

# life

at 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

how do you give a child the best chance in life?



A **STUDYGUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA AND ANDREW FILDES



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## What does it take to give a child the best chance in life?



### Curriculum relevance

This program will have interest and relevance for middle to senior secondary and tertiary students in the following curriculum areas:

- Biology
- Child and Family Services
- Community and Family Studies
- Exploring Early Childhood (Sec); Early Childhood Studies (Ter)
- General Science
- Health and Human Development
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE/HSIE)

### Life at One – Episodes One and Two

This is the first instalment in a landmark series that will follow eleven babies and their families for seven years to discover what it takes to give a child the best chance in life. It is divided into two 55-minute episodes.

### The filmmakers

*Life at 1* is directed by Catherine Marciniak, who is also the cinematographer. The series is produced by Jennifer Cummins and narrated by Colin Friels. The series is a Film Australia National Interest Program in association with Heiress Films and it was developed and produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

### Introduction

We were all babies once but most of us probably have little conscious memory of those first twelve months. Apart from photos and family stories, we have only the person we are now to provide us with clues about our earliest year of life. Some of us may have younger brothers and sisters whom we watched growing up and thus have a more immediate awareness of babies. This series introduces us to eleven children and their families;

their parents are interviewed and the babies are observed and tested as they play and grow. The series is being made in conjunction with a longitudinal study called *Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* being carried out by The Institute of Family Studies, which is following 10,000 Australian children over a seven year period.

### Synopsis

How do you give a child the best chance in life?

*Life at 1* is the first instalment in a landmark series that aims to unlock the secrets of child development by following eleven babies and their families for seven years.

Made in conjunction with the longitudinal study in which 10,000 Australian children have been placed under a sociological and scientific microscope, this groundbreaking program focuses





























## Quick Quiz about Episode Two

1. Which of the children has the most brothers and sisters?
2. How many of the six children are only children?
3. Whose mother and father are still teenagers?
4. Which child has a disabled brother?
5. Which babies are in regular outside day care?
6. Which baby's father was very sick for twelve months?
7. Whose father now works as a market gardener?
8. Which child's cortisol levels are described as 'surprisingly low'?
9. Which baby has surprisingly high cortisol levels throughout the day?
10. Whose father drives a taxi?
11. Whose mother has vision problems?
12. Whose father has several jobs?

(Answers on the last page of the notes)

## Extension Activities

1. Write a single page preview/review for a television guide about both episodes of this program, including the following:
  - A brief outline of what the program is about
  - A description of the balance of different elements in each episode
  - Your opinion of the program
  - Who you think would enjoy this documentary
  - What you found most interesting about it.
2. One of the topics this film investigates is the balance between nature and nurture, i.e. how much each of us is the product of our genetic

inheritance, and how much our upbringing determines the adult we become. How well do you think *Life at 1* balances its study of these two aspects of childhood and growth?

3. Consider what we are told and shown about these eleven children and their families. Write down two questions you would like to ask each of the parents in order to better your understanding of their lives with their children.

### 4. Looking forward

At the end of Episode Two the narrator indicates some of the challenges likely to be raised in the next programs as the children grow up. They include:

- Are girls really doing better than boys?
  - Is it a fantasy that the modern dad spends more time with his children?
  - Could a key predictor to childhood obesity be how much exercise parents do?
- Set up a class debate on one or more of these questions, providing as much evidence as you can find for your point of view.

## GLOSSARY

*Longitudinal study* – a study that involves the repeated observation or examination of a set of subjects over time.

*Australian Institute of Family Studies* – body responsible for the design and management of the 2004 study of 10,000 children and their families. The study has been funded by the Federal Government Department of Family and Community Services as part of the 'Stronger Families and Communities Strategy'.

*The study* – refers to the

Institute of Family Studies study of 10,000 Australian children described above.

*Nature versus nurture* – this term refers to the balance between genetic inheritance and environmental factors in the shaping of a person's growth and development.

*Cortisol* – a hormone secreted from the adrenal gland that has a role in indicating and controlling stress.

## REFERENCES

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## Films

*7 Up* (Michael Apted, 1964)

*7 Up* is the first in a series of films by Michael Apted following the lives of fourteen 7-year olds in Britain. Every seven years Apted has returned to film this group of people who are now 49. *49 Up*, the seventh film, was released in 2006. These films start with the premise from the Roman Catholic Jesuit Order, which says, 'Give me a child until he is seven and I will give you the man'.

*Maternity Unit*

(Janette Howe, 2005)

This program follows the drama and intensity of giving birth by going behind the doors of a maternity hospital in New South Wales. Teachers' Notes are available at:

<http://www.filmaust.com.au>

*Maternity Unit* screened on SBS television in 2006.

*Myths of Childhood*  
(Sarah Gibson, 1996)

This three part series investigates childhood in the western world in the late twentieth century. Teachers' Notes are available at: <http://www.filmaust.com.au>

*Myths of Childhood* screened on ABC2 television in 2006.

## Answers to the quick quizzes:

### Episode 1

1. Jara'na
2. Anastasija's
3. Three
4. Loulou's
5. Anastasija
6. Ben, Anastasija
7. Ben
8. Haleema's mother, Battena
9. Ben
10. Jara'na

### Episode 2

1. Shine
2. Two, Declan and Wyatt
3. Wyatt's
4. Daniel
5. Declan and Wyatt
6. Sofia
7. Joshua's

8. Declan

9. Joshua

10. Shine's

11. Daniel's

12. Sofia's

## Life at 1

A Film Australia National Interest Program in association with Heiress Films. Developed and produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Writer/Director:

Catherine Marciniak

Producer:

Jennifer Cummins

Executive Producer:

Penny Robins

Duration: 2 x 55 minutes

Year: 2006

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