us harrowing stories of resorting to restraining their child with cable ties and duct tape because they felt they had no other choice.

"Families of children with disabilities have had limited access to resources, support and products to enable their safe transport and participation in the community - MACA exists to change this.

"This research will provide a deeper understanding of the lived experience of families than we've ever had before, which will enable MACA to develop resources that respond to the real-world transport needs of families living with disability."

The research is being led by Sarah Pink, Professor of Design and Emerging Technologies at Monash University, with research assistant Iris Maher. Sarah said the research would go much further than standard observation.

"Families of children with disabilities and medical conditions have an enormous amount of knowledge, creativity and expertise when it comes to keeping their children safe when travelling, and our objective is to get under the surface and learn from them," Sarah said.

"The research will help identify how a deeper understanding of human experience and everyday social innovation offers new opportunities to solve complex and enduring problems.

"It's important we bring all of that in depth knowledge together and apply it to the design of future safe travel, whether it's policy, regulation, products or future technology."



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This research project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and is being conducted throughout 2021 and 2022.

A report of findings will be published at [macahub.org](http://macahub.org) later in 2022. For further information visit [www.makahub.org/projects/ethnographic-research](http://www.makahub.org/projects/ethnographic-research)

### **About MACA**

MACA is a registered charity dedicated to advancing the rights of children with disabilities and medical conditions to safe and accessible transport.

Until the establishment of MACA around two years ago, there was no national expert body advocating for the rights of children with disabilities and medical conditions to safe and accessible transport.

MACA addresses the gap in Australia between policy, research, and practice impacting the transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions.