The Everyday Childhoods collection is a qualitative longitudinal dataset that was collected by researchers from the Universities of Sussex and Brighton and the Open University during 2013-15. The initial project, called ‘Face 2 Face: Tracing the real and the mediated in children’s cultural worlds’ (F2F) was funded by an NCRM Methodology Innovation award (grant reference 512589109). The primary aim of the project was to explore how technologies documented and mediated the everyday in children's daily lives. The F2F project generated the majority of the data contained in this collection and the dataset comprises data from two research panels: firstly, a younger panel (the 'extensive' panel) of children aged 7-8 years (n=6) who had previously been involved with their families in an ESRC funded study of new motherhood (grant reference RES-148-25-0057, see http://modernmothers.org/). Their geographical location ranged across the South, South East and South West of England. Secondly, an older panel (the 'intensive' panel) of children aged 10-15 years (n=7) were recruited for the first time in this study. Their geographical location was focused in the South East of England. This latter sample were recruited to illustrate a diversity of youth experiences and identities, including along intersectional lines of ethnicity, religion, dis/ability, urban/rural locality, and economic background. Over the course of 12 months, both groups of children took part in a series of regular research activities aimed at capturing their everyday lives.

The research activities that make up this part of the dataset include:

1. ‘Favourite Things’ interviews – Carried out with each participant at the beginning of the study, during which children were invited to share ‘favourite’ possessions in their homes with a focus on objects that connected to their past and objects that connected to their future. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and the children’s objects were photographed.

2. Family interviews – To gain a sense of the children’s everyday routines, some of the children’s families were interviewed about a typical day in their household. These interviews typically included the child and at least one parent, and sometimes siblings and extended family. The family interviews were audio recorded and transcribed

3. ‘Day in a life’ observations – Each child was ethnographically observed by a researcher over a single day. These included school days, holidays and weekend days – and were normally chosen by the child in conjunction with their parent. The researchers drew on multimodal practices of ethnographic observation – collecting visual and audio data alongside traditional field notes.

4. Recursive interviews – At the conclusion of the 12 months of fieldwork, each child took part in a final interview to look back on their participation in the study, and to look at the data collected as part of the project. All younger children, and some older children, were interviewed with their parents. Data was presented back to the participants in curated multimedia documents which were intended to be shared publicly on the project’s website with the permission of children and parents.

A more detailed summary of the study and its methods can be found in the book based on the Everyday Childhoods: Thomson, R., Berriman, L., & Bragg, S. (2018) Researching Everyday Childhoods: Time, Technology and Documentation in a Digital Age: http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350011779

From 2014-15, members of the research team undertook a follow-on study, called ‘Curating Childhoods: Developing a Multimedia Archive of Children’s Everyday Lives’ funded by the AHRC’s Digital Transformations theme (grant reference H/M002160/1). The aim of this study was to explore the ethical challenges of publicly archiving data on children’s everyday lives. Participants from the Face 2 Face study were invited to join the research team at a one-day workshop hosted by the Mass Observation Archive (a project partner) and held at The Keep in East Sussex. At this workshop participants, including children, families and researchers, explored ethical and practical issues in relation to archiving and sharing their data. Some of the material collected from this workshop is included in the dataset, including postcards from the workshop participants addressed to the future archive users of their data and focus groups. As part of the project, some of the Face 2 Face participants also helped to pilot recording their own ‘day in a life’ using multimedia methods (e.g. photography or video), as part of a trial for the Mass Observations 12th May diary day.