

Parents of children with a disability under twice as much stress, survey finds

March 20 2013

(Medical Xpress)—Queensland parents of children with a disability endure twice as much stress and worry as parents of typically developing children, according to the *My Say* survey.

The University of Queensland (UQ), The University of Sydney and Monash University [survey](#) found 70 percent of Queensland parents of [children with disabilities](#) reported feeling stressed and worried.

This compares to just 32 percent of parents of typically developing children who reported feeling stressed and worried in a 2011 International Parenting Survey.

The *My Say* survey is part of a pioneering project called Stepping Stones Triple P (SSTP), which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of children with [disabilities](#) across three states by providing free parenting support and free professional training.

A project of this scale – involving an estimated 30,000 parents of children with disabilities in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales – has never been done before.

UQ's lead researcher on the project and Triple P founder Professor Matt Sanders said it was no surprise parents of children with special needs were in distress.

"Children with disabilities have three to four times more emotional and

[behavioural problems](#) than typically developing children, so it can be a very hard and lonely road for the people who love them and care for them," he said.

"The *My Say* survey results confirm what most health professionals already know – many parents of children with a disability are struggling to cope."

Over the next three years, parents of children with special needs in Queensland, Victoria and [New South Wales](#) will be offered free parenting support through Triple P's Stepping Stones program to improve their confidence, resilience and competence.

Professionals such as allied health therapists, teachers, nurses and community workers in these three states can also apply for free Stepping Stones training and resources.

Queensland is the first state to benefit from the SSTP project, with free training available from May this year and free parenting support from June.

Other *My Say* survey results indicate only 58 percent of parents of children with a disability reported feeling satisfied with their lives compared to 83 percent of parents of typically developing children, and 32 percent of parents of [children](#) with a disability felt emotionally distressed compared to nine percent of other [parents](#).

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Parents of children with a disability under twice as much stress, survey finds (2013, March 20) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-parents-children-disability-stress-survey.html>

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