**Baby Laughter project - Research highlights**

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Our survey was completed by parents of 580 girls, 700 boys and 17 twins. We are still stifting through the data but here are some of the conclusions that we’ve been able to draw so far:

**1. Laughter usually starts early but with some remarkable exceptions.**

90% of babies first smile is in the first 2-3 months and their first laughs are usually just a few weeks later. There is a surprisingly wide range of responses. Some parents reported laughter in the first few weeks while a very small number (< 1%) reported babies not laughing until 12 months or older.

**2. Parents report that boys laugh more than girls.**

On average they reported 48 times a day for boys compared to 37 times for girls. We are unsure whether this is a genuine difference or a result of parental perceptions.

*To our surprise twins laugh didn’t apparently laugh more at 36 times a day on average. Although Alexandra from Venezuela and her twins were an exception.*

**3. Tickling is one of the earliest and most reliable ways to raise a laugh.**

This ties together with research that other species respond to tickling. Young babies also quite like being dangled upside down.

**4. Laughter becomes more social as babies get older.**

Besides tickling peekaboo is the most popular game to play with babies. It becomes more sophisticated as babies get older.

Meanwhile, tickling develops into anticipation and ‘chasing’ games. And as babies understand more about the world they have a growing awareness and appreciation of silliness – silly voices and silly faces.

**5. We think babies start clowning around, trying to make us laugh around 1 year old.**

But we need better data on this.

**Current/Future projects**

1. Still want parents to send us videos at <http://babylaughter.net>

2. Just started lab based experiment on the social nature of laughter (and yawning).

3. Analysing laughter in 1000 mother-infant interaction videos.

Collaboration with Instutitute for the Study of Children, Families, and Social Issues.

4. Smartphone based data collection.

- More immediate data on laughter incidents.

- Ticklishness survey.